APPENDICES

commission on the ORGANIZATION of the government FOR the conduct of FOREIGN POLICY

June, 1975

(IN SEVEN VOLUMES)

[volume II]

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Foreword

The Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy has benefited greatly from the studies and analytic papers submitted to it by scholars and experts in various fields. Many of these contributions are published in this and companion volumes as appendices to the Commission Report. They are made available to the public in the hope they may stimulate further discussion and analysis of these difficult issues of government organization to meet new needs. The views expressed, however, are the authors' own; they should not be construed to reflect the views of the Commission or any agency of the government, either Executive or Congressional. The views of the Commission itself are contained solely in its own Report.

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Appendix D:
The Use of Information

Introduction

Appendix D contains a substantial work by Alexander L. George and associates entitled "Towards a More Soundly Based Foreign Policy: Making Better Use of Information." The study examines the various ways in which the judgments of decision-makers may be distorted by the misuse or nonuse of information, and discusses several methods of reducing the likelihood of such distortions occurring.

The analysis of the sources of distortion focuses in turn on the behavior of individuals, of small groups and of large bureaucracies, noting especially the effect of crises and stress on the first two. The examination of individual decision-making treats the important role of simple beliefs and subconscious decision mechanisms. The review of small group dynamics illuminates the various pressures which tend to affect the conclusions of such groups. The analysis of flows of information in large formal organizations highlights the "stubborn dynamics" of those entities.

The first half of this study is largely synthetic; Dr. George has reviewed and drawn extensively upon the work of others. The second half is largely original. It proposes comprehensive measures to minimize the dangers which Part I has identified. It assesses the limited utility of customary criteria (such as "the national interest") to provide guidance for decision-makers; discusses the effects of several organizational devices for forcing second thoughts: the devil's advocate, a formal options system and multiple advocacy; and it concludes with a discussion of how collegial forms of decision-making can improve policy outcomes.

A particularly rich and thoughtful analysis, this paper, beyond its utility to the Commission, should become a notable addition to the literature on decision-making.

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Towards a More Soundly Based Foreign Policy: Making Better Use of Information

Alexander L. George
With the assistance of David K. Hall, Margaret G. Hermann, Charles F. Hermann, Robert Keohane, and Richard Smoke
March 1975

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A substantial body of research and writing on decision making and the related task of developing more effective policy-making procedures has accumulated in the last several decades. This literature is indeed voluminous and often highly specialized. Those who have contributed to it include not only persons with practical experience in foreign policy making, but many specialists in the behavioral sciences—psychologists, political scientists, sociologists, economists, organizational theorists. They have utilized many different kinds of data and employed a variety of research approaches in studying the behavior of individuals, small groups, and organizations engaged in decision-making tasks under different conditions.

A great deal of this specialized literature has been examined by those who have participated in preparing this report. The use made of the literature necessarily has been selective; judgment has been exercised regarding the relevance and significance of different studies for present purposes. Despite a conscientious effort to locate all sources containing significant information, it is undoubtedly the case that important materials have been missed in our search of the literature.

While the report has benefited greatly from the contributions to the subject by academic specialists, it is not written primarily for the community of research-oriented scholars. References to relevant literature and footnotes are not lacking in this report, but they have been kept to a minimum. Had we attempted to make this report a comprehensive inventory of all articles and books that have something useful to say with regard to the making of foreign policy, the report would be several times its present length.

It has been my good fortune as principal investigator to have had the active assistance of many others in planning and preparing this report. As noted at the beginning of Chapter I, a number of scholars participated in a conference to help me plan the study. Others took responsibility for writing parts of the study. Chapter VII on the concept of national interest was co-authored by Professor Robert Keohane, my colleague at Stanford University. Chapter VIII on policy-applicable theory was written Dr. Richard Smoke, currently a fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences. Chapter XII on the evolution of the role of the Assistant for National Security Affairs was prepared by Professor David K. Hall, Brown University, who drew on his Ph.D. dissertation on this topic. Chapter XIV, which takes up the problem of how to recognize and deal with the effects of crisis-induced stress on policy making, was written by Professors Margaret G. Hermann and Charles F. Hermann, both of The Mershon Center, Ohio State University. In addition, Joseph Atkinson, Yale University, and Professor Anne McMahon of Stanford University assisted in the preparation of Chapter IV on small group behavior.

Preliminary drafts of chapters were circulated to a number of scholars for review and critical evaluation. Their comments proved to be highly useful in the ensuing revision of the chapters; but of course they bear no responsibility for the final product. Altogether some twenty persons read one or more chapters and prepared written comments. Their names are listed in the acknowledgments at the beginning of each chapter.

A special note of thanks is expressed to Professor Thomas Milburn, Chairperson of the International Relations Committee of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, who kindly arranged

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to have several chapters read by the following members of his Committee: Professor Grant Hilliker, The Mershon Center, Ohio State University; Professor Lloyd S. Etheredge, University of Manitoba, Canada; and Dr. Thomas V. Bonoma, a research psychologist with the Institute for Juvenile Research, Chicago.

A number of scholars generously allowed me to consult manuscripts of forthcoming publications of their own, each of which will constitute a major contribution to the literature on decision or foreign policy making. Thus I was able to see and draw upon John Steinbruner's manuscript, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision,* before its publication by Princeton University Press; Robert Jervis' forthcoming book, *Perception and Misperception in International Relations* (Princeton University Press); Irving L. Janis and L. Mann, *Decision Making: A Social Psychological Analysis* (forthcoming); Samuel A. Kirkpatrick's "Psychological Views of Decision-Making," which will appear in the *Political Science Annual,* Vol. 6, edited by C.P. Cotter (Bobbs-Merrill, 1975); and Wilfred Kohl's article, "The Nixon-Kissinger Foreign Policy System and U.S.-European Relations: Patterns of Policy-making."

I wish to express my appreciation to the following persons for sharing with me their insights into problems of policy making or for calling relevant materials to my attention: Drs. Herbert J. Spiro, Carl Nydell, E. Raymond Platig, Pio Uliassi, and Sven Groennings—all of the State Department; Professor Arnold A. Rogow, Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York; Drs. Leonard Wainstein and John Ponturo, Institute of Defense Analysis; Drs. Andrew Marshall and Alfred Goldberg, Department of Defense; Dr. Irving M. Destler, The Brookings Institution; Dr. Bertram S. Brown, Director, National Institute of Mental Health; Dr. Francis Barnes, M.D. and Dr. Bryant Wedge, M.D., both of Washington, D.C.; Dr. William Davidson, M.D., Institute for Psychiatry and Foreign Affairs, Washington, D.C.; Dr. Chester L. Cooper, Woodrow Wilson International Center, Smithsonian Institution; Professors Henry S. Rowen and Alain C. Enthoven, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University; Drs. Vincent P. Zarconne and Jared R. Tinklenberg, Psychiatry Department, Stanford University.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge my long-standing indebtedness to Dr. David A. Hamburg, M.D., formerly head of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Stanford University, for introducing me to the study of problems of stress and coping, and for the help he has given me in conceptualizing certain aspects of the present study and in assisting me with some of the interviews.

For unfailingly cheerful and efficient secretarial and administrative help I am indebted, as so often in the past, to Mrs. Lois Renner.

It should be noted, finally, that some important matters that can affect policy making are *not* taken up in this report. We do not deal here with problems associated with the physical and mental health of policy makers, the effects of sleep disorders on cognitive processes, the effects of aging on the performance of political leaders, the effects of drugs and medications taken for various purposes, the effects of "jet lag," etc. Preliminary data were gathered on some of these matters, but it became quickly evident that to provide useful and responsible analysis of these questions would require highly specialized competence and much more time and resources than were available for the present study. Given the importance of these matters, it is hoped that they will become the focus of a separate study at some point in the future.

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Introduction and Overview*

A. Definition and Scope of the Study

The present study adheres closely to the purpose and scope of Study II, C, "Minimizing Irrationality," which was described on page 13 of "The Commission's Studies Program"** (March 21, 1974) as follows:

> Recent work in several disciplines provides new insight into the tendencies of personal and bureaucratic factors (and in the case of crises, physiological and additional psychic factors) to distort the judgment of decision makers. Drawing on recent work in the political, behavioral and psychological sciences, this study would address two questions: (1) to what extent are current organizational, procedural and staff arrangements unnecessarily vulnerable to such pressures; (2) what alternative arrangements might either shield decision makers from such pressures or open their deliberations to others less likely to be affected by them? Answers would be sought as to arrangements both for response to crises, and for more routine decision making.

Additional definition and refinement of the study was achieved as a result of a planning conference held at Stanford University in mid-June. This conference was attended by the Research Director of the Commission, Mr. Peter Szanton, and seven consultants invited by the principal investigator. The consultants were Professor Graham Allison, Harvard University; Professor Paul Hammond, Head of the Social Science Department, The RAND Corporation; Professor Charles Hermann, Associate Director, The Mershon Center, Ohio State University; Professor Ole Holsti, Political Science Department, Duke University; Professor Richard T. Johnson, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University; Professor Thomas Schelling, Harvard University; and Dr. Richard Smoke, post-doctoral fellow with the Institute of Personality Assessment, University of California at Berkeley and currently fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford. Others who were invited but could not attend were Professor John Steinbrunner, Harvard University, and Professor Robert Jervis, Political Science Department, U.C.L.A.

The consensus that emerged from the planning conference was that the intended purposes of the study would be best addressed by focusing on possible impediments to optimal (or effective) information processing within the foreign policy-making system in the Executive Branch, and that attention should be focused upon the ways in which these impediments might affect the quality of major decisions made at the highest levels of policy making. While this definition of the study does not reject the possibility that gross irrationalities of the type that concern professional psychiatrists may occur in individuals who participate in policy-making systems, it directs attention instead to the variety of other types of impediments that can distort information processing and the evaluation of alternative options.

Accordingly, this study adopts a broad *social-psychological* framework rather than a narrow psychiatric approach. It must be immediately noted, however, that there exists no single social-psychological approach that deals comprehensively, and in an integrated manner, with all of the possible impediments to information processing in a complex policy-making system of the kind with which the Commission is concerned. Accordingly, by necessity the present study has had to formulate an eclectic framework of its own within which to discuss and evaluate the many different kinds of findings and theories that are relevant to one or another aspect of the over-all problem addressed.[1]

*All chapters of this study were authored by Alexander L. George except where otherwise noted.

**Printed in Volume VII, Appendix X, of this series of Appendices to the Report of the Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy.

[1]The framework employed in the present study draws upon that developed in the author's earlier publications: see A.L. George, "Adaptation to Stress in Political Decision Making: The Individual, Small Group, and Organizational Contexts," in George V. Coelho, David A. Hamburg, and John E. Adams, eds. *Coping and Adaptation*, N.Y.: Basic Books, 1974; and Ole R. Holsti and A.L. George, "The Effects of Stress on the Performance of

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B. Five Critical Procedural Tasks in Effective Decision Making

It is useful to remind ourselves at the outset that certain procedures are generally considered to be desirable in decision making. While adherence to these procedures does *not* guarantee high quality decisions in any given instance, nor does failure to do so necessarily result in a poor decision, most specialists in decision making believe that adherence to these procedures is likely to increase the probability of obtaining decisions of higher quality.

While specialists employ somewhat different terminologies in describing the desirable characteristics of decision-making procedure, there is substantial agreement that a policy-making process should accomplish the following tasks:

(1) Ensure that sufficient information about the situation at hand is obtained and that it is analyzed adequately so that it provides policy makers with an incisive and valid diagnosis of the problem;

(2) Facilitate consideration of *all* the major values and interests affected by the policy issue at hand. Thus, the initial objectives and goals established to guide development and appraisal of options should be examined to determine whether they express adequately the values and interests imbedded in the problem and, if necessary, objectives and goals should be reformulated;

(3) Assure search for a relatively wide range of options and a reasonably thorough evaluation of the expected consequences of each. The possible costs and risks of an option as well as its expected or hoped for benefits should be carefully assessed; uncertainties affecting these calculations should be identified, analyzed, and taken into account before determining the preferred course of action;

(4) Provide for careful consideration of the problems that may arise in implementing the options under consideration; such evaluations should be taken into account in weighing the attractiveness of the options under consideration; and

(5) Maintain receptivity to indications that current policies are not working out well, and an ability to learn from experience.

With this general model of effective decision making in mind we can better identify impediments to information processing that are likely to interfere with the performance of these five tasks.

Foreign Policy Makers," in C.P. Cotter, ed. *Political Science Annual*, Vol. 6, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975.

For a recent review of social psychological approaches to decision making, see Samuel A. Kirkpatrick, "Psychological Views of Decision Making," in C.P. Cotter, *op. cit.*

C. Sources of Impediments to Information Processing

The study considers, first, the *sources* of possible impediments to information processing. The most useful way of identifying these sources is to begin by taking note of the fact that a policy-making system is comprised of *individuals* who often come together in *small groups* within the framework of an *organization* that is characterized by hierarchy, division of labor, and specialization. It is not surprising, therefore, that sources of impediments to information processing are to be found in (1) the dynamics of individual behavior; (2) the ways in which small policy-making groups are structured, their internal processes managed, and their communications with outsiders regulated; (3) the patterns of behavior that emerge in complex organizations.

PART ONE of the study, which we shall now summarize, draws together in a systematic way available knowledge regarding the variety of often maladaptive ways in which individuals, small groups, and organizations deal with decision-making tasks. Many of these impediments stem from the very cognitive processes by means of which the human mind attempts to deal with complex policy problems that are characterized by value-complexity and uncertainty.

This is the focus of *Chapter II*, "Psychological Aspects of Decision-making," which discusses different ways in which individuals attempt to make decisions when policy issues are clouded by value complexity or when there is insufficient information and knowledge by means of which to calculate the expected consequences of different options. Thus, when a policy issue engages multiple competing values, the decision maker may find it difficult to devise a course of action that promises to safeguard all of these values and interests; he may be forced, instead, to determine his value priorities and choose among them. Value trade-off dilemmas of this kind are difficult to resolve by analytical techniques; they may create considerable frustration and psychological stress for the conscientious decision maker. To cope with or ward off the ensuing emotional malaise, he may resort to defensive modes of dealing with the value complexity imbedded in the policy issue.

We distinguish and discuss three different ways in which a policy maker may attempt to deal analytically or psychologically with value-complexity. First, he may attempt to *resolve* the value conflict, at least to his own satisfaction, by devising a course of action that seems to satisfy all of the competing values, either genuinely or in a spurious and illusory way. A second way is to *accept* the value conflict as unavoidable and to face up to the necessity to

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make a difficult trade-off choice. This, too, can be psychologically comforting for, after all, by doing so the decision maker is fulfilling one of the difficult responsibilities of leadership. But whether the decision maker correctly perceives the value-conflict as unavoidable and whether he deals adequately with the trade-off is another matter. Finally, the decision maker may find the value conflict imbedded in the policy issue so difficult to resolve and so distressing to contemplate that he may seek to *avoid* recognizing its existence or to play down its importance. This strictly defensive mode of coping may succeed in reducing or banishing the psychological malaise he would otherwise feel, but it may do so only at the cost of markedly impairing information processing and appraisal of options.

The decision maker is faced with another kind of difficulty when there is insufficient information about the situation and inadequate knowledge by means of which to assess the expected consequences of available options. Forced to act in the face of these uncertainties, when so much may be at stake, the decision maker may experience considerable malaise.

Studies of decision making under conditions of uncertainty indicate that there are a variety of psychological devices that can be employed by the individual to reduce or avoid the malaise of having to decide what to do in the face of incomplete information and inadequate knowledge. One of these devices, "defensive avoidance," provides an escape from worrying by not exposing oneself to cues that evoke awareness of a decisional dilemma. Defensive avoidance can take the form of procrastination—i.e. when a person seizes upon the fact that there is no immediate necessity for a decision to put the problem out of his mind, foregoing the opportunity for additional information search, appraisal, and realistic contingency planning.

Another type of defensive avoidance, "bolstering", may be resorted to when a decision cannot be put off because external pressures or a strict deadline demand action. In these circumstances, the individual may make the task of choosing easier for himself by re-evaluating the options before him, increasing the attractiveness of one option (which he will then select) and doing the opposite for competing options (which he will reject). "Bolstering", or "spreading the alternatives" as it is sometimes called, can result in distortion of information-processing and option appraisal. This is particularly likely when the decision maker, acting to cut short the malaise of a decisional dilemma, rushes his final choice, thereby foregoing the possibility of using the remaining time to obtain still additional information and advice. Supportive bolstering by sycophantic (or equally stressed) subordinates to the top decision maker can aggravate this danger.

In addition to these modes of defensive avoidance, which provide psychological assistance to enable a policy maker to come to a decision, there are a variety of cognitive aids to decision and simple decision rules that enable an individual to cope with the intellectual problem of what to do in the face of an issue that is clouded by uncertainty. The following six such aids to decision are discussed and illustrated in Chapter II: (1) the use of a "satisficing" rather than an "optimizing" decision rule; (2) the strategy of incrementalism; (3) "consensus politics"—i.e. deciding on the basis of what enough people want and will support rather than via an attempt to master the complexity of the policy issue; (4) use of historical analogies; (5) reliance upon ideology and general principles as guides to action; (6) application of beliefs about correct strategy and tactics.

While each of these aids to decision can facilitate the policy maker's choice, they can also have indirect and important consequences for the quality of information processing. There is a danger that an executive will resort *prematurely* to one of his favorite aids to decision or *rely too heavily* on it in reaching a decision. The result may well be to cut himself off from the possibility of benefiting from a broader or in-depth analysis of the problem that advisers or the organizational information-processing system can provide.

Chapter III, "The Importance of Beliefs and Images," views information processing from the perspective of cognitive psychology. The very processes of perception, cognition, calculation and choice are subject to inherent limits. The mind cannot perform without structuring reality, thereby often oversimplifying or distorting it. Nor, as cognitive psychologists have emphasized, can the mind function without seeking to make beliefs consistent with each other and incoming information consistent with existing beliefs. This deeply rooted striving for consistency (though it admits of exceptions) necessarily limits the flexibility and ingenuity with which an individual can recognize and deal with novel and complex features of foreign policy problems. Thus, information processing for policy making can be seriously impaired by the strong tendency displayed by individuals (and organizations, as well) to see only what they expect or want to see (the role of expectations or "mind-sets") and the tendency to assimilate incoming information to one's existing images, hypotheses, and theories.

Distorted information processing of this kind can contribute to an unjustified and dangerous lowering of one's guard—as, for example, when warning indicators of a military attack are rejected as inconsistent with pre-existing beliefs. Or, equally, it can lead to an unjustified and costly raising of one's guard—as, for example, when an opponent's fail-

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ure to cooperate is misread as evidence in support of a pre-existing belief regarding his hostility. A number of historical examples of these processes are presented in Chapter III, and particular attention is given there to the critical importance in foreign policy of understanding the opponent's perspective. One's image of the adversary includes an understanding of his ideology, his "operational code," and his mode of calculating utility and assessing risks. An incorrect image of the opponent can distort the appraisal of even good factual information on what he may do. Chapter III cites examples of this from the history of the Cold War.

To recognize the fact that all individuals must develop beliefs and constructs that simplify and structure the external world, and that consistency-striving in processing information is pervasive in human behavior, does not, however, require us to take a deterministic or fatalistic view with regard to the effects on policy making. That some manifestations of a policy-maker's consistency-striving are excessive and possibly harmful in decision making is something that he, or certainly other participants in policy making, are capable of recognizing and possibly correcting. The practical question is how to design and manage the policy making process in order to avoid forms of consistency-striving that are likely to severely narrow, distort, or curtail information processing and appraisal. Chapter III identifies a number of recognizable indicators that consistency-striving may have become excessive and that, therefore, greater vigilance in information processing may be required.

In *Chapter IV*, "Structure, Internal Processes, and Management of Small Groups," attention turns from the dynamics of individual behavior to small group processes. It is well known that foreign policy decisions are typically made in the setting of a small group in which the executive interacts with a relatively small number of close advisers. This chapter identifies additional sources of possible impediments to information processing and option appraisal that may be rooted in the structure, internal processes, and management of small policy making groups.

Small groups tend to have simpler internal role structures—that is, less differentiation of tasks, less division of labor and specialization within the group, and less formalized modes of procedure. Accordingly, there is less need of coordinating the activities of participants in small decision-making groups, and more of the time and energy of members can be focused directly on the problem-solving task. But the fact that relatively few individuals comprise the decision-making group may also mean that fewer policy options will be considered insofar as a smaller range of values, beliefs, and attitudes are then represented in the group and a reduced amount of knowledge and analytical skills is present within the group. To enhance the performance of small decision-making groups, therefore, it is often critical not only that a flow of relevant, timely information and advice be provided the group from outside sources but, equally important, that members of the group remain open and receptive to it.

Top-level officials and advisors comprising a small decision-making group tend to have broader perspectives and a less parochial view than individuals identified with departmental and agency interests. This may serve to improve the quality of decisions taken. But the smallness and hierarchical position of such groups may lead to new constraints and impediments. For when decision evolves to the top of an organization there is some risk that harassed senior officials will lose contact with sources of information and experts at lower levels. Specialists on organizational behavior have noted a marked tendency for the critical uncertainties identified in policy analyses provided by experts at lower levels of the organization to be left out, de-emphasized, or presented in an over-simplified manner when summaries of these analyses are transmitted upwards to top-level officials. To safeguard against these possibilities, the executive may be well-advised to assign the role of "expert's advocate" to some one in the small decision-making group who is indeed well-qualified to appreciate the complexities of the experts' reports and whose function it is to make sure that the group does not oversimplify the analytical summaries obtained from elsewhere in the organization.

The smallness of a decision group can be harmful also if it leads to increased pressure for conformity. Small groups are likely to be more cohesive because they provide fewer opportunities for sub-grouping and the intra-group conflicts associated with it. A particular danger in small decision groups is that irrelevant status characteristics or power-prestige differences among members may importantly influence their relationships, interactions, and performance of the tasks of policy analysis and appraisal of options.

Students of small group behavior used to emphasize the benefits of "cohesion," *i.e.* the members' positive valuation of the group and their motivation to continue to belong to it. While a certain degree of cohesiveness, solidarity, mutual esteem and liking may be necessary for group performance, it is increasingly recognized that highly cohesive groups are not necessarily high performance groups. This is particularly so when, as in foreign policy making, the group is under pressure to deal with situations in which the stakes are high. In these circumstances members of the group may begin to act as if maintaining group cohesion and well-being were the over-riding goal to the detriment of task-oriented activities.

Recent emphasis on the hazards of high group

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cohesion has led to the delineation of two different patterns of group conformity: firstly, the long familiar pattern of group pressure on individual members which leads them to hesitate to express doubts and misgivings regarding the dominant view being expressed out of fear of recrimination, anxiety about presenting a disloyal self-image, or fear of eviction from the group; and secondly, a less obvious pattern, labelled Groupthink by Professor Irving Janis, in which conformity springs from strong group cohesion brought about, or accentuated by a threatening, stressful environment. These two patterns of conformity pressures within the group can significantly lower group performance by introducing impediments to information processing and option appraisal. Historical examples of both types of conformity pressures, taken from recent American foreign policy, are cited in Chapter IV.

While conformity pressures are most likely to occur in small groups, smallness per se is not necessarily disruptive of effective information processing. What is critical is that the norms operating within the group emphasize the necessity for considering a reasonably wide range of options, for making realistic estimates of potential dangers and opportunities, and for avoiding the hazards of conformity pressures and practices which may lead to a premature stifling of diverse viewpoints. In Chapter IV and elsewhere in the report various suggestions are made for enhancing the quality of information processing and option appraisal within small decision-making groups.

Chapter V, "Organizational Behavior and Bureaucratic Politics," examines the larger sub-system within which the search for effective foreign policy takes place. Far from fulfilling the hopes of an earlier generation that modern principles of organization would strengthen the quest for more rational policies, the structural features of hierarchy, specialization, and centralization that characterize all complex organizations have produced chronic pathologies of information processing and appraisal. The various impediments that stem from patterns of organizational behavior and "bureaucratic politics" are briefly listed in Chapter V.

It is useful to be aware of the nature of impediments to information processing that can spring from individual behavior, from the structure and management of small policy-making groups, and from the stubborn dynamics of complex organizations. But knowledge of the *sources* of impediments is not sufficient by itself for practical purposes; what is needed, in addition, is a list of the *symptoms* of inadequate information processing to which these impediments give rise. Since the sources of impediments cannot be easily eliminated, the practical task is to institute preventive measures to reduce or minimize the impact which they are allowed to have upon policy making. For this purpose knowledge of the symptoms of inadequate information processing and appraisal can be helpful. It can sensitize those who participate in policy making and those who are responsible for maintaining effective procedures for policy making to quickly spot indications that information processing has become defective and to take corrective action.

To this end *Chapter VI,* "Some Possible (and Possibly Dangerous) Malfunctions of the Advisory Process," lists and illustrates nine types of "malfunctions" to which policy-making systems are prone. These malfunctions are not of a hypothetical kind; the chapter cites evidence which suggests that they occurred in recent historical cases of U.S. foreign policy making. These process malfunctions are of a general kind; they can occur under any model for organizing the foreign policy-making system—whether a highly-centralized White House-oriented system, a State-centered system, or a looser decentralized system. Whichever of these alternative organizational models is adopted, provision should be made within it to monitor the policy-making process in the interest of timely identification and correction of these malfunctions. Each process malfunction tends to have an adverse effect on one or another of the five important procedural tasks associated with effective decision making that were listed earlier. The nine types of malfunctions identified thus far include the following situations:

1. When the decision maker and his advisers agree too readily on the nature of the problem facing them and on a response to it.
2. When advisers and policy advocates take different positions and debate them before the executive but their disagreements do not cover the full range of relevant hypotheses and alternative options.
3. When there is no advocate for an unpopular policy option.
4. When advisers to the executive thrash out their disagreements over policy without the executive's knowledge, and confront him with a unanimous recommendation.
5. When advisers agree privately among themselves that the executive ought to face up to a difficult decision, but no one is willing to alert him to the need to do so.
6. When the executive, faced with an important problem to decide, is dependent upon a single channel of information.
7. When the key assumptions and premises of a plan which the executive is asked to adopt have been evaluated only by advocates of that option.
8. When the executive asks advisers for their opinions on a preferred course of action but does not request a qualified group to examine more carefully the negative judgment offered by one or more advisers.
9. When the executive is impressed by the con-

sensus among his advisers on behalf of a particular option but fails to ascertain how firm the consensus is, how it was achieved, and whether it is justified.

While the historical illustrations chosen to illustrate these malfunctions in Chapter VI are drawn from Presidential-level decision making in the sphere of foreign policy, similar malfunctions no doubt occur at lower levels in the organization as well. Nor are these malfunctions confined to the area of foreign policy or to policy making in government. Rather, the theory of malfunctions and the recommendation that efforts be made to monitor policy making to identify the emergence of such malfunctions and to take appropriate preventive action is presented here as having general applicability to a variety of policy-making systems.

D. Ways of Reducing Impediments to Information Processing

PART TWO of the study takes up ways in which impediments to information processing may be avoided or their harmful effects minimized. We begin in *Chapter VII* with a discussion of the role that the criterion of "national interest" might play in this respect. Foreign policy problems, as emphasized in Chapter II, typically engage a multiplicity of competing values and interests, so much so that policy makers often encounter great difficulty in reducing them to a single criterion or yardstick by means of which to judge which course of action is "best" in a given situation. In principle, the criterion of "national interest," which occupies a time-honored and revered place in the theory and practice of foreign policy, should assist decision makers to cut through much of this value complexity and help improve judgments regarding the proper ends and goals of foreign policy. In practice, however, "national interest" has become elastic and ambiguous, and its role as a criterion in foreign policy making obscure, problematical, and controversial.

