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July 1967

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PRESIDENTIAL CONTROL OF FORCE: THE KOREAN WAR AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

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During the First World War, the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, made the now famous statement that "war is too important to be left to the generals." Years later another Frenchman, General Charles De Gaulle, gave the other side of the picture. He said that "politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians." It would appear that neither Clemenceau nor De Gaulle was right. Rather, each proclaimed a colorful but dangerous half-truth.

Later, still another Frenchman -- a less well-known general -- indicated the kind of thinking needed at the highest levels of government to deal effectively with limited international conflicts. This Frenchman, after participating in the abortive Anglo-French military operation against Egypt in 1956, noted that the joint action foundered because Anglo-French leaders failed to integrate properly the political and military aspects of the operation. He concluded that a new type of national leadership

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This paper was written for presentation at the meetings of the American Sociological Association in August 1967 at San Francisco. The assistance of Jane Howland is gratefully acknowledged.

was needed for this purpose: political leaders who were sufficiently educated in the realities of military operations, and military leaders who were better trained to understand political considerations. History has forgotten the name of this French general, which proves again that immortality is rarely achieved by those who warn against oversimplified approaches to foreign policy.

The United States has of course encountered similar problems. The Korean War dramatically revealed that efforts to employ force in limited conflicts often evoke seriously conflicting political and military considerations, and that these conflicts must be balanced and controlled at the highest levels of national decision-making.* The planning and conduct of limited conflicts such as the Korean War, the various Berlin crises, the Quemoy crisis of 1958, the Cuban missile crisis and the war in Vietnam revolve about basic, but complex questions such as the following: How much, if any, of the nation's military capabilities will be used? For what objectives? In what ways and with what constraints? The answers can be given only by the civilian heads of government; hence, the President must retain tight control over all developments and decisions affecting the nature and scope of conflict.

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*For an analytic review of the literature on limited war and an annotated bibliography, see Morton H. Halperin, Limited War in the Nuclear Age, New York: Wiley, 1963. The single best treatment of all aspects of the Korean War is David Rees, Korea: The Limited War, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964.

I.

The rationale and necessity for presidential direction and control of limited military conflicts emerged from the experience of the Korean War. In that conflict the President had to decide not only the objectives to be pursued; he also had to determine and to control the level of costs and risks that were acceptable. There were deficiencies and problems in the performance of these tasks. Before considering them in detail, let us recall some general propositions that emerged from this experience.

The Korean War demonstrated, first, that the wish to prevent damage to U.S. interests, or to advance them, cannot by itself determine what level of costs and risks are acceptable in the use of military force. Only by placing a "value" on the U.S. interests at stake and on the objectives associated with them can a President place a reasonable ceiling on costs and risks. Otherwise, he is likely to enter into open-ended and uncontrollable commitments to what are, in fact, limited national interests and objectives.

Second, responsibility for determining what levels of costs and risks are acceptable in a limited conflict belongs to the President; he must not delegate it to military commanders or to other subordinates.

Third, escalation of commitment in a limited conflict can take place, paradoxically, as a result either of military set-backs or victories. Both of these possibilities were illustrated, as we shall see, during the Korean War.

That escalation in commitment can result from military success is illustrated by the events of September 1950 when General MacArthur's brilliant victory over the North Korean army at Inchon led the Truman Administration to adopt a new, quite ambitious, objective. With the tacit approval of the United Nations, the decision was made at that time to occupy North Korea and to unify all of Korea. This new objective entailed no vital U.S. interests; it was casually accepted and adopted without serious opposition as a result of the momentum of events. Initially, U.S. leaders regarded their commitment to this new objective as conditional, that is dependent upon Soviet and Chinese reactions. At the time Truman and his advisers formulated the new objective, in late September and early October, it appeared that it could be achieved at relatively low and quite acceptable costs and risks, that is, without triggering Soviet or Chinese intervention. In the following weeks, however, as Richard Neustadt and others have shown, Truman acted in ways that had the effect of hardening his commitment to the new war aim.*

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*I rely for this account particularly on Richard Neustadt's incisive study of U.S. policy-making at this stage of the Korean War, in his Presidential Power, New York: John Wiley, 1960, pp. 123-151; and on the more detailed study by Martin Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," in Harold Stein, American Civil-Military Decisions, University of Alabama Press, 1963. See also Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, Vol. 2, Years of Trial and Hope, Garden City, Doubleday, 1956, chapter 22-24; Roy E. Appleman, United States Army in the Korean War, Washington, D. C., Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1961.

