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CHAPTER SIX

Presidential Leadership and Advice about Going to War

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The growth of the presidency has paralleled the growth of the U.S. government in terms of size and complexity. Leadership of large, complex systems cannot be accomplished by single individuals. Each president depends on the government's operational officers who will implement policies once they have been adopted. But before policies are adopted, presidents need both expert and general advice on the wisdom of adopting various policy options. This chapter will examine presidential decision making and the dynamics of advisory systems. More specifically, it will focus on how presidents can use their advisors to elicit the best policy advice. There is nothing automatic about this; it is a challenge for each president.

Presidents attract extremely smart, ambitious people to serve in the White House and have at their disposal the best experienced, professional career services. But the quality of the advice the president receives depends upon how the president uses the available talent. Presidential leadership is necessary to set the tone for the type of advice elicited from aides. The wrong signals will elicit the wrong type of advice. If the president wants his own biases or predispositions reinforced, that is what he will get. If he wants to learn from disagreements among his staffers, he must encourage dissenting views. But he must impose order on this dissent and be willing to make the final decisions.

This analysis is based on several premises. Presidents will make better decisions if they consider a range of realistic options and alternative policies

brought to their attention. This is a primary function of a presidential advisory system. And the key to eliciting these alternatives from aides is to encourage contrasting perspectives. Presidents need frank advice and unvarnished evaluations. If aides trim their advice to suit the perceived predispositions of their superiors, they will not serve the president well. If presidents discourage dissent, their aides will anticipate their wishes and self-censor any conflicting views. This may lead to a narrow focus and neglect of alternative courses of action.

This chapter will examine several cases of presidential decision making and try to distill from them lessons about the effective use of advisors in high-level decisions about war and peace. The approach will be to juxtapose two instances of successful presidential decision making with two corresponding instances of less successful decision making. The two successful cases are the following:

1. Dwight Eisenhower's decision not to intervene in Vietnam in 1954
2. John Kennedy's conduct of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962

The two unsuccessful cases are the following:

1. Lyndon Johnson's decision to commit ground troops to Vietnam in 1965
2. John Kennedy's debacle at the Bay of Pigs in 1961

In each case, the situation facing the president will be examined and the policymaking process will be analyzed.

Although these cases may not all be unambiguously successes and failures, much can be learned from examining how presidents used their advisory systems. Eisenhower's decision not to intervene in Vietnam to save the French kept the United States out of a land war in Asia, and the dominoes did not fall. Kennedy's conduct of the Cuban Missile Crisis prevented what might have been a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The corresponding failures arguably left the United States in a weaker position than it had been before the incidents occurred. Johnson's war in Vietnam divided the United States politically, resulted in the deaths of 58,000 American soldiers and several million Vietnamese, and did not prevent the Communist victory in Vietnam. Kennedy's Bay of Pigs invasion strengthened Fidel Castro's control of Cuba, gave Nikita Khrushchev the pretext for inserting ballistic missiles into Cuba, and prevented a peaceful rapprochement with Cuba.

I Eisenhower and Johnson

Confront Vietnam

Presidents Eisenhower and Johnson both faced the problem of Vietnamese nationalism and the potential control of the country by regimes allied with Communist powers. The issue in each case was whether to commit U.S. military forces to prevent a Communist takeover. Despite the similarity of the situations, the two presidents arrived at different decisions. The cases below present and contrast the deliberation and decision making of the two presidents.

Eisenhower's Decision in 1954 Not to Intervene in Vietnam

In 1954 the French were facing a crisis in Vietnam. Their control of their colony since the nineteenth century had been interrupted by the Japanese occupation during World War II. After the war, the French had sought to reassert their control of the country, but this provoked fierce resistance from the Viet Minh who sought independence. The French had staked their hopes on a stand at Dien Bien Phu, a stronghold surrounded by mountains. The Vietnamese had them under siege, and in the spring of 1954, the French were in danger of losing. At this time the United States was paying approximately 75 percent of the French military costs and supplying some U.S. bombers and people to service them.¹ With defeat looming, the French sent emissaries to Washington with appeals to President Eisenhower to come to their aid with direct American military intervention.

Eisenhower was a staunch anti-Communist and did not want to see the French defeated. He was concerned about the strength of France in Europe as an essential partner in NATO, and he did not want to be accused of "losing Vietnam" as the Democrats had been accused of "losing China" after the Communist revolution of 1949. He also articulated the "falling domino" principle: "You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly."² In other words, Eisenhower believed that if Vietnam fell to the Communists, the rest of Indochina would then go, as well as Burma, Thailand, Malaya, and Indonesia. The administration was considering a range of actions to support the French, including the use of atomic weapons.³

Eisenhower's national security policymaking process was based on his extensive experience with large organizations and international relations.⁴

The process was relatively formal: the second-level Planning Board reported policy options to the principals on the National Security Council (NSC), and then the Operations Coordinating Board dealt with implementation of policy. Eisenhower also instituted the positions of chief of staff and staff secretary in the White House. In the late 1950s, the Democrats, particularly Henry Jackson's Senate committee, criticized the administration's policy process for its bureaucratic nature, charging that it stifled creativity and bold action. It is true that a highly structured process can easily degenerate into a compartmentalized bureaucratic formalism in which success depends on the skills of the bureaucratic actors rather than the merits of their ideas.⁵ Eisenhower was able to avoid this danger by forcing his aides to examine their premises and confront disagreements fully.