Most thoughtful observers of foreign policy would readily agree that the "national interest" concept lends itself much more readily to being used as political rhetoric for legitimizing decisions and actions already taken than as an exact, well-defined criterion for determining what these policies should be. One reason for this difficulty is that "national interest", like "general welfare" and "public interest," constitutes what decision theorists refer to as a "nonoperational goal"—that is, it does not provide a measuring rod for comparing alternative policies. Such concepts can be related to specific choices of action only through consideration of the subgoals to which they are presumably related.

In Chapter VII we distinguish different types of national interests in order to clarify the concept and indicate how it might be employed more usefully. We believe that a strict notion of "irreducible" (or "vital") interests (referring to the three fundamental national values implied by the terms "physical survival," "liberty," and "economic subsistence") is necessary, in order to introduce discipline and restraint into the formulation of foreign policy. Even the criterion of "irreducible national interests" is not easily applied in practice, as a review of the foreign policy of successive Administrations since World War II suggests. The chapter also discusses other types of national interests and suggests procedures for applying them in the determination of foreign policy.

Another way in which some of the impediments discussed in PART ONE may be avoided or minimized is by improving the quality and relevance of knowledge available to policy makers about the various substantive activities such as deterrence, crisis management, alliance management, conciliation, etc. that comprise the means of furthering foreign policy goals. The lack of better knowledge and theory about these matters creates a vacuum, as it were, which gives impediments to information processing freer reign. *Chapter VIII* discusses the nature of policy-applicable knowledge and theory and suggests how it might be helpful at different stages in the decision-making process.

The next three *Chapters (IX, X, and XI)* discuss three procedural tools—the "devil's advocate", the "formal options" system, and "multiple advocacy" —that are often recommended and, on occasion have been employed in an effort to widen the range of information, options, and judgment before decisions are made. The uses and limitations of each of these three procedural devices is evaluated on the basis of available information on past experience with them.

Though a devil's advocate is not without value, it appears that this relatively simple device, even if effectively implemented, cannot possibly satisfy all the requirements for designing an effective policy-making system. Clearly, more comprehensive prescriptive theories or models of policy making are needed. Hence we proceed to a detailed examination of the rationale and modus operandi of the "formal options" system, and to an evaluation of the experience gained during its employment on President Nixon's behalf by Henry Kissinger during his service as Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.

The reality of the way in which a policy-making system operates is always more opaque and inconsistent than the clarity of the theoretical model which inspired its creation. For this reason it is particularly important to evaluate the performance of such a system in order to understand better its spe-

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cial requirements and vulnerabilities. In this way additional steps may be taken to improve performance. This is done in Chapter X for the "formal options" system and in Chapter XI for "multiple advocacy", which in important respects provides an alternative or supplement to the formal options system.

As outlined in this report, multiple advocacy is not a decentralized policy-making system. Rather it requires considerable executive initiative and centralized coordination of some of the activities of participants in policy making. The multiple advocacy model accepts the fact that disagreement over policy in one form or another is inevitable. The solution it strives for is not only to ensure that there will be multiple advocates but to do what can be done to provide each of them with at least the minimally necessary analytical and bureaucratic resources required for effective advocacy. These and other requirements for effective multiple advocacy are not easily met. As with the devil's advocate and formal options, multiple advocacy cannot be regarded as a panacea. It, too, has practical limits and costs attached to it, which are discussed in Chapter XI.

No president can effectively oversee the flow of security and foreign policy issues without major staff assistance. One of the most important developments in the organization of the government for foreign policy making was the introduction of the National Security Council in 1947. *Chapter XII* examines in detail the evolution of the role of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in successive administrations and the considerable augmentation of his tasks and responsibilities. A detailed description is provided of the steadily expanded "job description" of the Special Assistant. In addition to exercising responsibility for the role of "custodian-manager" of NSC procedures, the Special Assistant has acquired and performed five other important roles: policy adviser-advocate; policy spokesman-defender; political watch-dog for the president's power stakes; enforcer of policy decisions; and administrative operator.

These various responsibilities are not easily harmonized; the acquisition of so many important tasks has placed the Special Assistant not only in a powerful position but one in which his performance is bound to be affected by competing demands and, hence, by role conflict. What is of particular concern is that his ability to perform the basic custodial responsibility for maintaining adequate procedures, preventing impediments to information processing, ensuring balanced and dispassionate appraisal of options can be undermined by his effort to combine this role with that of policy adviser or policy advocate, policy spokesman and defender, watch-dog for the president's political interests, or administrative-operator for conduct and/or implementation of policy. Chapter XII reviews available evidence on performance of different individuals in the job of Special Assistant in successive administrations.

Fortunately, "formal options", "multiple advocacy", and the "devil's advocate" do not exhaust the devices available to a chief executive for broadening the perspective of departmental and agency officials, and ameliorating the impediments to information processing that can easily flow from this. *Chapter XIII,* "The Collegial Policy-making Group," discusses how the executive can restructure and redefine the roles of his departmental advisers in order to broaden the perspective with which they view policy problems. For various reasons, a more loosely structured and not overly formal milieu makes it easier for participants in such a group to free themselves from the constraints of organizational doctrines and from the tendency to overprotect the special interests of their sub-units and constituencies. Chapter XIII also discusses ways in which a collegial group can be managed to strengthen the analytic component of policy making as against the influence of bargaining considerations.

Throughout the report it is suggested that the pressures of international crises constitute a major source of impediments to information processing. Crises are stressful because they usually pose major threats to important values and require decision makers to respond rapidly. In addition, they often come as a surprise. These three familiar characteristics of crises—threat, surprise, short-response time—can easily create severe psychological stress in decision makers. To be sure, all studies of the effects of stress on performance indicate that up to a point stress can actually stimulate improvement in the performance of many tasks. But when stress becomes more acute and/or prolonged, a threshold is reached—which differs for different individuals—beyond which stress begins to degrade performance. The complex, demanding cognitive and judgmental tasks associated with foreign policy making are vulnerable when increased stress is placed on decision makers. In addition to international crises, many other events and situations encountered in the conduct of foreign policy share some of the same characteristics of threat, surprise, and short response-time. This is the case, for example, when decision makers must meet deadlines on important matters. Concern about the effects of stress upon performance, therefore, is not confined to international crises.

Chapter XIV, "Maintaining the Quality of Decision-making in Foreign Policy Crises," details the major kinds of impediments to information processing that are typically created when acute stress is experienced. It also addresses the problem of how to identify symptoms of acute stress and

manifestations of its disruptive impact on the decision process. Illustrative lists of these symptoms and their disruptive impacts are provided. The chapter also offers suggestions for training personnel engaged in policy making to be alert to these disruptive influences and lists various corrective actions that might be taken.

PART ONE:
SOME SOURCES OF IMPEDIMENTS
TO INFORMATION PROCESSING

CHAPTER II

Psychological Aspects of Decision-Making: Adapting to Constraints on Rational Decision-Making*

Much of foreign policy-making consists of efforts to calculate the utility of alternative courses of action. Rational calculation of this kind requires (1) *information* about the situation; (2) *substantive knowledge* of cause and effect relationships that is relevant for assessing the expected consequences of alternative courses of action; and (3) a way of applying the *values* and interests engaged by the problem at hand in order to judge which course of action is "best" and/or least costly, and which, therefore, should be chosen.

These three requirements are imperfectly met by the way in which most foreign policy issues present themselves. As a result, the policy-maker must proceed under the handicap of severe constraints on the possibility of meeting these requirements of rational decision-making. These constraints are often referred to as the problems of "value-complexity" and "uncertainty." It is a central thesis of this chapter that these constraints on rational decision-making are capable of generating psychological stress in policy-makers that can impair adaptive responses to the policy issues in question. The stressful emotional pressures of decision-making can be dealt with by the individual either by *analytical* modes of coping with value-complexity and uncertainty or by *defensive* modes of coping with the malaise they engender. This chapter discusses these different modes of coping with value-complexity and uncertainty and calls attention to their implications for information processing and appraisal. The following chapter will discuss the role which certain types of beliefs and images held by decision-makers play in information processing. We shall defer for subsequent chapters a discussion of the ways in which small group dynamics and organizational processes can affect the individual decision-maker's quest for effective policies. The reader should keep in mind that the individual decision-maker's efforts to process and appraise information can be affected in many ways by processes associated with the small advisory groups in which he participates and by the organizational behavior around him.

A. Value-complexity and Uncertainty: Some Definitions

A brief statement of what is meant by "value-complexity" and by "uncertainty" is useful at the outset. "Value-complexity" refers to the presence of multiple, competing values and interests that are imbedded in a single issue. When this is the case, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the decision-maker to formulate a single yardstick that encompasses and aggregates all of the competing values and interests. Lacking a single criterion of utility, the decision-maker may experience great difficulty judging which course of action is "best" on an overall basis. He is confronted instead by a value-trade-off problem which can be extremely difficult and painful to deal with. In order to do so he may attempt to order his value priorities and decide which of the competing values and interests to pursue in the given situation at the expense of the other values and interests that are also at stake. Value trade-off decisions of this kind are often extremely stressful for the decision-maker. Neither the analytical nor the defensive modes of coping with value-com-

*In preparing this chapter, I have drawn on my earlier discussion of some of these problems in "Adaptation to Stress in Political Decision Making", in George V. Coelho, David A. Hamburg, and John E. Adams (eds.), *Coping and Adaptation*, New York: Basic Books, 1974. I have benefited from the many useful comments on an earlier draft provided by Professors Robert Jervis, U.C.L.A., John Steinbruner, Harvard University, and Irving L. Janis, Yale University. In addition, all three have generously allowed me to consult manuscripts of forthcoming publications of their own. Useful comments on an earlier draft were received also from Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Ole R. Holsti, and E. Raymond Platig.

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plexity adopted by the decision-maker may be conducive to sound policy even though they may be successful in relieving or reducing the malaise he experiences.

As we shall note in Chapter VII, the decision-maker's effort to apply the criterion of "national interest" in deciding what course of action is "best" does not enable him to escape the problem of value-complexity or to cope with it easily and satisfactorily. For, not only has the concept of national interest been stretched to encompass a variety of values and interests, even the more rigorously delimited notion of "vital" or "irreducible" national interests includes several fundamental values that compete and conflict with each other in many situations which foreign policy-makers must deal with.

Finally, we take note of the fact that the effect of value-complexity on decision-making can be considerably accentuated by what has been referred to as "value extension",[1] *i.e.* the all too familiar tendency of policy issues to arouse a variety of motives and interests that are extraneous to values associated with even a very broad conception of the "national interest." Thus foreign policy issues and the circumstances in which they arise may arouse the policy-maker's personal motives and values, his political interests or those of the administration or political party to which he belongs. This is not surprising since the way in which a policy-maker deals with a particular foreign policy problem can indeed have important consequences for his personal well-being and political fortunes: thus, it can:

- satisfy or frustrate personal values held by the policy-maker;
- provide an outlet for expressing his deep-seated motives and impulses;
- obtain approval or disapproval from those who are significant figures in his life;
- enhance or damage his self-esteem;
- advance or set back his career prospects;
- strengthen or weaken his bureaucratic resources.

At times the policy-maker's personal stakes in a foreign policy issue may lead him in the same direction as his objective conception of where the national interest lies. But often, whether he is aware of his personal motives and interests or attempts to repress such awareness, they add to the problem of value-complexity and exacerbate his value conflicts. As a result, the dilemma of choice the decision-maker experiences can become accentuated, and the value trade-off problem he faces in trying to decide what to do may become even more difficult. Finally, the decision-maker may be willing or unwilling, able or unable, to prevent his personal motives and interests from affecting his perception of the policy problem and his judgment in dealing with it.

"Uncertainty," as the term is used here, refers to the lack of adequate information about the situation at hand and/or the inadequacy of available general knowledge needed for assessing the expected outcomes of different courses of action. Uncertainty complicates the task of making good assessments of the problem facing the decision-maker and the additional task of deciding how to deal with it. In the face of uncertainty the decision-maker has difficulty in making reliable cost-benefit appraisals of the alternative courses of action under consideration. He is faced with the necessity of choosing from among the options without a firm basis for confidence in his judgment. Uncertainty of this kind adds to the stress of decision-making. This is an important consideration to keep in mind when focussing upon emotional and psychological factors that can affect decision-making. Some of the ways available to individuals and organizations for coping with stress induced by uncertainty can seriously degrade the quality and effectiveness of the decisions that emerge.

Together, the presence of value-complexity and uncertainty impose severe limits on the possibility of raising policy-making to the level of rationality associated with models of "pure" rationality in decision theory.[2] Very often, both value-complexity and uncertainty are present in a problem which the policy-maker is trying to decide. For purposes of analysis and presentation, however, we shall deal with them separately in this chapter.

B. Dealing with Value-Complexity

There are, as decision theorists have emphasized, analytical ways of dealing with value-complexity in choice situations in order to strive for as "efficient" and acceptable a solution to such problems as possible. We shall not review this technical literature here, nor attempt to judge how germane it is for different types of foreign policy problems. Such analytical techniques may be relevant in principle but, for various reasons, difficult to apply in practice in the settings in which foreign policy decisions are made. Besides, decision-makers often do not

[1]The concept of "value extension" is taken from the valuable discussion of constraints on rational decision-making in John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, Princeton University Press, 1974.

[2]For useful discussions of these cognitive limits on rational choice and some of their implications in the arena of political decision-making, see for example, James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations* (New York: Wiley, 1958); and Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through'," *Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (Spring 1959), pp. 79–88.

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behave in dealing with value-complexity as decision theorists say they should.

For whatever set of reasons, the decision-maker may find that an analytical approach does not enable him to maximize all the values and interests engaged by a given policy issue. He may search for, but be unable to find, a course of action that promises to safeguard all of the multiple stakes aroused for him by that issue. Faced with this dilemma, he may attempt to deal with it strategically as, for example, by assigning higher priority to achieving some of the values and interests at stake and by utilizing available information and analytical skills as best he can for this purpose. But even a strategic approach for dealing with difficult value trade-offs may not be wholly successful and may result in the decision-maker experiencing considerable frustration, anxiety, self-doubts, etc. To cope with the ensuing emotional stress, he may react defensively in ways that may further prejudice the possibilities for a more satisfactory response to the policy problem. In sum, the decision-maker may deal with value-complexity analytically and strategically; or he may resort to defensive psychological modes of coping with the emotional stress of being faced by difficult value trade-off problems. It is also possible that his response will include elements of both analytical-strategic and defensive modes of coping.

It is useful to distinguish three different ways in which a policy-maker may attempt to deal with the malaise associated with value-complexity. First, he may *resolve* the value conflict, at least in his own mind, by devising a course of action that constitutes either a genuinely creative analytical solution to the problem or a spurious and illusory resolution of it that may also be psychologically comforting even though analytically defective. A second way is to *accept* the value conflict as unavoidable and to face up to the need to make the difficult trade-off choice as part of one's role requirements as a decision-maker. This, too, can be psychologically comforting; but whether the decision-maker is correct in perceiving the value conflict as unavoidable and whether he deals adequately with the trade-off is another matter. Finally, the decision-maker may seek to *avoid* a value conflict by denying its existence or playing down its importance. This strictly defensive mode of coping may succeed in reducing or banishing psychological stress, but it may do so only at the cost of markedly impairing information processing and appraisal. Let us examine these three modes of dealing with value-complexity more closely.

1. VALUE-CONFLICT RESOLUTION

This way of dealing with value-complexity takes the form of attempting to satisfy, to some extent at least, all of the competing values and interests of which one is aware. This is usually a formidable task, if not an impossible one. But, if the policy-maker is successful in doing so, the rewards are considerable; not only does he achieve a high quality decision, he derives inner psychological satisfaction from doing so and may also expect political benefits from satisfying many different constituencies. Particularly in a democracy or in a pluralistic policy-making system the executive is under strong temptation and indeed often under strong political pressure to try to reconcile conflicting values imbedded in an issue he must decide. In these circumstances, the inventive executive may indeed come up with a creative, novel option that genuinely resolves the apparent value conflict, demonstrating thereby that the values in question were really congruent. More often, the best that can be done is the lesser, but still significant achievement of reconciling the value conflict through some kind of compromise. The weaker solution of value compromise may result in a policy that sacrifices the quality of the decision for greater acceptability.

The resolution of value conflict may be attained in one of two ways: (1) by inventing a single policy that yields some satisfaction for each of the multiple interests and values at stake; or (2) by staging or scheduling satisfaction for these values/interests via a series of separate actions or policies over a longer period of time. In the latter case, the policy-maker realizes that the value trade-off problem cannot be avoided entirely. His initial action is designed to promote only some of the competing values/interests; he may try to promote the remaining values/interests damaged or neglected by his initial policy by additional actions shortly thereafter. This type of "scheduling" may prove to be beneficial or damaging to foreign policy objectives, depending on circumstances and the perspicacity of the policy-maker. Inept "scheduling", of course, may produce a policy that is incoherent and inconsistent.

We have to recognize that, however effective in relieving the policy-maker's psychological stress, efforts to resolve value conflicts may in fact be unrealistic, spurious, and illusory. Some value conflicts simply cannot be resolved. Efforts to do so may actually impede the search for effective policies, resulting in highly questionable compromises of all or most of the values imbedded in the issue. A decision-maker who impulsively or rigidly strives to resolve or reconcile value conflicts shirks thereby his responsibility to determine value priorities and to make reasoned trade-off choices. Thus, while value-conflict resolution is the best strategy when it is possible and skillfully done, it is often not feasible and other strategies for dealing with the problem posed by conflicting values are then preferable.

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2. VALUE-CONFLICT ACCEPTANCE

In this way of dealing with a complex mix of values the decision-maker faces up to the fact that a difficult choice among them must be made. It is important, however, that he should not determine value priorities *prematurely;* rather, he should maintain unimpaired receptivity to information that illuminates the full range of values imbedded in the issue. Only then should he proceed to make a reasoned, conscientious determination of value priorities in order to resolve the trade-off problem that confronts him.

To do so requires the policy-maker to accept the fact that he has to put aside or give lesser weight to some salient values and interests in order to advance those judged to be of greater importance or, at least, those with the greatest chance of being realized in the situation at hand. Ideally, he does so without engaging in a fruitless effort to achieve a genuine, full resolution of the value conflict or resorting to defensive psychological mechanisms of denying or minimizing the conflict.

Some decision-makers are evidently better able than others to deal with value conflicts in this manner. It is, of course, one of the major role tasks of a leader that he accept the responsibility to make difficult trade-off choices of this kind. Harry Truman appears to have been unusually successful in avoiding the stresses of decision-making by identifying with this leadership requirement. Identification with the role may bring with it an understanding and acceptance of the fact that one cannot be an executive without facing up to the fact that there will be occasions on which one simply cannot make a good decision without sacrifice of some of one's own interests or those of others. We may recall that it was Truman who made the difficult decision (which cost him a great deal politically but evidently not much by way of psychological distress) to withdraw U.S. backing from Chiang Kai-shek in 1949, and who later resisted strong domestic pressure (again at high political cost to himself and his party but without much evidence of emotional stress) to expand the Korean War against the Chinese mainland.

By identifying with the role of executive and viewing oneself as being a role-player, the individual may find it possible to make difficult decisions with greater detachment and also with greater sensitivity to priorities among competing interests and values. At the same time, being a good role-player may enable the individual to experience less stress and less personal damage when he is obliged to make a decision that sacrifices some interests. For then he may see these losses as an unavoidable consequence of fulfilling his role requirements, which oblige him to make the best possible decision that focusses on the most important of the various stakes at issue. Finally, by fulfilling difficult role requirements of this kind, as Truman did, the individual may in fact derive personal satisfaction—if not also the respect and praise of others—that bolsters and protects his self-esteem.

But, as with the first mode of dealing with the analytical difficulty and psychological stress of value-complexity which has already been discussed, this second mode, too, may be performed ineptly so far as its impact on foreign policy is concerned. Critical in this respect is whether the decision-maker is correct in perceiving a value conflict as being unavoidable. As a matter of fact, he may arrive at this conclusion *prematurely* without adequate information or analysis of the policy problem. Being a good role player, insofar as concerns fulfilling the requirement to make difficult decisions when necessary, does not guarantee good judgment; nor did it prevent Truman, who tended to be overly eager to appear "decisive," from acting impulsively on occasion.

In sum, the two ways for dealing with value-complexity that we have discussed thus far may be successful in relieving or avoiding psychological malaise, but their consequences for the quality of a leader's decisions is another matter and can be either beneficial or harmful. This danger is much more pronounced when the decision-maker seeks to *avoid* a value conflict by denying its existence or minimizing its true importance. It is to this defensive mode of coping with value-complexity that we now turn.

3. VALUE-CONFLICT AVOIDANCE

To avoid or minimize the psychological malaise created for him by perception of important value conflicts an individual may resort to the tactics of ignoring or playing down some of the competing values and interests that are imbedded in the decisional problem. Defensive maneuvers of this kind have received considerable attention in psychological studies of decisional stress. A variety of psychological devices are available to any individual for reducing his perception of a value conflict that would otherwise create severe stress. These mechanisms are described in various psychological theories of balance, consistency, dissonance, and conflict. The two which seem of greatest importance here are "cognitive restructuring" and "devaluation."

In the first of these, cognitive restructuring, the individual finds a way of turning aside incoming information that calls attention to or heightens a value conflict. Thus, he may ignore, discount, deny, forget, or unintentionally misinterpret information about some of the competing values. In "devalua-

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tion", on the other hand, the individual downgrades one of the values or interests that he or others close to him hold. Doing so minimizes the value conflict he would otherwise experience and makes it more manageable, psychologically and analytically. Devaluation may lead the individual to reduce or abandon his identification with significant others who are going to be damaged as a result of his ignoring their interests or values. The decision-maker may cut out of his consultations those holding the devalued values, or refuse to credit the information they put before him, or even denigrate them before others.

Avoiding value conflicts in these two ways is more likely to impede information processing than other mechanisms that may also be utilized for the same purpose.[3] Thus, cognitive restructuring and devaluation are likely to distort the decision-maker's perception of the full range of values imbedded in the issue and hamper appraisal of options that best deal with the multiplicity of values and interests at stake.

Cognitive restructuring exemplifies a more general tendency displayed by individuals and organizations to see what they expect to see and to assimilate incoming information to preexisting images, beliefs, hypotheses and theories. We deal in some detail with this tendency, often referred to by cognitive psychologists as "consistency-striving," in the next chapter. Here we shall illustrate how consistency-striving may contribute to the decision-maker's avoidance of value trade-off problems.[4]

Truman's decision to use the Seventh Fleet to "neutralize" Formosa early in the Korean War provides a possible example of how policy-makers can avoid recognizing a value trade-off problem. Truman and his advisors could think immediately of several good reasons for interposing the Seventh Fleet between Formosa and the Chinese mainland; but the historical record gives no indication whatsoever that they recognized, let alone discussed, that other U.S. interests would be jeopardized by this move. The "neutralization" of Formosa involved the United States once more in the Chinese civil war. While offered as a temporary move, the use of the Seventh Fleet for this purpose set into motion a reversal of Truman's policy of disengaging the United States from the fate of the Nationalist regime which had fallen back from the mainland to Formosa.[5]

Choices are indeed easier when there is no need to consider value trade-offs. Avoidance of value complexity is particularly likely, as Jervis notes, when a decision-maker initially considers only one or two of the values involved in the problem at hand and comes to favor a particular policy for dealing with it because it seems appropriate for safeguarding or enhancing those particular values. Later, when he becomes aware that other important values and interests are also imbedded in the problem, he may proceed to bolster his premature adherence to a favored policy option by finding questionable or ill-considered arguments for believing that the same action will also somehow safeguard, or at least not seriously damage, the other values and interests. As a result, the process of information "search" and "appraisal" is inhibited and cut short before the decision-maker has examined the range of values at stake more fully and weighed the evidence of a conflict among them more carefully.

Psychological avoidance of hard choices may be detected also in instances when foreign policy-makers fail to recognize that the set of goals they are pursuing are in fact likely to be inconsistent with one another. Thus, for example, as World War II drew to an end American policy-makers were disposed to agree that the Soviet Union's security requirements made it necessary for her to have friendly regimes on its borders in Eastern Europe; but, at the same time, American leaders also strongly embraced the idea of free elections in East Europe. President Roosevelt appears to have avoided a clear recognition of the likely incompatibility of these two goals—and hence a dilemma for U.S. policy—by embracing the optimistic but highly questionable expectation, which he stated at the Yalta Conference, that free elections in Eastern Europe would result in governments "thoroughly friendly to the Soviet [Union] for years to come." Roosevelt's unwillingness to contemplate that East European governments formed via free elections might be hostile to the Soviet Union made it possible for U.S. foreign policy to embrace what were in fact mutually incompatible objectives, thus laying the groundwork for further exacerbation of Soviet-American relations later on.[6]

[3]For example, after having made a decision that ignores or gives insufficient weight to some values the policy-maker may attempt to convince those damaged by his action that it was the right or necessary thing to do, or to demonstrate that he is a worthwhile person who is still identified with their interests and welfare, or to resort to acts of expiation or asceticism in order to relieve the self-disapproval or guilt he experiences as a result of having acted contrary to their interests and values.

[4]Robert Jervis deals with the phenomenon of "irrational consistency" and its role in denial of value trade-off problems in considerable detail in his forthcoming study, *Perception and Misperception in International Relations.*

[5]For a detailed discussion see Joseph de Rivera, *The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy,* Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1968; pp. 85–94.

[6]This example is taken from Robert Jervis, *op. cit.* Of course, we cannot be certain of the psychological explanation advanced here for Roosevelt's policy. It is possible that Roosevelt was well aware that the East European governments might prove to be hostile to the U.S.S.R. but accepted that possibility as a calculated risk.

As this case illustrates, the failure of policy-makers to perceive an admittedly difficult value trade-off spawns unrealistic policies that can prove damaging to the realization of either of the conflicting objectives. It is well to recognize that excessive consistency-striving is often abetted, as in the case just cited, by the *political* constraints under which policy-makers operate. To face up to the necessity for choice can sometimes entail severe political costs, whichever way the value trade-off is resolved. Perception of value conflicts can be blurred, moreover, when—as is often the case when policy-makers attempt to assess the "national interest"—the values in question are vague or ill-defined. Perception of value trade-offs can be muted also when the impact of the policy chosen upon the values in question will not be felt immediately and when the longer-term consequences of the policy cannot be reliably predicted.

C. Dealing with Uncertainty

When the information and knowledge needed for making an important decision is inadequate, this, too, can create emotional stress for the executive.[7] Thus, in a pioneering essay on political decision-making many years ago, three political scientists called attention to the need to look for the "devices" employed by decision-makers to minimize "the psychological tensions which accompany decision-making under circumstances of uncertainty and lack of complete information." Continuing, they asked: How do decision-makers learn to live with the possibility of "unacceptable error"? And what effects do the devices used to cope with uncertainty have on their deliberations?[8] We shall list and discuss briefly a number of well-known ways in which individuals deal with uncertainty in making decisions. Some of these devices serve to minimize psychological tension for the decision-maker without necessarily helping him to deal effectively with the situation.

1. CALCULATED PROCRASTINATION

It is understandable that in the face of stress induced by uncertainty executives often find it difficult to act. Indeed, some leaders go so far as to conclude that the best strategy of leadership is to do as little as possible, hoping that the problems that seem to require their attention will go away or find some other solution.

Of the many executives in political life or in other sectors of society who have adopted this philosophy as a strategy for dealing with decisional uncertainty, it will suffice to take note of Calvin Coolidge's well-known principle of "calculated inactivity." As one political scientist has put it, Coolidge's strategy in the presidency "was to 'sit down and keep still' in the face of problems rather than to confront them, to 'remain silent until an issue is reduced to its lowest terms, until it boils down to something like a moral issue.' 'If you see ten troubles coming down the road, you can be sure that nine will run down into the ditch before they reach you and you have to battle with only one.' "[9]

The philosophy of "calculated procrastination" may be surprisingly effective under some circumstances, but it carries with it the risk that the executive will be confronted by acute crises more often than would otherwise have been the case had he taken action on a timely basis to deal with emerging problems.