Downgrading and dismissing Chinese Communist warnings in late September and early October of intervention if U.S. forces moved into North Korea, Truman proceeded to identify himself more closely with the new war aim. By the time evidence became unmistakable in late October and early November that substantial Chinese Communist forces had entered North Korea, it had become quite difficult for Truman to abandon or modify the aim of unifying Korea or to reverse the course of military operations designed to achieve it.

At this point the primary and urgent presidential task was to control the risks of Chinese intervention and salvage what could be salvaged of the aim of unifying Korea <u>at an acceptable cost</u>. To improvise policy successfully in this situation was itself a formidable task. But it was made more difficult because Truman earlier had delegated broad control over military operations to MacArthur and left it up to him to judge how best to react in case the Chinese Communists intervened. For Truman to establish personal control over the risks now that the Chinese forces had entered Korea, he would have to take back the discretionary power he had earlier delegated to MacArthur or persuade him to see the war through the Administration's eyes. It was Truman's failure to recognize this dilemma and come to grips with it that led to disaster.

Several days after General MacArthur launched his march to the Yalu on November 25th, it will be recalled, the Chinese Communist forces launched a major offensive against the maldeployed UN forces. The result was "one of the major decisive battles of the present century,

followed by the longest retreat in American history."* In the grim weeks that followed it seemed for awhile that UN forces would have to be evacuated from South Korea. The military disaster occurred because MacArthur's attempt to march to the Yalu had created a serious separation of his forces. Tactical deployment of his forces in the much broader reaches and difficult terrain of northern Korea made them extremely vulnerable to the Chinese action that followed. A more cautious strategy by MacArthur would have enhanced the defensive capability of his forces, thereby substantially reducing the severe military-political damage inflicted on the United States by the successful Chinese offensive.

The failure of Truman and his advisers in Washington to minimize the risks and costs of a possible Chinese intervention, as Neustadt and Lichterman have shown, was not primarily caused by intelligence failures. Nor can it be explained by alleging that General MacArthur exceeded his military directives, which he did not do. The facts are as follows: On October 8, shortly after the aim of unifying Korea was adopted and MacArthur was authorized to move his forces into North Korea, Truman approved new instructions to MacArthur which gave him considerable discretion:

> Hereafter in the event of open or covert employment anywhere in Korea of major Chinese Communist units, without prior announcement, you should <u>continue the action as long as, in your judgment, action by your forces now</u>

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*S. L. A. Marshall, <u>The River and the Gauntlet</u>, New York: Morrow, 1953, p. 1.

> under your control offers a reasonable chance of success [underlining supplied].*

Thus, what constituted a "reasonable chance of success," as Neustadt notes, was now "delegated to the judgment of MacArthur.... In the weeks to come he would misjudge with tragic consequences, but it cannot be charged that he exceeded his instructions.... The discretion given to MacArthur in October contributed directly to disaster in November."**

By the end of October not a few U.S. military leaders began to suspect that substantial Chinese Communist forces were covertly entering North Korea. Indeed, in late October and early November Chinese Communist "volunteers" engaged both South Korean and U.S. armies in several sharp tactical encounters before breaking off contact. Despite this turn of events, however, Washington permitted MacArthur to prepare and carry out his march to the Yalu. He was entitled to do this under existing directives which, though reconsidered by the National Security Council on November 9, were left unchanged.***

By mid-November (before MacArthur's forces began their final move to the Yalu) Truman's chief advisers and military specialists were acutely concerned over the risks associated with the increasing dispersal and maldeployment of MacArthur's forces. The British repeatedly urged Washington to stop MacArthur's forward columns and pull back to the narrower "waist" of North Korea.

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*Truman, Memoirs, II, p. 362.