Eisenhower expected full and open debate among his staffers, but more importantly, he encouraged it and sent clear signals to his advisors that disagreement would not be punished and that frank analysis would be rewarded. In his words:

I know of only one way in which you can be sure you've done your best to make a wise decision. That is to get all of the people who have partial and definable responsibility in this particular field, whatever it may be. Get them with their different viewpoints in front of you, and listen to them debate. I do not believe in bringing them in one at a time, and therefore being more impressed by the most recent one you hear than the earlier ones. You must get courageous men, men of strong views, and let them debate and argue with each other.⁶

Eisenhower's policy deliberations "put a high premium on vigorous, informed debate. . . . The advisers managed to state their disagreements with one another and with the president clearly and forcefully in Eisenhower's presence."⁷ The Planning Board advised in April 1954 that the United States should intervene in Vietnam, using U.S. military forces if necessary.⁸ Thus Eisenhower's own conclusion was subject to rigorous analysis, and his judgments were not accepted without full debate and discussion, particularly in the April 6 NSC meeting that took up the issue of intervention.⁹

According to scholars John Burke and Fred Greenstein, the deliberations were marked by a "spirited no-holds-barred debate. . . . [T]he participants did not appear to hold back out of deference to the president or to tailor their advice to him."¹⁰ Eisenhower encouraged policy debate

among his advisors and said that he would be skeptical if they appeared to be unanimous about any important decision.

One device used by Eisenhower was the role played by Robert Cutler as "custodian manager" of the deliberations. In historian Alexander George's analysis, the custodian-manager role entails maintaining some balance of resources among the various presidential aides and their policy positions, arranging for new and independent sources of information, and, most importantly, monitoring the policy process to ensure that the president receives as objective a range of options as possible.¹¹ Cutler did not take a position in the policy debates but rather acted as guardian of the process to make sure that all questions were addressed fully.

After the full analysis of the political and military situation in Vietnam, Eisenhower concluded that U.S. military intervention would not solve the problem. His evaluation of the French position was that they "could not win the war because [of] the internal political situation in Vietnam." And he was convinced that "had the elections been held as of the time of the fighting, possibly 80 per cent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh."¹² The military situation was even less tenable than the political conditions. In an unpublished passage in his memoirs he laid out his reasoning: "The jungles of Indochina . . . would have swallowed up division after division of United States troops, who unaccustomed to this kind of warfare, would have sustained heavy casualties. . . . Furthermore, the presence of ever more numbers of white men in uniform probably would have aggravated rather than assuaged Asiatic resentments."¹³ Eisenhower emphasized this point when he noted, "The Vietnamese could be expected to transfer their hatred of the French to us."¹⁴

But "the strongest reason of all for the United States refusal to respond by itself to French pleas was our tradition of anticolonialism."¹⁵ Because the United States was the most powerful noncolonial power in the world, "America's moral position" would be undermined by intervening militarily to maintain French control of Vietnam.¹⁶ Eisenhower also strongly believed that the United States should not act unilaterally but that U.S. "defense policy is based on membership in a system of alliances."¹⁷ In addition, U.S. intervention in the absence of support from Congress would be "completely unconstitutional and indefensible."¹⁸

From the beginning of the French crisis in January 1954 until shortly before the French defeat, Eisenhower had kept open the possibility of some sort of intervention by the United States, including covert air support. At an NSC meeting on April 29, he laid out the conditions under which the Western position in Indochina could be preserved. But the

conditions, including a broad international military coalition and independence for Vietnam, were unlikely to occur.¹⁹ In the end, on May 7, after a fifty-five-day siege, the 10,000 French soldiers at Dien Bien Phu surrendered to the Viet Minh. The dominoes did not fall, and the United States had avoided, for a decade, another land war in Asia.

*Johnson's Decision to Intervene in
Vietnam in 1965*

Even though Eisenhower had declined to intervene on behalf of the French in 1954, he had built his foreign policy on thwarting Communist advances throughout the world. John Kennedy was also a committed cold warrior and had introduced American military advisors to Vietnam to support the noncommunist government in the South. Thus when Johnson acceded to the presidency he inherited a limited U.S. commitment to support the government in the South against the indigenous Viet Cong as well as the North Vietnamese who sought to overthrow what they saw as a repressive regime that had illegitimately come to power. The coup (with the acquiescence of the United States) in which Ngo Dinh Diem was assassinated in late 1963 had seemingly committed the United States to support the successor government.

But the Republican nomination of hawk Barry Goldwater in 1964 had led Johnson to portray himself as a dove with respect to Vietnam. Johnson told a campaign audience on September 25, 1964, "We don't want our American boys to do the fighting for Asian boys. We don't want to get involved in a nation with seven hundred million people and get tied down in a land war in Asia."²⁰ Thus despite Johnson's own conclusion that the United States could not easily abandon South Vietnam, he hid his real convictions by downplaying the possibility of further commitment of American troops to Vietnam.

In December Johnson authorized planning for air strikes against the North and for broader U.S. participation in the war. Also in December 1964 General Harold K. Johnson predicted that it would take 500,000 men and five years to achieve victory in Vietnam.²¹ In late January 1965, a study for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) estimated that 700,000 troops would be necessary.²² Johnson kept this information secret because he did not want to acknowledge to Congress or the public his judgment that war in Vietnam was likely. From the end of 1964 throughout 1965 Johnson concealed the true cost of his Vietnam plans so as not to jeopardize public and congressional support for his Great Society initiatives or engender opposition to his war plans.²³

In December 1964 and January 1965, Johnson ordered military leaders to continue planning for U.S. intervention in Vietnam. The Viet Cong attack on the U.S. base at Pleiku on February 7 that killed nine Americans provided the occasion to begin bombing North Vietnam to send the message that the United States would uphold its commitment to support the South. After the Pleiku attack, Johnson ordered that air-defense units be deployed in the South to protect U.S. planes that would be used in increased bombing raids on the North.

