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ADVISING THE PRESIDENT IN A CRISIS:
HISTORICAL LESSONS FOR POLICY PLANNING

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I. ADVISING THE PRESIDENT IN A CRISIS

How can policy planners ensure that Presidents get good advice when they need it? The question is not new, and its persistence suggests that the answers are not simple. Studies to support crisis planning-- for instance, the design and staffing of crisis management systems-- have in the past met with considerable skepticism from policy circles, who often find the issue either imponderable or academic. Those who consider it imponderable argue that the range of potential crises is so varied as to make any but the most rudimentary planning an empty exercise. Those who consider it academic assert that, even if it were possible to plan for a restricted set of crises, the specific needs for information and advice would be entirely dependent upon the personal style and whim of the President. But hardware, data bases, and civil servants are developed to serve more than one administration. Therefore, it is understandable that high-level crisis management systems, such as the White House situation room, have been "minimalist" in design, requiring relatively little reliance on on-site advisers or information. Instead, their emphasis has been on maintaining a "phone book" of outside experts and the sophisticated communications necessary to contact them. Since the architects cannot predict what a President will want to know and with whom he shall want to consult in these presumably unforeseeable crises, their approach offers the greatest flexibility.

Yet there are potential crises for which this architecture would be entirely inappropriate. The most important example, and the one that motivates this paper, is a nuclear attack on the United States. In the first hours after even a very limited Soviet attack the President or his successor would have to make grave decisions affecting the very survival of the nation, but he might be cut off from the government from which he draws his information and counsel.¹ For some period of time he will

¹The only U.S. Government national communications network designed to function in a nuclear war that is mentioned in unclassified sources is the Minimum Essential Emergency Communications Network (MEECN), which

only be able to avail himself of the people at his location (assumed for the purposes of this paper to be the National Emergency Airborne Command Post (NEACP))--perhaps almost indefinitely if Washington, D.C. has been destroyed before key personnel were evacuated. Here a "phone book" will not be sufficient.

If the President evacuated the White House in anticipation of an imminent attack on Washington, or the Vice President or another successor were sent aloft in the NEACP, it can be assumed that they would choose to be accompanied by at least a few key personal advisers. However, in the environment of a nuclear crisis, these people may be impossible to find or transport, or they may be dead. Thus planners of a nuclear crisis management system will have to be concerned with staffing it with specially trained supporting and backup personnel. These people will have crucial responsibilities. Not only will they have to perform their designated duties, for instance as geographical or functional specialists, but they may be called upon to act as senior advisers to a President facing the gravest crisis in the history of the republic. They should be selected and trained on the basis not only of their stature and pertinent experience, but also with regard to some theory of effective advising.

- The purpose behind this paper is to outline some tentative principles of effective advice-giving in a crisis. It will restrict itself to one general attribute of an adviser's behavior: his own definition of his role, and his relationships with his peers among the Cabinet and with the President. The principles will be illustrated in terms of the behavior of a senior adviser to the President responsible for foreign affairs; in effect an acting Secretary of State. The intent is to suggest some guidelines for the selection, training and behavior of such individuals who might be chosen to serve in crisis management systems.

links the National Emergency Airborne Command Post (NEACP) with the unified and specified commanders responsible for U.S. nuclear forces. The MEECN should permit limited consultation between the President and his senior military commanders and ensure that his order to respond to a nuclear attack reaches U.S. forces. The MEECN does not include any capability to communicate with the State Department, the intelligence community, U.S. embassies abroad, or foreign governments.

- Since the definition of "effective" advisory behavior is in the eye of the beholder, the cases used in this paper will draw from the public life of the man who was probably the most widely regarded Secretary of State since World War II, Dean Acheson.