2. DEFENSIVE PROCRASTINATION[10]

While some executives adopt the general *strategy* of "calculated procrastination" to deal with uncertainty in a variety of situations, many more executives will resort to the *tactic* of procrastination only on occasion. It is useful in this connection to distinguish between "rational (or calculated) procrastination" and "defensive procrastination." When the relative merits of alternative courses of action for dealing with a particular problem are clouded by uncertainty it may be quite rational to postpone making a decision if (a) there is no time pressure to do so, or (b) there is some reason to hope that more information and a better appraisal of the problem and of the options may be available later on; or (c) there is reason to believe that the situation itself may improve.

"Defensive procrastination" occurs, on the other hand, when a person seizes upon the fact that there is no immediate necessity for a decision to escape from the decisional conflict that the uncertainty has created by putting the problem out of his mind and

[7]A particularly vivid example of the stress produced for an executive by his inability to cope with decisional complexity is provided by President Warren G. Harding. On one occasion Harding unburdened himself to a friend:

"John, I can't make a damn thing out of this tax problem. I listen to one side and they seem right, and then God! I talk to the other side and they seem just as right, and there I am where I started. I know somewhere there is a book that would give me the truth, but hell, I couldn't read the book. I know somewhere there is an economist who knows the truth, but I don't know where to find him and haven't the sense to know him and trust him when I did find him. God, what a job!" (Quoted by Richard Fenno, *The President's Cabinet*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959; pp. 40–1).

[8]R.C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, B. Sapin, *Foreign Policy Decision-making*, New York: Free Press, 1962; p. 167.

[9]Fenno, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–1.

[10]The discussion of "defensive procrastination" here and the discussion below of "hypervigilance", "defensive avoidance," and "bolstering" draw in part on the work of Irving L. Janis. See particularly I. L. Janis and L. Mann, *Decision Making: A Social Psychological Analysis* (forthcoming).

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turning his attention to other matters. (Delegating the problem to an assistant or to a committee, in effect for "burial," can facilitate defensive procrastination.) A person who engages in "defensive procrastination" displays lack of interest in the issue thereafter, with the consequence that he foregoes further information search, appraisal, and contingency planning. In contrast, the person who engages in "rational procrastination" sees to it that active search, appraisal, and contingency planning continue.

In brief, whereas the defensive procrastinator "leaves the field" in order to escape the unpleasantness of uncertainty, the rational procrastinator *uses* the time the lack of a deadline offers, taking steps to reduce the uncertainty that plagues the decision he will have to make.

Examples of both kinds of procrastination can be found in the conduct of foreign policy. In the management of conflict relations with other states decision-making is often geared to externally-imposed time pressure, by deadlines implicit in rapidly developing situations or deliberately created by other actors in the international arena. Viewed from this standpoint international crises may have a necessary and useful catalytic function in forcing foreign policy-makers to come to grips with and to decide difficult issues on which they would rather procrastinate. A similar function may be performed, of course, by a variety of other events—for example, Congressional budget hearings, summit meetings, press conferences, etc.

At the same time, however, several examples can be cited of the decision-maker's resort to defensive procrastination when the time pressure and urgency that had initially galvanized him into addressing a difficult issue was removed with the passing of the crisis. Thus, when the Taiwan Strait crisis reached a peak of war tension in March 1955 Eisenhower sent a high-level delegation to Formosa to persuade Chiang Kai-shek to thin out his forces on the Offshore Islands. When the crisis suddenly calmed down, Eisenhower's interest in the problem quickly evaporated. This despite the fact that there was every reason to expect that the crisis would probably erupt again in the future, with the prospect that Chiang's heavy deployment of troops on the Offshore Islands would once again complicate U.S. policy. In fact, after the crisis was over Chiang proceeded to *increase* the size of his forces on the Offshore Islands without objection from Washington. As a result, when tension in the Taiwan Strait erupted again in 1958 the Administration had even less freedom of action than in 1955. Again Eisenhower sent a high-level emissary to Chiang, but with the waning of the crisis the salience of the issue declined and, once again, the Administration turned its attention to other matters.

3. DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY UNDER TIME PRESSURE

We have noted that in the face of uncertainty imbedded in complex issues executives often find it difficult to act. How *does* a leader overcome such inhibitions? There are, after all, many situations in which the policy maker has to decide what to do even when the relative merits of alternative options are by no means clear and when he perceives serious risks in any course of action. Self-imposed deadlines[11] and time pressures facilitate choice in such situations, but they do not by themselves make it easier for the decision-maker to cope with the malaise of having to make an important decision in a matter that is laden with uncertainty. What, we may ask, does forced choice under these circumstances do to the quality of search and appraisal?

Social psychologists who have studied decision-making under circumstances of this kind have noted two different ways in which information processing and appraisal can be impaired. One type of impairment results from "hypervigilance"; the other from "defensive avoidance." The first refers to a panic-like state of mind that is accompanied by a marked loss of cognitive efficiency. The second refers to psychological devices used to escape from current worrying about a decision by not exposing oneself to cues that evoke awareness of a decisional conflict or dilemma that is fraught with potential losses. While hypervigilance is relatively rare, defensive avoidance is a highly pervasive tendency that is encountered in many different types of decisions whether in business, family affairs, or in politics.[12]

We have already discussed one type of defensive avoidance, namely "defensive procrastination." Another manifestation of defensive avoidance is what is sometimes called "bolstering," a phenomenon that occupies a prominent role in the theory of cognitive dissonance and in related social psychological theories.

4. "BOLSTERING"

"Bolstering" refers to the psychological tendency under certain conditions of decisional stress to increase the attractiveness of a preferred (or cho-

[11]The importance of deadlines and the functions they serve has been stressed in the work of a number of specialists on organizational decision-making. For a summary of research findings see the Ph.D. dissertation by Lennart A. Arvedson, *Deadlines and Organizational Behavior*, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, July 1974.

[12]As Janis notes (in a personal communication), defensive avoidance is probably rare when different persons at different levels of an organization work independently on a policy problem, insofar as this increases the likelihood that flimsy rationalizations entertained by any one person or group will be challenged by others. The absence of such conditions, on the other hand, is likely to increase the incidence of defensive avoidance.

sen) option and doing the opposite for options which one is inclined to reject (or has rejected). Thus, the expected gains from the preferred alternative are magnified and its expected costs/risks are minimized. Similarly, the expected gains from rejected alternatives are downgraded, their expected costs/risks are magnified.

It is important to note that bolstering makes the decision-maker's task of choosing what to do easier; it reduces the malaise of making a decision that is clouded by uncertainty.[13] It does so by *"spreading the alternatives"*, *i.e.* making one option seem more attractive than the alternative options. Thus, bolstering is accompanied by *distorted information-processing and appraisal.*

Bolstering can occur before a decision is made as well as, perhaps more often, afterwards.[14] Pre-decisional bolstering occurs when the decision-maker believes that a firm deadline for decision is approaching and when he believes that he will not obtain additional relevant information of much consequence. He will then move towards closure by selecting what he regards as the least objectionable alternative, and then consolidate his choice by reinterpreting the uncertainties to make it appear more attractive than it has seemed to be earlier.

It should be noted that the decision-maker's belief that there is little time left to make the decision and his belief that no additional useful information can be expected may both be in error. In order to cut short the stress and malaise of a decisional dilemma he may rush his decision, thereby foregoing the possibility of using the remaining time to obtain still additional information and advice. In other words anxiety and stress may push the decision-maker towards premature closure, cutting off search and appraisal in the interest of resolving his decisional dilemma via bolstering. Supportive bolstering by sycophantic (or equally troubled) subordinates can aggravate this danger.[15]

It has to be recognized, of course, that bolstering can be of positive value to the decision-maker if it is preceded by search and appraisal that is as thorough as circumstances permit. Then a last-minute bolstering—one that does not cut short search and appraisal—can help the decision-maker to avoid suffering gnawing self-doubts that can further drain his time and energy. Of course, if carried too far in this respect last-minute bolstering may render the decision-maker less capable of monitoring the consequences of his decision and less inclined to reconsider his policy on the basis of evidence that it is not working.

A variety of rationalizations and other psychological devices may be utilized by the decision-maker who resorts to bolstering in order to achieve the comforting feeling that the action he is taking is likely to lead to a successful outcome. An *incomplete* list includes the following:

(1) He may convert the genuine uncertainty that exists as to the likelihood of different outcomes into spuriously calculated risks to which he assigns probabilities;

(2) he may distort the estimate of the probability of future events, exaggerating the likelihood that his action will lead to a favorable outcome and minimizing the likelihood of an unfavorable outcome;

(3) he may exaggerate in his own mind possibilities open to him for reversing his decision, should it turn out badly, or for limiting or correcting whatever undesirable effects it may have;

(4) he may reevaluate some of the negative consequences his decision may entail by attributing certain longer-range benefits to them;

(5) he may engage in wishful thinking as to the likelihood that the risks of his policy will materialize, if at all, only in the long-run whereas its benefits will emerge more quickly;

(6) he may attempt to convince himself that if his policy fails, its failure will at least not be highly and widely visible or that he will not in any case be held personally responsible for its failure;

(7) he may believe that even if his policy fails in the end, it will have done enough good to have been worthwhile.[16]

The shallowness of rationalizations of this kind is always clearer in the aftermath of a policy fiasco. Thus Kennedy and his advisers, heavily bolstering the decision to allow the Bay of Pigs invasion, managed to convince themselves that the United States' role in the invasion would not become known. During the Korean War Truman and Acheson bolstered their decision to allow MacArthur to occupy North Korea by assuming that, should the Russians or Chinese intervene, they would be able to reverse the decision or at least limit the undesirable consequences. And in 1965 President Johnson and many of his advisers bolstered their decision to use air power against North Vietnam with the opti-

[13]Bolstering also occurs when the decision-maker resorts to consistency-striving devices to avoid value trade-off problems (see above, pp. 15ff); the present discussion focusses on its use in dealing with uncertainty, as defined here.

[14]This is still something of a controversial issue among social psychologists, with some of those associated with cognitive dissonance theory holding that bolstering or dissonance-reduction occurs only *after* a decision is made. However, Janis and Mann *(op. cit.)* present evidence that under certain conditions bolstering occurs *before* a decision is made.

[15]I am indebted for the last point to Lincoln Bloomfield (personal communication).

[16]This seventh type of rationalization is suggested by Robert Jervis, *op. cit.*, who gives as an example the argument of the type made by McGeorge Bundy in February 1965 for the bombing of North Vietnam.

mistic expectation that a prolonged bombing campaign would not be necessary and that the war would end "soon."

5. THE USE OF AIDS TO DECISION AND SIMPLE DECISION RULES

In addition to "bolstering", which provides *psychological* assistance for enabling the policy-maker to come to a decision, there are a variety of *cognitive aids* that enable him to cope with the intellectual problem of deciding what to do in the face of uncertainty.[17]

Most individuals have learned to diagnose new situations even when the available information is ambiguous or incomplete. And most individuals have also acquired ways of choosing among alternative courses of action even when limitations of knowledge and information exclude the possibility of assessing the expected outcomes by applying a comprehensive, rigorous analytic model. Let us review quickly some of the major decision rules and strategies employed to cope with decisional uncertainty.

a. *The use of a "satisficing" rather than an "optimizing" decision rule.* [18] Because the search for a course of action that will yield the highest possible pay-off is often impractical, most people settle for a course of action that is "good enough", one that offers a sufficient rather than a maximum payoff. Not only does the use of "satisficing" as a decision rule fit the severe limitations of man's capacity to process information—and, only to a lesser extent, that of organizations as well—it is also an appropriate way of adjusting to the fact that to apply an "optimizing" decision rule requires enormous quantities of information and analytical resources such as are often simply not available or could be obtained only at great cost.

A distinction needs to be made between the most limited application of the "satisficing" criterion in which the decision-maker selects the first option coming to his attention that offers some degree of improvement over the present state of affairs, and "satisficing" after a more persistent search for an option that does better than others that have been considered.

b. *The strategy of "incrementalism."* [19] Incrementalism converts the "satisficing" decision rule for dealing with uncertainty for any single decision problem into a strategy covering a whole sequence of decisions aimed at improving the present state of affairs gradually by means of small steps. The incremental approach recommends itself to leaders when they find it difficult to obtain agreement on longer-range objectives and when the knowledge and information needed to devise more comprehensive plans to achieve them is in any case lacking. Under these circumstances a decision-maker employing the incremental strategy will consider a narrow range of policy alternatives that differ only slightly from existing policies and aim at securing marginal rather than dramatic improvements. The strategy relies on feed-back as part of a "remedial", "serial", "exploratory" attack on the problem at issue—hence the description of incrementalist strategy as "the art of muddling through."

While the incrementalist approach may recommend itself to the policy-maker as a way of hedging against uncertainty and as a conservative strategy that avoids the risks of seeking more far-reaching changes, it nonetheless entails risks of its own that are not always recognized. The marginal improvements sought may be proven illusory or grossly insufficient. Incrementalism may degenerate into a costly series of trial and error actions that fail to secure a cumulative improvement in the situation. Reliance upon incrementalism may encourage policies that attack symptoms and offer marginal relief rather than deal with root causes. There is, in brief, no guarantee that the decision-maker will somehow muddle through successfully. And, by focussing on securing marginal improvements in the near future the policy-maker may fail to see opportunities for larger gains by means of strategies geared to longer-range objectives. Further, particularly in foreign policy but also in domestic policy, incrementalism can be dangerously myopic insofar as the actions taken to achieve short-term gains, as in U.S. policy in Vietnam, may turn out to be steps on a slippery slope to highly unfavorable outcomes.

Clearly, then, some way must be found to distinguish sloppy, myopic incrementalism from a more sophisticated variant of this strategy. To this end, several caveats seem appropriate:

[17]The following discussion draws upon and elaborates the ideas presented earlier in A. L. George, "Adaptation to Stress in Political Decision Making: The Individual, Small Group, and Organizational Contexts," in George V. Coelho, D. A. Hamburg, and John E. Adams (eds.), *Coping and Adaptation*, New York: Basic Books, 1974.

[18]This simple (and widely used) distinction between seeking a satisfactory (i.e. sufficient and good enough) as against an optimal outcome was made by Herbert A. Simon, "A Behavioral Model of Rational Choice," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 69, February 1955. See also James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations*, New York: Wiley, 1958, pp. 140–1; and Richard M. Cyert and James G. March, *A Behavioral Theory of the Firm*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964.

[19]Charles E. Lindblom is perhaps the foremost expositer and exponent of incremental decision-making. See his "The Science of 'Muddling Through'," which appeared originally in *Public Administration Review* (Vol. 29, No., 2, 1959; pp. 79–88) and has been widely reprinted. For a fuller development of his views, in which he doubted that incrementalism was an appropriate strategy in foreign policy, see C. E. Lindblom and D. Braybrooke, *A Strategy of Decision* (New York: Free Press, 1963) and C. E. Lindblom, *The Policy-Making Process*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968).

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(1) Incrementalism is *not* a substitute for *policy analysis* that encompasses longer-range considerations and generates a *planning context* within which, then, incremental decisions are made.

(2) The incremental approach requires *criteria* by means of which the decision-maker can judge the results of past decisions in order to make needed corrections in policy.

(3) The strategy of incrementalism assumes—and requires!—that the decision-maker will retain *freedom and flexibility* to make important corrections of policy after the consequences of his earlier move have emerged. (This assumption often proves to be unjustified in practice—as in the case of Truman's provisional decision to unify Korea by force in the late summer of 1950—for corrections of policy often have a heavy political and/or economic cost attached to them. Once established, policies often acquire a momentum that is difficult to control or reverse.)

c. *"Consensus Politics."* The policy-maker may decide what to do on the basis of what enough people want and will support rather than attempt to master the cognitive complexity of the problem by means of analysis. In the search for an effective decision there is often a potential trade-off between the substantive "quality" of a decision and its "acceptability" to those whose support the decision-maker feels he would like to have or, indeed, must have. When the search for a "quality" option is handicapped by the difficulty of calculating expected outcomes, the policy-maker may fall back on the decision rule of "consensus." In effect, then, the decision-maker by-passes the thorny trade-off dilemma between "quality" and "acceptability" by making the criterion of "acceptability" a substitute for that of "quality."

d. *Use of historical analogies.* Many thoughtful observers have remarked about the universal human tendency to force the present into constructs of the past. Thus, "history does not repeat itself in the real world but it does repeat itself in the 'reality world' of the mind." [20]

It is indeed striking to note the extent to which political leaders have attempted to follow the injunction to learn the "lessons" of history. As the diplomatic historian Ernest May noted some years ago, "Eagerness to profit from the lessons of history is the one characteristic common in the statecraft of such diverse types as Stanley Baldwin, Adolf Hitler, Harry Truman, Charles de Gaulle, and John F. Kennedy." Each of these statesmen "was determined to hear the voice of history, to avoid repeating the presumed mistakes of the past." [21]

Our purpose here is not to call attention once more to the lessons of an earlier historical case or of misapplying the correct lessons of that case to a new situation which differs from it in important respects. Rather, attention is drawn to the fact that policy-makers often cope with the difficulty of comprehending and dealing with new situations by resorting to historical analogies. Thus, an earlier historical case that had made a particularly strong impression on the policy-maker becomes an aid to diagnosing the present situation and for deciding what is the best or necessary way with which to respond to it. Very often it is relatively recent history—events that the statesman personally experienced earlier in his life or which he experienced vicariously through contact with significant figures in his intellectual development—that provides the models or analogies to which the decision-maker turns most readily. Very often, too, it is the "remembered history" of his generation on which he draws. Thus, as World War II began to draw to a close and Franklin Roosevelt addressed himself to the peace that would follow, he was influenced particularly by a desire to avoid the mistakes Woodrow Wilson had made at the end of World War I. As for Harry Truman, when the Korean War unexpectedly broke out in late June of 1950, he quickly oriented himself by viewing it in terms of its presumed parallel with the events of the '30's when the democracies had failed to act in the face of totalitarian aggression against Manchuria, Ethiopia, Austria, thus encouraging the totalitarian powers to go further until World War II broke out.[22]

The role that historical analogy played in the deliberations leading to President Johnson's intervention in the Dominican crisis of April 1965 is emphasized in all accounts of the crisis. Fear of another Castro in the Caribbean strongly shaped the perceptions and judgments of American policy-makers on this occasion. Johnson probably acted as he did not because he thought that the probability of a Communist victory in the Dominican Republic was high but rather because he attached high value to avoiding such an outcome. In other words, he was unwilling to accept even a relatively low risk of a communist take-over. At the same time, however, the President's known concern over the possibility of another Castro heightened the sensitivity of those reporting on events in the Dominican Repub-

[20]Davis Bobrow, "The Chinese Communist Conflict System," *Orbis*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Winter 1966), p. 931. See also Robert Jervis, "How Decision-makers Learn from History," forthcoming.

[21]Ernest May, "The Relevance of Diplomatic History to the Practice of International Relations," paper given at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1965.

[22]For a useful discussion see Ernest R. May, *"Lessons" of the Past: The Uses and Misuses of History in American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 161.

lic to any possible evidence of Communist influence and led to distorted information search and appraisal. Commenting on this, Abraham Lowenthal notes how pervasive the tendency is for policy-makers to rely on historical analogies, "lessons of history," and simplifying concepts: "Policy-makers seize on evils they have experienced and wish to avoid in order to organize their information about events they do not have time to analyze from scratch . . . unfamiliar problems are discussed in terms of the familiar." [23]

Other scholars as well have called attention to the risks associated with the policy-maker's reliance on historical analogies. Often the causal linkage which the policy-maker assumes to have been present in the past case is questionable in and of itself; or else he over-generalizes the causal relationship that was indeed present in a historical case and misapplies it to a new situation that differs in important respects. One way of avoiding these habits is to absorb the lessons of many different historical cases into a richer, differentiated theory that is comprised of *contingent* generalizations, i.e. the conditions under which a particular causal relationship of policy relevance does and does not hold. For example, the simple generalization: "if appeasement, then World War III," should be converted into conditional generalizations: "Under what conditions is appeasement likely to lead to a larger war? And, under what conditions is appeasement likely to achieve useful foreign policy objectives without leading to a major war?" (For further discussion of the need for policy-relevant theory of this kind, see Chapter VIII.)

e. *Ideology and General Principles as Guides to Action.* Other sources of relatively simple decision rules for coping with decisional complexity and the uncertainties that hamper calculation of outcomes are to be found in the ideological beliefs and moral principles of the policy-maker. They provide a generalized, deductive belief system which, applied to a particular situation, can help the decision-maker to cut through its complexity to illuminate whether, when, and how he should respond to it.

Thus, for example, Cordell Hull, Secretary of State under Franklin D. Roosevelt, had memorized as a youth a set of maxims from Jefferson and Gladstone. "As I faced the stupendous problems to be dealt with abroad," Hull wrote of his first month in office, "it gave me some relief and greater confidence to feel that I was strongly grounded on the fundamental propositions that should govern relations among nations. I proceeded to assemble and classify these principles, all of which the President, too, believed in strongly, and to make practical application of them at appropriate times." [24]

Hull's principles no doubt served to simplify and structure the problem of action he faced repeatedly as Secretary of State. Whether they also enabled him to exercise consistently good judgment in foreign policy is another matter. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., for one, wrote critically of the use to which Hull put his "principles":

> ". . . often . . . they served as a means of avoiding problems until he could find an aspect reducible to his set of principles, or of disguising, even from himself, some of his less creditable impulses . . . Hull's moral world was bounded, in other words, not by the facts or by original moral convictions, but by the copy-book maxims into which he absorbed both the facts and his emotions." [25]

f. *Beliefs about correct strategy and tactics.* The problem of action in the face of uncertainty is eased for the decision-maker by fundamental beliefs he holds about (a) the nature of international politics and conflict; (b) the extent to which historical developments can be shaped by intelligent or misguided action; and (c) axioms regarding correct strategy and tactics for dealing with friendly and unfriendly actors in domestic and world political arenas. Most political actors have developed relatively stable views on many of these matters. These beliefs are part of the "cognitive map" which enables them to process information and engage in appraisals of alternative courses of action.

The term "operational code" has been employed in referring to beliefs of this kind held by a particular statesman or policy elite. But the term is somewhat a misnomer insofar as it implies or permits the inference that a leader's "operational code" consists of a set of recipes or rules for action that he applies mechanically in his decision-making. Rather, beliefs of this kind serve as a prism or filter that influences the actor's perception and diagnosis of political situations, and that provides norms and standards to guide and channelize his choices of action in specific situations. The function of an operational code belief system in decision-making, then, is to provide the actor with "diagnostic propensities" and "choice propensities." Neither his diagnosis of situations nor his choice of action for dealing with them is rigidly prescribed and determined by these beliefs. Rather, their function is to

[23] A.F. Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention* (Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 161.

[24] Hull, *Memoirs*, New York: Macmillan, 1948, Vol. I, p. 173.

[25] Schlesinger, "The Roosevelt Era: Stimson and Hull," *The Nation*, June 5, 1948. As Schlesinger's essay indicates, historians often employ cognitive psychology to interpret the behavior of historical actors. Available historical materials contain considerable data relevant for such analysis, but they are seldom studied systematically and with a more explicit theoretical framework.

simplify and *channelize* the task of processing information, inventing and appraising options, and choosing the action that seems best in the circumstances. Stated in another way, these beliefs serve to adapt the actor's effort to engage in optimal informational processing and in rational calculation to the complexity and uncertainty that are characteristic of so much political decision-making.

The old Bolsheviks, for example, developed a set of beliefs which led them to employ a special kind of optimizing strategy in relations with opponents, both domestic and external.[26] It was unnecessary and undesirable in their view to approach the task of selecting the objectives of political action by trying first to calculate precisely the probability of achieving each of the alternative objectives that might be pursued in a given situation. Further, the old Bolsheviks believed that one should not limit the choice of objective to one that appears quite likely or certain of realization. Rather, one should be willing to pursue more ambitious objectives that were possible of achievement, even though the probability of a successful outcome was uncertain and difficult to calculate. By following these maxims one would safeguard against falling into an overly conservative approach to political action, typified by the tendency to pare down the goals of action to those that seemed highly feasible and likely to be achieved.

Resort to an optimizing strategy of this kind did not imply neglect of risk and cost calculations. The old Bolshevik "code" assigned important limits to the preferred optimizing strategy. Thus, for example, the risks of pursuing ambitious objectives could be controlled by *limiting the means* employed on their behalf. (In contrast, in one influential American approach to international politics, a *limitation of objectives* was considered particularly important for keeping limited conflicts with adversaries such as the Soviet Union from expanding dangerously.)

There were, as a result, important differences between Soviet and U.S. approaches to the calculation and acceptance of risks during the period of the Cold War. Soviet leaders acted on the premise, derived from the old Bolshevik "code", that in the struggle to make important gains one can often accept *seemingly* high risks—such as the danger of war—so long as the undesired outcome is several steps removed in a possible temporal sequence and so long as, in addition, one can control the sequence of events that might lead to that undesired outcome. These beliefs about correct strategy and tactics led Soviet leaders on a number of occasions (e.g. the Berlin crises) to engage in what they regarded as low-risk, controlled-risk actions to advance their interests as part of an "optimizing" strategy. To Western leaders and audiences, however, these same actions appeared to indicate that Soviet leaders were engaging in high-risk actions and were indeed prepared to risk war. The risk of war, however, was in fact several steps removed; and Soviet leaders, applying their own approach to risk-calculation and risk-acceptance, could well believe that they retained the possibility of moderating their actions, terminating the crisis or redirecting it into safer channels, should it become necessary to do so.

It is clear that during the Cold War the two sides often operated with fundamentally different notions of what constituted a rational approach to risk-calculation and risk-acceptance under conditions of uncertainty. Interpreting Soviet behavior from the standpoint of their own approach to risk calculation led Western leaders and publics on more than one occasion to distorted judgments regarding Soviet intentions and the willingness of Soviet leaders to incur high risks.

Each of the six cognitive aids to decision-making that have now been discussed can indeed enable the policy-maker to cope in some way with the intellectual problem he faces when the decision he must make is clouded with uncertainty. The substantive quality of the decision is, of course, another matter. Leaving aside a direct answer to this question, let us consider instead the implications of the policy-maker's use of these cognitive aids and simple decision rules for his ability to benefit from the contribution that close advisers and the organizational information-processing system can make to his search for an effective decision.

The first thing to be noted is the danger that the executive will resort *prematurely* to one of his favored cognitive aids or simple decision rules—for example, a historical analogy or a maxim of correct strategy, a "satisficing" or a "consensus" decision rule—or *rely too heavily* on it in making his decision. The result may well be to cut himself off from the possibility of benefiting from a broader or in-depth analysis of the problem that advisers or the organizational information-processing system can provide. Cognitive aids and decision rules may be indispensable, but they carry the risk of serving as filters that screen, channelize, or block the executive's receptivity to information and advice from others. The cognitive aid or decision rule an executive leans on in order to reach a decision can easily serve to define in a narrow way his informational needs in that situation. He will tend to pay less

[26]The following paragraphs draw upon Nathan Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism* (Free Press, 1953), and Alexander L. George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1969.

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attention or give less weight to available information and advice that is not directly relevant and usable with respect to the cognitive aid or decision rule he utilizes in order to cut through the intellectual complexity and "confusion" surrounding the problem at hand. This has important implications for the design and management of advisory relationships and organizational information-processing systems.

CHAPTER III

The Importance of Beliefs and Images*

While the subject of foreign policy generates many disagreements, most thoughtful observers of international affairs nonetheless do agree upon the overriding importance of some of its fundamental characteristics. Thus, sophisticated policy-makers and academic scholars alike agree that relations among states are shaped by the way in which leaders view each other and, more generally, by their beliefs about the nature of conflict within the international system. The importance of such beliefs and images is emphasized, for example, by a former State Department Planner, Louis Halle, who reminds us that the foreign policy of a nation addresses itself not to the external world, as is commonly stated, but rather to "the *image* of the external world" that is in the minds of those who make foreign policy. "In the degree that the image is false," Halle warns, "no technicians, however efficient, can make the policy that is based on it sound."[1]

The same point is increasingly emphasized in the work of academic scholars who, influenced by psychological theories of cognition, have been struck by the role that the subjective beliefs, perceptions and misperceptions of foreign policy-makers play in their decision-making.[2] It is useful at the outset, therefore, to remind ourselves of some of the basic tenets of cognitive psychology.