**Neustadt, p. 138; see also Lichterman, pp. 594, 611.

***Neustadt, pp. 143-144; Lichterman, p. 594.

At this point, it appears that a most unfortunate breakdown occurred in the machinery of advice for presidential decision-making. Despite the fact that Truman's three chief advisers -- JCS Chairman General Bradley, Secretary of Defense Marshall, and Secretary of State Acheson -- shared in the grave concern felt over MacArthur's deployment and his plans, and despite the fact that they seemingly agreed that MacArthur's directives should be changed, this consensus was not translated into action. Evidently each had reasons of his own for not taking the problem to Truman; and each interpreted his official role quite narrowly in order to relieve himself of the obligation to take the initiative in this respect. This was a sorry example, indeed, of narrow bureaucratic role-playing at the highest advisory level.*

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*Neustadt concluded his study of the available facts by noting that while the JCS "practically implored" MacArthur to show more caution, nonetheless "when he demurred, as under his instructions he had every right to do so, the Chiefs of Staff lacked courage (lacking certainty) to seek their alteration from the President." Despite the JCS concern, communicated to and shared by Marshall and Acheson, "No one went to Truman because everyone thought someone else should go." According to Neustadt, each of the chief advisers had reasons of his own for not doing so. "The military chiefs deferred to State; let Acheson, as guardian of 'policy,' ask Truman to reverse MacArthur. But Acheson, already under fire from the Capitol, was treading warily between the Pentagon and that inveterate idealist about generals, Harry Truman. In immediate terms the risk was 'military'; if it justified reversing the commander in the field, then the Joint Chiefs must make the judgment and tell Truman. So Acheson is said to have insisted, understandably enough, and there the matter rested." Neustadt adds that "on a 'military' issue the Chiefs of Staff were loath to balk the victor of Inchon, whose tactics might be better than they seemed 8,000 miles away."

The "breakdown" of the advisory function in this case was caused by a most unusual combination of circumstances. Nonetheless, given the profound consequences a lapse of this kind can have, it invites attention to better design and use of the machinery of advice for presidential decision-making.*

One can only speculate as to what Truman's response would have been had his advisers shared their concern

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As for George Marshall, who had preceded Acheson at State and had himself been Army Chief of Staff when Bradley was subordinate commander, he had "leaned over backwards" since returning to government as Secretary of Defense shortly before these events took place in an effort "not to meddle with the work of his successors in <u>their</u> jobs. He also had leaned over backwards not to revive the old Army feud between him and MacArthur. What Acheson and Bradley were not ready to initiate, Marshall evidently felt he could not take upon himself.... The President meanwhile, had little thought of overriding, on his own, the tactical decisions of a qualified commander." (Neustadt, pp. 139-140. See also Martin Lichterman, <u>op. cit</u>., p. 602, who draws on correspondence and an interview with Acheson for some of the information on these events, which Neustadt makes use of in his account.)

*Certainly the whole question of the "organizational dynamics" of policy-formation within government and other complex organizations deserves more systematic study. In particular, attention should be directed at ways in which harmful practices and consequences associated with bureaucratic structuring of advisory functions and problem-solving processes can be avoided or minimized. Deserving of study from this standpoint is the favorable experience associated with the role of the special <u>ad hoc</u> Executive Committee of the National Securing Council during the Cuban missile crisis. See also the recent comparative study by Harold Wilensky of the problems encountered in industry and government in their efforts to bring available knowledge to bear on policy-making. (<u>Organizational Intelligence</u>, Basic Books, 1967.)

with him and recommended that MacArthur's directives be changed. If Truman had acted promptly, there probably would have been time enough to pull back MacArthur's forces before the Chinese launched their major offensive on November 28th. The catastrophe that followed might have been avoided altogether or greatly reduced.*

Truman incurred disaster in this case because he followed the traditional presidential practice of giving the theatre military commander a broad delegation of control over military operations within the framework of established directives regarding objectives, missions and forces. Truman's viewpoint and rationale for doing so was expressed some years later in an interview with Neustadt:

> we knew the Chinese had close to a million men on the border and all that.... But [MacArthur] was commander in the field. <u>You pick your man, you've got to back him up. That's the only way a military organization can work</u>. I got the best advice I could and the man on the spot

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*Several years later Neustadt called attention to other considerations that would have made it difficult for Truman to change MacArthur's directives. If he had ordered a halt to MacArthur's forward advance and then it subsequently turned out that the Chinese striking force was mainly north of the Yalu, Truman "would have looked pretty silly." What's more, "he would have looked like the man who deprived General MacArthur of victory. No wonder," Neustadt concluded, "his advisers hesitated." (Testimony by Richard Neustadt, U.S. Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Security, March 25, 1963, p. 95.)