Acheson was chosen for several reasons. He advised four Presidents from both parties; in all but the first instance (when he was Truman's Secretary of State) the President called him out of retirement. He has written extensively about his participation in government and his notion of the proper role for a Secretary of State. Finally, his extensive experience across a number of crises and Presidents transcends the personality of any single President or the exigencies of a particular crisis. The examples from Acheson's public life used to illustrate these principles of advising were drawn from biographies of Acheson, including his extensive autobiographical material; excerpts of speeches and personal correspondence; and topical scholarly studies of the several crises.

The second section of this paper will describe Acheson's perceptions of his roles and responsibilities as revealed by his performance in a number of crises from 1947 to 1965, and in his own writings. The third section applies his perspectives to the challenge of developing effective advisers for emergency crisis management systems.

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II. ACHESON'S PRINCIPLES OF CRISIS BEHAVIOR

This section describes some characteristics of Acheson's behavior in a crisis. There are two subgroups: (a) Tenets pertaining to foreign policy-making in crisis; (b) Acheson's definition of his own role as Secretary of State and his relationships with the President and other advisers.

A. HOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS IN A CRISIS

1. Do Not Surrender the Initiative

Acheson firmly believed in the importance of retaining the ability to *initiate*, rather than merely react. Several examples will illustrate.

(a) The Republic of Korea was invaded late on the evening of Saturday, June 25, 1950 (Washington time). Truman, who was in Independence for the weekend, received word of the attack from Acheson by telephone on Saturday night. At mid-day Truman returned to Washington on Acheson's recommendation and met that evening with his senior advisers at Blair House. In Acheson's review of the military events of the day, he listed three recommendations:

- (1) "General MacArthur should be authorized and directed to supply Korea with arms and other equipment over and above that already allocated under the Military Assistance Program.
- (2) The U.S. Air Force should be ordered to protect Kimpo airfield (near Seoul) during the evacuation of U.S. dependents by attacking any North Korean ground or air forces approaching it.
- (3) The Seventh Fleet should be ordered to proceed from the Philippines north and to prevent any attack from China on Formosa or vice versa."¹

¹Acheson, Dean, *Present at the Creation*, p. 529.

Acheson's recommendations were motivated by his belief that the attack "was an open, undisguised challenge to our internationally accepted position as the protector of South Korea. . . . To back away from this challenge. . . . would be highly destructive of the power and prestige of the United States."² Thus Acheson felt strongly that for *political* reasons the initiative must be recaptured from the North Koreans.

(b) Acheson writes that "when I set off to meet the President, I had no plan. . . ."³ This is disingenuous. In fact, Acheson had convened a meeting at 11:30 that Sunday morning of State and Defense Department representatives, which under his chairmanship arrived at a list of "suggested actions" MacArthur should take. (Acheson's recommendations to Truman at the Blair House dinner were based on this meeting.) By the time Truman approved them that night they had already been transmitted in a JCS directive to MacArthur via a teleconference at 7:30. (The directive noted that the "suggestions" had not been approved by Truman yet, but "JCS and State now meeting with the President. The telecon is to let you know current thinking here. . . . for planning purposes."⁴) Thus Acheson's desire for speed was so strong that he allowed--or did not choose to prevent--directives to a commander in advance of Presidential authorization.⁵

(c) In October 1962, Acheson was called in by Kennedy on the second day of the ExCom's deliberations over Soviet missiles in Cuba. He rapidly became the leading exponent of a conventional airstrike against the missiles, and opposed a naval blockade of Cuba. "The blockade left our opponents in control of events."⁶

²*Ibid.* p. 528.

³*Ibid.*

⁴Goulden, Joseph. *Korea: The Untold Story*, p. 56.

⁵This anecdote is not meant to suggest that Acheson acted improperly, but merely that his concern about speed and decisiveness inclined him toward allowing communications to MacArthur that anticipated Truman's decisions.

⁶Acheson, "Homage to Plain Dumb Luck," p. 200.