A. Information-processing Viewed from the Perspective of Cognitive Psychology

The fundamental tenets of cognitive psychology that are directly pertinent for this study can be listed briefly,[3] since, once stated, they are readily recognizable in everyday experience.

First, the mind can be fruitfully viewed as an information-processing system. Individuals orient themselves to their surroundings by acquiring, storing, appraising, and utilizing information about the physical and social environment.

Second, in order to function every individual acquires during the course of his development a set of beliefs and personal constructs about the physical and social environment. These beliefs provide him with a relatively coherent way of organizing and making sense of what would otherwise be a confusing and overwhelming array of signals and cues picked up from the environment by his senses.

Third, these beliefs and constructs necessarily simplify and structure the external world. That such beliefs are indispensable was emphasized many years ago by the philosopher, Joseph Jastrow, in the striking observation that the mind is essentially "a belief-seeking rather than a fact-seeking apparatus."

Fourth, much of an individual's behavior is shaped by the particular ways in which he perceives, evaluates and interprets incoming information about events in his environment.

Fifth, information-processing is selective and subject to bias; the individual's existing beliefs and his "attention-set" at any given time are active agents in determining what he attends to and how he evaluates it.

Sixth, there is considerable variation among individuals in the richness-complexity as well as the validity of their beliefs and constructs regarding any given portion of the environment. (These differences are evident also in the way in which differ-

*In preparing this chapter I have benefited from the many useful comments provided by Professors Robert Jervis, U.C.-L.A., John Steinbruner, Harvard University, and Irving L. Janis, Yale University, all three of whom, in addition, allowed me to consult manuscripts of their forthcoming publications. Useful comments on an earlier draft were received also from Joseph Atkinson, Yale University, Professor Ole R. Holsti, Duke University, and Dr. David Hamburg, Stanford University.

All scholars who have addressed the questions taken up in this chapter are indebted to the seminal discussion provided a decade ago by Dean G. Pruitt, "Definition of the Situation as a Determinant of International Action," in Herbert C. Kelman (ed.), *International Behavior*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965.

[1] *American Foreign Policy*, 1960, pp. 316–318; emphasis supplied.

[2] A number of policy-oriented scholars—in particular Lincoln Bloomfield—have emphasized the value of political-military-diplomatic games as a means of seeing political reality through the perspectives of other actors.

[3] For a useful explication of developments in cognitive theory see Robert B. Zajonc, "Cognitive Theories in Social Psychology," in G. Lindzey and E. Aronson (eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Second edition, Vol. I., Addison-Wesley Co., 1968.

ent individuals view the international arena and can be of considerable significance in the conduct of foreign policy.)

Seventh, while such beliefs can change, what is noteworthy is that they tend to be relatively stable. They are not easily subject to disconfirmation and to change in response to new information that seems to challenge them. Instead, individuals (including decision-makers) tend to down-grade discrepant new information of this kind or interpret it in ways that reduce its inconsistency with their prevailing beliefs, images, and theories of the physical, social, and political world.

Eighth, and notwithstanding the preceding tenet, individuals are capable of perceiving the utility of discrepant information and adopting an attitude of open-mindedness with regard to new information that significantly goes counter to their current beliefs.

Knowledge of cognitive psychology is indispensable for understanding some of the fundamental constraints on processing of information in foreign policy-making. While these tenets apply in the first instance to the individual qua individual, they have their analogues also in the constraints that apply to information-processing in small groups and organizations. There are, of course, additional sources of impediments to information-processing in policy-making; some of them will be discussed later in this report.

B. The Impact of Consistency-striving on Information Processing

Information processing for policy-making can be seriously impaired by the strong tendency displayed by individuals and organizations to see what they expect to see (the role of expectancies or "mind-sets") and the tendency to assimilate incoming information to pre-existing images, hypotheses, and theories. In this section of the chapter we shall consider the impact which "consistency-striving" of this kind can have on the quality of information processed for policy-making purposes.

We must recognize at the outset that there is no easy solution to this problem, for, it cannot be emphasized too strongly, a pronounced tendency toward consistency-striving is inherent in human behavior. Thus, perception and interpretation of new information would hardly be possible unless it were filtered through existing beliefs and frames of reference. One must be careful, therefore, not to apply the labels of "closed-mindedness", "cognitive distortion", "irrationality" in too facile a manner. For under many circumstances it is quite natural for an individual to strive to maintain his beliefs in the face of seemingly discrepant information that challenges them and, additionally, to attempt to maintain some degree of consistency among his beliefs. Organizations as well as individuals typically attempt to incorporate new information in ways that render it comprehensible within existing cognitive frameworks on which they rely to organize new experience and to orient the organization effectively to the environment in which it exists.

Besides, we must recognize that the mind is called upon to interpret inherently vague or conflicting data. It is often quite inappropriate to refer to the resulting perceptions and judgments as being "rational" or "irrational." We must be careful, in other words, not to confuse error with irrationality, not to infer from *post hoc* observations that an error or oversimplification occurred in policy-making that it was due to some form of irrational perception or judgment. It seems advisable, therefore, to avoid using the term "irrational" (which has the general connotation that a person has abandoned reality-testing, is totally lacking in sense, behaves impulsively or mindlessly, etc.) in referring to instances of consistency-striving of the kind discussed here.

At the same time, however, to accept the fact that consistency-striving is pervasive does not require us to take a deterministic and fatalistic view of the matter. That some manifestations of an individual's consistency-striving are excessive and possibly harmful in policy-making is something that he, or certainly other participants in policy-making, are capable of recognizing and possibly correcting. This way of approaching the phenomenon of consistency-striving has the merit of drawing attention to the practical question of how to design and manage policy-making process in order to avoid the occurrence of those forms of consistency-striving that are likely to severely narrow, distort, or curtail information processing and appraisal.

While it will be difficult sometimes even with the benefit of hindsight to ascertain whether a given instance of consistency-striving was excessive and inadequately scrutinized, a number of criteria or indicators can be identified as relevant and useful for this purpose. The individual's striving for consistency need not arouse concern when his interpretation of new information is not clearly illogical and when the pre-existing beliefs he relies upon are adequately grounded in previous experience. On the other hand, the striving for consistency becomes suspect and demands greater vigilance in information processing

(a) when the beliefs preserved thereby are not well-grounded to begin with; or

(b) when the individual (or organization) relies upon inappropriate beliefs or irrelevant rationalizations in order to ward off incoming information; or

(c) when the assimilation of the new information

into pre-existing beliefs involves violations of generally accepted rules for treating evidence; or

(d) when the individual fails to notice events of obvious importance that contradict his beliefs or theories; or

(e) when he displays unwillingness to look for evidence that is readily available which would pose challenges to existing policy beliefs; or

(f) when he refuses to address the arguments of those who disagree with his interpretation of events; or

(g) when he repeatedly shifts rationales on behalf of his policy in response to new facts.

From a practical standpoint these criteria are useful in and of themselves even though they will not always enable a historian to make confident *post facto* judgments as to whether consistency-striving in any particular instance was excessive. Thus, awareness of the criteria among policy-makers should alert participants to the possibility that the natural tendency to consistency-striving may be leading them or their colleagues into narrowing or distorting their processing and appraisal of information about the situation.

For the policy-maker to discount a single item of information (unless it be an ultimatum or warning from the opponent) that challenges existing beliefs may not constitute very good evidence of harmful consistency-striving. But when a whole series of such items is discounted in an *ad hoc,* piecemeal way, there is a higher probability that the policy-maker is engaged in excessive consistency-striving that is likely to result in biased information processing. For one way to avoid the burden of a substantial amount of discrepant information is to refute it on an item by item basis, as such information becomes available over a period of time, rather than to face the implications of examining the larger body of relevant data in toto.

Let us turn now to some historical cases in which consistency-striving appears to have impeded the search for and processing of information. Evidence of this phenomenon can be seen in the events leading to the American intervention in the Dominican crisis of April 1965. In his detailed, scholarly account of this crisis Abraham Lowenthal emphasizes the extent to which the Administration's fear of another Castro in the Caribbean distorted information processing: "From the very outset, both Washington officials and those in Santo Domingo keyed their questions and reports to the need to avoid a 'second Cuba.' Because American intelligence agencies were geared to produce lots of data on Communist activities but were unprepared to assess correctly the configurations of non-Communist Dominicans in this confused period, the picture they presented was bound to be unbalanced and wrong . . . There was a tendency throughout the week (as previously) to err on the side of magnifying the Communist risk, by reporting on all the possible connections of other Dominican actors in the crisis and by passing on to Washington all reports of presumed Communist plans and intentions."[4] As a result all dissimilarities of the internal Dominican situation with that of Cuba prior to Castro's takeover were ignored. Thus, that a skillful and attractive political leader like Castro was missing in the Dominican situation; that a popularly based guerrilla movement was absent in the Dominican Republic; that the Dominican communists were weak, divided, and totally lacking in support in the rural areas, etc.—"all these facts were forgotten, or probably not known . . ."[5]

Excessive consistency-striving on the part of British leaders at the outset of the Suez crisis in 1956 appears to have impeded the search for and processing of readily available information. When Nasser seized the Canal, British leaders quickly adopted the comforting but erroneous view that the Egyptians could not operate the Suez Canal. Since almost all of the pilots who guided ships through the canal were European and were expected to quit, British leaders concluded that the canal would soon have to close. This prospect was so pleasing that they failed to inquire whether much training was required to produce competent pilots which, as a matter of fact, was not the case![6]

The two historical examples cited illustrate distortion of information processing created in the first case by the fears of policy-makers and in the second instance by their "wishful thinking." In both instances policy-makers were in fact conscious of entertaining the particular fear or hope in question. What was lacking was sufficient vigilance as to the possibility that their fears or hopes might weaken their receptivity to relevant information. As Jervis reminds us, lack of awareness that one's beliefs can distort receptivity to incoming information can have damaging consequences for policy-making. Thus, what is in fact ambiguous or equivocal information in a given situation can be mistaken by the individual (or by the organization) as firm evidence on behalf of a favored interpretation simply because it is not inconsistent with a pre-existing be-

[4]A. F. Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention* (Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 154. Robert Jervis (in a personal communication) calls attention to the possibility that a "magnification effect" of President Johnson's own preferences and fears may have occurred in this situation as a result of the way in which the intelligence process worked. Thus, because members of the foreign policy organization knew of Johnson's beliefs and preferences, they may have gone out of their way to make sure that they did not miss any signs of Communist strength.

[5]*Op. cit.*, pp. 154–5.

[6]Example cited by Robert Jervis, from Terence Robertson, *Crisis: The Inside Story of the Suez Conspiracy,* New York: Atheneum, 1965; pp. 94–5, 109.

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lief. Conversely, new information that is really unambiguous and unequivocal can be mistakenly rejected or down-graded as being inconclusive or implausible because it is inconsistent with pre-existing beliefs. Lacking awareness of the critical role his prior beliefs may be playing in evaluating new information, the individual may fail to realize that the incoming information is compatible with other interpretations as well, or that it provides only plausible rather than compelling support for the prior belief he holds.

Distorted information-processing of this kind can contribute to an unjustified and dangerous lowering of one's guard—as, for example, when warning indicators of a military attack are rejected as inconsistent with pre-existing beliefs. Or, equally, it can lead to an unjustified and costly raising of one's guard—as, for example, when an opponent's failure to cooperate is misread as further evidence in support of a pre-existing belief regarding his hostility.

Many historians believe that distorted information-processing of this kind contributed to the exacerbation of the Cold War. One instance of this can be seen in the interpretation American decision-makers placed on the Russian rejection in the late forties of the Baruch Plan for the control of nuclear weapons. Ignoring the possibility that the Soviet Union, whether or not it entertained aggressive aims, would have legitimate reasons for finding this American plan unacceptable, some U. S. leaders regarded rejection of it as evidence of Soviet aggressive and expansionist aims.

Consistency-striving plays a role also in enabling opponents in an acute conflict situation such as the Cold War to maintain basic images of each other as hostile and malevolent in the face of seemingly contradictory evidence. When one attributes "inherent bad faith" to the opponent, such an image can easily become self-perpetuating since the assumption of "inherent bad faith" does not easily admit of evidence that could invalidate it. Thus, when the opponent behaves in a seemingly conciliatory fashion there is a strain towards rendering such discrepant information consistent with one's pre-existing negative image of him, and this leads to various stratagems for discounting, ignoring, or discrediting that new information.[7]

Psychological tendencies of this kind made it more difficult for both sides in the Cold War to credit indications from time to time that the other side might be inclined to change some of its policies and attitudes in the interest of bringing about a relaxation of tensions and a search for accommodation. Thus, after Stalin's death in 1953 Secretary of State Dulles dismissed the conciliatory gestures of the triumvirate which succeeded him as "rotten apples" intended to beguile the Free World. On this and, as Professor Ole Holsti[8] has shown, on numerous other occasions—such as the signing of the Korean armistice, the Soviet acceptance of the Berlin Foreign Ministers Conference in 1954, the signing of the Austrian State Treaty, the Geneva Summit Conference in 1960—Dulles interpreted Soviet actions that did not conform to his image of an implacably hostile enemy as having been imposed on Soviet leaders by weakness. Dulles argued that it was the frustration and inability of Soviet leaders to conduct a successful foreign policy that had forced them into less aggressive behavior on these occasions.

Similarly, Dulles' conduct of the Middle East crisis that led to the Suez War in 1956 was influenced by a deeply-rooted conviction that the Soviet Union was economically weak. He regarded the Soviet shift to an economic offensive in foreign affairs in 1955–56 as a bluff designed to force the United States into bidding against the Soviet Union and thereby spending itself eventually into bankruptcy. Dulles decided upon Egypt as the place to call the Soviet economic bluff and, partly for this reason, he cancelled the Aswan Dam offer the U. S. had made to Egypt. It was only in his final year in office, 1957–58, that Dulles finally abandoned his view that economics was the "fatal weakness" of the Soviet regime.

C. Understanding the Opponent's Perspective[9]

Many thoughtful observers of history have been struck by the frequency with which major errors in policy that resulted in avoidable catastrophes or missed opportunities can be traced to the inability of foreign policy-makers to view events from the perspective of their adversaries. This is a difficult task at best. Policy-makers often employ the criteria of "national interest" and "rationality" as vehicles for grasping the opponent's perspective and for inferring the way in which he views events and decides what to do about them. To make this task easier for themselves policy-makers also slip into the simplifying assumption that the opponent is a single actor, thereby ignoring the complex organi-

[7]Perhaps it should also be noted that one can become the victim of one's "inherent good faith" image of an ally. "Good faith" images may be less durable than "bad faith" images, but they can also impede information processing. (Ole Holsti, personal communication).

[8]Ole R. Holsti, "Cognitive Dynamics and Images of the Enemy: Dulles and Russia," in D. J. Finlay, O. R. Holsti, and F. R. Fagen, eds., *Enemies in Politics* (Chicago, Rand McNally, 1967).

[9]This section and the next draw upon A. L. George and R. Smoke, *Deterrence in U.S. Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

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zational dynamics within the opposing government and the play of broader political forces that constrain and shape its foreign policy actions. However, neither of these two criteria nor the simplifying assumption that often accompanies their use provide a reliable basis for gauging the opponent's perspective.

1. THE CRITERION OF NATIONAL INTEREST

The uses and limitations of the criterion of "national interest" as a guide to foreign policy will be discussed in detail in Chapter VII. Much of what is said there applies also to the attempt to use the opponent's national interest as a basis for understanding and predicting his behavior. It may be reasonable to assume, as a general first approximation, that all actors in the international system are motivated to protect and advance their national interests. But one must go on to recognize that the concept of national interest is not likely to be so well-defined or uniformly interpreted by members of the opposing government as to enable confident predictions of how that government perceives and will pursue its interests in any given situation.

2. THE CRITERION OF RATIONALITY

Attributing "rationality" to the opponent is hardly more helpful. The assumption that all actors in the arena of world politics can be counted upon to take a rational approach in foreign policy is not without some validity and utility; but it does not offer a sufficient basis for estimating how these other actors view events, calculate their options, and make their choices of action. Additional comment on the assumption of rationality is necessary here since policy-makers often rely on it to estimate how other actors will behave and many scholars use it to explain foreign policy behavior.

To describe behavior as "rational" is to say little more than that the actor attempts to choose a course of action that he hopes or expects to further his values. But, of course, what the opponent's values are, and how they will affect his policy-making and decisions in different kinds of situations remains to be established. Moreover, foreign policy issues are typically complex in that they raise multiple values and interests that cannot easily be reconciled. Even for the rational actor, therefore, choice is often difficult because he faces a value trade-off problem. How the opponent will resolve that dilemma is not easily foreseen, even by those close to him let alone by those in another country who are attempting to predict his action on the basis of the rationality assumption.

In addition to being complicated by value complexity of this kind, the opponent's attempt at rational decision-making is likely to be affected by uncertainties that render problematical his efforts to calculate expected outcomes of various courses of action open to him. These uncertainties stem from inadequate information about the situation and a deficit of the kind of general knowledge of ends-means relationships that is needed to assess the consequences of any particular option. How the opponent will deal with these uncertainties is not easily forseeable, and once again this limits the ability to predict his behavior by applying the general assumption of rationality to his behavior.

It is clear, therefore, that behavioral models are needed that will characterize in a more discriminating way how each opponent approaches the difficult task of rational calculation in the face of value-complexity and cognitive uncertainty. In other words, the abstract model of rationality has to be supplemented or replaced by an empirically-derived theory as to how a particular opponent tends to deal with the various constraints on rationality in his approach to decision-making.[10] Ideally, a good model of this kind would also recognize the possibility that genuine changes in the opponent's behavioral style might occur, attempt to postulate conditions under which such changes might occur, and specify appropriate ways for recognizing them in order to modify the initial model.

It is not an easy matter to develop empirical models of this kind and to apply them effectively. We may recall the difficulties U.S. policy-makers encountered during the Cold War in trying to estimate the intentions or expected reactions of the Soviet Union, Communist China, and North Vietnam. The results of this experience strongly reinforce the view that available information for estimating an adversary's behavior in a particular situation rarely speaks for itself but must be interpreted with reference to a valid model of that adversary's general patterns of behavior. Even when such information is plentiful, consistent, and relatively free of "noise", correct appraisal of it requires hypotheses about the way in which that particular adversary typically approaches political conflict, and a theory or model of that adversary's behavioral style and approach to calculation of action.

One's image of the opponent includes an understanding of his ideology, his "operational code", and his mode of calculating utility and assessing risks. An incorrect image of the opponent can distort the appraisal of even good factual information on what he may do. A single familiar historical example will suffice to illustrate this point. Prior to the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin had ample high-quality intelligence of Hitler's military

[10]This position is consistent, I believe, with the more general position advanced by John Steinbruner who argues that if one wants better behavioral models one ought first recognize the severe limits on what can be effectively modelled, and then attempt to build models informed by cybernetic and cognitive logic.

dispositions and plans. The Soviet leader, however, did not believe that Hitler would launch a surprise attack. For Stalin's image of the opponent in this case encouraged him to believe that Hitler would almost certainly present demands and attempt to bargain before deciding on whether he needed to resort to force. Stalin, therefore, misperceived the purpose of the menacing Nazi military build-up on the Soviet border, believing that it was intended to set the stage for serious negotiations and coercive bargaining.[11]

Egregious and fateful miscalculations of an opponent's behavior occurred more than once also in the conduct of American foreign policy in recent decades. During the Korean War rather good information was available for assessing the threat of Chinese Communist intervention in October and November of 1950. But that information was rendered equivocal when filtered through the incorrect U.S. image of Chinese Communist leaders. Incoming information on Chinese intentions was systematically misinterpreted and minimized by American decision-makers for reasons that are as simple as they are fundamental. U.S. leaders miscalculated because they failed to understand the frame of reference from which the Chinese Communists were assessing the significance of what the United States was doing in Korea. By failing to comprehend the ideology and complex motivational calculus of the Chinese leaders, U.S. leaders misread Peking's perception of the threat that U.S. behavior in Korea was posing for it.

Washington's estimates of Chinese intentions were based on the faulty premise that Chinese leaders were calculating their interests in much the same way as U.S. leaders perceived Peking's interests. Since Truman and Acheson had convinced themselves that legitimate Chinese national interests were not importantly threatened by the U.S. occupation of North Korea or by plans for unifying it with South Korea, they believed that Peking also saw it in this way or could be persuaded to do so by verbal assurances that the United States harbored only friendship, not hostility, towards China.

As Robert Jervis notes, the U.S. misperception of Peking's intentions in this case illustrates a more general tendency for actors to assume that their intentions, especially if they are basically peaceful, are as clear to others as they are to themselves. This results in an important obstacle to understanding an opponent's perspective in that to do so involves recognizing that he sees you in a less than flattering light.[12]

Similarly, defective U.S. images of North Vietnamese leaders played a role in the miscalculation of Hanoi's vulnerability to coercive military pressure. Underestimating Hanoi's motivation and the strength of its commitment to its objectives, some American leaders assumed that the North Vietnamese would not risk destruction of their new industrial facilities by U.S. bombing.

Even a reasonably good model of the opponent's behavioral style, however, does not insure correct interpretation of his intentions in any given situation. By 1962 U.S. analysts had developed considerable insight into patterns of Soviet behavior; nonetheless, they were taken by surprise by the Soviet deployment of missiles into Cuba. The U.S. failure to give credence to the possibility of a missile deployment can be traced to a number of factors, among them a faulty assessment of the risk calculations that had accompanied the Soviet decision to put missiles into Cuba. American analysts erred in assuming that Soviet leaders would regard such a deployment as a *high-risk* venture and, therefore, would forego it. However, Soviet leaders evidently convinced themselves that the missile deployment was a calculable, controllable low-risk strategy.

The inability of U.S. leaders to sense correctly the Soviet approach to the calculation and acceptance of risks had been, in fact, a chronic problem from the beginning of the Cold War. In late June of 1948, despite considerable warning, American leaders were taken by surprise by the Soviet blockade of allied ground access to West Berlin. Most American officials had believed that Soviet leaders would surely recognize that a move against West Berlin would constitute a high-risk venture, and hence that Moscow would reject it as posing an unacceptable risk. From the perspective of the Soviets, however, their action was a well-calculated, controllable low risk.

Once the blockade of West Berlin was imposed, Truman displayed considerably more caution in his response than other officials thought necessary. Truman's caution, it may be noted, stemmed partly from his image of the opponent. Unlike some of his advisers, who tended to perceive the Soviet Union as something of a neighborhood bully, full of tough talk and menacing gestures until challenged, Truman and others of his advisers saw the USSR as a wily adversary—deceitful to be sure, but also unstable and, worst of all, unpredictable! (Secretary of Defense Robert Lovett remarked that the heads of Soviet leaders were "full of bubbles.") Given his image of the opponent, Truman disagreed with "hard-line" advisers who believed that the Soviets would not run any risk of World War III until they were ready for it. For his part, Truman believed that Moscow was willing to "risk a military incident" during the crisis to test U.S. "firmness and patience." In his view it was possible that Soviet lead-

[11]For an analysis of Stalin's miscalculation of Hitler's intentions, see Barton Whaley, *Codeword Barbarossa*, M.I.T. Press, 1973.

[12]For a more detailed discussion see Robert Jervis' forthcoming book.

ers might even be looking for a pretext to begin a war. Thus, different images of the Soviet opponent among American policy-makers at this time produced divergent perceptions not only of Moscow's intentions and its willingness to accept high risks, but also of the utility and risks of different measures the United States might take to maintain itself in West Berlin.

Divergent images of the Soviet opponent also underlay a major policy disagreement among President Kennedy's advisers during the Berlin crisis in 1961. Dean Acheson's diagnosis of the threat and his recommendations typified the "hard-line" view shared by other important advisers as well. The essence of this position was that the Soviets were engaged in an *offensive* move in Berlin that posed serious dangers to the entire Western position in Europe. For the Western powers to offer to negotiate or to present an image of flexibility in the face of Khrushchev's deadline for concessions, the "hardline" school argued, was to encourage the Soviets to press for the greatest possible realization of their far-reaching objectives.

Opposed to the firm stand advocated by these advisers was a "soft-line" position advocated by other Kennedy advisers, including Ambassadors Harriman and Thompson. They believed that the Soviets were engaged in an essentially *defensive* operation in Berlin, aimed at consolidating their control over Eastern Europe. These advisers urged Kennedy to undertake active negotiations immediately in order to avoid a dangerous confrontation and also as a means of conveying to Moscow that the West was willing to reduce the irritants which West Berlin no doubt imposed on Soviet interests in East Europe. Fearing that the intransigent position advocated by the "hard-line" school could lead the Soviets to make desperate moves, advocates of the softer-line favored immediate negotiations in order to assure the Soviets that their legitimate, minimum security interests would be respected. To the "soft-line" school it appeared that the expansionist thrust of Soviet foreign policy, if indeed it had been as virulent as had been feared, was moderating, and that Moscow was acting increasingly out of "nationalist" and "defensive" motives.

We have looked at a number of cases in which American policy-makers held differing views as to whether and to what extent the adversary was aggressive. Such disagreements, as we have shown, underlie many policy disputes over foreign policy.[13] It should be further noted that participants in these policy debates may not be fully aware of the fact that their specific disagreement over policy rests fundamentally on different images of the opponent. When this is the case, participants in the policy discussion may fail to come to grips with the root issue. Not only may the quality of the policy debate suffer as a result, the decision eventually taken—as by President Kennedy in the Berlin crisis of 1961—may be a muddy compromise that contains internally inconsistent elements reflecting both positions rather than a well-considered hedge against uncertainty as to the true nature of the opponent's motivations.

3. THE ASSUMPTION OF A "SINGLE ACTOR"

In the effort to capture the perspective of their adversary policy-makers often "over-rationalize" the actions and behavior of the opposing government. That is, they slip into the highly questionable assumption that everything the other side does is the result of unified planning and highly centralized calculation. The other government is reified; its actions are viewed as the product of rational calculations by a superordinate individual. Moreover, personalization of other governments is often accompanied by stereotyping them as friend or foe.

While such a simplification of the image of an adversary lightens the policy-maker's task of understanding his perspective, it also creates serious impediments to information processing and appraisal. For to regard the adversary in the image of a single actor de-sensitizes the policy-maker to information that reflects the complexities of the opponent's policy-making process. Clues as to the play of organizational factors, bureaucratic politics, and domestic political pressures on the opposing government's policies are either ignored or reinterpreted to make them consistent with the image of a highly centralized actor. What is actually the result of compromise, bargaining, or uncoordinated actions by different participants in the other government's policy-making system is misperceived as a well-considered action by a single rational actor.

Simplified images of this type are to be found not only in the relationships among staunch opponents like the United States and the Soviet Union. There is disconcerting evidence that the same tendency operates on occasion in relationships between friendly governments. Thus, Richard Neustadt has set forth evidence of a dozen instances of misperception between Washington and London in two major crises: Suez 1956 and Skybolt 1962. "In every instance," Neustadt observes, participants in policy-making on one side "failed to understand the stakes of the players on the other side."[14] Thus, the positions taken by each side at critical junctures in the *inter*-state contest were defined by *intra*-state

[13]In his forthcoming book Robert Jervis also emphasizes this point and gives historical examples from the policy-making of a number of countries.