But the implications of this move were that the bases had to be protected, and so ground combat units would be sent to secure the air bases. On March 8, 1965, the first combat troops, 3,500 marines, arrived at Danang in South Vietnam. And once ground combat forces became engaged, it would become much harder to withdraw without seeming to surrender. This seemingly predictable sequence of events was not subjected to serious scrutiny by Johnson's top political and military advisors.²⁴

These troops, although engaged in combat, were supposed to be assisting the South Vietnamese in defensive operations. But in April an increase of 18,000–20,000 in the Marine forces was authorized, and the National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 328 changed the marines' mission by authorizing the offensive utilization of U.S. ground troops against the Viet Cong. NSAM 328 stated explicitly that the change in mission was to be kept secret.²⁵

After a meeting of his top advisors on April 19–20 in Honolulu, Johnson decided to increase U.S. ground troops to a total of 82,000 and change the mission of U.S. troops from primarily defensive operations to an offensive mission of searching out the enemy.²⁶ At the same time, Johnson concealed his intentions from Congress and the public, implying that there had been no changes in objectives or mission and that he was continuing to search for peaceful solutions. The NSAM of April 6 specified that U.S. officials "should minimize any appearance of sudden changes in policy."²⁷

In July 1965, Johnson made the final decisions for what amounted to an open-ended commitment of U.S. ground forces and the Americanization of the war. No longer could it be argued that the United States was merely giving military support to the government of South Vietnam; rather, the United States was fully committed not merely to protecting bases with occasional offensive operations but to a full-scale offensive war.²⁸ Nevertheless, Johnson concealed from Congress the full level of commitment of U.S. troops. Johnson publicly admitted only an immediate increase in troop levels to 125,000 troops. But in fact he had authorized levels from

175,000 to 200,000.²⁹ At the peak of the war there were 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam. Robert McNamara and Johnson also understated the needed additional financial support by \$10 billion and argued that military mobilization was not necessary, and McNamara incorrectly said that U.S. troops were not involved in combat operations.³⁰

The Johnson administration's policymaking after the 1964 November election through the summer of 1965 involved a series of decisions that culminated in an open-ended commitment of U.S. forces without an explicit confrontation of the full implications of those decisions. To be sure, some individuals foresaw the future implications of the gradual U.S. commitment, but these dissenters were dealt with in an ad hoc and *seriatim* manner rather than through a full confrontation in NSC meetings.

Thus the problem was not a lack of any dissenting voices. In fact, there were significant objections to Johnson's policies. For example, General Maxwell Taylor was against the commitment of U.S. ground troops; Under Secretary of State George Ball warned of the dangers of a U.S. war in Vietnam; and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield voiced his objections to Johnson.

The problem was rather that Johnson did not encourage his advisors to confront fully the broader implications of their decisions, and they failed to recognize explicitly the implications of each stage of the escalation:

1. changing the role of U.S. military personnel from advising to bombing;
2. establishing air bases;
3. protecting the air bases;
4. providing ground troops to protect the bases;
5. changing the mission of troops from defensive to offensive;
6. moving from a limited to an open-ended troop commitment and Americanization of the war.

Although the administration undertook detailed analyses of each step in the process, the broader implications were neglected. In Burke and Greenstein's terms, the sequence of decisions "was simply devoid of analysis."³¹ The failure to confront fully the broader implications of the military decisions was compounded by the political decisions to conceal the growing military involvement from Congress and the public. Thus Johnson did not go to Congress for a declaration of war or for a further authorization of a U.S. military commitment, nor did he call up the reserves, nor was he honest about the fiscal implications of his military decisions.

Burke and Greenstein argue that Johnson's use of his advisors was considerably inferior to Eisenhower's. In contrast to Eisenhower's deliberate approach to decision making about Vietnam in 1954, Johnson's approach was piecemeal and fragmented. For instance, the NSC did not meet at all from October 1964 through January 1965, met six times in February, and then met only four more times through the end of July. Often Johnson used NSC meetings for purposes of briefing rather than for deliberation.³²

In addition, unlike Eisenhower's Planning Board, there was no regularized process for lower-level executives in the departments to raise concerns about the policy direction.³³ The lack of a regularized process also meant that at times dissenters had to develop back channels to get their views to Johnson. For instance, George Ball at times had to get his views to Johnson through presidential confidant Bill Moyers.³⁴ In an insightful analysis of the dynamics of Johnson's decision-making process in 1965, historian Larry Berman concludes that "Johnson scared his advisors into giving him what they thought he wanted, rather than the truth."³⁵ Johnson consistently placed the burden of proof on those who held any dissenting views rather than forcing those who agreed with him to prove their points.³⁶

Johnson's overbearing personality often had the effect of shortening debate or neglecting the discussion of options that he opposed, and he saw disagreements as attacks upon himself. For instance, at the February 7 meeting about how to respond to the attack on Pleiku, Johnson polled his top advisors individually, asking whether they agreed with the consensus to respond by bombing the North. On the surface, this device seems to preclude a false sense of unanimity and ensure that anyone who has any reservations has a chance to air them. But when used by a president seeking consensus, this tactic puts each individual on the spot by forcing him to have to declare whether he is with the team or not.³⁷

Thus at the February 7 meeting when Johnson polled his advisors, George Ball went along with the consensus because to disagree might antagonize his colleagues.³⁸ On the other hand, Mike Mansfield did express reservations, and Johnson became so upset with him that for the next six months he refrained from raising any objections to Johnson at meetings, though he did communicate his reservations about Vietnam policy privately to Johnson.³⁹ The outcome of the February 7 meeting was a decision to launch air strikes, with little discussion of the potentially broader implications of the decision.

Similarly, but from the other policy direction, Johnson suppressed hawkish dissent from military representatives who generally favored a greater commitment of troops and the calling up of reserves to send a clear signal to the public that a major war was being undertaken. At the July 27 meeting, Johnson specifically asked Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whether he agreed with Johnson's decision. Despite the fact that everyone knew Wheeler favored calling up the reserves, Wheeler nodded his agreement.⁴⁰

Although policy memoranda often did pose difficult questions about the implications of current commitments for the future, Johnson often failed to raise these questions for discussion at meetings. For instance, on July 1, Special Assistant for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy presented four memos (authored by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Under Secretary of State George Ball, and Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs William Bundy) that raised serious and contrasting questions about the further escalation being considered by Johnson. Yet Johnson did not engage these advisors in a discussion of their disagreements in his July 2 meeting with them.⁴¹