As I saw it at the time, *and still believe*, the decision to resort to the blockade was a decision to *postpone* the issue at the expense of time within which the nuclear weapons might be made operable.⁷

Acheson's account of the Cuban crisis stresses the need to remove the missiles quickly. As he reported to Kennedy after the blockade had been in force for three days without Soviet agreement to withdraw them, "Time was running out. The airstrike remained the only method of eliminating them and hourly was becoming more dangerous."⁸ In a letter to a friend written approximately a year after the crisis:

My own desire was for more vigorous action than was taken. I never quite believed that my younger colleagues really understood the nature of the decision. They thought that the choice was between beginning tough. . .and risking its consequences, or beginning soft. . .and if necessary, working up to tougher measures.⁹ They did not realize--though they were warned--that it is almost impossible to work up.

Every factor of domestic pressure, international pressure, general panic over nuclear war, ideological confusion (a Pearl Harbor in reverse),¹⁰ . . . the hopeless fly-paper of negotiation which only a Korean veteran can appreciate--*all this paralyzes effort. One never exceeds the altitude first gained.* So I was in favor of destroying the missiles. . .and then dealing with the consequences. These might have been severe. . .If they were, then I thought that the Russians were ready for drastic action, anyway, and *we would be better off to take the initiative than than to wait for theirs later on.*¹¹

⁷*Ibid.* (emphasis added).

⁸*Ibid.* p. 204.

⁹Robert Kennedy makes this argument in *Thirteen Days*, p. 34.

¹⁰The phrase is Robert Kennedy's. See Part 3, below.

¹¹David Acheson, ed. *Among Friends: Personal Letters of Dean Acheson*, p. 245.

What is especially noteworthy about Acheson's beliefs is that he remained as forthright and outspoken in his opposition to the blockade *after* the crisis as before.

(d) Returning to the Korean War, on the 28th of June 1950, Acheson pointed out at the NSC meeting (after the Far East Air Force had been committed to the battle but before U.S. ground troops were introduced) "that we could not count on the continuance of the enthusiastic support that our staunch attitude in Korea had evoked in the country and in the world. Firm leadership would be less popular if it should involve casualties and taxes." Acheson's account of Truman's reaction to this warning highlights his disdain for delay:

The President, mistaking my purpose, which was to prepare for criticism and hard sledding, insisted that we could not back out of the course upon which we had started. *The reply was typical of one of his most admirable traits.* He was unmoved by, indeed unmindful of the effect upon his or his party's political fortunes of action that he thought was right and in the best interest of the country. . . *A doctrine that later became fashionable with Presidents, called "keeping all options open" (apparently by avoiding decision), did not appeal to Harry S. Truman.*¹²

Thus Acheson's instincts were for action in a crisis, when military circumstances required it (as in Cuba) or when delays would be damaging to the United States' leadership role (as in both Korea and Cuba). He rejected flexibility for its own sake and prized speed, decisiveness, and persistence.

2. The Imperatives of Alliance Leadership

Acheson considered American prestige a critical asset to the alliances he helped create, and counted it as an important factor in deterring war with the Soviets. In each crisis, he emphasized that America's role meant that even actions taken far from Europe could affect allies' opinions and therefore, America's long-term position.

¹²Acheson, *Present*, p. 535. (Emphasis added.) The reference to later presidents was probably directed mostly at Lyndon Johnson.

(a) Korea could not be backed away from because to do so "would be highly destructive of the power and prestige of the United States. By prestige I mean the shadow cast by power, which is of great deterrent importance."¹³ Here the defense of Korea was to Acheson motivated by political considerations more than military ones.

(b) In Cuba, Acheson argued that "if the United States government should take a passive position, it would forfeit--and rightly so--all confidence and leadership in the Western hemisphere. . .and in Western Europe."¹⁴

(c) In 1965, after Acheson had been called back into service by Lyndon Johnson to mediate the 1964 Cyprus dispute (during which he disagreed strongly with Johnson's personal letter to Turkish President Inonu threatening to renege on U.S. military guarantees), he was asked to participate in a "senior panel of advisers" on foreign affairs. As Acheson wrote to Truman, Johnson made "a long complaint about how mean everything and everybody was to him. . .For a long time he fought the problem of Vietnam...