[14]Richard E. Neustadt, *Alliance Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 115.

bureaucratic politics and domestic politics. Preoccupied with the complexities of their own policy-making, decision-makers on each side failed to consider that officials in the other government were also constrained in what they perceived and would do by the exigencies of their own bureaucratic and domestic politics. Instead, each side engaged in wishful thinking as to how its ally perceived unfolding developments. "Each hopeful estimate of friends abroad," Neustadt observes, "was grown at home . . . in effect, these men saw what they had to see if what they felt they had to do stood any chance to work. . . ."[15]

D. The Problem of Receptivity to Warning of Emerging Threats to Foreign Policy Interests

The trauma of Pearl Harbor sank deeply into the American consciousness and led to emotional efforts to pin the blame for failure to heed warning of the Japanese attack on scapegoats or knaves. In time there emerged a more dispassionate understanding of the circumstances that had enabled the Japanese to achieve surprise despite the availability to U.S. policymakers of what seemed, in retrospect particularly, to be ample warning of the forthcoming attack. Objective analysts of Pearl Harbor and of other instances of surprise have pointed to ways in which this type of danger can be reduced; but, at the same time, they have drawn the sober conclusion that the possibility of surprise is inherent in the nature of the problem and can never be reliably excluded.[16] They have identified various mechanisms imbedded in individual psychology, the dynamics of group behavior, the ways in which organizations function, and the play of governmental politics that can hamper receptivity to and proper evaluation of warning. Only a brief discussion of some of the factors which can impede receptivity to warning can be presented here.[17]

Laboratory studies of difficulties in perception of stimuli provide useful analogies to the problem of receptivity to warning of emerging threats in the international arena. The results of perception experiments, however, do not encourage hopes for easy or complete solutions to this problem. Studies of a person's ability to recognize a stimulus that is imbedded in a stream of other stimuli have shown at least three factors to be important:

(1) The "signal-to-noise" ratio—i.e., the strength of the signal relative to the strength of confusing or distracting background stimuli;

(2) The expectations of the observers; and

(3) The rewards and costs associated with recognizing and correctly appraising the signal.

One might assume that the stronger the signal and the less the background "noise," the easier it should be to detect the signal. However, the task of correct signal detection is more complicated than this even in the laboratory and even more so in international affairs. Thus the results of perceptual experiments that deal with relatively simple psychophysical auditory or visual stimuli indicate that detection of a signal is not simply a function of its strength relative to background "noise." Rather, the effect of a signal's strength on the person's ability to identify it can be cancelled out by the impact of the second and third variables mentioned above.

In foreign policy situations, too, the decision-maker's expectations or "set," and the rewards and costs associated with his recognition of the signal may be more important in determining his receptivity to, and correct appraisal of, incoming information that points to an emerging threat. Not only the individual but small policy-making groups and organizations as well are capable of engaging in various psychological strategems for diluting or discrediting information that challenges the structure of existing expectations, preferences, habits or convenience. It is well known that discrepant information of this kind is often required, in effect, to meet higher standards of evidence and to pass stricter tests of admissibility than new information that supports existing expectations and hypotheses. As a result, it is disconcertingly easy at times for policy-makers and their intelligence specialists to discount discrepant information or to interpret it in such a way as to "save" a preferred hypothesis or policy.

The "reward-cost" aspect of correct signal detection can sharply reduce the policy-maker's receptivity to information of emerging threats. For to take available warning seriously may require the policy-maker to make new decisions of a difficult or unpalatable character; anticipation of this can lower his receptivity to that information. The policy background at the time can further strengthen the tendency to ignore or downgrade incoming information that challenges existing beliefs or exacerbates decisional dilemmas. Thus, as is well known, once policies have been made within the government, they tend to acquire a momentum of their own and the support of vested interests. Top-level decision-makers are often reluctant to reopen policy matters that were decided earlier with great difficulty; for to do so, they fear, can easily plunge the government once again into the turmoil of decision-making.

Psychological mechanisms of this kind have contributed to a number of important intelligence and

[15]Neustadt, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[16]Roberta Wohlstetter, *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*, Stanford University Press, 1962.

[17]For a more detailed discussion see George and Smoke, *op. cit.*, Chapter 20, "Response Theory."

policy failures. Among them was the Truman Administration's pronounced lack of receptivity to available warning in the spring of 1950 of the forthcoming North Korean attack on South Korea. Had the warning been taken more seriously, the attack would not have come as a surprise. The time made available by the warning might have been used to weigh more carefully whether what was at stake in Korea warranted U.S. military intervention. If an affirmative answer to this fundamental question had emerged, then the Administration might have utilized the warning before the attack took place to undertake to deter the North Korean move. As it was, the North Koreans acted as they did on the mistaken notion that the United States would not intervene militarily on behalf of South Korea. Thus, the Korean War, with all of its fateful consequences, qualifies as a genuine example of war-through-miscalculation. It was clearly a war that might have been avoided had Washington been more receptive to available warning and acted upon it.

Instead, information-processing within the U.S. policy-making system was impeded and distorted both by the existing expectations or "set"[18] of the Administration and by the costs associated with greater receptivity to incoming information of the emerging threat. Taking available warning seriously always carries the penalty of deciding what to do about it. In this case, it would have required Truman and Acheson to reconsider the earlier decision they had taken in 1949 to draw a line defining U.S. security interests in the Far East to exclude Formosa, South Korea, and Indochina. The exclusion of Nationalist-held Formosa was part of the Administration's policy of disengaging from the Chinese Nationalists. This was a far more controversial decision within the Administration and with the public than the exclusion of South Korea. So much so that a reversal of the existing policy of no military commitment to South Korea in response to the warning of a possible North Korean attack would have been politically inconceivable unless Truman and Acheson had also been willing—which they were not, *prior* to the North Korean attack—to extend a new commitment to the Chinese Nationalist regime on Formosa as well.

As this case and others show, the policy background at the time warning becomes available may subtly erode the policy-maker's receptivity to it. A similar misfortune occurred later in the Korean War. During September and early October of 1950 the Administration eased itself into a commitment to occupy North Korea and to unify it with South Korea. But then, when repeated warnings that this would trigger Communist Chinese military intervention, came in, the Administration found itself so locked into its more ambitious war policy that it was disposed to dismiss the warnings as bluff. For to have given credence to the worrisome indications of a forthcoming Communist Chinese intervention carried with it the cost of reconsidering and abandoning the war policy that had given rise to that danger. In this critical situation the Administration's wishful thinking encouraged grossly defective information processing. The result was that, once again, Washington was taken by surprise when the Communist Chinese launched their massive offensive in late November. A new war resulted that neither side had wanted, one that could have been avoided had Washington not misperceived and misjudged the evidence of Chinese intentions.

Similarly, in the spring of 1948, most American policy-makers refused to take seriously the possibility of a Soviet blockade of West Berlin despite mounting tension and the fact that only recently, in March, had the Soviets imposed a temporary blockade of Western ground access to the city. Some of the same psychological dynamics that interfered with optimal processing of incoming information in the cases already described can be seen here too. For U.S. policy-makers to have taken available warning of a possible Soviet blockade of West Berlin seriously would have carried with it the "cost" of having then to face up to and resolve difficult, controversial policy problems. At the time an American commitment to West Berlin did not yet exist. Officials within the Administration were badly divided over the wisdom of attempting to defend the Western outpost that lay deep in Soviet-occupied East Germany. Under these circumstances, it was easier to believe that the Soviets would not undertake serious action against West Berlin than to decide beforehand what the American response should be to such an eventuality. In this case, fortunately, while American policy-makers were taken by surprise by the Soviet blockade, Truman managed to deal with the crisis without backing down or going to war.

While this discussion of receptivity to warning has been necessarily brief, it should suffice to indicate that the impediments are numerous and that they cannot be easily eliminated. For this reason most specialists have urged that the problem of securing warning should be linked closely with the problem of deciding what responses are appropriate and useful in the light of the available warning, however equivocal or ambiguous it may be. While high-confidence warning is desirable, often it is not available. But neither is high-confidence warning

[18]For example, American global security planning at the time did not envisage what has come to be known as "limited war." The expectation, rather, was that the next war would resemble World War II and that the Soviets would not be ready to start a war with the United States for at least five more years. These expectations and other factors, only some of which are discussed here, are all part of the explanation for the "surprise" which U.S. policy-makers experienced over the North Korean attack.

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always necessary for making useful responses to the possibility of an emerging crisis. Recognizing that the responses a policy-maker can make to warning often entail costs and risks of their own, and indeed that some responses can be quite harmful, this approach to the problem emphasizes the need to search for responses to warning that are useful in the situation without posing unacceptable costs. Even ambiguous warning, for example, gives policy-makers more time to consider what to do, to step up efforts to acquire more information about the developing situation, to rehearse the decision problem they would face if the warning proves to be correct, to spell out the likely consequences if the low probability warning proves to be genuine, to review their commitments and contingency plans, and—not least in importance—to seize the opportunity to avert a possibly dangerous crisis. Thus, even ambiguous warning provides an opportunity to deal with the conflict situation and/or the misperceptions associated with it before it leads to a military conflict.

Finally, we should note that this discussion of receptivity to warning of emerging threats applies also to information about favorable developments elsewhere in the world that offer *opportunities* for foreign policy-makers to advance positive goals. For many purposes policy-makers do not need high-confidence forecasts of emerging opportunities in order to take some sensible measures to facilitate such opportunities and to turn them to account. Thus, for example, following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the enunciation at that time of the Brezhnev Doctrine, policy-makers in Washington (as well as other observers) speculated that these events may have heightened Peking's anxiety regarding a future Soviet move against Communist China. Was Peking's anxiety over the possibility, which its border conflict with the Soviet Union could only have heightened, sufficient to make it interested in a detente with the United States? The point that deserves emphasis here is that it did not require a forecast that could confidently predict Peking's readiness for a detente to make it worthwhile for Washington to discretely explore and encourage the possibility. Sensible steps could be taken to reinforce and activate any disposition for a detente on Peking's part. From the standpoint of U.S. policy, the matter of a possible detente was "actionable" even in the face of considerable uncertainty as to Peking's readiness and conditional willingness to reorient its policy towards the United States.[19]

This chapter and the preceding one have identified psychological impediments to information processing that spring from the responses individuals make to the challenge of making difficult decisions. It is useful to be aware of the nature of these psychological mechanisms and the fact that they are pervasive. At the same time, it would be naive and misleading to suggest that if only our knowledge of these impediments to information processing could be perfected we could then hope to eliminate their occurrence. Rather, as we have sought to convey, the very processes of perception, cognition, calculation and choice are subject to inherent limits. The mind cannot perform without structuring reality, thereby often oversimplifying or distorting it. Nor, as cognitive psychologists have emphasized, can the mind function without a consistency principle. Even if there were no other constraints on creative, adaptive policy-making, the operation of the consistency principle by itself would necessarily limit the flexibility and ingenuity with which an individual can recognize and deal with the novel and complex features of foreign policy problems.

As emphasized in this and the preceding chapter, error in the individual's perception and judgment is to be expected; the very cognitive processes and psychological mechanisms that allow the individual to make decisions at all also help to produce error! At the same time, however, knowledge of the sources of error and, in particular, of the *symptoms* of inadequate information processing to which these psychological mechanisms give rise can be helpful. Such knowledge should serve to sensitize both those who participate in policy-making and those who address the challenging task of developing better information processing systems. This should be of practical value in enabling them to design, manage, and operate the policy-making system in ways that are likely to reduce tendencies towards narrowing and distorting of information-processing. Possibilities of this kind will be taken up in Part Two of this report. But first we have to consider additional sources of impediments to information processing that can arise from certain dynamics of behavior in small policy-making groups and in the larger organization.

[19]As we now know, beginning in 1969 the Nixon Administration in fact did engage in a series of signals and probes to explore and encourage Peking's interest in a detente. For a detailed account see Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974.

CHAPTER IV

Structure, Internal Processes, and Management of Small Groups*

Many foreign policy-making decisions are made in the setting of a small group in which the executive interacts in some way with his close advisers. There is ample evidence that the group context of decision-making can affect performance. At the very least, the interactions that take place among members of the group make it likely that the decisions that emerge will be different from what a simple aggregation of individual preferences and abilities might otherwise suggest. The structure of the small group around the executive and the character of interactions within it shape information processing and option appraisal and, thereby, can significantly affect the substance and quality of the decisions taken.

It is well to recognize at the outset that relationships within small groups can be structured in a variety of ways and that markedly different interaction patterns are possible. Depending on the form they take, group processes can have either a positive or negative impact on the search for effective decisions. This point, long emphasized by social psychologists, has been made with particular reference to political decision-making by Professor Irving L. Janis:

> "a group whose members have properly defined roles, with traditions and standard operating procedures that facilitate critical inquiry, is probably capable of making better decisions than any individual in the group who works on the problem alone. And yet the advantages of having decisions made by groups are often lost because of psychological pressures that arise when the members work closely together, share the same values, and above all face a crisis situation in which everybody is subjected to stresses that generate a strong need for affiliation."

*The assistance of Joseph Atkinson, Yale University, and Professor Anne McMahon, Stanford University, in preparing this chapter, which includes many of their own insights, is gratefully acknowledged. Helpful comments on an earlier draft were received from Professors Irving L. Janis, Ole R. Holsti, and Robert Jervis, and also from Dr. Thomas V. Bonoma.

As Janis implies, members of the small group interact not only in order to deal with the substantive tasks of policy-making; their interactions also include efforts to deal with the emotional needs and stresses that can be aroused by the value complexity and uncertainty which, as was noted at length in Chapter II, are often associated with foreign policy decision-making.

In this chapter we shall consider some of the ways in which structural variables, internal processes, and management of small groups can impede—or facilitate—information processing. For this purpose we shall draw, necessarily selectively, from the vast theoretical and empirical literature bearing upon this problem that has emerged mainly from the disciplines of social psychology and sociology. Despite its limitations, this literature is highly suggestive; it serves as an important source of insights and hypotheses for those concerned with the behavior of foreign policy-making groups. Used with caution, it can sensitize and assist both those who study policy-making and those who participate in it.

First, however, we must recognize that laboratory groups, with whom much of the systematic experimental research has been conducted, differ in some important respects from real-world decision-making groups. The emotions aroused among real-world decision-makers stem from the perceived consequences of the difficult and often distressing choices they must make which may affect themselves and their own individual career prospects as well as the lives of many other people; indeed in foreign policy-making, the peace of the world may be at stake. Decisions made in laboratory experiments, on the other hand, tend to mean much less to the participating subjects and to be objectively much less consequential in other ways. Moreover, laboratory studies usually employ groups of strangers brought together for meetings of limited duration. The members of such groups have approximate equality and, though leaders often do emerge

or are designated by the experimenter, they usually have little formal or institutional authority. A presidential advisory group, by contrast, is comprised of members who have prior associations, and it meets over long periods of time under a leader who possesses great authority, both formal and informal.

Finally, the laboratory environment tends to be somewhat artificial, with extraneous influences eliminated and coping options severely curtailed. In short, although experimental studies sometimes do possess great verisimilitude for the subjects upon whose responses they rely, experimenters can never be absolutely sure either whether they are measuring what they intend to measure or whether the variables they choose to manipulate are the most important ones affecting the particular kind of behavior in which they are interested. Only when experimental findings coincide with further independent observations of behavior in natural settings, as indeed they often do, can we be reasonably confident that they possess sufficient validity and, therefore, that they are potentially useful in suggesting sources of impediments to information processing in actual policy-making groups.

In this chapter we will examine a number of ways in which group decision-making behavior can be influenced by such social-structure variables as group size, membership composition, internal role structure, group cohesion and conformity, the nature of the tasks involved, decision rules and group norms, and leadership and management styles.

A. Size, Membership Composition, and Role Structure

Most real-world decision-making groups tend to be quite small—between two and seven members according to one study—and their size tends to be reduced at times of crisis, or when "crucial choices" have to be made.[1] This is true, for instance, of the foreign policy groups within the U.S. government that developed plans in several recent crises, including Korea (1950), Indo-China (1954), Cuba (1962), Vietnam (1965), Cambodia (1970), and the Arab-Israeli conflict of October 1973.

There are various reasons why the size of the group becomes smaller when important decisions are being made, which we need not take up here. Let us turn instead to a quick review of some of the factors that affect the internal structure and interaction patterns in committees. The work at Harvard of Robert Bales (and others employing his research approach) suggests that committees whose members are focused upon a decision task form informal power-prestige orderings.[2] That is, members evaluate each other's early contributions (or lack of contributions) to the discussion and form expectations based on these evaluations about the relative worth of each other's future contributions. On the basis of these expectations, opportunities to participate in the discussion are differentially allocated by the members to each other. Thus, after a time, the members tend to be stably ranked in terms of their relative frequency of contribution to the discussion; and a member's position in that rank tends to be related to other measures of influence and informal power in the group. For example, high participators interrupt others but are not likely to be interrupted by others; they tend to get agreed with more often than others; and they have more control over the interaction process itself than lower participators. Thus the members are functionally differentiated from each other both in terms of frequency of contributions and by the character of those contributions.

It is important, therefore, to understand the formation of such role systems and to relate them to successful committee interaction. Approximate equality of interaction frequencies among the members is very rare and does not seem to be associated with committee success, as measured by either membership satisfaction or the quality of the decision.[3] What does seem to be important is that some notion of "adequate representation" obtain, so that all members have an equal *right* to voice positive or negative reactions, to ask questions, and to make a suggestion which will receive appropriate reactions. It is difficult, of course, to know exactly what "adequate" representation means; the members themselves may well not know. Research suggests that successful committees tend to strike a 50/50 balance between the amount of interaction in the form of questions and the amount in the form of answers and reactions. They also tend to have a ratio of positive to negative reactions of about two to one. Not only are too many negative reactions expressed by individuals within the group symptomatic of difficulties encountered in the process of deliberation, but too many positive ones also appear to indicate difficulties. A very high ratio of positive to negative reactions may mean either a lack of involvement or that the members are afraid to risk disagreement. In short, successful communication tends to be associated with the development

[1] Richard Snyder and Glenn Paige, "The U.S. Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea: The Application of an Analytical Scheme," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 3, 1958, p. 362; also, J. James, "A Preliminary Study of the Size Determinant in Small Group Interaction," *American Sociological Review*, 16, 1951, pp. 474–477.

[2] R. F. Bales, *Interaction Process Analysis*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1950.

[3] This entire paragraph is based quite heavily upon the summary paper by R. F. Bales, "In Conference," *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 32 (1954), pp. 44–50.

of a functionally differentiated role system which produces a widely distributed (but not equally distributed) frequency of suggestions, reactions and questions, and a certain amount of disagreement as well as agreement. What these findings suggest is that improving the quality of committee decisions may require that less emphasis be placed on issues of leadership and more on identifying the composition and interaction process of the group as a whole.

Bales recommends choosing members who will tend to fall "naturally" into a moderate gradient of participation by virtue of their characteristic frequency of interaction in committee settings. Groups composed of all high participators may suffer from competition and groups composed of all low interactors may find themselves short on ideas.[4] He further suggests that the optimum size of a committee is four to seven, with five being the optimum number. Below seven, each person in the group says at least something to each other person; in groups over seven, the low participators tend to stop talking to each other and center their infrequent communications on the few top-ranked men. This increases the centralization of communication and influence. Committees as small as two or three are also problematic, especially if there is a power problem among the members. In a two-person group no majority short of unanimity can form; each person can exercise veto power over the other. In a three-person group, the tendency of two to form a combination against the third seems fairly strong; thus it is hard for a three-person group to have an optimum amount of disagreement because the structure is too sensitive to disagreement and tends to an all-or-none extreme in its decision.

Turning now to other possible consequences of having decisions made in small-group settings, it should be noted that smaller groups tend to have simpler role structures—that is, less differentiation of tasks, less division of labor and specialization within the group, and less formalized modes of procedure. As a result, there is less need of coordinating the activities of participants in small decision-making groups than would be the case for larger, more complex policy-making units. Accordingly, more of the time and energy of the small group can be focussed directly on the problem-solving task. But the fact that relatively few individuals comprise the decision-making group may also mean that fewer policy options will be considered insofar as a smaller range of values, beliefs, and attitudes, and a reduced amount of knowledge and analytical skills are then represented or are available to the group. To enhance the performance of small decision-making groups, therefore, it is often critical not only that a flow of relevant and timely information and advice be provided to the group from sources outside the group itself but that the members of the group remain open and receptive to it.

Smallness can be beneficial if it means that the values invoked during the decision period are more consistent; hence, in this sense, the choice of action is likely to be more "efficient" in furthering those particular values. However, while value-consistency within the group facilitates choice of action, as was noted in Chapter II, this may be at the expense of ignoring other values relevant to the problem. The quality of the decision may suffer under these circumstances.

We should recognize, too, that in constituting small decision-making groups executives often prefer individuals who operate with a broader, less parochial view of the values at stake. The advantage of forming the group in this way is that such advisers are less likely to engage in bargaining in order to protect the narrow bureaucratic interests of subunits of the organization. When decision-making is in the hands of a small group it is probably easier for individual members to convince each other or to change their own minds than it is in larger, more formal groups in which each high official is identified as representing his own department or agency. As a result, small informal groups may produce more examples of genuine persuasion and, because the participants know that persuasion is possible, the arguments may be better. (See also Chapter XIII, "The Collegial Policy-making Group".)

But while the broad perspective of top-level officials may serve to improve the quality of decisions in this respect, the smallness and hierarchical position of such groups may lead to new constraints on effective problem-solving. For when decision evolves to the top of an organization there is some risk that harassed senior officials will lose contact with sources of information and experts at lower levels, and thus lack information and expertise relevant to the policy problems they are deciding.[5]

A related danger is that of "uncertainty absorption" as communication flows upward in large, complex organizations characterized by hierarchy,

[4]E. F. Borgatta and R. F. Bales, "Interaction of Individuals in Reconstituted Groups," *Sociometry*. Vol. 16 (1953), pp. 302–320. For a detailed discussion of the effects of group size within the size range 2–7, see R. F. Bales and E. F. Borgatta, "Size of Group as a Factor in Interaction Profile," in *Small Groups: Studies in Social Interaction*, A. P. Hare, E. F. Borgatta and R. F. Bales, eds., New York: A. A. Knopf, Inc., 1966, pp. 495–512.

[5]Thus, as James Thomson, Jr. has noted, "The more sensitive the issue, and the higher it rises in the bureaucracy, the more completely the experts are excluded while the harassed senior generalists take over (that is, the Secretaries, Undersecretaries, and the Presidential Assistants)." ("How Could Vietnam Happen? An Autopsy," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1968; p. 49)

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specialization, and centralization. Specialists on organizational behavior have noted a marked tendency for the critical uncertainties identified in policy analyses provided by experts at lower levels of the organization to be left out, de-emphasized, or presented in an oversimplified or one-sided manner when summaries of these analyses are transmitted upwards to top-level officials.[6] The inadequacies of such summaries can easily reinforce rather than counter-balance the psychological tendency of policy-makers to deal with complex issues by squeezing them into pre-existing but perhaps inappropriate cognitive categories and repertoires of action.

To safeguard against these possibilities, the executive may be well-advised to assign the role of "expert's advocate" (comparable to, but more specific than a "devil's advocate") to some one in the small decision-making group who is indeed well-qualified to appreciate the complexities of the expert's reports and whose function it is to make sure that the group does not oversimplify the analytical summaries obtained from specialists from elsewhere in the organization. Similarly, the executive could encourage members of the small policy-making group to check their understanding of critical facts, assumptions, and uncertainties with experts in their own agencies while the group is still deliberating and before the final decision is made.[7]

The smallness of a decision group can be harmful also if it leads to increased pressure for conformity. Small groups are likely to be more cohesive because they provide fewer opportunities for subgrouping and the intra-group conflicts associated with it. But cohesion implies conformity insofar as the members of a small group are inclined to reject dissident members who persist in taking deviant positions. At the same time, as will be emphasized later in this chapter, this danger can be mitigated in a small group in which the leader adopts non-directive or non-promotional practices with respect to the substantive content of the decisions that are being made.

It was noted earlier that the differentiated role system described in Bales' work has the character of being a power-prestige ordering, and that this can have important consequences for the degree of conformity within committees. The probability of conformity is likely to be increased when the ordering is affected by evaluations based on criteria not relevant to the decision and therefore not relevant to an accurate judgment about the relative worth of the members' contributions. The evidence indicates that irrelevant status characteristics may importantly influence the internal role structure and interaction patterns within the group. Thus, members' evaluations of each others' general status characteristics (e.g., sex, race, age, education, occupation) may affect the evaluative expectations formed by the members and the resulting power-prestige ordering. Strodbeck *et al.* have shown that this is likely to happen in jury deliberations[8] and the work of Berger *et al.* indicates that this process is quite general whenever the members are strangers to each other and thus have no previous judgments about their relative competence with respect to the issues relevant to the committee decision.[9] In this way, irrelevant status characteristics can indirectly affect the quality of the decisional outcome. Members who enjoy high prestige by virtue of status considerations are likely also to be the high ranking members in the group's role system. Low status members are likely also to be low participators and low on influence within the group. When such effects are undesirable, care should be taken to establish the relevant expertise of each member, thus improving the possibility that expectations will be based on relevant evaluations.

Torrance[10] studied decision committees composed of members of the military who held different ranks. The findings suggest that the military rank of each member very heavily affected the formation of the power-prestige order in the committees. High ranking officers systematically held high positions in the group's role structure and low ranking officers held low ones. Low ranking officers gave public agreement to decisions without privately necessarily believing in their accuracy and were more likely to be dissatisfied with the committee. The influence attempts made by low-ranking officers were less frequently successful than other members', even when they had the right answer. This suggests that when committees are formed from members of a formal authority structure (such as a government), the members' ranks in the larger system may well affect their rank in the committee in a way which is not beneficial to the decision.

[6]On "uncertainty absorption" see James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations*, New York: Wiley, 1958; p. 165. See also the discussion of "organizational pathologies" in Harold Wilensky, *Organizational Intelligence*, New York: Basic Books, 1967; and Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1967.

[7]These suggestions were advanced by Irving Janis (personal communication, and Chapter 9 of his *Victims of Groupthink*.)

[8]F. L. Strodbeck, R. M. James and C. Hawkins, "Social Status in Jury Deliberations," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 22 (1957), pp. 713–719.

[9]J. Berger, B. P. Cohen and M. Zelditch, Jr., "Status Characteristics and Social Interaction," *Interpersonal Behavior in Small Groups*, R. J. Ofshe, ed. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973, pp. 163–175.

[10]This effect was especially pronounced in permanent groups when compared with temporary groups. E. P. Torrance, "Some Consequences of Power Differences in Decision-Making in Permanent and Temporary Three-Man Groups," *Research Studies*, State College of Washington, Vol. 22 (1954), pp. 130–140.

By implication, whenever status or position in an external authority system affects the formation of a role system in a committee, then those factors are likely to affect the decisional content. Low ranking members may withhold important facts, suggestions, or negative reactions; and they may agree to a decision about the merit of which they are not privately convinced. In effect, then, the quality of the decision will be about the same as if the top ranking member or two had made the decision independently.

While conformity pressures are most likely to occur in very small groups, smallness per se is not necessarily disruptive of optimal information processing. Indeed, at times of crisis or when urgent deadlines must be met it is virtually inevitable that the size of the decision-making group will shrink. This may be desirable as well as necessary, *so long as the norms operating within the group emphasize the necessity for considering a reasonably wide range of options, for making reality-based estimates of potential dangers and opportunities, and for avoiding the hazards of conformity pressures which may lead to a premature stiffling of diverse viewpoints.* We shall return to the importance of norms which regulate the group's problem-solving activities and to the related topic of leadership practices, but first it is necessary to differentiate among two types of conformity tendencies in small policy groups.

B. Two Patterns of Conformity

Until recently, following the lead of the eminent social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, students of small group behavior have tended to emphasize the benefits of group cohesion. "Cohesion" refers to the members' positive valuation of the group and their motivation to continue to belong to it. When group cohesiveness is high, the members experience and express solidarity, mutual liking, and positive feelings towards participating in group tasks. Highly cohesive groups provide members with a sense of security, with solace and support against anxiety or distress, and help them to maintain self-esteem.