> said this was the thing to do.... So I agreed. That was my decision -- no matter what hindsight shows [italics supplied]."*

Truman's statement notwithstanding, he learned the lesson as did all subsequent presidents. For the rest of the war Truman closely monitored and controlled the military strategy and tactics the theatre commander was allowed to employ. So long as MacArthur remained theatre commander he continued to differ with Washington's war strategy and its assessment of the risks and costs of different military tactics. MacArthur was eventually relieved of his command in April 1951 not for violating directives on military matters or disagreeing with Washington's conduct of the war but for repeatedly taking his disagreements to the public.** MacArthur felt, as he stated, that there was "no substitute for victory" and that the war should be expanded against Communist China. In this respect MacArthur voiced what many Americans felt and some were saying. For, as noted earlier, the commitment to the objective of unifying Korea tended to become stronger as a result of the military set-back the Chinese Communists had inflicted. From the President's standpoint, however, the aim of unifying Korea was not fixed and immutable. Rather, when the successful Chinese offensive made the expected costs and risks of achieving that objective excessive, Truman judged that we had to abandon it and settle for less. But the President had great difficulty in preventing an unwanted escalation of the U.S.

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*Neustadt, p. 128; see also Lichterman, pp. 595, 600.

**Neustadt, p. 20.

commitment, and he succeeded in doing so only by incurring substantial political damage at home. Maintaining control over policy and the power of decision in situations of this kind are among the major responsibilities and tasks of presidential leadership.

As we have seen, MacArthur took full advantage of the broad directives given him to undertake the questionable strategy of marching to the Yalu. While MacArthur's calculations and rationale for doing so may never be fully clarified, it is likely that he was willing to accept appreciable risks in the matter, though obviously he did not foresee their full magnitude. The war aim of unifying Korea obviously appealed to MacArthur, as it did to others. He may have differed from Washington in placing a higher value on achieving this objective than did the more cautious Administration leaders in Washington. As viewed by MacArthur, the two alternatives to marching to the Yalu -- namely standing still or retreating to the narrow waist of North Korea -- may have appeared more distasteful than accepting the risk of a strategy which, while admittedly somewhat bold, offered the possibility of a major gain.**

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*After engaging UN forces tactically in late October and early November, the Chinese Communist "volunteers" had broken contact -- in accord with their guerrilla doctrine and, no doubt, to assess the situation further. MacArthur, however, misinterpreted this tactic as indicating possible Chinese disengagement from the war or as a sign of limited Chinese objectives. He also grossly underestimated the number of Chinese who were already south of the Yalu. Rees, op. cit., pp. 128-135, 138-142.

**Rees, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

Thus, the Korean experience emphasized dramatically for all future administrations that it is the President's responsibility not merely to indicate the objectives to be pursued in a conflict, but also to set a limited ceiling on the acceptable costs and risks of pursuing those objectives. The theatre commander traditionally had a different point of view on this matter. MacArthur was not the first nor the last theatre commander who felt that when he was given an objective and a mission, he should also be given the necessary means of accomplishing it. Quite understandably, a theatre commander does not like to be given a difficult mission and then be told, in effect, that Washington does not consider it important enough to give him sufficient resources from those available to accomplish it. Moreover, in contrast to the practice in some other armies U.S. theatre commanders had always been given considerable freedom to decide on tactical operations. As a result, the viewpoint of the theatre commander traditionally has been that once he has been allocated military resources, he should be allowed to use them in ways that his professional military judgment indicates are likely to be most effective. Accordingly, in the past when the civilian heads of government or his military superiors in Washington imposed constraints on his conduct of military operations in the name of political considerations, the theatre military commander was likely to regard them as undue "interference," especially if they made accomplishment of his mission more difficult and costly.