Finally I blew my top and told him that he was wholly right in the Dominican Republic and Vietnam, that he had no choice except to press on, that explanations were not as important as successful action; and that *the trouble in Europe* (which was more important than either of the other spots) *came about because under him and Kennedy there had been no American leadership at all.*"¹⁵

In each instance Acheson's preeminent concern was to fulfill the responsibilities that were in his eyes incumbent on the leader of the Western alliance, even at great cost, and in Cuba, at the risk of general war.¹⁶ It is probably difficult to overstate the importance he

¹³Present, p. 528.

¹⁴Honage, p. 198.

¹⁵Among Friends, p. 273. (Emphasis added.)

¹⁶Acheson thought the risks of general war were low but conceded that he might be wrong. "I thought that they (the Soviets) might act in Berlin or Turkey, and that we must be prepared for war. My judgment, upon which we could not bank, was that they would not react with spasmodic violence. Some disagreed; and I was prepared to accept their judgment and go ahead." Acheson, *Among Friends*, p. 245. (Emphasis added.)

placed on acting in a crisis so as to maintain the United States position with its allies, and the vehemence of his criticism of Presidents who failed to do so.

3. Disdain for Moral Posturing

Acheson's account of the Cuban crisis makes plain that he strongly disagreed with Robert Kennedy's moral opposition to an airstrike against the missiles.

I remember clearly his formulation of it. An attack on the installations, he said, would be 'a Pearl Harbor in reverse' and would never be acceptable to his brother. This seemed to me to obfuscate rather than clarify thought by a thoroughly false and pejorative analogy.¹⁷

Senator Kennedy seemed. . . to have been moved by emotional or intuitive responses more than by the trained lawyer's analysis. . . [In charging that Acheson's airstrike proposal promised] killing thousands and thousands of civilians, [Kennedy engaged in] emotional dialectics.¹⁸

Acheson makes clear that to him the "right" thing for the U.S. to do will frequently not be the popular thing. It is unlikely that Acheson was personally uncomfortable with moralism *per se* (since he used it to such good effect at the time of the decision to aid Turkey and Greece in 1947), but rather with appeals to considerations of popularity that served to encourage temporizing. Acheson was impatient with delay, and in his writings shows disdain for concern about domestic politics. This disposition undoubtedly served him well under Harry Truman but was probably a liability in his dealings with Kennedy, and particularly Lyndon Johnson.

¹⁷ *Homage*, p. 198.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 197-199.

B. HOW TO BEHAVE AS SENIOR FOREIGN POLICY ADVISER TO THE PRESIDENT

We are fortunate in that it is possible to rely not only on Acheson's actions in crises but also on his very considerable autobiographical works. While the latter were certainly written with history in mind, they nevertheless reveal a great deal about his prescriptions for being an effective servant to the President.

1. A Strong, but Correct, Personal Relationship with the President

In public Acheson offered the highest praise to Truman. Their private correspondence, which spanned the years from their mutual retirement on January 20, 1953, until death, indicates that Acheson's affection and respect was heartfelt. Below is reproduced in its entirety his first letter to Mr. Truman after they left office:¹⁹

Antigua, British West Indies
February 10, 1953

Dear Mr. President,

You and Mrs. Truman have been constantly in our thoughts these last three weeks. We see glimpses of you in papers weeks old and read fragmentary reports of you. But you are vivid in our minds. We have spoken often of that last poignant day together and shall never forget the sight of you on the back platform as the train grew smaller and smaller down the track. We wish that you would both escape to the peace and privacy for a while. . . We talk about the great epoch in which you permitted us to play a part--and which now seems ended in favor of God knows what.