As a result, not surprisingly, the dominant view of specialists on group behavior has been that high cohesiveness improves group performance. Thus, when present in policy-making groups, cohesiveness provides an atmosphere in which the clash of parochial and bureaucratic viewpoints can be minimized, and in which consensus can be reached without excessive interpersonal friction and rivalry that tends to be disruptive of group performance as well as distressing to its members.

It is increasingly recognized, however, that *highly cohesive groups are not necessarily high performance groups.* This is particularly so when, as in foreign policy-making, the group is under pressure to deal with situations in which a great deal may be at stake. In these circumstances members of the group may begin to see maintaining group cohesion and well-being as the over-riding goal to the detriment of task-oriented activities. The policy consensus arrived at under these conditions may be more than simply the convergence of individual opinions on a particular issue; rather it may also express fundamental individual needs and group values that transcend normal canons of objectivity, and it may reflect a tacit agreement within the group to agree unquestioningly upon whatever course of action causes least interpersonal strife.

Recent emphasis on the hazards of group cohesion has led to the delineation of two dynamically different patterns of conformity: *first,* the long familiar pattern of group pressure on individual members which leads them to quell vague doubts or stronger misgivings out of fear of recrimination or anxieties about presenting a disloyal self-image; and *second,* a less obvious pattern, labelled "Groupthink" by Irving Janis, in which conformity springs from strong group cohesion brought about or accentuated by a threatening, stressful environment. The first pattern of conformity has received most attention from experimental social psychologists, partly because it is much easier to study systematically. We shall consider each of these dynamic patterns in turn, keeping in mind, however, that elements of both may be present in the way in which a group responds to a difficult situation.

I CONFORMITY FROM GROUP PRESSURE ON THE INDIVIDUAL

Most policy-making groups are comprised of individuals with somewhat different value-systems and beliefs. Foreign policy problems often activate the conflicting as well as the shared values and beliefs within the group. In these circumstances, arriving at a preference ordering of the salient values within the group and reaching agreement on the evaluation of options is difficult, if not logically impossible. Therefore, some kind of bargaining process is likely to operate within the group, even if members are unaware of it. This process may be less overt and, therefore, less readily observable in smaller groups.

Typically, this bargaining-process works in the direction of conformity, with group members interacting to reduce variances in behavior and to crystallize attitudes and beliefs. The individual who deviates from the emerging consensus or dominant view of the group becomes the center of attention

as members address themselves to him in efforts to force him to conform. If these efforts fail the dissident individual may be isolated by the group, being placed in the distressing position of having either to maintain his unpopular stand without support, or to withdraw into silence and inactivity. In extreme cases the deviant member may be rejected altogether by the group. This type of rejection has been produced experimentally by Stanley Schachter,[11] and the classical experiments by Solomon Asch demonstrated convincingly that many people will distort reality in the interests of maintaining a conformist position rather than face isolation or rejection.[12]

Conformity pressures operate in natural settings as well as in the laboratory. In politics these pressures are especially strong, not only because there is "safety in numbers" for elected officials, but also because of the need to present a united front to the outside world. Particularly in foreign policy there is pressure for executive advisory groups to agree in order to allow the President to act, or seem to act, decisively toward other international actors.

There is a danger, therefore, that advisors holding unpopular policy views will be silenced or ineffectual when subjected to pressure for conformity by the group or the executive. Numerous participant-observers in policy-making groups have noted this phenomenon. "Even the most distinguished and forthright adviser," Theodore Sorensen notes, "is usually reluctant to stand alone. If he fears his persistence in a meeting will earn him the disapprobation of his colleagues, a rebuff by the President . . . he may quickly seek the safety of greater numbers."[13] Moreover, the mere anticipation of disapproval either by the leader or other prestigious members of the group may lead to self-censorship by an adviser who holds unpopular views. This danger is particularly acute in political decision-making groups in which there is typically a great disparity in power and status between the leader on the one hand and other group members on the other. Extreme instances of kowtowing to the whims of leaders are found, of course, among advisers to Hitler, Stalin, and other dictators. But similar tendencies appear even in democratic political systems. Not only does the formal authority and prestige of the democratic executive give him great "idiosyncracy credit" with other members of his policy-making group; in addition, their reluctance to challenge his views or to give him unwelcome advice is often reinforced by fear of incurring his displeasure.

The articulation of dissenting opinions by an adviser may lead to his isolation or expulsion from the policy-making group. In his memoirs George Kennan gives numerous examples of difficulties he experienced in playing the devil's advocate role in the State Department.[14] In his account of the Cuban missile crisis, Robert F. Kennedy recalled: "I had frequently observed efforts being made to exclude certain individuals from participating in a meeting with the President because they held a different point of view . . ."[15] According to Townsend Hoopes, Vice-President Humphrey's last-ditch attempt in February, 1965 to prevent the bombing of North Vietnam was received at the White House "with particular coldness, and he was banished from the inner councils for some months thereafter, until he decided to 'get back on the team'."[16]

Rejection of a dissident, however, is only the extreme outcome of pressure for conformity. Attitudes towards dissenters may be more complex than this particular outcome implies. Both in real-world settings and in some experimental laboratory groups, countervailing considerations are often present, or can be introduced, that make it undesirable or unnecessary to squelch or reject a dissenter. For one thing, persons with power or status within the group may have "idiosyncracy credit" to deviate from the group consensus without being squelched.[17] Moreover, the possibility that a dissenter is likely to increase malaise over policy within the rest of the group is often accepted and legitimized by group norms in the expectation that divergent views and disagreement, up to a point, will strengthen the capabilities of the group to cope with its difficult tasks. Still another possibility, noted particularly in real-world groups, is that dissidents may be controlled and neutralized, and even used in subtle ways. (See Chapter IX, "The Devil's Advocate".)

It is interesting to note that pressures *against* conformity in policy-making groups often arise from motives inspired by bureaucratic politics and the institutional loyalties of individual members, rather than on the basis of the objective merits of a particular proposal. In these circumstances what matters

[11]"Deviation, rejection, and communication," in *Group Dynamics* (2nd ed.), edited by Dorwin C. Cartwright and A. Zander, Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1960.

[12]Solomon Asch, *Social Psychology*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1952.

[13]Theodore C. Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, p. 90; see also Chester L. Cooper, *The Lost Crusade*, Greenwich: Fawcett, 1972; pp. 273–4.

[14]G. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925–1950*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967; pp. 474, 480, 491–6, 499.

[15]R. F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, New York: Norton, 1969, p. 117.

[16]Townsend Hoopes, *The Limits of Intervention*, New York: David McKay, 1969, p. 31.

[17]The term "idiosyncracy credit" is normally applied to subordinates, but it applies to some degree to superordinates as well. See Edward Hollander, "Conformity, Status, and Idiosyncracy Credit," *Psychological Review*, Vol. 65, 1958; pp. 117–27.

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most is who makes the proposal and who opposes it. When this is the case, disagreement tends to be person-centered rather than task-oriented, and this type of conflict is likely to decrease the quality of policy decisions unless it can be disciplined by analytical procedures and some form of balanced multiple advocacy.[18] (See Chapters X and XI.)

There is some reason to believe that personality variables partly account for individual differences in susceptibility to conformity pressures. But the relationship between personality characteristics and susceptibility to social influence has proven to be difficult to test experimentally, since it is usually mediated by intervening variables.[19] As a matter of fact, freedom to deviate from the group majority has been associated with *non*-personality variables such as, e.g., the presence of a permissive discussion leader, the perception within the group that it is composed of persons different in interest and knowledge, the emergence of role-differentiation within the group, and the fact that an individual is a member of more than one group.[20] Not all conformity, in other words, springs from the same motivations, and while there appear to be some consistent individual differences in certain aspects of persuasibility, it is not clear whether and to what extent either conformity or "deviation" are identifiable personal propensities that some people possess to a significantly greater extent than others.

A distinction between "conformity" and "uniformity" may be useful at this point. Cohesive or homogeneous groups may produce pressures for conformity on members, but this does not imply that members hold uniform opinions on all policy positions; nor does it imply that decisions are made only when the group has reached a position of unanimous approval for a particular course of action. This depends upon both the *norms* and the *decision-rules* prevailing in the group. Thus, as Cartwright and Lippitt have argued, "A group might have a value that everyone should be as different from everyone else as possible. Conformity to *this* value, then, would result not in uniformity of behavior but in non-uniformity." But these authors also concede that "the pressure to uniformity which arises from the need for 'social reality' " and the necessity for the group to act cannot "simply be obliterated by invoking a group standard of tolerance . . ."[21] There may be times when excessive tolerance is counter-productive, especially if dissent is used as a bargaining tool as, for example, when a member dissents on a trivial point but, after a long argument, agrees to concede, hoping that his opponents will make a return concession on another point that is, in reality, more important to him.

Thus the introduction by the leader of a simple group norm of "tolerance" for dissident opinions, while helpful,[22] will generally not suffice to create an optimal problem solving culture within the group. For this, the general instrumental task in which the group is engaged needs to be differentiated into a set of interrelated sub-tasks. (See below.) Specific norms and "rules of the game" need to be established to govern each of the various subtasks of policy-making.

II CONFORMITY FROM STRESS-INDUCED COHESION

In his book, *Victims of Groupthink*, Irving Janis, a social psychologist who has long been preoccupied with problems of real-world decision-making, identifies another pattern of group dynamics that is distinct from group pressures on the dissident individual for conformity. Quite apart from such pressures, Janis notes, the very fact that a small group of decision-makers experience strong group cohesion, induced or reinforced by having to cope with a stressful environment, may lead to an erosion of their critical intellectual capacities. Janis suggests that, under conditions of stress-induced cohesion, a group begins to take on the characteristics of an embattled primary group. "Concurrence-seeking" within the group tends to replace reality-based estimates of the efficacy and morality of policy options being considered.[23]

[18]N. R. F. Maier, *Problem-solving and Creativity in Individuals and Groups*, Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Coles, 1970; pp. 227, 387, 413; Harold Guetzkow and John Gyr, "An Analysis of Conflict in Decision-Making Groups," *Human Relations*, XXIII, 1970, pp. 288–317.

[19]William McGuire, "Personality and Susceptibility to Social Influence," in Edgar F. Borgatta and William W. Lambert (eds.), *Handbook of Personality Theory and Research*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968. McGuire reviews the results of studies that have attempted to account for "conformity" and "uniformity" of views within a group on the basis of individual personality characteristics. The findings that have accumulated in this heavily researched field have turned out to be increasingly complex and inconsistent. A similarly sober conclusion regarding the difficulty of explaining conformity in terms of personality traits has been drawn by political scientists specializing on the personality correlates of political attitudes. See Giuseppe Di Palma and Herbert McClosky, "Personality and Conformity: The Learning of Political Attitudes," *American Political Science Review*, December 1970; pp. 1054–1073.

[20]D. C. Cartwright and R. Lippitt, "Group Dynamics and the Individual," *International Journal of Psychotherapy*, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1957; pp. 86–102.

[21]*Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

[22]N. R. F. Maier and A. R. Solem found in an experimental study that the presence of a permissive discussion leader who protected individuals holding minority views from the social pressures of the majority up-graded the quality of the discussion and the problem-solving performance of the group. ("The Contribution of a Discussion Leader to the Quality of Group Thinking: The Effective Use of Minority Opinions," *Human Relations*, 1952, pp. 277–288.

[23]In this respect, Janis echoes an important element in Leon

Janis sees in concurrence-seeking within small groups "a form of striving for mutual support based on a powerful motivation in all group members to cope with the stresses of decision-making."[24] This striving for support is helpful to group members insofar as it alleviates stressful emotions, feelings of insecurity or anxiety about risks or errors, and conflicts between humanitarian ideals and utilitarian (but perhaps unethical) courses of action.

Clearly, this pattern of conformity is a much more subtle and insidious thing than pressure to conform exerted against dissident members of a policy-making group. Its danger to high quality information processing lies not so much in the fact that critical opinions are being suppressed, as in the fact that group members do not realize that this suppression is occurring, since overt pressure for conformity is rare, if not entirely absent. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that what Janis calls the Groupthink pattern of conformity has been less well articulated and studied than the first conformity pattern examined above. Hard evidence to support the Groupthink hypothesis is more difficult to obtain since it is difficult, though not impossible, to simulate in a laboratory the kind of real-life conditions in which Groupthink occurs.

If the dynamic processes that underlie Groupthink are themselves difficult to observe directly, they produce a number of behavioral symptoms that are more readily noted. Janis lists a number of symptoms of Groupthink: illusions of invulnerability and of unanimity held by members of the group, euphoria and over-optimism, risk-taking and aggression, shared stereotypes of opponents, sloganistic thinking, beliefs in the inherent morality of the group, direct and indirect pressures for conformity, and poor information processing.

Leaving aside the question whether these behaviors are produced only by Groupthink, most of them have been observed in natural groups experiencing emotional stress in difficult situations. While careful not to over-state his thesis or to claim proof for his hypotheses, Professor Janis has found plausible support for his theory in the historical materials available on high-level foreign policy-making in a number of crisis situations: in particular, in the Bay of Pigs fiasco but also to some extent in the Pearl Harbor case, the Korean War, and the Vietnam escalation.

Sensitized by Janis' theory, no one who reads the accounts of U.S. high-level policy deliberations in the Bay of Pigs case can fail to be impressed by the evidence of Groupthink symptoms and by the plausibility of Janis' interpretation that this pattern of conformity played a role in distorting information processing and appraisal within Kennedy's policy-making group.[25] Janis cites Arthur Schlesinger's recollection that the dominant mood in the White House in the first few months of Kennedy's Administration was one of "buoyant optimism," and notes its resemblance to the Groupthink illusion of invulnerability. As Schlesinger puts it: "Euphoria reigned; we thought for a moment that the world was plastic and the future unlimited." Janis believes that this mood might well have encouraged the group to adhere to a number of highly questionable beliefs that underlay its acceptance of the Bay of Pigs plan—i.e., that the U.S. role in the invasion could be effectively masked, that the Cuban airforce was so ineffectual that it would be knocked out completely by the few obsolete B-26's at the disposal of the Cuban exile force, that Castro's army was so weak that the small Cuban exiles' brigade would be able to establish a beachhead, that the invasion would touch off a strong uprising against Castro, etc.

Evidence of the Groupthink illusion of unanimity is also available. "Our meetings," Schlesinger recalls, "took place in a curious atmosphere of assumed consensus." His additional comments show that this illusion could be maintained only because the major participants did not reveal their possible reservations. From conversations held later with men in the State Department and in the White House, Sorensen concluded that they had entertained doubts about the invasion plan which they had not expressed, "partly out of a fear of being labelled 'soft' or undaring in the eyes of their colleagues."[26]

A broader perspective on the Groupthink phenomenon can be gained by observing that under certain conditions a small decision-making group may take on the characteristics of an embattled "primary group." The special kinds of mutual identification and emotional ties that bind members of

Festinger's theory of informal social communication which Stanley Schachter later developed in his studies of conformity pressures. Schachter postulated that "on any issue for which there is no empirical referent, the reality of one's own opinion is established by the fact that other people hold similar opinions." In other words, concurrence-seeking is an adaptation to the cognitive constraints on rationality that were noted in Chapter II. In the face of value-complexity and uncertainty, individuals engage in concurrence-seeking vis-a-vis other members of the group in order to establish thereby the validity of their opinions and judgments.

[24] *Victims of Groupthink*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972; p. 202.

[25] Janis' detailed analysis of policy-making in the Bay of Pigs case occupies a full chapter in his book. Only a brief and selective summary of his well-reasoned analysis can be presented here. It is important to note that in focussing upon evidence of Groupthink in this and other cases, Janis does not deny that other factors also played an important role in these fiascos.

[26] Cited by Janis, *op. cit.*, pp. 36, 39, 40. In his book Janis also presents detailed case studies of the Marshall Plan and the Cuban Missile crisis, in both of which he sees evidence of high quality decision-making which avoided the pitfalls of Groupthink.

a primary group together have been emphasized by sociologists and psychologists who have noted the remarkable cohesiveness that develops sometimes in small military combat groups. Group ties support and sustain individual members of the group in coping with the stresses of combat.[27]

While it may seem far-fetched to invoke the analogy of a combat group, nonetheless the members of a small decision-making group, too, can develop primary group ties and rely upon them as a means of adapting to decisional task environments of prolonged or periodically acute stress. From membership in a small intimate group the individual may secure some of the psychological support—supplies of esteem, respect, affection, protection—needed to sustain him in his efforts to cope with the cognitive complexity, the uncertainty and risks, and the criticism of outsiders that are an inevitable part of political decision-making.

Indeed, on more than one occasion in recent history high-level policy-making groups have taken on some of the characteristics of just such an embattled group. Historian Henry Graff, who had occasion to conduct private interviews with President Johnson and his principal foreign policy advisers on four different occasions between mid-1965 and the end of 1968, noted that as these advisers "felt increasingly beleaguered, they turned toward one another for reassurance" and became "natural friends" of their chief.[28] Graff was impressed with the repeated emphasis on unanimity expressed by members of Johnson's "Tuesday Lunch Group," as this group of policy advisers was called. Graff's impression of the group was that it was highly cohesive:

> "The men of the Tuesday Cabinet were loyal to each other, with a devotion compounded of mutual respect and common adversity. They soon learned, as all congenial committeemen learn, to listen selectively and to talk harmoniously even when in disagreement . . ."[29]

Bill Moyers not only supports Graff's impression that Johnson's inner circle was highly cohesive but adds that the concurrence-seeking tendency within this group and other policy-making groups is part of the explanation for its lack of critical debate of Vietnam War policy:

> ". . . one of the significant problems in the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations was that the men who handled national security affairs became too close, too personally fond of each other. They tended to conduct the affairs of state almost as if they were a gentlemen's club . . ."[30]

Cohesiveness within the top decision-making group may also indirectly restrict information processing. Subordinates outside the group may perceive that its members do not welcome discrepant information and advice, and adjust their own behavior accordingly. Thus, subordinates may censor information flowing upwards into the top policy-making group in the light of the anticipated rejection of it.

Stress-induced cohesiveness may emerge not only at the highest levels of decision-making but also within tightly-knit factions which pursue a highly valued policy against odds and in the face of great and persistent difficulties. In "fanaticized" policy cliques of this kind a tacit understanding may develop among members against arousing each other's doubts concerning the correctness of the group's position and tactics. The critical and moral capacities of individual members are impaired not so much because of their strong commitment to the policy in question but as a result of group dynamics which encourage tendencies towards regressive forms of thinking (as well as regressive emotional states). Members of such groups tend to adopt a simplified cognitive view of the external world and of other political actors; they employ dichotomized modes of thought and oversimplified notions of causality; they tend to lose a sense of proportion and to confuse means with ends. Supported by other members of the cohesive faction, the individual may indulge in a degree of intellectual arrogance, rigidity, and amoral behavior that he would be incapable of sustaining by himself.

The source of Groupthink resides neither in the individual nor in the organizational setting, but in the cohesive group itself. However, high group cohesion does not lead automatically to Groupthink; it must be accompanied by at least two additional factors: insulation of the policy-making group from outside influences, and assertively directive leadership practices. Thus, once again, we must observe the crucial importance of group norms in determining the quality of small group decision-making: if the group boundaries are permeable and its members are accessible to dissenting opinions from outgroups to which they are attached, and if the group leader avoids the trap of promoting his own views at an early stage in the decision-making process, taking care to insure that differences of opinion are fully and fairly consid-

[27]See, for example, Edward S. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 12, 1948; pp. 280–315; Samuel A. Stouffer *et al*, *The American Soldier*, 4 volumes, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949; Irving L. Janis, "Group Identification Under Conditions of External Danger," *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. 36, 1963, pp. 227–238.

[28]Henry Graff, *The Tuesday Cabinet*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970; p. 24; cited by Janis, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[29]Graff, *op. cit.*, p. 6; cited by Janis, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

[30]Quoted in Hugh Sidey, "White House Staff vs. the Cabinet," *Washington Monthly*, February, 1969; cited by Janis, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

ered, then high or moderate levels of group cohesion may be acceptable, or even desirable, at the information-processing stage of decision-making.[31]

C. Group vs. Individual: Quality of Decisions and Risk-Taking

The preceding discussion has emphasized that if the potential advantages of a small group or committee are to be realized, it requires—among other things—that (1) a differentiated role structure develop within the group which is based upon judgments of relevant contributions that different members can make to the decision-making tasks at hand, and that (2) the processes of reaction, questioning, and suggestion-making within the group not be inhibited. Whether groups or individuals perform better depends on other factors as well—for example, the nature of the task undertaken.[32] Groups appear to perform better than individuals in remembering information; they also do better when the task places a premium on duplication of effort or on a division of labor. Groups usually perform better on very complex problems, except on tasks requiring a great deal of interpersonal organization within the group.[33]

Without allowing ourselves to be drawn into the complexity of this issue and the voluminous, if not always consistent, findings that have been reported, it suffices to note that both groups and individuals appear to have relative advantages and disadvantages for dealing with complex cognitive tasks associated with policy-making. It appears desirable, therefore, to search for mixed procedures that will enable an executive to benefit from both collective and individual insights into policies under consideration. One simple and familiar example may suffice to illustrate the point. Thus if a group is assigned the task of producing a written report on an aspect of foreign policy, it may gain coherence and clarity if one member has predominant responsibility for writing drafts of the report to be submitted for the comments and criticisms of other group members, with the understanding that the final product is the equal responsibility of all group members. On the other hand, if in the process of rehearsing arguments in favor of the particular policy option advocated by the group majority, the draft-writer finds himself overburdened by doubts and misgivings, he should feel free to return to the group to express and further discuss those points that trouble him, rather than feel bound by loyalty and/or personal pride to attempt to represent the views of the majority in a polished written form.[34] In this way, the group will receive the benefit of both collective and individual insights into the policies under consideration.

We turn now to a central task in foreign policy decision-making: the calculation and acceptance of risks. On this critical issue, the social psychological research of some years ago seemed to support the view that groups are on balance inclined to take greater risks than individuals. But recent critiques have called this finding into question and no conclusion can be drawn.[35] Widely different interpretations have been made on the basis of similar evidence in this area of research. One popular early explanation for the apparent shift to risk in small group decision-making held that the shift, if it occurred at all, resulted from a diffusion of responsibility among group members: a special form of continuous buck passing. Speculations abound on this subject and are almost as numerous as studies undertaken, but no simple and definitive conclusions can be reached in spite of the vast research resources expended. More recently, the risky-shift hypothesis has been assimilated into the broader category of "choice shifts," leaving it open whether groups are more risky or more conservative than individual members.[36]

It seems likely that investigators will be forced to develop more discriminating hypotheses regarding the different conditions under which groups are and are not likely to choose riskier options than the individuals comprising the group would. More attention needs to be directed, too, at the idiosyn-

[31]Janis concludes his study with a detailed discussion of various ways in which Groupthink may be prevented. Some of his prescriptions are incorporated into Chapter XIV.

[32]Victor Vroom, "Industrial Social Psychology," in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, eds., *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 2nd ed., Vol. 5, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969, p. 230.

[33]Harold Kelley and John Thibaut, "Group Problem Solving," in Lindzey and Aronson, *Handbook, op. cit.*, pp. 1–101; Barry Collins and Harold Guetzkow, *A Social Psychology of Group Processes for Decision Making*, New York: Wiley, 1964, pp. 15–16.

[34]Theodore Sorensen reports that during the Cuban Missile Crisis he was asked to prepare arguments in favor of a particular option favored by some members of the Executive Committee, but instead found himself tortured by doubts. He did not feel bound to meet his task, under these circumstances, and returned to Excom to air his doubts at what became one of the group's most productive discussions.

[35]Professor Dorwin Cartwright has incisively criticized the quality of experimental research on the so-called "risky-shift" phenomenon. See his "Risk-Taking by Individuals and Groups: An Assessment of Research Employing Choice Dilemmas," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, XX, 1971, pp. 361–378. See also the same author's "Determinants of Scientific Progress: The Case of Research on the Risky Shift," *American Psychologist*, 1973, Vol. 28, pp. 222–311.

[36]For a summary of recent trends in this research area see Samuel A. Kirkpatrick, "Psychological Views of Decision-Making," in Neil Cotter (ed.), *Political Science Annual*, Vol. 6; Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975.

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cratic characteristics of the individual who fills an executive position and the effects of exposure to different kinds of group processes on his risk-taking behavior in different types of situations. Finally, whether or not the group picks riskier choices than the individual, the question remains whether the riskier choice in that situation constitutes a poorer decision or, in fact, a better one. Acceptance of a more risky option may reflect defective judgment or, conversely, a more adequate analysis of the requirements of the situation.

It should be noted in this connection that Janis' Group-think hypothesis that was discussed earlier in this chapter is an attempt to present a rather precise variant of the risky-shift argument. Thus Janis identifies a special set of conditions under which the task performance of highly cohesive groups deteriorates, and he details a wide range of factors which may operate to encourage excessive risk-taking by such groups of which they are unaware. But, as Janis emphasizes,[37] these are factors against which can be marshalled a number of ingenious managerial techniques designed to avoid or reduce the likelihood of distorted information processing and excessive risk-taking.

D. Group Norms and Decision Rules

That the decision-making culture within the small group exercises an important effect upon the quality of information processing has already been emphasized. We will content ourselves here with explicating what is meant by "decision-making culture," which refers to the norms that regulate different aspects of the process by means of which an advisory system operates.

It is well known that executives vary substantially in their cognitive styles, i.e. the way in which they seek to organize information processing and to benefit from advice. Executives who find personal contact with too many advisers inefficient or wearing, or who find exposure to the rough-and-tumble of vigorous debate within the advisory group incompatible with their habitual or preferred mode of decision-making, will seek to limit their direct involvement with others in the search and evaluation phases of policy-making that precede final choice of action. The type of communication network that an executive develops around him will reflect not only his cognitive style but also his conception of the role he should play in the management structure and in the decision-making process. Some executives prefer to restrict their role to making the final choice of action; others prefer to involve themselves more actively in the search and evaluation activities that precede the final phase of decision-making.[38] But all executives rely to some extent on a relatively small number of advisers and staff to ferret out information, make suggestions, develop and appraise policy options, and to monitor the implementation of decisions taken.

The way in which advisers and staff perform these tasks is influenced by the expectations that develop regarding how they are to interact together for this purpose. These expectations, in turn, are shaped by the preferences of the executive or his surrogates—that is, by the norms which he or they introduce into the advisory system to define, guide and regulate the roles and behavior of the participants. Thus, for example, some executives favor debates among advisers that go to the heart of crucial assumptions and premises that divide the group; other executives prefer to limit the discussion to the advantages and disadvantages of specific options. The importance of the group norms an executive introduces into the policy-making group is better grasped if we specify in some detail the various sub-tasks of policy-making to which they apply. Thus, norms will be needed to cover questions of the following kind which arise in any advisory system:

1. Who will constitute the policy-making group for different kinds of issues?
2. How will policy alternatives be identified, discussed, and evaluated within the policy-making group?
3. How will participants in the group satisfy their needs for information and analysis?
4. Will general advice or specialized inputs to the policy-making task be expected from each participant?
5. What process will be followed in attempting to form consensus within the group on behalf of the policy that is chosen?
6. What "rules" will govern the expression of disagreement, the regulation of competition among participants to influence the leader's choice, the scope of bargaining and compromise during different phases of policy-making?
7. How will the task of synthesizing the various elements of complex policy problems be handled?
8. In arriving at a decision, what relative weight will be given by the executive to arriving at the technically best alternative as against one that commands the desired kind and magnitude of consensus within the group?
9. What degree of support, how expressed, will

[37]Janis, *op. cit.*, Chapter 9, "Preventing Groupthink."

[38]These observations are developed further in Chapter X.

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be expected of the participants once a decision has been made by the executive?

10. What "rules" will govern reconsideration of a past decision or policy?

There is relatively little systematic research on the nature and consequences of different norms covering these questions either in laboratory or real-world decision-making groups.[39] We are forced, therefore, to rely largely upon impressionistic material in order to discuss their importance. It is clear, to begin with, that the style and preferences of the executive tend to define the norms that will be followed in addressing these tasks. However, some executives assert themselves more forcefully than others in introducing norms of this kind into the advisory system. Norms covering these subtasks are not always well-defined, comprehensive, and shared by all participants. Nor is an executive necessarily consistent in his setting of norms and in his enforcement of them.