Johnson's series of decisions about Vietnam were in sharp contrast with Eisenhower's carefully orchestrated deliberations. Eisenhower forced confrontation of ideas among his advisors; Johnson suppressed disagreement. Johnson's insecurity and overbearing personality discouraged the open exchange of ideas; Eisenhower's experience and self-confidence led him to allow his judgments to be challenged in the course of deliberations. Johnson discouraged dissent; Eisenhower made it clear that he did not want yes-men. Johnson's policymaking process was "an organizational shambles"; Eisenhower's NSC process was orderly and deliberate in allowing disagreements to be fully aired.⁴²

II John Kennedy and Two Crises Regarding Cuba

Within his first two years in office John Kennedy faced two crises regarding Cuba, but the dynamics of his deliberations in each situation were in sharp contrast. The Bay of Pigs situation occurred early in his administration, and his handling of it reflected his inexperience. His conduct of the Cuban Missile Crisis reflected the knowledge he had gained from his experience with the Bay of Pigs, and nuclear war was averted.

Kennedy and the Bay of Pigs

After the Cuban revolution that overthrew the Batista regime in 1959, the Eisenhower administration began planning to aid anti-Castro Cuban exiles in an attempt to overthrow Castro. The plan, led by CIA Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell, called for the infiltration of the anti-Castro Cubans who would organize resistance to undermine Castro. But after the 1960 election, the plan escalated to the level of a more formal invasion with U.S. support. Kennedy was presented with the plan in the early days of his administration, and despite some misgivings, he felt pressure to approve it for several reasons.

Kennedy had made a campaign issue of support for Cuban refugees and had accused the Eisenhower administration of not doing enough to support them. He did not want to thwart the plan developed during the Eisenhower administration and be accused of being soft on Communism. There was also the "disposal problem" of what to do with the exiles who had been training in Guatemala and who might return to Miami and complain about Kennedy's abandonment of Eisenhower's plan.⁴³ In addition, Kennedy held personal animus toward Castro and had been told that Castro's military capacity was improving and that any delay would risk decreasing future chances of defeating him.

So the planning and preparation were allowed to proceed with Kennedy's stipulation that no U.S. forces would be directly involved. On April 17, 1961, about 1,400 exiled Cubans attacked Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. The CIA then urged Kennedy to reverse his decision not to allow U.S. military support to the exiles, but Kennedy refused, fearing Soviet retaliation and the opprobrium of the international community.⁴⁴ Castro's air force was effective in attacking the invaders who were facing his 20,000-strong ground force. The whole operation was a fiasco from the U.S. and Cuban exile perspective, with 114 men being killed and 1,189 captured.

Several factors contributed to Kennedy's failure to avoid this foreign-policy disaster:

1. problems of organization, primarily the lack of it in the early days of the administration;
2. the hesitation of Kennedy and his aides to challenge what appeared to be unanimous military judgments;
3. the narrowness of the group of people Kennedy consulted;
4. the failure of Kennedy and his advisors to question plans and assumptions aggressively.

Kennedy came to office wanting to distinguish himself sharply from President Eisenhower, something that had been an important part of his campaign. One way to do this was to reject Eisenhower's elaborate national security policy development process. Kennedy preferred a streamlined process in which he would be the center of action and there would not be the elaborate series of meetings that characterized the Eisenhower administration. So Kennedy abolished Eisenhower's NSC apparatus: the Planning Board and the Operations Coordinating Board, as well as the offices of chief of staff and staff secretary.⁴⁵ Kennedy preferred ad hoc meetings with those who could be of most use to him on specific issues. Thus, at the beginning of his administration, he did not convene regular NSC meetings and he did not have a systematic organization for crisis decision making.⁴⁶ The NSC met fifty-one times during Eisenhower's first year and almost every week after that. In contrast, Kennedy called only twenty-one NSC meetings in 1961, relying on ad hoc task-force meetings instead.⁴⁷

Having no high-level experience with national security decision making in the executive branch, Kennedy tended to defer to the professionals in the military and intelligence establishment. The premises upon which the CIA planning was based included a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) that concluded that Cuba was on the verge of revolt against Castro. The CIA assured Kennedy that opposition to Castro in Cuba was strong and that Cubans would rise up to join the exiles to overthrow Castro. But this reflected wishful thinking rather than hard analysis of data from Cuba. The CIA had been cherry-picking the intelligence, and there was no evidence that substantial portions of Cubans would support an insurrection.⁴⁸

One important factor was the strong personality of CIA Deputy Director for Plans Richard Bissell, the primary architect of the plan. Bissell was a formidable force, with an impressive intellect and all the mystique of the CIA behind him. But in addition to heading the planning for the operation, he was also its most forceful advocate and thus lacked the detachment to provide an objective perspective on its chances of success. The problem was that no other insider provided the essential skeptical perspective that Kennedy needed.⁴⁹

Another problem was that the plan was so tightly held that even other divisions within the CIA were not allowed to vet it and experts at the Cuba desk at the State Department were excluded from reviewing it.⁵⁰ The plan was not subjected to a full staff review by the military, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff had examined the plan and had judged that its chances of success were "fair." Kennedy saw this as an endorsement of

the military soundness of the plan, but he did not realize that *fair* in the minds of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was meant in contrast to *good* or *excellent*. The real judgment was that the odds were three to one *against* success.⁵¹ But military leaders were hesitant to challenge the CIA plan, and as regular military forces were not involved, they did not insist on measures that would ensure its success. In effect, Kennedy was depending on a single channel of information about the military and political conditions in Cuba, as the plan was secret and the military chose not to challenge the CIA plan.⁵²

In addition to being given the seemingly unanimous recommendations from his military advisors, Kennedy was under political pressure not to abandon the planned invasion. Kennedy's willingness to go ahead with the plan was seen as a "test of his mettle."⁵³ CIA Director Allen Dulles strongly supported the plan. He said to Kennedy: "I stood right here at Ike's desk and told him I was certain our Guatemalan operation would succeed, and, Mr. President, the prospects for this plan are even better than they were for that one."⁵⁴

The unanimity of the intelligence and military experts was reinforced by the reticence of Kennedy's personal advisors to voice their reservations. In explaining his own unwillingness to voice his doubts, Special Assistant for Latin American Affairs Arthur Schlesinger said,

The advocates of the adventure had a rhetorical advantage. They could strike virile poses and talk of tangible things—fire power, air strikes, landing craft and so on. To oppose the plan, one had to invoke intangibles—the moral position of the United States, the reputation of the President, the response of the United Nations, 'world public opinion' and other such odious concepts.