One of the glorious things which I have read--and which you probably know--is Paul Wilstack's edition of the correspondence between John Adams and Jefferson. If you do not know it, by all means get it. There were two robust old codgers. I think one gets a wholly new affection for Adams.

We are here, I hope, until the end of March. This note brings to both you and Mrs. Truman our devotion and solicitude. I know that these are difficult weeks for you both.

Affectionately,

¹⁹ *Among Friends*, p. 76.

The letter is interesting in several respects. First, Acheson's tone is careful in its deference, especially in his addressing "Mr. President," which he continued through all their correspondence. The letter stands out from his others for its floridness and lack of irony. Additionally, Acheson's reference to Adams and Jefferson seems to be a broad hint of his aspirations for their future relationship. Throughout he is deferential, solicitous, eager to please.

This letter seems to corroborate the public appearance of Acheson's and Truman's relationship: great mutual respect and trust, built to a large degree upon Acheson's scrupulous efforts to "remember who is President."²⁰ By way of example, in his memoirs he recounts the disposition of George Marshall upon taking Louis Johnson's place as Secretary of Defense in September 1950. Acheson had served under Marshall in the State Department and admired him enormously.

The General insisted, overruling every protest of mine, in meticulously observing the protocol involved in my being the Senior Cabinet officer. Never would he go through a door before me, or walk anywhere but on my left; he would go around an automobile to enter it after me and sit on the left; in meetings he would insist on my speaking before him. To be treated so by a revered and beloved former chief was a harrowing experience.²¹

The anecdote stands out because it is a rare glimpse of apparently unimportant trivia, in a memoir largely bereft of gossip, indicating that it clearly made a deep impression on Acheson. In his relationships with both Marshall and Truman, it is evident that the respect he offered was reciprocated, to the great advantage of his effectiveness as an adviser.

²⁰ Acheson uses this phrase in *Present*, p. 196, referring to both his own conduct and that of General Marshall, and in "The President and the Secretary of State," p. 33. "Without this mutual understanding a successful relationship is most unlikely."

²¹ *Present*, p. 572. Similarly, "it seemed natural to all of us that next to the President, deference was due to General Marshall. But he would have none of it. The Secretary of State was the Senior Officer to whom he punctiliously deferred not only in matters of protocol but in council as well." Acheson, *Sketches from Life of Men I have Known*, p. 135.

2. Careful Protection of Prerogatives

As much as Acheson considered it important that "from first to last both parties to the relationship understand who is President," he felt that "only a bit less important. . . is recognizing who is Secretary of State." He continues:

A President may, and will, listen to whom he wishes. But his relationship with the Secretary of State will not prosper if the latter is not accepted as his principal adviser and executive agent in foreign affairs and the trusted confidant of all his thoughts and plans relating to them.²²

To do this meant relying on more than personal relationships. Acheson perceived that maintaining that relationship required constant attention to ensure that he and his department were adequately serving the President. For instance, he and Truman met alone several times a week:

The great utility and importance of these meetings lay in the opportunity for talk. Over the years. . . these talks enabled us not only to keep one another informed but to see events and choices each from the other's point of view.²³

While wanting the last word on foreign policy, Acheson did not attempt to monopolize it. He could summarize and synthesize the remarks of others with such skill as to sustain his value even when his own views did not carry the day. Ronald Steel recounts that "In the spirit of bipartisanship he once drafted a speech for a critic of the Bretton Woods bill, which Acheson himself championed. 'It was the best attack on the bill ever delivered,' he recalled."²⁴

Acheson's disenchantment with the performance of Dean Rusk, whom he recommended to Kennedy as Secretary of State, seems to stem in large part from Rusk's passivity in office and failure to gain unchallenged

²²Acheson, "The President and the Secretary of State," in Price, Don K., ed. *The Secretary of State*, pp. 33-34.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁴Steel, Ronald, "Acheson at the Creation," *Esquire*, December 1983, p. 216.