This matter is of interest here because it is quite likely that contradictory, inconsistent, or ambiguous norms represent an important impediment to information processing. Unless group norms are well-defined and comprehensive an executive may find his advisers filling the vacuum in their own way to enhance their own interests, often competing with each other in ways that create misunderstandings and counterproductive frictions.

This is not to say that an executive should make explicit all of the criteria he employs in making his choices of policy. The weight he gives to different considerations or to the judgment of particular advisers in arriving at his final decision may well be a matter that is better left unclarified in many situations. Similarly, requiring his advisers to engage in explicit voting before he makes or announces his decision may degrade the quality of the advice he receives; it may also serve to promote rivalries, as well as strengthening pressures for conformity.

The decision rule a leader chooses to follow may importantly affect the quality of the information processing and appraisal that takes place and, hence, the policy outcome. If he is perceived by his advisers as having a preference for unanimity, for example, the result may be counterproductive bargaining leading to a unanimous recommendation offered by his advisers that represents a hodgepodge of inconsistent values or a delicately-structured system of compromises which satisfies most interests partly, none wholly, and which may turn out to be quite inappropriate to the problem at hand. A decision rule of unanimity may also tend to result in minimum action, since a person who feels compelled to please those who are against him as well as those who are for him may end up doing as little as possible.

An explicit majority decision rule, on the other hand, does not avoid the problem of compromise, and may create a win-lose fighting stance among group members. Bitterness and hostility among the defeated minority may be the result.

High-level political decisions, however, usually involve a third decision rule: authoritative choice by the executive, after consultation. While in this case the executive is not bound to seek either unanimous or majority support for the action he decides to take, nonetheless the nature of his consultation becomes a critical factor in determining the quality of the search and evaluation provided him by the advisory system. His consultation practices will also be highly germane for developing consensus within the group (and, through its members, outside the immediate group as well) on behalf of his decisions.

Leaders vary in the degree to which they deliberately use their authority to block or hamper consideration of certain policy alternatives and to achieve agreement within the group for their own preferred course of action. But, as is well known, this can occur even when it is not the executive's intention or desire to curtail full consideration of alternatives. Some members of the group may develop a sensitivity to what the leader is thinking and may wish to please him by channeling their advice in the same direction. Or they may feel pressure not to pursue a line of thought to which the leader is obviously opposed.

A corollary danger is that an assertive leader may promote a feeling among group members that they are only fact-gatherers and expediters, and that all value questions are his sole prerogative. This may lead not merely to a diffusion of responsibility, but to its displacement upon the executive; thus members may vest their consciences in the leader, ignoring the moral or ethical considerations pertinent to the policy options being discussed.[40] The executive may have to take special precautions to prevent his authority from hampering free communication and unfettered discussion of policy alternatives, and he may have to make explicit his desire for value-judgments from group members.

[39] Two important exceptions may be noted: Victor H. Vroom and Philip W. Yetton, *Leadership and Decision-making* (forthcoming), and Irving L. Janis and L. Mann, *Decision Making: A Social Psychological Analysis* (forthcoming).

[40] Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority*, New York: Harper & Row, 1974. See also the discussion of factors that make for acceptance or rejection of illicit demands from an authoritative leader in Janis and Mann, *op. cit.*

E. Leadership

Since control over the process of deliberation and decision-making within the group is likely to be exerted particularly by members possessing greater power and prestige, the issue of leadership is raised. It is more useful to look at the importance of leadership in this respect in terms of the special tasks or functions that need to be performed rather than in terms of personality style or skills.

It has been suggested that committees prefer certain kinds of behaviors in their leaders to others, but it is not necessary that the leader be "emergent" rather than designated.[41] Designated leaders may indeed be preferable to emergent ones because they do not have to engage in behavior aimed at "establishing" their position. This preference depends upon two conditions, however; 1) that the designated leader does not trigger organizational or status problems and 2) that he controls the interaction process. The leader must be well differentiated functionally from the other role members in terms of type and frequency of his interaction, and in terms of controlling the allocation of interaction opportunities in a way which is consistent with the expectations of the members. He must get the committee task-focused and return it to a task focus when it digresses. If the designated leader fails to differentiate himself in these ways, the group is likely to develop an "emergent" leader who will be permitted to "share" leadership functions with the designated leader. This may or may not create conflicts. If the designated leader appropriately differentiates himself, emergent leaders will not be supported by the other group members.[42]

Successful committees are also associated with leaders who, although highly differentiated in terms of the previously mentioned behaviors, do not control heavily on *content* issues. Content suggestions and evaluations should be broadly (though not equally) distributed among the other members. If a leader over-controls on content, he is likely to produce conflict or superficial agreement and inhibition. Successful committees also tend to have a relatively high ranking member (second or third in the ordering) who functions as a socio-emotional leader. That is, he provides support for other members, tension release in times of disagreement, and so on.[43] Finally, special leadership skills (beyond the behavioral requirements already discussed) may not be necessary.[44]

Leaders relate differently to the groups they work with. One dimension of this difference concerns the quality of "distance" or aloofness maintained by a leader. Fred Fiedler has presented evidence from which he concludes that good leadership is contingent upon the leader having a moderate distance between himself and his key associates.[45] But his evidence is not completely consistent, which suggests that the value of leadership "distance" may depend both on the nature of the task and the personality of the leader himself.

At times of crisis, as has been demonstrated experimentally,[46] group members are more willing to accept directive leadership, and this may be because they require more emotional support from the leader at such times. A boost in morale may help the group out of the trough of depression and pessimism so that it can concentrate on the task of meeting the crisis more realistically. Planning a military intervention may require a more distant leader than, for example, preparing for a goodwill tour of a friendly nation. Someone like Harry Truman might habitually feel that people who did not think as he did were basically different from him and, therefore, have no trouble remaining aloof from them. Someone like Dwight Eisenhower might habitually assume that there was one truth and that all men of good will could get together and find it and, therefore, have some difficulty in maintaining emotional distance in his interpersonal relations. If a moderate degree of distance was required for a particular task, a man like Truman might deal more effectively with a group of sympathetic friends, while a man like Eisenhower would be more effective among a group of strangers or opponents.

Leaders differ, too, in terms of how they perform the instrumental and affective facets of leadership: Richard Nixon apparently felt uncomfortable in groups (though not with certain individuals, particularly Haldeman on whom he was apparently highly dependent) and tended to be operationally vague, preferring to make his decision in solitude and then leave it to one of his advisers to carry it out. Fearing he might concede unwisely in the heat of an emotional argument, he preferred to maintain a rigid control over his own emotions, and to surround himself with severe, unemotional technocrats. Since these were the men who substituted for

[41]L. Carter, W. Haythorn, B. Shriver, and J. Lanzetta, "The Behavior of Leaders and Other Group Members," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 46 (1950), pp. 589–595.

[42]L. Berkowitz, "Sharing Leadership in Small Decision-Making Groups," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 48 (1953), pp. 231–238.

[43]R. F. Bales, "In Conference," *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 32, (1954), pp. 44–50.

[44]Edgar Borgatta, A. S. Couch and R. F. Bales, "Some Findings Relevant to the Great Man Theory of Leadership," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 19 (1954), pp. 755–759.

[45]Fred Fiedler, *Leader Attitudes and Group Effectiveness*, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1958.

[46]Robert L. Hamlin, "Leadership and Crises," in Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, eds., *Group Dynamics*, 3rd ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1968.

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him in many group meetings, we may assume that their performance of the affective side of leadership was also deficient in some respects; e.g., their unsympathetic manner might lead to less free discussion of policy options.[47] A leader who is not very good at the affective, morale-boosting aspects of leadership might find it beneficial to employ someone else to perform these tasks in his policy-making groups.

The behavior of groups often differs markedly under different leadership conditions. The classic experiments of Ronald Lippitt and Ralph White, employing three different leadership styles—authoritarian, laissez-faire, and democratic—among adults in charge of boys' clubs, showed that a democratic style was both more preferred by group members and more productive in terms of work.[48] This style was characterized by high levels of participation in policy-making by group members, and the use of "guiding suggestions" rather than orders; i.e., indirect guidance that takes into account the purposes of the group member, rather than direct expression of what the leader wants to do. Democratic leaders were also careful to outline procedures in advance, in contrast to the authoritarian leaders who dictated procedures one at a time so that future steps remained uncertain and members could not seize the initiative. Laissez-faire leaders left groups alone to determine their own policies, supplying information only on request. The autocratically-led groups showed a large amount of either aggressive or submissive behavior, lacked spontaneity, engaged in scapegoating activities, and had the highest drop-out rate. The groups with laissez-faire leaders performed little work, largely of poor quality, and spent most of their time playing. Under democratic leadership, more work was done, though less time was spent on it than under autocratic conditions, and the work accomplished was more original and spontaneous, continuing even in the absence of the leader. More mutual praise occurred, there was more use of the word "we," and a greater readiness to share property.

Generalizations from these findings must be made cautiously, however, since there was little potential for serious conflict between leader and followers in this special experimental situation. In a foreign policy group we would expect sharp differences of opinion occasionally with which a democratic-style leader might have some trouble coping, but the Lippitt and White experiments do at least suggest that the extreme styles of autocratic or laissez-faire leadership may have important dysfunctional consequences for information processing by small groups. A more moderate and flexible style that explicitly encourages task-oriented participation by group members, confers praise and criticism in an impersonal manner, and limits the boundaries of desired behavior in advance, may be optimally functional under most circumstances. Note also that the *appearance* of democratic leadership can be illusory: it may be employed with a certain amount of deviousness as a means of manipulating the group into thinking it has made a decision which it has not, in fact, made. But such manipulation is not always successful; most individuals feel some psychological pressure to resist perceived manipulation of their attitudes. A leader may have to build up a good deal of "idiosyncracy credit" with his advisers before he can successfully use them in this way without incurring their resentment.[49]

Thus far in the report we have identified possible impediments to information processing that stem either from the behavior of the individual decision-maker or from the dynamics of small groups to which he belongs. We turn next to the larger organizational context.

[47]See, for a fuller discussion of this point, Joseph B. Atkinson, "President Nixon's Advisory System as a Variant of the Patron-Client Model of Association: A Case Study," unpublished paper, Yale University, April 1974.

[48]Ralph White and Ronald Lippitt, "Leader Behavior and Member Reaction in Three Social Climates," in Cartwright and Zander, *op. cit.*

[49]See further, Hollander, *op. cit.*

CHAPTER V

Organizational Behavior and Bureaucratic Politics as Sources of Impediments to Information-Processing*

It is interesting to recall that personality theorists who pioneered in studying the disruptive role emotions and impulses can play in a person's behavior looked to organizational structures and procedures as providing the means for strengthening an individual's rational capacities. Views of this kind were expressed many years ago by Sigmund Freud and William McDougall, and echoed more recently by W. R. Bion, a specialist on group dynamics who has been associated with the work of the Tavistock Clinic in London. Bion takes the position that by relying upon "organization and structure" a work group can prevent the emotional drives of its members from obstructing performance of its tasks.[1] These hopes found strong resonance in the views of political scientists of an earlier generation who saw in the emerging "scientific" approach to organization and management an opportunity to improve the quality of information-processing and appraisal of complex policy issues. They were intrigued by the possibility that an over-burdened executive could divide his overall responsibilities into a set of more manageable sub-tasks to be assigned to specialized units of the organization. The resulting division of labor and specialization within the organization would enable the executive to approximate more closely the ideal of "rationality" in policy-making.

The hopes placed in the potentialities of modern organization by personality theorists and political scientists alike have not been fully realized. Organizations can indeed strongly reinforce the rational, constructive, adaptive sides of an executive's personality; and they can service his need for information, appraisal, and planning. Thereby organizations can also help to control and counter impediments to information-processing introduced into policy-making either by ego defensive maneuvers to which any individual resorts from time to time or by certain kinds of group dynamics that can hamper effective reality-testing and task performance.

But for various reasons, the potential contribution of organization has proven difficult of realization, and it is clear that earlier expectations were excessively optimistic. For one thing, while executives of organizations do in fact attempt to seek the advantages of internal division of labor and specialization, many policy problems of large scope cannot be neatly divided into separable tasks and dealt with successfully by specialized sub-units in isolation from the rest of the organization.[2]

In order to be responsive to a wide range of foreign policy problems, the United States government is divided into a number of departments and agencies, among which the primary responsibility for different aspects of foreign policy is divided. However, few important issues fall exclusively into the domain of any one of these organizations. Although policy-makers might like to classify issues as either military or diplomatic or economic, it is rarely possible to make such a simple classification as regards most issues. For example, it has been pointedly observed that the problem of deployment of U.S. troops in Europe is relevant to our defense posture (Defense Department), our balance of payments (Treasury), and our relations with both our European allies and the Soviet Union (State).

Many such issues of foreign policy—often the most important ones—cut across jurisdictional lines of special competence and responsibility. To emphasize this point some thoughtful observers have suggested that a "policy question" be defined as one for which there are no experts per se, but

*For comments on an earlier draft of this chapter I am indebted to Eric Davis, Grant Hilliker, and Robert Jervis.

[1]W. R. Bion, "Group Dynamics: A Review," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 33, 1952; Part II, pp. 235–247.

[2]Robert Axelrod, *Conflict of Interest: A Theory of Divergent Goals with Applications to Politics*, Chicago, Markham, 1970; pp. 122ff.

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only advocates and referees. For policy problems of this kind effective problem-identification, problem-solution, and policy-implementation cannot be achieved by sub-dividing the task and delegating different parts of it to sub-units of the organization. Rather, these policy problems must be approached within a holistic framework and provision must be made for coordination and interaction among the specialized sub-units.

The difficulties of achieving coordination and interaction are compounded by virtue of the fact that sub-units within an organization typically develop interests and goals of their own; often they are in sharp variance with organizational goals and value priorities as seen from the perspective of the executive. The executive's task of policy control, policy coordination, and policy implementation is jeopardized, moreover, by competition and conflict among the various sub-units. The internal politics of policy-making within the organization are the source of a number of stubborn impediments to optimal information-processing. These are described and richly illustrated in the literature on organizational behavior and "bureaucratic politics,"[3] and need only be briefly recapitulated here.

Reflecting their own special interests and perspectives, sub-units often contribute in selective, biased ways to the organization's search for and processing of information. Similarly, the participation by a sub-unit in the evaluation of policy options is often biased by its parochial priorities and needs. In order to compete more effectively in the internal struggle over policy the various participants from different parts of the organization resort to rhetorical exaggeration of their recommendations and over-simplification of supporting arguments. Moreover, the organizational actors employ their bargaining advantages (stemming from resources such as expertise, control over information, standing with the president, political skill, etc.) to influence the choice of policy.

Internal conflict over policy poses risks to the interests of sub-units. To reduce these risks they often restrict competition with each other, engage in bargaining, and arrange compromises designed to protect their most important interests. As a result, policy issues may not rise to the presidential level; or, when they do, the issue may take the form of a concealed compromise that reflects the narrow interests of actors at lower levels. Moreover, when a sub-unit's interests seem to require it, it will avoid responsibility for an issue or narrow the range of its participation in policy-making. Thus, it is not always the case that sub-units seek to expand their responsibilities, resources, missions and budgets. Under some circumstances quite the opposite may be true; that is, sub-units will be unwilling to get involved in policy disputes on behalf of causes which they consider unpromising and potentially costly to themselves. Restriction of participation may occur even though the issue in question has high priority from the standpoint of the executive.

Finally, the pronounced tendency of sub-units to rely on established routines and standard operating procedures also constrains the performance of the organization. These routines may be inappropriate for dealing with novel situations and may lead to ineffective implementation of presidential policy. Moreover, sub-units may be quite selective in their compliance with top-level directives and policies, following their own judgments of the merits of a policy or acting to safeguard their own interests.

In sum, far from fulfilling earlier hopes that they would strengthen the quest for more rational policies, organizations have developed "pathologies" of their own. As Harold Wilensky has emphasized, all large-scale organizations have structural characteristics of hierarchy, specialization, and centralization that encourage chronic pathologies of information and advice.[4] We shall turn in the next chapter to a closer look at the implications of this for the functioning of the policy-making system.

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[3]A useful synthesis and explication of these materials is provided in Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision*, Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1971. On organizational politics see also the publications of Morton Halperin, particularly his *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, Brookings Institution, 1974, and I. M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy*, Princeton University Press, 1972.

[4]Harold Wilensky, *Organizational Intelligence*, New York: Basic Books, 1967.

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Some Possible (and Possibly Dangerous) Malfunctions of the Advisory Process*

It is not easy to predict what impact the parochialism of sub-units described in the preceding chapter will have on the executive's ability to comprehend policy problems, exercise intelligent choice of action, and arrange for effective implementation. This will depend upon a variety of factors, among them the steps the executive takes to protect himself and the advisory system around him from the maneuvers of sub-unit actors. Besides, we should recognize that conflict over policy within the executive branch may in fact help illuminate issues and improve information search and appraisal. (This possibility will be taken up in PART TWO.)

Relevant to this is the way in which the executive attempts to organize foreign policy-making procedures within the executive branch—i.e., whether the organizational model he establishes is a highly-centralized White House-oriented system, a State-centered system, or a looser de-centralized system. Each of these models attempts to cope with the dynamics of organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics in somewhat different ways. Each model requires a somewhat different set of procedures and strategies for curbing the damaging effects of the parochial viewpoints and policy maneuvers that sub-units engage in.

These alternative organizational models for structuring foreign policy-making within the executive branch are described in detail and evaluated in other reports being prepared for the Commission. The present report confines itself to identifying a number of *general "malfunctions"* of the advisory process that can occur under *any* of these alternative organizational models. It is important to clarify the reasons for doing so. While structural reorganization can aid in the quest for effective policy, there appears to be no single organizational model by means of which the chief executive and his staff can convert the functional expertise and diverse viewpoints of the many sub-units within the executive branch into consistently effective decisions and policies. Impediments to information processing will occur under any of the organizational models that are being considered. The dynamics of organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics that create these impediments are stubborn; they will not be eliminated by any of the organizational models under consideration.

It follows from this that efforts to improve the foreign policy-making system should not stop with structural reorganization along the lines of one or another of the organizational models under consideration. In addition, whichever model is adopted must also include provisions for timely identification and correction of possible malfunctions in the advisory system.[1] Provision must be made for *monitoring* the day-to-day workings of the policy-making system, and strategies for *"preventive intervention"* must be available within that system.

As defined here, "malfunction" refers to the ways in which a policy-making process fails to achieve one or another of the features of an effective procedure. It is conceded that a procedural malfunction does not always result in a major policy error; nor can it be argued that a better policy will always be chosen if procedural malfunctions do not occur. Rather, the premise on which this report rests is that procedural malfunctions *can* have damaging consequences for policy choices, not that they necessarily will.[2] Nine malfunctions of the advisory

*For comments on an earlier draft I am indebted to Dr. David Hamburg, Stanford University; Professor Grant Hilliker, Mershon Center, Ohio State University; and Professor Lincoln P. Bloomfield, M.I.T.

[1]This point is increasingly emphasized by organization specialists who have been struck by the chronic pathologies of information and advice to which all complex organizations are subject. Harold Wilensky, for example, provides a list of "organizational defenses against informational pathologies" (*Organizational Intelligence*, N.Y.: Basic Books, 1967, pp. 174–181); and Anthony Downs identifies a number of strategies (such as redundancy, use of counter-bases) for reducing or avoiding distortion in hierarchical communication within organization (*Inside Bureaucracy*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1967, pp. 118–127).

[2]For additional discussion see A. L. George, "The Case for

process have been identified as having occurred at the Presidential level in various historical cases; they will be listed, and briefly discussed here. (The reader is asked to keep in mind that malfunctions of this kind are not confined to presidential decision-making in the foreign policy sphere; such malfunctions can occur at any level of decision-making, for other kinds of policy issues, and in other kinds of organizations.)

1. When the President and his advisers agree too readily on the nature of the problem facing them and on a response to it.

Paradoxically, while it is often difficult for an executive to achieve sufficient consensus within the decision-making group on behalf of a wise policy without diluting its ingredients, to achieve consensus too quickly and too easily is also likely to degrade the quality of the decision. An experienced executive will regard a readily achieved consensus within the policy-making group as a reason for *postponing* rather than taking action. Alfred P. Sloan, former chairman of General Motors, is reported to have said at a meeting of one of his top policy committees:

> "Gentlemen, I take it we are all in complete agreement on the decision here . . . Then I propose we postpone further discussion of this matter until our next meeting to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about."[3]

Deferring action is more difficult, of course, when the situation seems to require it or when the chief executive himself is disposed to take immediate action. In certain types of international crisis a kind of spontaneous consensus may quickly emerge among members of the policy-making group on behalf of the "need for action" to prevent damage to U.S. interests—a consensus which may prevent adequate consideration of the magnitude of the expected damage and how much cost and risk one should undertake in order to prevent it. It is particularly when everyone seems to agree on the need for some action to prevent expected damage that the most dangerous mistakes in the calculation of risk and utility are likely to be committed. The typical error under these circumstances is a gross underestimation of the costs and risks of the action taken. Conversely, *disagreement* within the decision-making group on the proper objectives, the proper means, the kinds and level of risk present in the situation is likely to improve the analytical process and the advice that precedes the final choice of policy the President makes.

This type of malfunction of the policy-making process can be vividly seen in the events leading to President Johnson's decision to send U.S. military forces into the Dominican Republic in the spring of 1965. As Philip Geyelin (a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal* at the time) put it in his excellent review of this crisis: "If Lyndon Johnson had acted much differently than he did in the early, decisive days of the Dominican crisis, he would have had to invent his own alternatives and ignore the counsel of his principal advisers."[4] There is nothing in the available record to indicate that the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy, attempted to preserve the President's options in this case.

Indeed, all available accounts of the crisis indicate that consensus on the need for U.S. military intervention developed quickly, easily, and without challenge within the decision-making group. Geyelin notes that Johnson "was remarkably at the mercy of the advice and activities of his subordinates on the scene"—who speedily concluded that a rebel victory carried with it the risk of an eventual communist regime. This definition of the situation emerged almost at once in the field and was immediately accepted without question in Washington because everyone's perception of the crisis in the Dominican Republic was shaped by a strong policy predisposition that antedated the crisis. This was the belief that the Dominican Republic should not be allowed to become another Cuba. A distorted, exaggerated perception of the threat in Santo Domingo emerged when available information on the rebels was viewed through the prism of the "Cuban syndrome." No attempt was made until well after the U.S. was committed to intervention to check the U.S. Embassy's definition of the situation and of the policies most appropriate for meeting it.[5]

But decisional premises of this kind do not always paralyze the ability of decision-makers to make a

Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review*, September 1972, pp. 765–781.

[3]Quoted by Peter F. Drucker, *The Effective Executive*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 148.

[4]Philip Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World* (New York: Praeger, 1966), pp. 244–5.

[5]Some of the major accounts on the Dominican intervention, in addition to Geyelin's book, are Abraham F. Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention* (Harvard University Press, 1972); John Bartlow Martin, *Overtaken by Events* (New York: Doubleday, 1966); Theodore Draper, *The Dominican Revolt* (New York: Commentary, 1968); Tad Szulc, *Dominican Diary* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1965); Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power* (New York: The New American Library, 1966); Dan Kurzman, *Santo Domingo: Revolt of the Damned* (New York: Putnam, 1965); Center for Strategic Studies, Georgetown University, *Dominican Action—1965: Intervention or Cooperation?* (Washington University Press, 1966); Haynes Johnson and Bernard M. Gwertzman, *Fulbright: The Dissenter* (New York: Doubleday, 1968); Jerome Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970).

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reasoned calculation of the utility of intervention. Vigorous multiple advocacy within the Eisenhower administration in the Indochina crisis of 1954 helped to control the effect that ideologically reinforced decisional premises were allowed to have on the final decision. The policy-making process worked much better in the 1954 crisis than in the Dominican crisis.

2. When advisers and advocates take different positions and debate them before the President but their disagreements do not cover the full range of relevant hypotheses and alternative options.

There is no assurance that on any given policy problem each of the relevant options will find an advocate within the policy-making group. Some options may fail to get serious consideration because it is felt that the President has excluded them or would reject them, or because they are not in the interest of any agency and no one wants to pay the bureaucratic cost of asking the President to adopt them. Thus, the option of not giving direct military assistance to South Korea when it was attacked by North Korea in June 1950 was never really considered by Truman's advisers, in part because the President had made it clear at the outset that the United States would not allow the attack to succeed. (A fuller account of this case is given below.)

Other options may fail to get consideration because policy-making officials serving under the chief executive are uninterested in them. There are various ways of reducing the executive's freedom of action even while seemingly providing him with multiple options. As Robert H. Johnson notes: "One of the chief problems with attempts to lay out major policy alternatives is the strong temptation to load the dice. A typical procedure is to set up a straw-man alternative on either side of a middle course of action which quickly becomes the logical choice over the more 'extremist' options." [6]

3. When there is no advocate for an unpopular policy option.

In the Vietnam escalation case there was, at least, an advocate for the unpopular option of withdrawal in the person of George Ball. In the Korean case, by contrast, the policy-making group assembled by President Truman on the first day of the North Korean invasion quickly developed a consensus on the need for action to prevent the expected damage to U.S. interests. While members of the group were by no means uniformly enthusiastic at the prospect of U.S. military involvement, the consensus to act was at no time subjected to challenge. This was not because of any previously agreed-upon contingency plans which had only to be put into operation. Indeed no such plans existed. The North Korean attack came as an unexpected shock. It was this rude reality, not the availability of pre-existing plans, that helped produce consensus within the policy-making group. Critical in this respect, too, was the President's initial definition of the situation as one in which too much was at stake to permit the United States to acquiesce.[7] The ingredients for bureaucratic politics and multiple advocacy were present in the long-standing policy and personal conflicts between Secretary of State Dean Acheson and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson, but their expression was muted by the President's attitude, the atmosphere of crisis, and Acheson's reversal of Administration policy on Formosa in the direction that Johnson had advocated.

During the first few days of the conflict, at a time when U.S. assistance was still limited to air and naval support, several of Truman's advisers expressed their reluctance to see U.S. ground troops committed to combat in South Korea. Indeed, the President's own hesitation in the matter was also noticeable. There was some discussion of the disadvantages and hazards of this course of action before the need for U.S. combat troops became evident. Once the deteriorating battlefield situation made it imperative, however, no adviser questioned the introduction of American combat forces except George Kennan, who hesitated on the grounds that it would increase the likelihood of Soviet counterintervention. Neither Kennan nor military advisers who were unenthusiastic about being drawn into a land war on the Asian continent were given any encouragement to play a more vigorous advocate's role in the policy discussions.[8]

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[6]Robert H. Johnson, "National Security Council," *Orbis*, Vol. 13 (Fall, 1969), p. 723. Others who have called attention to the subterfuge of "straw man" options include I. M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1972); John P. Leacocos, "Kissinger's Apparat," *Foreign Policy*, No. 5 (Winter, 1971–72), p. 24; Charles Yost, "On Affairs at State," *N.Y. Times*, May 30, 1971.

[7]Taking note of this, Richard C. Snyder and Glenn D. Paige emphasize that the definition of a situation itself can, in effect, exclude consideration of any but a single course of action. See "The United States Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 3 (December 1958), p. 245; Harry S. Truman, Memoirs: *Years of Trial and Hope*, Vol. II, Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1956, pp. 332ff; Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision*, pp. 98–99, 113–115, 124–6, 148–9, 174; Alexander L. George, "American Policy-making and the North Korean Aggression," *World Politics*, 7 (January, 1955) pp. 209–32.