Much has changed since the events and controversies of the Korean War referred to here. Traditional practices and attitudes have been considerably modified. Both civilian and military leaders understand that the President must himself retain tight control over all decisions and developments affecting the nature, scope, and termination of limited conflicts. The problem remains, however, of understanding the implications of the requirement of presidential control for design of military forces, military planning, and crisis management.

Since the Kennedy Administration gave particular attention to these questions, the remainder of this paper will consider some of the experience gained since 1961, particularly in the Cuban missile crisis.

II.

We shall pass over developments and experiences in the years following the Korean War that led President Kennedy, upon assuming office, to seek additional improvement of the government's ability to make more effective use of force as an instrument of foreign policy. In his "Special Message on the Defense Budget," submitted to Congress on March 28, 1961, Kennedy asserted a new doctrine of flexible, controlled response to guide his Administration's military policies. Our response to attacks against any part of the Free World, he said, would be "suitable, selective" as well as "swift and effective." Kennedy also indicated some general guidelines for the design and use of military force: "Our weapon systems must be usable in a manner permitting deliberation and discrimination as to timing, scope and targets in response to civilian authority."

Kennedy's statement is relevant because it foreshadowed the criteria later developed and applied for evaluating military options in future crises. Plans for the use of military capabilities that did not meet these complex criteria would be less acceptable to the President, particularly at the critical opening stages of a crisis when control was all important. I would like to highlight the problem of adapting military capabilities to presidential use in limited, controlled crises by drawing a distinction between "gross military capabilities" and "usable options." There can be a substantial difference between gross military capabilities to attack various

targets -- capabilities which may be plentiful and readily available -- and usable military options, which are capabilities the President is willing to use in a crisis only if they do the job in the way he thinks appropriate and necessary. From this standpoint, gross military capabilities do not necessarily provide usable options; they are, rather, the ingredients from which planners must develop usable options.

The special political-military requirements that capabilities must meet in order to constitute usable options in controlled crises are indeed stringent and often difficult to meet satisfactorily. This was illustrated particularly well by the experience of the Cuban missile crisis.

President Kennedy and his advisers first considered the significance of the Soviet missile deployment and concluded that it portended serious damage to a number of important U.S. interests. On this basis, Kennedy then decided that the United States would have to secure the removal of the missiles by one means or another but should <u>not</u> go beyond this specific objective -- by, for example, attempting also to secure the overthrow of Castro. The President also made it clear to his advisers that he placed a high value on achieving the objective of removal of the missiles. Some of his advisers had earlier indicated support for objectives that fell short of, or went beyond this. But the President defined his objective and his strong commitment to it clearly and consistently throughout the crisis. This proved important in later evaluations of alternative courses of action from the

standpoint of their appropriateness as well as their expected effectiveness.

The ExCom (the ad hoc Executive Committee of the National Security Council that the President established at the beginning of the crisis) considered three military options: the blockade/quarantine, an air strike against the missile sites, and an invasion of Cuba. At the beginning the ExCom was divided in its opinion as to these and other non-military options. Appreciable support for the air strike came from advisers from civilian as well as military branches of government. Many ExCom members thought the blockade option was a weak and ineffectual response to the provocation -- the deployment of the missiles.* But despite this clear recognition of the weaknesses inherent in the blockade option, Kennedy eventually chose it as his opening move, apparently because he felt that he could not accept the other two stronger, and in some respects, more relevant military options.

All available accounts emphasize the value of the broad-gauged iterative evaluation given to the policy problem in the series of ExCom meetings. During this

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*As Sorensen reports: "At first there had been very little support of a blockade.... It appeared almost irrelevant to the problem of missiles.... the greatest single drawback to the blockade, in comparison with the air strike, was time. Instead of presenting Khrushchev and the world with a fait accompli, it offered a prolonged and agonizing approach, uncertain in its effect, indefinite in its duration, enabling the missiles to become operational, subjecting us to counter-threats from Khrushchev... and in all these ways making more difficult a subsequent air strike if the missiles remained." Theodore C. Sorensen, Kennedy, pp. 687-688.

iterative process the criteria of choice were defined with greater clarity. In fact, it may be said that more than any preceding crisis this one forced leading members of the Administration to determine what the general doctrine of controlled, flexible response meant in terms of specific design criteria for formulating "usable" options out of "gross" military capabilities.