primacy in foreign affairs. In his account of the Cuban crisis, he quotes Robert Kennedy's scathing remarks on Rusk's participation and adds his own elaboration:

'During all these deliberations,' Senator Kennedy has written, 'we all spoke as equals. There was no rank, and in fact we did not even have a Chairman. Dean Rusk, who as Secretary of State might have assumed that position, had other duties and responsibilities during this period of time and frequently could not attend our meetings.' One wonders [writes Acheson] what those 'other duties and responsibilities' were to have been half so important as those they displaced.²⁵

Thus in Acheson's vision, the Secretary of State must eschew any desire to be "putative Prime Minister,"²⁶ yet be aggressive in asserting his authority as first among equals in the area of foreign affairs.

3. Custodian of the Alliance

The importance Acheson attached to the maintenance of U.S. prestige was established above. In crisis councils, Acheson as Secretary was responsible for the "conscience" of the Administration in reminding it of its responsibilities as leader of the Western alliance. His strongest criticisms--of Kennedy, Johnson, Rusk, and others not recounted in previous paragraphs--were reserved for those who counselled inaction that would damage the United States' credibility with its allies.

4. Understand the Limitations of Diplomacy

To maintain his primacy, Acheson was much more than merely the diplomatic service's lobbyist in council. He recognized the limitations of pure diplomacy and the importance of force in foreign policy. Two examples will illustrate:

(a) Although he had been intimately involved in its development, he "never thought the UN was worth a damn. . . To a lot of people it was the Holy Grail, and those who set store by it had the misfortune to believe their own bunk."²⁷ Even the Security Council resolution of June 26,

²⁵ *Homage*, p. 206.

²⁶ "The President and the Secretary of State," p. 33.

²⁷ "Acheson at the Creation," p. 216.

1950, calling upon North Korea to cease its armed aggression against the South, without which the U.S. "would have had to go into Korea alone,"²⁸ did not diminish the challenge to the U.S. of defending the South. As Acheson wrote, "Troops from other sources would be helpful politically and psychologically but unimportant militarily."²⁹ Thus Acheson did not rely on international organizations as a substitute for traditional national foreign policy.

(b) The maintenance and use of military force were critical to American foreign policy as seen by Acheson. For instance:

- (i) He led the Cabinet and JCS in recommending the commitment of airpower and later ground troops in Korea in June 1950;
- (ii) He persuaded Kennedy to increase draft callups and submit a substantial supplemental defense appropriations request during the Berlin crisis of 1961;
- (iii) As mentioned, he was the strongest advocate of an airstrike against Soviet missiles in Cuba in October 1962;
- (iv) He strongly supported Johnson's intervention in the Dominican Republic and introduction of combat troops in Vietnam in 1965.

In Acheson's view, coordination between the military and State departments were critical to his success. He relates approvingly his working relationship with General Marshall and the Chiefs when Marshall became Secretary of Defense:

For the first time . . . the Secretaries of State and Defense, with their top advisers, met with the Chiefs of Staff in their map room and discussed common problems together. At one of these meetings General Bradley and I made a treaty, thereafter scrupulously observed. The phrases "from a military point of view" and "from a political point of view" were excluded from our talks. No such dichotomy existed. Each of us had our tactical and strategic problems, but they were interconnected, not separate.³⁰

²⁸This is Truman's opinion, from a note he wrote to Acheson, reprinted in *Present*, p. 540.

²⁹*Present*, p. 528.

Acheson was asked in a television interview at about the same time (September 18, 1950): "You have talked often about situations of strength. Is that a fundamental basis of American foreign policy?" Acheson replied categorically, 'It is an absolutely essential and fundamental basis.'³¹

Thus Acheson's role as senior adviser on foreign affairs meant, to him, application of many instruments of foreign policy in addition to the State Department. In crises particularly he was loathe to pin any hope upon the "fly-paper of negotiation," opting instead to recommend force as the way of meeting his imperatives for decision and action.

³⁰*Present*, pp. 572-73.