In addition, Schlesinger argued, the State Department often deferred to the military so as not to appear to be "soft headed idealists but . . . tough guys."⁵⁵

Kennedy did receive some skeptical analysis, but it came from voices outside the executive branch and was thus less effective. One of the few skeptics was seventy-six-year-old Dean Acheson, who had been President Truman's secretary of state. When Kennedy asked his opinion, Acheson replied, "Are you serious?" He asked Kennedy how many soldiers Castro could bring to bear on the invasion on the first day of the engagement. When Kennedy replied 25,000 (out of a total military of 200,000), Acheson replied, "Well, it doesn't take Price-Waterhouse to figure out that fifteen hundred Cubans aren't as good as twenty-five thousand."⁵⁶

Kennedy brought in Senator J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Fulbright's judgment was that Cuba and Castro were "a thorn in the flesh, but not a dagger in the heart."⁵⁷ But Fulbright was seen as an outsider, not one of the inner circle; thus his criticisms were perceived as ill informed and critical of the planners, and his views were discounted.

Kennedy's inner circle harbored some doubts about the operation but did not express these doubts forcefully. Schlesinger thought that he was too junior and inexperienced to take a leading role in discussions, and so he passed on some of his doubts in private memos to the president. Dean Rusk also expressed some skepticism privately, but not at meetings, out of deference to the military professionals.⁵⁸ Historian Alexander George argues that the mere expression of skepticism by individuals is often not sufficient for the president to consider fully their points of view. If the president's decision making is to be well informed, the dissenting perspective must be developed with sufficient resources to make a credible argument.⁵⁹

Under Secretary of State Chester Bowles wrote a dissenting memo, but his boss, Dean Rusk, did not give it to the president.⁶⁰ Importantly, Kennedy's top personal advisors, his brother Robert (whom Kennedy had appointed U.S. attorney general) and Theodore Sorensen, were not brought into the formal planning, and Sorensen did not even know about it until after it had happened.⁶¹ Acting as what social psychologist Irving Janis terms a "mindguard" to protect the president from dissent, Robert Kennedy told the doubtful Schlesinger not to express his disagreements: "You may be right or you may be wrong, but the President has made his mind up. Do not push it any further. Now is the time for everyone to help him all they can."⁶²

After the invasion ended in a debacle, Kennedy blamed himself and publicly accepted full responsibility for the failure: "How could I have been so stupid?"⁶³ But privately he expressed anger toward his military and intelligence advisors: "The advice of every member of the Executive Branch brought in to advise was unanimous—and the advice was wrong."⁶⁴ He told Schlesinger, "You always assume that the military and intelligence people have some skill not available to ordinary mortals."⁶⁵ He was particularly bitter about the joint Chiefs of Staff: "Those sons-of-bitches with all the fruit salad just sat there nodding, saying it would work."⁶⁶

Part of the problem was that the Kennedy administration was in its infancy; the president's advisors were not familiar with their colleagues, and they did not have the confidence to disagree with the judgments of

the experts in the executive branch.⁶⁷ In addition, the new administration was filled with the hope and hubris of just having won a very tight election.⁶⁸ Schlesinger's conclusion was that the White House staff had failed to "protect the president."⁶⁹

Many of the meetings took place in a "curious atmosphere of assumed consensus," according to Schlesinger.⁷⁰ Sorensen's judgment was that "no realistic appraisal was made of the chances for success or the consequences of failure."⁷¹ Why the failures of critical judgment took place may be deduced from former President Eisenhower's question to Kennedy after the debacle: "Mr. President, before you approved this plan, did you have everybody in front of you debating the thing so you got the pros and cons yourself and then made the decision, or did you see these people one at a time?"⁷² Luckily, Kennedy learned from his mistakes and put the lessons to use in his handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

The 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis

Perhaps the greatest pressure any president could face is the possibility of nuclear war, and the closest the world has come to a nuclear exchange was during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 when President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev faced off over Cuba. In April 1961, Khrushchev decided to order the placement of nuclear-tipped intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. Khrushchev's motives probably were to try to counter the strategic superiority of the United States in intercontinental ballistic missiles (despite Kennedy's charges of a "missile gap" in his campaign) and to protect Castro's regime in Cuba, Russia's only ally in the Western Hemisphere.

In the spring of 1962, intelligence reports showed Russian arms shipments going to Cuba, but Kennedy believed Khrushchev's assertion that the military equipment was merely defensive. Khrushchev's assurances turned out not to be true, and the first nuclear warheads arrived in Cuba on October 4. The United States discovered the deception on October 14 when a U-2 flight revealed that several nuclear missile sites were under construction. After reviewing the analysis of the photographs, McGeorge Bundy gave Kennedy the news early in the morning on October 16.

From the beginning Kennedy and his advisors viewed the presence of nuclear missiles in Cuba as an unacceptable threat to U.S. national security interests, even though McNamara and Bundy judged that they did not affect U.S. strategic military superiority. But Kennedy thought he could not afford to appear weak to the international community, particularly after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and a less-than-successful

summit meeting in Vienna. Any sign of weakness could encourage Khrushchev to be more aggressive in Berlin and elsewhere in the world. Kennedy did not want to seem "soft" in national security affairs.