Thus, the air strike option, conceived initially as a clean, quick "surgical" removal of the missile sites, ran into a series of political-military tests it could not pass. Sorensen reports that planning studies indicated that an air strike "could not be accomplished by a few sorties in a few minutes, as hoped, nor could it be limited to the missile sites alone...." Other targets -- airfields, air defenses, and nuclear warhead storage sites -- would also have to be taken out in what would constitute a "massive bombardment." Even then, "and this in particular influenced the President -- there could be no assurance that all the missiles would have been removed or that some of them would not fire first, unleashing their nuclear warheads on American soil." Not only would the massive bombardment look like the preparations for an invasion, but "The more we looked at the air strike, the clearer it became that the resultant chaos and political collapse would ultimately necessitate a U.S. invasion...."*

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*Sorensen, pp. 684, 694, 697. See also Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 63-64, 69, 79, 88, 101, 106; A. Schlesinger, Jr., A Thousand Days, pp. 803-804.

Moreover, the air strike option could not be coupled with the kinds of political-diplomatic preparation and communications deemed essential to reduce the political costs and military risks associated with it. "The problem of advance warning was unsolvable"; reports Sorensen, quoting Robert Kennedy that without an advance warning the air strike would appear to be "'a Pearl Harbor in reverse, and it would blacken the name of the United States in the pages of history.'"*

Finally, an air strike of the proportions indicated by military considerations might result not only in a large number of Cuban casualties** but in a number of Russian military personnel casualties as well, perhaps placing Khrushchev under strong pressure to retaliate. There was no guarantee Khrushchev wouldn't succumb to such pressure.***

Furthermore, the blockade option, its disadvantages notwithstanding, met many of the criteria for a usable option that the ExCom was progressively identifying. Indeed, some of the perceived disadvantages of the air strike became the virtues of a blockade. Sorensen reports that the blockade option came to be favored because "it was a

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*Sorensen, pp. 684-687; Schlesinger, pp. 805-806.

**In a speech on October 13, 1964, Robert Kennedy indicated that his brother had been swayed against the air strike by the estimate that it might result in the death of 25,000 Cuban civilians. New York Times, October 14, 1964.

***Sorensen, p. 685.

more limited, low-key military action than the air strike. It offered Khrushchev the choice of avoiding a direct military clash by keeping his ships away. It could at least be initiated without a shot being fired or a single Soviet or Cuban citizen being killed.... Precisely because it was a limited, low-level action, the argument ran, the blockade had the advantage of permitting a more controlled escalation on our part, gradual or rapid as the situation required. It could serve as an unmistakable but not sudden or humiliating warning to Khrushchev of what we expected from him. Its prudence, its avoidance of casualties and its avoidance of attacking Cuban soil would make it more appealing to other nations than an air strike, permitting OAS [Organization of American States] and Allied support for our initial position, and making that support more likely for whatever air-strike or other action was later necessary." The adherents of the blockade option argued that it "appeared most likely to secure our limited objective -- the removal of the missiles -- at the lowest cost." The President indicated that he "liked the idea of leaving Khrushchev a way out, of beginning at a low level that could then be stepped up...."*

Moreover, the blockade could be used in a closely controlled fashion as an instrument of policy. It could be separated into a sequence of actions, each introduced with presidential approval, and spaced out to permit political-diplomatic actions and communications to take place. The momentum of events could be either slowed

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*Sorensen, pp. 688, 691, 693-694; Abel, pp. 62, 72-73, 81, 86, 89-90, 93-94.

respect -- that is, they should not be capable of being interpreted by the opponent or by others as being at variance with the specific demand the President has made upon the opponent, for this would suggest that he is really seeking objectives more ambitious than those he has announced or that he will settle for much less than he has demanded.