³¹Quoted in, Stupak, Ronald, *The Shaping of Foreign Policy*, p. 27.

III. APPLYING ACHESON'S PRINCIPLES TO THE SELECTION AND TRAINING OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL

What might the principles drawn from Acheson's experience imply for the personnel chosen to support crisis management? The following possibilities are suggested:

(1) *Personal familiarity with the President is crucial.* The President and the adviser must be able to speak freely and candidly with one another, as Acheson and Truman did. The adviser's value to the President in a nuclear crisis will be greatly circumscribed if they are forced to "feel each other out" on the job. Training programs for crisis personnel should call for them to work closely with the President, or his constitutionally designated successors such as the Vice President, in peacetime so as to establish relationships of mutual trust and respect (or identify those cases where it will *not* be established, so that personnel can be changed).

Since the officials in line of succession to the Presidency, such as the Vice President, Congressional leaders, and Cabinet officers, not to mention the President, are extraordinarily busy people, occasional exercises and games may have to substitute for day-to-day working relations. Exercises will serve not only to test systems and train personnel (including the Presidential successor), but can be a testbed for developing "group dynamics."

(2) *The importance of personal stature and prestige would be difficult to overstate.* Advisers who do not know Presidents well can nevertheless be much in demand if they are known "by reputation." Acheson knew Kennedy and Nixon only casually, and Johnson only moderately well, and yet each called upon him to perform important and sensitive official duties (including acting as an emissary to heads of state.) Thus the adviser's stature can substitute in part--but only in part--for personal familiarity, as long as the adviser "remembers who is President." In this regard, serious consideration should be given to recruiting crisis personnel from the ranks of retired members of the Cabinet and Subcabinet who could act as a reserve to reinforce a cadre of full-time government employees.

(3) *Breadth of experience is more important than depth.*

Obviously, the advisers should be the most experienced men available. However, the adviser must have an "ecumenical" perspective, recognizing that conducting foreign affairs in a nuclear crisis is not a problem that admits of neat jurisdictional division among agencies. He must conceive of his role as much more than simply a "State Department representative." If Acheson's experience is indicative, the President will want integration and synthesis of many views, and he would prefer *not* to be his own Secretary of State. The need for integration will be particularly acute if only a very limited staff is available. The NEACP, for instance, can carry no more than a handful of persons aside from the battle staff.

This principle suggests that advisers with broad governmental experience should be preferred to those who have risen through the ranks of a single agency or community. They are more likely to recognize their broad responsibilities to the President, and present fairly the views of other "agency reps." At the same time, some roles and duties will be uniquely the adviser's, such as being mindful of the United States' responsibilities to its allies. His role must include, but also transcend those duties. (Acheson's criticism of Rusk implies that Rusk failed because he defined his role too narrowly.)

(4) *Advisers must be capable of being their own supporting analytic staffs.* Under extremely austere conditions, with information being reported in from a variety of sources (embassies, theater commanders, surviving field offices, etc.) there will be few resources or time for careful collation and analysis. The senior adviser will to some degree be his own watch officer. To avoid the "paralysis of indecision" loathed by Acheson, he must be capable of absorbing and assessing disparate reports of highly varied reliability and make rapid recommendations to the President. This may call for individuals with watch or briefing experience, who can think quickly--and well--and tolerate a great deal of unavoidable uncertainty. Again, exercises could be a valuable device for training personnel to operate in the information-impooverished environment of a nuclear war.

The qualification mentioned at the outset, that there is no objective definition of "effective" advice, must be repeated. Certainly advising a President in nuclear war would in many respects only barely resemble the peacetime process. This excursion through Dean Acheson's experience hopefully has demonstrated that *some* principles can be observed across a number of crises and Presidents, eliminating at least one source of variation. For those concerned with the design of crisis management systems, this discussion should indicate that historical research can provide useful hypotheses for later testing through interviews, games, exercises, or other approaches.

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