When Kennedy assembled the Executive Committee of the NSC (Ex Comm), the consensus was that military action was unavoidable. Kennedy said, "I don't think we've got much time on these missiles. . . . We're certainly going . . . to take out these missiles."⁷³ Nevertheless, in the light of his experience with the Bay of Pigs, Kennedy decided to continue Ex Comm's deliberations and explore fully the options available to him. Kennedy insisted on further explorations despite the early hawkish views of many of his advisors. Perhaps the most belligerent advisor was General Curtis LeMay, chief of staff of the U.S. Air Force, who declared on October 19, "I see [this] leading into war. I don't see any other solution. It will lead right into war. This [considering peaceful alternatives] is almost as bad as the appeasement at Munich."⁷⁴ In addition to expressing his judgment, LeMay's assertion implied a veiled threat to go public with his charges of Kennedy's weakness after the crisis.⁷⁵

After the group reached a consensus to go forward with an air strike on Cuba on October 19, Attorney General Robert Kennedy argued that the implications of an attack were too important to undertake one immediately and that they should continue to explore other options. Part of his hesitation stemmed from the moral implications of a surprise attack. Invoking the memory of Pearl Harbor, Robert said, "A sneak attack was not in our traditions. Thousands of Cubans would be killed without warning, and a lot of Russians too."⁷⁶ On October 21, the group still favored an air strike by nine to seven, but moral concerns were no longer the only problem with an air strike. Close questioning of air force officers revealed that a surgical air strike was not feasible and the best outcome they could guarantee was the destruction of 90 percent of the missiles they had located (potentially leaving others they had not located). Thus, the generals concluded, an attack of hundreds of sorties would need to be followed up by a full-scale ground invasion to ensure that all of the missiles were found and destroyed.⁷⁷

Kennedy finally concluded that the safest route might be to establish a naval blockade around Cuba; it would keep open more options than an air attack and give Khrushchev time to reconsider his commitment to nuclear missiles in Cuba. Even though this was his final decision, Kennedy did not pretend that he had the only answer to the problem: "There isn't any good solution. Whichever plan I choose, the ones whose plans are not taken are the lucky ones—they'll be able to say 'I told

you so' in a week or two. But this one seems the least objectionable."⁷⁸ The president's visible uncertainty at this point and throughout the crisis encouraged debate, whereas a signal that the president had made up his mind would have stifled dissent or skepticism.

Kennedy then sent a letter to Khrushchev demanding that the missiles be withdrawn and reminding him of the danger of nuclear confrontation. On October 22, he gave a speech to the nation explaining the crisis and warned the Russians that any use of the missiles would result in a U.S. attack directly on the Soviet Union. The blockade was set up and preparations were made to stop any Russian ships with nuclear cargo. On October 24, the crisis came to a head when Russian ships, presumably carrying nuclear cargo, stopped and reversed course.

But the original missiles were still in Cuba, and the Russians had to be convinced to take them out. After an exchange of letters, on October 25, Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles in exchange for a U.S. guarantee not to invade Cuba. Khrushchev also demanded the removal of U.S. nuclear missiles in Turkey. Kennedy publicly refused to agree to the latter stipulation, but he secretly sent his brother Robert to assure the Russians that the missiles would be removed as long as there was no public quid pro quo. It was later revealed that Kennedy had prepared a fallback position in case of an impasse in which UN secretary general U Thant would propose the swap of U.S. missiles in Turkey for Russian missiles in Cuba.⁷⁹

After Khrushchev had agreed to remove the missiles and the crisis ended, Kennedy called the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Cabinet Room to thank them for their advice and support. Again, Curtis LeMay confronted the president, declaring, "It's the greatest defeat in our history, Mr. President. . . . We should invade today!"⁸⁰ Kennedy's reaction was "[t]he Military are mad. They wanted to do this. It's lucky for us that we have McNamara over there."⁸¹

A number of analyses of the Cuban Missile Crisis have concluded that President Kennedy led a decision-making process that, under great pressure, operated exceptionally well in ensuring that a wide range of alternatives was carefully evaluated and that options were not shut off prematurely. What was in McNamara's judgment a lucky outcome was actually made possible by Kennedy's leadership in using a number of techniques that facilitated rational analysis of the options.⁸² Planning for the various options discussed was elaborate, with each alternative worked out in detail, including contingency plans for unexpected developments (which led to the discovery that a "surgical"

air strike was not feasible). Kennedy was sensitive to Khrushchev's internal political pressures; he did not attack Khrushchev personally and gave him room to change course while still saving face. While Kennedy thought that Khrushchev was duplicitous, he did not think that he was stupid.

Despite the need for secrecy, outside advice was sought from experts who were not members of the Ex Comm, for example, U.S. representative to the UN Adlai Stevenson, former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, former Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett, and arms advisor John McCloy. During deliberations, Kennedy invited comments from second-tier officials (e.g., Paul Nitze, George Ball, and Llewellyn Thompson) to get their perspectives, and he ensured they would speak up despite the presence of their immediate superiors and Kennedy's more outspoken aides. The role of Robert Kennedy was crucial to the deliberations. Because he did not fear for his job and his loyalty to the president was unquestioned, he felt free to ask probing questions and challenge the assumptions of anyone in the room. At times he convinced his brother to allow Ex Comm deliberations in the president's absence so that his perceived leanings would not stifle frank discussion.

In historian Tony Judt's analysis, Kennedy demonstrated "a remarkable coolness . . . a willingness and a capacity to listen, question, absorb, weigh, and finally adjudicate in extraordinary circumstances."⁸³ Kennedy's leadership was demonstrated throughout the course of the crisis by his consistent decisions to choose the less belligerent and more moderate course of action at each of the key turning points. Despite tremendous pressure arising from the nature of the situation and the recommendations of his military advisors, Kennedy resisted the temptation to use full-scale military force. Some of his key decisions were as follows:⁸⁴

1. Rejection of an invasion in favor of an air attack
2. Rejection of a massive air strike in favor of a selective one, and only after giving a warning
3. Rejection of an air attack in favor of a blockade
4. Limit of the full blockade to a quarantine of only nuclear weapons
5. Decision to move the quarantine line from 800 miles to 500 miles from Cuba⁸⁵
6. Decision to intercept a Panamanian ship registered in Lebanon rather than a Russian ship
7. Decision to respond to Khrushchev's first and more conciliatory letter, rather than to his second and more belligerent letter