3. High confidence in the effectiveness and discriminating character of military options: The military actions chosen should be militarily effective in accomplishing their task with high confidence, employing relatively small forces, and with accuracy and low collateral damage. Otherwise the attempt to convey a clear and appropriate demonstration of resolution (criteria 2) may boomerang, either by demonstrating military ineffectiveness or by damaging the wrong target.

4. Avoid motivating opponent to escalate: Military action should not confront the opponent with an urgent requirement to escalate the conflict immediately in order to avoid or to compensate for the military or political damage being inflicted upon him. A demonstrative use of force may be self-defeating if it punishes the opponent to the extent that it requires an immediate strong military reaction on his part.

5. Couple military action with political-diplomatic actions: The military action chosen should be capable of being coupled (preceded, accompanied and/or followed, as necessary) with those political and diplomatic actions, communications, consultations, and proposals that are an essential part of the overall strategy for persuading the opponent to accept the demands made upon him. This includes political and diplomatic activities directed not only to the opponent but to others who may have to be influenced.

down to allow time for each side to make its calculations and decisions, or speeded up to increase pressure on the opponent.

As already noted, the theory of controlled, measured response was applied in a particularly painstaking and detailed manner in planning for, and managing the Cuban crisis. The policy-makers in ExCom clarified the operational requirements of this particular approach to using force as an instrument of policy. These requirements may be stated in more general terms. One can extract from the available accounts of the Cuban missile crisis as many as seven criteria that the ExCom employed in its comparative evaluation of the air strike and blockade options. These criteria, or requirements, for controlled and measured use of force were interrelated but they may be more usefully listed separately.

1. Presidential control: Presidential authorization is required for each military option in the unfolding or developing sequence of military actions that is designed to bring pressure to bear on the opponent. Moreover, he or those to whom he delegates his authority should be able to monitor the employment of these actions and alter the application of the military plan as needed in the light of emerging political considerations.

2. Clear and appropriate demonstration: The military actions, individually and in combination, should constitute a clear and appropriate demonstration of U.S. resolution to achieve the specific objective the President has decided to seek in the conflict. The military actions should not be equivocal in this

6. Provide pauses in military operations: Military actions must be selected and programmed to provide significant pauses in the momentum of military operations. Time must be provided at each point for the opponent to assess the actions taken, and to receive and reflect on the signals and proposals addressed to him. Furthermore, the opponent must have an opportunity to do so without being subjected to too much "noise" from other actions.

7. Avoid impression of resort to large-scale warfare: Military actions should be avoided that might be interpreted by the opponent as the start of large-scale warfare. This would signal to him that the effort to deal with him by means of a controlled coercive or bargaining strategy has been abandoned in favor of a "quick, decisive" military strategy

Having stated these seven general criteria, let me recall that the ExCom eventually discarded the air strike option as the opening U.S. move in the crisis because it could not meet the second, third, fourth, fifth and seventh of these criteria. Instead, the ExCom chose the blockade because it was consistent with the first, fifth, sixth and seventh criteria though weak or uncertain when judged by the second and fourth criteria.

In the Cuban missile crisis a limited amount of force -- namely, the blockade or quarantine of "offensive" weapons -- was coupled with credible threats of additional force in order to persuade Khrushchev to pull out his missiles. It should not be overlooked that force was employed in this case as part of a diplomatic strategy which made combined use of the "carrot and the stick." Thus, the military effort Kennedy made in order to coerce Khrushchev was coupled with a conditional pledge not to invade Cuba.

The Cuban missile crisis stands out as a case in which a small and carefully applied amount of force sufficed to secure an objective. There were extenuating circumstances that favored this. Conditions will differ from crisis to crisis. Still it is necessary to understand the conditions under which force can be employed so economically and in this case so effectively. Force, in the Cuban crisis, was used as a refined instrument of coercion and persuasion. There are bound to be severe limits to the use of force as a selective, controlled instrument of policy in future crises. But it is essential that we discover these limits. Once military operations go beyond a certain point, the momentum of war can set off a chain of consequences we can neither fully anticipate or perfectly control.