8. Refusal to retaliate for the downing of a U-2 plane and the death of the pilot on October 27
9. Secret agreement to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey
10. Fallback plan to agree publicly to remove the missiles if his secret plan failed

One measure of the effectiveness of the deliberations over the thirteen days of the crisis was that most of the members of the Ex Comm changed their minds at least once during the course of their deliberations.⁸⁶ Although Kennedy's actions as president may have played a role in Khrushchev's decision to put the missiles in Cuba in the first place, his steady leadership under great pressure saved the world from a nuclear disaster. In short, Kennedy learned from the mistakes he made in handling the Bay of Pigs affair and demonstrated a marked improvement in his ability to manage advice during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Conclusion

What can we learn from a comparison of these successes and failures in decision making? Scholar Alexander George's ideas of custodian manager and multiple advocacy are relevant to the outcomes of the cases. In the successful cases, someone played the role of honest broker or custodian manager of the deliberative process. In 1954, Robert Cutler played this role for Eisenhower. In 1962, President Kennedy delegated part of that role, the role of inquisitor and provocateur, to his brother Robert. In the less successful cases, no one person paid close attention to the process of deliberation.

Multiple advocacy was encouraged in the successful cases. In 1954, Eisenhower had set up a formal system of policy analysis and encouraged confrontation of opposing ideas. In 1962, Kennedy fostered a skeptical questioning of each of the military options. In 1965, on the other hand, Johnson suppressed confrontations in his deliberations. In 1961, Kennedy did not closely question the invasion plans of Richard Bissell.

But most importantly, the overall approach to deliberation about war and peace was strikingly different in the successful and unsuccessful cases. In each of the successful cases, the president insisted on formal meetings with his principal advisors—Eisenhower's NSC Planning Board, Kennedy's Ex Comm. In each of these cases, the deliberations were marked by face-to-face give-and-take and frank evaluations of the range of options available to the president. In contrast, in each of the failures,

decisions about going to war were made during an extended period of time, with each step being considered carefully by itself but not in the broader strategic context. The overall directions of the policies were not expressly confronted in formal meetings between each of the presidents and his principal advisors.

Quoting Eisenhower's dictum that "leadership is as vital in conference as it is in battle," political science scholar Andrew Rudalevige argues that the challenge of presidents is to ensure that they receive dissenting as well as consensus perspectives.⁸⁷ But the prior condition is that a president must *want* to receive differing perspectives. Carefully designed organizational structures and decision-making processes can bring to the president's attention a broad range of options. But the effectiveness of structures and processes depends upon the desire of presidents to use them to consider alternative courses of action. In the successful cases presented here, presidents clearly wanted to examine alternatives. In the less successful cases, they did not press their advisors for dissenting views.

Burke and Greenstein conclude that "advisory systems do matter."⁸⁸ But the advice that a president receives ultimately depends on the president rather than the personnel in his White House or the organization of his advisory system. A president will get the type of advice he encourages. Burke and Greenstein ask of a president: "To what extent does he have qualities that lead him to receive a rich stream of advice and information?"⁸⁹ Although no process can guarantee wise decisions, the cases considered above have reinforced the view that in decisions with very high stakes, a president can benefit from a skeptical assessment of a broad range of options.

Notes

1. John Burke and Fred Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality: Decisions on Vietnam, 1954 and 1965* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1991), p. 29; Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), p. 358. Burke and Greenstein put the annual aid at \$800 million for 1953.
2. Quoted in Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 361.
3. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 361. Eisenhower's reaction to the atomic bomb proposals was "you boys must be crazy," Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 363.
4. An excellent account of the Eisenhower administration's deliberations about whether to intervene in Vietnam in 1953 is John Burke and Fred Greenstein's (with the assistance of Larry Berman and Richard Immerman) account in *How Presidents Test Reality*, upon which much of this discussion is based.
5. On the dangers of bureaucracy in decision making, see Alexander George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 212-214.

6. Quoted in Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, pp. 54-55.
7. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 288.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
11. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking*, pp. 195-196.
12. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956; The White House Years* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), p. 372.
13. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 359. Eisenhower deleted the passage from his published memoirs (published in the 1960s when the United States was becoming more engaged in Vietnam), because he did not want to undercut a sitting president's foreign policy.
14. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 32.
15. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, p. 373.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 373-374; and Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 360.
17. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 108.
18. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, p. 360; Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 46.
19. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 84.
20. David Wise, *The Politics of Lying: Government Deception, Secrecy, and Power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), pp. 65-66.
21. H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997), p. 247.
22. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, p. 261.
23. For an analysis of President Johnson's deception of the public and Congress over his escalation of the war in Vietnam, see James P. Pfiffner, *The Character Factor: How We Judge America's Presidents* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), pp. 50-55.
24. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, p. 218; Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 160.
25. It read in part: "Premature publicity [should] be avoided by all possible precautions. The actions themselves should be taken as rapidly as practicable, but in ways that should minimize any appearance of sudden changes in policy . . . changes should be understood as being gradual and wholly consistent with existing policy." Ambassador Maxwell Taylor sent a cable to Secretary of State Dean Rusk saying that "we believe that the most useful approach to press problems is to make no, repeat, no special public announcement to the effect that U.S. ground troops are now engaged in offensive combat operations." Quoted in Larry Berman, *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), p. 57.
26. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, pp. 260-264.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 264.
28. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 198.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 230; see also McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, pp. 319-320.
30. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, pp. 319-320.
31. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 278.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 234.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 235-236.
35. Berman, *Planning a Tragedy*, p. 3.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
37. Chester Cooper captures the dynamics of this tactic in his memoir, *The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam* (New York: Dodd and Mead, 1970), p. 223. "During the process [NSC meetings] I would frequently fall into a Walter Mitty-like fantasy: when my turn came I would rise to my feet slowly, look around the room and then directly look at the President and say, very quietly and emphatically, 'Mr. President, gentlemen, I most definitely do not agree.' But I was removed from my trance when I heard the President's voice saying, 'Mr. Cooper, do you agree?' And out would come a 'Yes, Mr. President, I agree.'" Quoted in Berman, *Planning a Tragedy*, p. 3.

38. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 131.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 228.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 246–247. For an argument that the Joint Chiefs of Staff neglected their duty to give their best advice to the president, see McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*. E.g., in January 1965 McMaster writes, "Each member of the JCS continued to suppress his reservations about the strategy of graduated pressure and optimistically advanced his own service's solution to the problem" (p. 261). According to McMaster, "The Chiefs, however, had given the president the military advice he wanted," rather than their frank advice. Thus, "the nation went to war without the benefit of effective military advice from the organization having the statutory responsibility to be the nation's 'principal military advisers'" (pp. 325–326).
41. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 235; Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (New York: Free Press, 1988), pp. 80–81; Berman, *Planning a Tragedy*, p. 135.
42. Fred Greenstein and John Burke, "Dynamics of Presidential Reality Testing: Evidence from Two Vietnam Decisions," *Political Science Quarterly*, 104, 4 (Winter 1989–1990), pp. 557–580.
43. Arthur Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (New York: Fawcett, 1965), p. 227.
44. The CIA assumed that Kennedy would allow the use of U.S. forces if defeat seemed likely. According to CIA director Allen Dulles, "We felt that when the chips were down, when the crisis arose in reality, any action required for success would be authorized rather than permit the enterprise to fail." Quoted in Michael Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960–1963* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), p. 134.
45. See Meena Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy: The National Security Decision Making of Eisenhower and Kennedy* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), p. 13. Richard Neustadt said Kennedy's intention was to streamline, not eliminate, the process and that Secretary of State Dean Rusk was expected to replace it. But Rusk did not take the initiative until after the Bay of Pigs experience. See *Preparing to Be President: The Memoirs of Richard E. Neustadt*, ed. Charles O. Jones (Washington, DC: AEI Press, 2000), p. 153.
46. Theodore Sorensen, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 304; Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profile of Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), p. 71.
47. Bose, *Shaping and Signaling Presidential Policy*, p. 14.
48. See Reeves, *President Kennedy*, pp. 79–80; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 303; Irving Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascos*, 2nd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. 24. The CIA Inspector General's report on the Bay of Pigs planning was highly critical of the process and results.
49. On the danger of letting the advocates of a plan be its only evaluators, see George, *Presidential Decisionmaking*, pp. 130–131; Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, pp. 144–145.
50. Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, p. 143; Janis, *Groupthink*, p. 24.
51. Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, pp. 142–143; Ernest May and Philip Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 27.
52. See George, *Presidential Decisionmaking*, pp. 129–130.
53. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 306.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
55. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 240.
56. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, p. 77.
57. Neustadt and May, *Thinking in Time*, p. 49; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, pp. 78–79.
58. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, p. 80.
59. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking*, pp. 132, 193–194.
60. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 235.
61. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 245; Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, pp. 277–278.
62. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 243; Janis, *Groupthink*, pp. 40–41.
63. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, p. 103.

64. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 305.
65. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 242.
66. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, p. 103; Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 305.
67. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 304.
68. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 242; Janis, *Groupthink*, p. 35.
69. Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, p. 242.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
71. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, p. 304.
72. Reeves, *President Kennedy*, p. 102.
73. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, p. 436.
74. Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917–1963* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2003), pp. 554–555; May and Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes*, pp. 2, 700.
75. The Munich analogy does two things: (1) It cuts off analysis by assuming that anything less than military confrontation will lead to the victory of the other side. (2) It cuts off debate because it leaves anyone who favors negotiations vulnerable to being branded an "appeaser" who lacks courage. In the United States this is a powerful political weapon. (Regarding the Munich analogy, some might question the historical accuracy of the premise that Britain or the United States was sufficiently mobilized for war in 1939 to be able to eject Hitler's troops from Czechoslovakia. The historical accuracy of the analogy, however, is no longer relevant.)
76. Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, p. 556; Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, pp. 459–460.
77. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, p. 469.
78. Janis, *Groupthink*, p. 149.
79. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, p. 569.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 544; Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, pp. 570–571; Reeves, *President Kennedy*, p. 425.
81. Beschloss, *The Crisis Years*, p. 545.
82. Robert McNamara declared that avoiding a nuclear war in 1962 was due to luck in his documentary film *Fog of War*, DVD (Culver City, CA: Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment, 2004).
83. Tony Judt, "On the Brink," *New York Review of Books*, 45, 1 (January 15, 1998), p. 58.
84. *Ibid.*
85. The Navy changed the parameters of the blockade of Cuba. The first edition of Graham Allison's *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971) deals with the incident on pages 127–132. Allison asserts that, although President Kennedy had decided that the blockade should be moved closer to Cuba in order to give Khrushchev more time, "existing accounts to the contrary, the blockade was not moved as the President ordered" (emphasis in the original, p. 130). Yet the second edition of the book, written with Philip Zelikow, does not deal with the incident in the same way (pp. 230–236). Allison and Zelikow concluded in the second edition that at the president's insistence, "the blockade line became increasingly formalized at a radius of 500 miles" (p. 233). A written inquiry to Allison about this seeming discrepancy did not elicit any response.
86. Janis, *Groupthink*, p. 152.
87. Andrew Rudalevige, "What Should the President Know and When Should He Know It?" *Presidency Research Group Report*, 26, 1 (Fall 2003), p. 1. For a more formal analysis, see Andrew Rudalevige, "The Structure of Leadership: Presidents, Hierarchies, and Information Flow," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 35, 2 (June 2005), pp. 333–360; in the same issue, see also Matthew J. Dickinson, "Neustadt, New Institutionalism, and Presidential Decision Making: A Theory and Test," pp. 259–288.
88. Burke and Greenstein, *How Presidents Test Reality*, p. 293.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 266.