[8]Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision*, N.Y.: The Free Press, 1968; p. 136, 164–5, 255, 257, 260–1, 300–1. Kennan's hesitation over use of U.S. ground troops, however, should not be exaggerated into making him, as some revisionist writers have tried to do, into an opponent of U.S. intervention. In his memoirs, Kennan states that from the onset of the Korean crisis he felt that the United States would have to react with all necessary force to repel the attack and to expel North Korean forces from South Korea. He also favored prompt steps to protect Formosa from falling into Communist hands on the ground that "two such reverses coming one on the heel of the other could easily prove disastrous to our prestige and to our entire position in the

Later in the Korean War, when the decision was being made to send the U.S. and U.N. forces across the 38th parallel to pursue the defeated North Korean army and to unite the two parts of the country, the threat of Chinese Communist intervention became a factor. Important officials in Truman's circle of policy advisers (Secretary of the Air Force Thomas Finletter and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Forrest Sherman, as well as George Kennan) were disturbed by the risks of Chinese intervention.[9] Once again, however, Truman's structuring and management of the policy-making process discouraged those with reservations about the drift of policy from playing the role of more articulate devil's advocates. Indeed, such a role was not generally congenial to President Truman. He preferred to structure the policy-forming process in terms of functional expertise. Each agency head was expected to provide his considered view of that aspect of the problem for which he was responsible. Within each department second- and third-level officials contributed their advice to their department head, and deviations from this hierarchically organized flow of advice within each department were discouraged. Kennan's advice on this and other occasions when it differed from Acheson's was overshadowed and controlled by the advice of the Secretary of State.[10]

4. When advisers to the President thrash out their own disagreements over policy without the President's knowledge and confront him with a unanimous recommendation.

In this variant of the workings of bureaucratic politics the other actors in effect "gang up" on the chief executive and try to sell him the policy they have worked out among themselves. Clark Clifford gives a succinct, authoritative account of this practice in an interview describing his role as assistant to President Truman on domestic affairs:

> The idea was that the six or eight of us would try to come to an understanding among ourselves on what directions we would like the President to take on any given issue. And then, quietly and unobtrusively, each in his own way, we would try to steer the President in that direction . . . Well, it was two forces fighting for the mind of the President, that's really what it was. It was completely unpublicized, and I don't think Mr. Truman ever realized it was going on. . . .[11]

In this case, as Clifford's account makes clear, two coalitions of advisers were competing for influence over policy. A more dangerous situation arises when all major advisers on a policy issue reach an agreement among themselves before going to the executive. This type of malfunction of the process almost occurred in the late autumn of 1964 when President Johnson was confronted with a solid lineup of advisers recommending that he proceed with the Multilateral Force for NATO. The M.L.F. was a strategic force to be composed of surface ships manned by mixed crews drawn from a number of NATO countries. For several years a small but strong group of M.L.F. partisans within the administration had pushed this idea as a way of knitting the alliance together. An opportunity for final U.S. approval of the plan and its implementation arose in connection with Prime Minister Harold Wilson's visit to Washington for discussions with the President. The advocates of the M.L.F. within the administration succeeded in coordinating with all of the President's chief advisers a position paper that would finally have committed the U.S. firmly to the M.L.F. Hence, on the eve of his critical meeting with the British Prime Minister, Johnson "was confronted with a spirited, consecrated, nearly united bureaucracy . . ."[12]

Now, it is extremely difficult for a President to act contrary to the unanimous advice of all his national security advisers. It is well to regard this variant of the bureaucratic politics process as a possible malfunction, for its occurrence threatens to deprive the chief executive of an adequate evaluation of available options. The President does not benefit adequately from multiple advocacy when the actors thrash out or compromise their differences *privately* and confront him with a unified recommendation.

In the M.L.F. case the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, McGeorge Bundy, did act in

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Far East" (*Memoirs, 1925–1950*, [Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1967], p. 486).

[9]Kennan, pp. 487–96; also Trumbull Higgins, *Korea and the Fall of MacArthur* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 78–79; Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 183–84.

[10]In a laudatory account of the way in which Truman organized and managed the process of foreign policy making, Dean Acheson credits him with infusing an adversary process into N.S.C. meetings similar to that of the law court. It is clear that what Acheson endorses in this respect is the formal, orderly variant of the adversary process—one which worked in Acheson's advantage because Truman acknowledged and leaned on his special competence in foreign affairs—and not the unstructured and unpredictable variants of multiple advocacy associated with the game of bureaucratic politics. Acheson's distaste for unstructured, informal variants of multiple advocacy—in which he enjoyed less influence—emerges clearly from his critical account of the workings of the ad hoc Executive Committee of the N.S.C. at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, in which Acheson participated at President Kennedy's invitation (Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, [N.Y.: Norton, 1969], pp. 733–737; see also Acheson's review of R.F. Kennedy's *Thirteen Days* in *Esquire*, February 1969).

[11]Patrick Anderson, *The President's Men* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), p. 116.

[12]Geyelin, *LBJ and the World, op. cit.*, p. 162. A detailed analysis of the workings of the bureaucratic politics process leading up to the final confrontation of the M.L.F. advocates with President Johnson, based partly on interviews, is provided in John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, Princeton University Press, 1974.

time to prevent the emerging malfunction from narrowing the President's information and options. Geyelin states that Bundy's position as "guardian of options and protector of the President was perhaps never more effectively displayed than in the episode of the M.L.F. Bundy had sensed trouble building up earlier in the year. With the M.L.F. partisans in full cry, the President's position was uncertain . . ." [13] Sensing the development of the type of malfunction we have been discussing, Bundy intervened to restore some semblance of multiple advocacy to the system. He quietly called upon Richard Neustadt, a part-time consultant to the White House, to make an independent appraisal, for the President's benefit, of the M.L.F. issue in Europe as well as in Washington. Armed with this and other information which Bundy assembled, the President entered the final briefing conferences with his foreign policy advisers prepared to challenge the decisional premises, information, and recommendation of their position paper on the M.L.F. "In the course of the protracted conferences in preparation for the Wilson visit," Geyelin reports, "Johnson assailed the men around him, questioning their competence as well as their counsel . . ." [14]

In emphasizing the importance of Bundy's intervention in this case, we do not ignore that other factors also worked against Johnson's adherence to the M.L.F. There was by no means a clear consensus on its behalf, let alone enthusiasm, within NATO; and senior members of Congress as well as many officials in the executive branch were not enthusiastic supporters of the M.L.F. What Bundy's timely intervention accomplished was to bring these factors into greater prominence for the President's benefit.

5. When advisers agree privately among themselves that the President should face up to a difficult decision, but no one is willing to alert him to the need for doing so.

In direct contrast to the malfunction just discussed, in which his advisers privately agree upon a policy which they then attempt to get the President to adopt, this malfunction refers to the unusual and dangerous situation in which a private consensus on the need for presidential action emerges among his advisers but is not communicated to the President. This highlights once again the critical importance of presidential-level participation and sensitivity to policy-making discussions within the system.

In the M.L.F. case, monitoring of these discussions by the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs alerted the President in time. But in a different crisis under Truman in November, 1950, failure to alert the President resulted in a classic example of this kind of breakdown in the advisory system. By early November, large numbers of Chinese Communist forces had already intervened in the Korean War and had subjected U.S. and South Korean forces to sharp tactical combat; but they had not yet launched an all-out offensive against U.S. and U.N. forces. Nonetheless, Truman's chief civilian and military advisers in Washington were acutely concerned over the risks associated with the maldeployment of MacArthur's forces in North Korea in the presence of large numbers of Chinese Communist forces. The President's advisers seemingly agreed among themselves that MacArthur's directives should be changed in order to reduce the vulnerability of his forces, but this consensus was not translated into action. According to Richard Neustadt's account, each adviser had his own reasons for not taking the problem to Truman. And each adviser interpreted his official role quite narrowly in order to relieve himself of the obligation to take the initiative.

"No one went to Truman," Neustadt writes, "because everyone thought someone else should go." He continues:

> 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.

As for Secretary of Defense George Marshall, who had preceded Acheson at State and had himself been Army Chief of Staff when Bradley (now Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) was subordinate commander, he had "leaned over backwards" since returning to the government shortly before these events took place

> not to meddle with the work of his successors in *their* jobs. He had also 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 over-riding, on his

[13] Geyelin, *op. cit.*, p. 170. Geyelin's account is generally supported by Steinbruner, *op. cit.*, who also provides additional details. Other accounts represent McGeorge Bundy intervening not as a neutral watchdog of the President's options but as a concealed advocate against the M.L.F. who had bided his time. (Patrick Anderson, *The President's Men*, pp. 271–2; David Halberstam, "The Expensive Education of McGeorge Bundy," *Harper's*, July 1969, p. 29.)

[14] Geyelin, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

own, the tactical decisions of a qualified commander.[15]

This was a sorry example, indeed, of narrow bureaucratic role-playing at the highest advisory level. One can only speculate what Truman's response would have been had his advisers shared their concern with him and recommended that MacArthur's directives be changed. If Truman had acted promptly, there would have been time to pull back MacArthur's forces before the Chinese launched their major offensive on November 28. The catastrophe that followed might have been avoided altogether or greatly reduced.[16]

6. When the President, faced with an important problem to decide, is dependent upon a single channel of information.

A seldom-noted aspect of Khrushchev's behavior during the Cuban missile crisis was that he quickly established multiple channels for securing information on Kennedy's intentions. Too much was at stake for the Soviet government for it to wait passively for Washington to provide deliberate or inadvertent signals regarding the President's intentions. Faced with the need to make important decisions momentarily, the Soviet premier grasped the value of redundancy in information coverage of critical aspects of his opponent's behavior.[17] In striking contrast, U.S. leaders have allowed themselves in several crises to remain dependent on a single channel of information about critical aspects of the situation. Among the many malfunctions of the policy-making process evident in planning the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961 was the fact that Kennedy and his advisers, including the JCS, depended on CIA's estimates of Castro's military and political strength. Both were miscalculated and underestimated by CIA. It was incorrectly estimated that there was a substantial anti-Castro underground, which would lead to an uprising when the invasion by Cuban exiles took place. It was erroneously believed that Castro's air force was weak and vulnerable and that he did not have the air power to defeat the invading force. CIA argued that the invasion should not be delayed since Cuba would soon receive modern air power from the Soviets. As a matter of fact Castro had already received these modern aircraft.[18]

Although the single channel of information on these and other inputs to policy planning was controlled by CIA, where the chief advocates and planners of the invasion resided, Kennedy's suspicions were not aroused. There was ample time to set up independent channels of information and intelligence evaluation, but the President and his alter egos did not move in this direction. Rather they allowed CIA to maintain unchallenged its position as dominant advocate, a position which rested partly on its exclusive custodianship of critical information and intelligence inputs.

The type of malfunction we have been discussing occurred again in the Dominican intervention of April, 1965. For its picture of developments in the complex internal political situation in the Dominican Republic, Washington was dependent on a single channel of information—this time the U.S. Embassy in Santo Domingo. There was no independent source of information on these events.[19] Accordingly, had Johnson (or any of his advisers) wished to act differently in this crisis, as Gayelin puts it, "he would have had to discount the overwhelming weight of intelligence he received from the scene . . ." [20]

Washington's dependence on a single channel of intelligence cannot be explained on the ground that the crisis developed too swiftly to initiate additional channels. Warning was available that the internal political conflict in the Dominican Republic might

[15]Richard Neustadt, *Presidential Power* (N.Y.: Wiley, 1960), p. 145. Neustadt makes use in his account of Martin Lichterman's correspondence and an interview with Acheson, reported in Lichterman, "To the Yalu and Back," in *American Civil-Military Decisions*, ed. Harold Stein (University of Alabama Press, 1963) p. 602.

[16]Neustadt's and Lichterman's accounts of these events were qualified some years later both by Dean Acheson and General J. Lawton Collins, Army Chief of Staff at the time. (Acheson, *Present at the Creation*, pp. 466–468, 754; Collins, *War in Peacetime: The History and Lessons of Korea* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969], pp. 202, 205–217.) Neustadt's interpretation was questioned earlier also by David S. McLellan in his "Dean Acheson and the Korean War," *Political Science Quarterly*, 83 (March 1968), pp. 16–39.

McLellan agrees that Acheson and other top-level advisers did labor under the "dread of Chinese involvement" in *early* November. He notes, however, that at two important policy meetings on November 21, 1950, Acheson displayed relative optimism that MacArthur could accomplish his mission. McLellan is perplexed by this marked change of mood. He fails to see that it can be traced to the Chinese disengagement on the battlefield that took place after the high-point of Washington's (and MacArthur's) anxiety on November 9. When day after day passed without further combat or major contact with Chinese forces, the acute anxiety American leaders had felt in early November gradually declined.

[17]On this general point see also O.R. Holsti, *Crisis, Escalation, War*, Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1972; p. 21.

[18]Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 302. Cf. also the detailed account of flaws in decision making in the Bay of Pigs case in Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days*, Chapter 10; and Chester Bowles, *Promises to Keep* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 326. For a critical account of CIA's performance in the case by the then Inspector General of CIA, see Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr., "Paramilitary Case Study: The Bay of Pigs," *Naval War College Review*, November-December, 1972.

[19]A conscious attempt by Washington to develop an alternative source of information on events in the Dominican Republic was undertaken finally on April 29 *after* the U.S. decision to intervene overtly had been made and was being implemented. This was the Presidential mission of John Bartlow Martin.

[20]Geyelin, *op. cit.*, p. 244–5.

get out of hand. But neither the President nor his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, "the guardian of presidential options," utilized the available warning to establish quickly the necessary additional independent sources of information on what was going on in the Dominican Republic.

7. When the key assumptions and premises of a plan have been evaluated only by the advocates of that option.

A striking example of this type of malfunction occurred in the Bay of Pigs case. Because Kennedy persistently entertained grave doubts about the CIA invasion plan and, moreover, did *not* regard Castro as a direct threat to the United States, it is puzzling that the key premises of the CIA plan were not subjected to thoroughgoing scrutiny. As Irving Janis emphasizes in his study, *Victims of Groupthink,* the answer lies partly in the considerable respect and prestige enjoyed in the new Administration by CIA Chief Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell, both carry-overs from the Eisenhower administration, and partly also in Kennedy's wish to have them join his team.

Kennedy's reservations about the invasion plan were never translated into an effective search for an alternative. Instead, a number of partial constraints were imposed on the plan to make it more acceptable to the President.[21] Questions that the President and other policy makers raised from time to time were answered only by those who were preparing the plan and supporting it. As Irving Janis notes, the President let these meetings degenerate into question-and-answer periods. When an occasional skeptic, like Senator Fulbright, who was invited by the President to attend one of the policy meetings, raised questions about the plan, Kennedy was satisfied to allow the CIA representative to respond. In the last analysis, the key assumptions and premises of the invasion plan were not subjected to thorough independent analysis because the President allowed the CIA to dominate and weaken the multiple advocacy system. The JCS, it is true, was asked to evaluate the CIA plan, but there was no disposition on the part of Kennedy or his leading advisers to ensure that the JCS was sufficiently motivated to give it a properly critical scrutiny, or to look closely at the qualified endorsement the JCS came up with.

In providing consistently reassuring answers, the CIA representatives were not necessarily engaged in conscious deception, though wishful thinking may have been at work in their assessment of uncertainties. Their behavior is not surprising if we keep in mind that the CIA leaders firmly believed that action against Castro was necessary. They had created and trained a Cuban exile force to carry out the invasion; the preparations had already achieved a certain bureaucratic momentum by the time the new President established himself in office and turned some of his attention to reviewing the plan.

8. When the President asks advisers for their opinions on a preferred course of action but does not request a qualified group to examine more carefully the negative judgment offered by one or more advisers.

We have noted the danger that may arise when no actor in the system is willing to speak up for an unpopular option or to oppose the group's preferred course of action. A different kind of malfunction occurs when advisers who give counsel that runs against the grain suffer from inadequate resources for advocacy in the competitive marketplace of bureaucratic politics. Maldistribution among the actors of informational and analytical resources, of formal status, of informal prestige and reputation, or access to presidential confidence, and so on, can severely weaken the workings of the policy-making system by giving lopsided advantages to some participants.

As a result, the President may "hear" the negative opinion put forward by a dissenting adviser but not be impressed; he may be satisfied all too easily with the seemingly impressive rebuttal of a more powerful and prestigious advocate. This type of malfunction of the policy process was evident in the deliberations leading up to the Bay of Pigs fiasco. On various occasions the CIA plan to invade Cuba was strongly opposed by individual advisers—Chester Bowles, Arthur Schlesinger, Senator Fulbright. All accounts of Kennedy's management of the policy-making process in this case make clear that far from seeking opportunities to encourage vigorous multiple advocacy, he was reluctant to see it develop and hoped to satisfy his own doubts about the plan by procedures which did not so directly challenge its advocates and supporters.

Following the President's cue, neither did McGeorge Bundy, his alter ego for national security affairs in the White House, nor Robert Kennedy, nor Secretary of State Rusk, attempt to initiate or encourage an independent evaluation of the plan. When Hilsman suggested that his office do so, Rusk refused on the grounds of secrecy. And at one point, Arthur Schlesinger, who had written two memos opposing the plan, was taken aside by Robert Kennedy and told to "lay off." Those who opposed the invasion were "heard" but given no encouragement to develop the case against it or to form themselves into a group that would look into the issues more thoroughly.

[21] Sorensen, *op. cit.*, pp. 304, 306; Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, Chapter 10.

What this case shows, therefore, is that the advice of policy dissidents which remains the mere opinion of the individuals concerned will not suffice to check the momentum of a dominant policy faction that is attempting to control the President's decision.

9. When the President is impressed by the consensus among his advisers on behalf of a particular policy but fails to ascertain how firm the consensus is, how it was achieved, and whether it is justified.

We spoke earlier of a malfunction (number 4) similar to this one in some respects, in which the other participants in bureaucratic politics thrash out their disagreements on a policy issue privately, without the President's knowledge, and then confront him with a unanimous recommendation. But the chief executive may also be the victim of what Irving Janis calls an "illusory" consensus among his advisers that reflects a rather different working of the policy-forming system. Thus, at the important April 4, 1961, meeting it appeared to President Kennedy that there was no longer any opposition to the Bay of Pigs plan. Evidently he did not realize that the way in which the policy-forming process had been managed had discouraged the emergence of opposition. As Schlesinger recalled it, "Our meetings were taking place in a curious atmosphere of assumed consensus." And, as Sorensen puts it, the advice offered Kennedy "was not so unanimous or so well considered as it seemed." [22]

What this suggests, then, is that a chief executive and his alter egos must not take the consensus among policy advisers at face value. Particularly when the consensus is agreeable to him, the President must force himself to test it in order to establish whether it is complete or obscures important differences and unresolved issues. Similarly, he should ascertain what the consensus is based on and how it was achieved. Is it a well-considered consensus in which actors have done their homework properly and interacted with each other in a joint problem-solving exercise. Or is it a manufactured or synthetic consensus obtained through the dominance of one policy clique, or through bargaining among the actors that resulted in a compromise that papers over difficult problems and shirks the task of identifying and evaluating relevant options.

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The nine malfunctions identified in this chapter do not cover all possible breakdowns in the functioning of information and advisory systems on which an executive is dependent. While the historical illustrations chosen to illustrate these malfunctions are drawn from Presidential-level decision-making in the sphere of foreign policy, similar malfunctions no doubt occur at lower levels in the organization as well. Nor are such malfunctions confined to the area of foreign policy; they can and no doubt do occur in governmental decision-making in other policy areas as well. Finally, malfunctions of this kind can occur in nongovernmental organizations as well. In other words, while this report is concerned with foreign policy-making, the theory of malfunctions in policy-making presented in this chapter is of general applicability.

Awareness that malfunctions of the kind can occur should sensitize those engaged in policy-making to watch for them and to take timely preventive or corrective actions. We shall return to this possibility particularly in Chapter XII when we discuss the tasks of a "custodian-manager" of the policy-making process.

[22] Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, pp. 250, 255; Sorensen, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

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PART II:
WAYS OF REDUCING IMPEDIMENTS
TO INFORMATION PROCESSING

CHAPTER VII

The Concept of National Interests: Uses and Limitations

by
Alexander L. George and Robert Keohane*

We begin our discussion of ways in which some of the impediments to information processing identified in PART ONE might be avoided or their harmful effects on policy minimized by discussing the role which the concept of "national interest" might play in this respect. Foreign policy problems, as was emphasized in Chapter II, typically engage a multiplicity of competing values and interests, so much so that policy-makers often have great difficulty in attempting to reduce them to a single criterion of utility with which then to judge which course of action is "best." In principle, the criterion of "national interest," which occupies so central a place in discussions of foreign policy, should assist decision-makers to cut through much of this value complexity and improve judgments regarding the proper ends and goals of foreign policy. In practice, however, "national interest" has become so elastic and ambiguous a concept that its role as a guide to foreign policy is problematical and controversial. This chapter examines some of the reasons for this development and points to ways in which the concept can be clarified in order to strengthen the guidance it can give to foreign policy-makers.

An inquiry of this kind is especially pertinent in the current post-Cold War era. There is now substantial consensus among American leaders and public alike that the United States allowed itself to become overcommitted and overextended as a result of the Cold War and that henceforth American foreign policy must be guided by a more differentiated, discriminating analysis of the extent to which its interests are engaged by developments elsewhere in the world. Expressing agreement with this view President Nixon stated in 1970 that his Administration felt it necessary to reexamine U.S. commitments around the world "to see that they are consistent with our interests." His report to Congress on foreign policy that year underscored this point: ". . . Our interests must shape our commitments, rather than the other way around."

A. Criterion of Justification?

The concept of "national interest" continues to be important to foreign policy-makers despite its limitations as a theoretical and scientific concept.[1] They have used the concept in two different ways: first, as a *criterion* to assess what is at stake in any given situation and to evaluate what course of action is "best"; second, as a *justification* for decisions taken. Particularly with respect to the latter use of "national interest" there is reason to be uneasy and dissatisfied.

Admittedly, the task of justifying decisions has become increasingly important with the rise of public opinion and the remarkable changes in communications technology in the last century. Foreign policy is now conducted in a much more open environment than used to be the case, and the public's demand for an "instant history" of what is taking place and why a particular decision was made has created unusual pressures on leaders to explain and justify all of their important decisions and actions. It is not surprising that, under these circumstances, the "national interest" tends to become a somewhat shopworn part of the political rhetoric of every Administration and at times a psychological crutch for leaders who become locked into disastrous policies.

Many thoughtful observers of foreign policy would readily agree that the "national interest" concept does indeed lend itself much more readily

*For helpful comments to an earlier draft we express appreciation to Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Ole R. Holsti, Stephen Genco, Robert Jervis, Joseph S. Nye, Jr., E. Raymond Platig, and Robert L. Rothstein.

[1]For a critical analysis of the scientific and theoretical limitations of the concept, see James N. Rosenau, "National Interest," *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 11.

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to being used as political rhetoric for legitimizing decisions and actions than as an exact, well-defined criterion for enabling policy officials to determine what those policies should be. But it is possible to be too cynical about this. For it is by no means the case that "national interest" has been without value to conscientious policy-makers who were determined to set reasonable objectives, to judge carefully what was at stake in particular situations, and to act prudently in any given situation.

The surpassing need for a superordinate criterion such as the "national interest" is evident. Foreign policy issues typically engage a multiplicity of values and interests which are often difficult to harmonize. Not only is much at stake, but the various values imbedded in the policy problem often pull the decision in different directions. In addition, uncertainty clouds the decision-maker's judgment as to the benefits to be expected and the likely costs/risks of each of the options he has under consideration.

Under these circumstances it is understandable that the decision-maker should attempt to apply the criterion of "national interest" in an effort to cut through the problem of value-complexity and to cope with the uncertainties affecting choice among alternative policies. A conscientious effort to consider the over-all national interest can indeed help to alleviate the psychological malaise an executive experiences in making difficult decisions of this kind. He can justify the ensuing decision both to himself and to others as one based on careful consideration of "the national interest." However, the intellectual guidance which the national interest criterion actually gives the decision-maker in dealing with complex issues is another matter. It is of some importance to understand why this is so.

In the first place, "national interest" has the characteristics of what decision theorists refer to as a "nonoperational goal"; it does not provide a measuring rod for comparing alternative policies.[2] National interest is similar in this respect to concepts such as "the general welfare" and "the public interest." Such concepts cannot be employed as a utility function in rigorous policy analysis. They can be related to specific choices of action only through consideration of the subgoals to which they are presumably related. Thus, "national interest" encompasses a variety of subgoals that compete for influence in the conduct of foreign policy. But there is lacking an operational common denominator for dealing with these subgoals. Hence the relative weight to be given to various subgoals is a matter left to the authoritative (but subjective) judgment of top-level officials.

The limitation of the "national interest" concept was obscured in an earlier era by simplistic but influential arguments to the effect that national power is the supreme goal of national action. But power is, clearly, only one subgoal of national interest, and an instrumental goal at that rather than a fundamental value in and of itself.

Other limitations of the national interest concept as a criterion of policy will emerge more clearly if we recall the historical transformation through which the international system has passed. The concept of "national interest" goes back several centuries and is associated with the emergence of the nation-state in the 16th and 17th centuries. The idea of national interest, or "raison d'etat" as it was called, appears to have played a significant role at times in the determination of policy in the classical system of diplomacy before the French Revolution. As E. H. Carr puts it, "The essential characteristic of the period was the identification of the nation with the person of the sovereign." [3] The "national interest" was therefore unitary and relatively simple to determine, since it was considered to be merely the interest of the ruler.

With the "democratization" of nationalism, however, the relative simplicity of the concept of "raison d'etat" was eroded and the state itself came to be seen as composed of different interests. In the era of liberal democracy, "L'etat, c'est moi" was no longer an acceptable answer to the question of sovereign legitimacy. The "national interest" came to reflect a weighing of various diverse interests within the state, held together, somewhat tenuously at times, by the doctrine of nationalism. It therefore became a more amorphous concept, as different groups within the polity competed to claim it as a legitimizing symbol for their interests and aspirations, which might by no means be shared by many of their compatriots.

With the transition from the *laissez-faire* to social service state after 1914, the character of the "national interest" changed further. More groups saw their interests affected by foreign policy, as foreign policy expanded much more deeply, and explicitly, into the realm of economics. Increasing numbers of individuals and groups asserted interests in, and claims upon, what foreign policy should be. It became less and less convincing to speak of the state as possessing superior interests of its own that were largely independent of, and transcending, those of its subjects and citizens. Thus the scope of "national interest" was broadened appreciably, even in contrast to the situation prevailing during the 19th century.

The calculation of "national interests" has therefore become far more complicated, and indeed, more unpredictable, than it was in the simpler sys-

[2]See, for example, James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations*, New York: Wiley, 1958; pp. 156–7.

[3]E. H. Carr, *Nationalism and After* (London, St. Martin, 1945), p. 2.

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tem of classical diplomacy. As a result, some modern analysts have gone so far as to conclude that it is not useful to think in terms of an overarching national interest and that what we mean by the concept is simply whatever emerges from the policy-making process. However appealing this conclusion may be to academic authors concerned with precise definitions and clear delineation of empirical from value-laden terminology, it is hardly likely to satisfy policy-makers, who need some reference point for comparing conflicting interests and coming to a judgment.

Is there, then, some way of salvaging the concept of "national interest" and strengthening the guidance it can give in the formulation of foreign policy?

B. Values and Interests as They Affect Foreign Policy

It is important to notice at the outset that the concept of "national interest" is heavily value-laden. Interests can be seen as applications of values in context: values applied in the light of situations as they appear to people involved in them. As used by policy-makers, the phrase "national interest" implies a choice among interests, and therefore a choice among values standing behind those interests. Insofar as the concept of national interest is to be useful as a criterion for policy, it must specify some means by which leaders can determine which values, and therefore which interests, are to be included, and which excluded, from the set of national interests.

We shall attempt here to distinguish different types of national interests, as a means of clarifying what the term may mean. Later in this chapter (Sections C and D) we will use these distinctions as a basis for arguing that different decision-rules should be used to determine what to do when different types of national interests, broadly defined, are at stake.

Our first distinction turns on the question of whose interests are principally involved in a given situation. *Self-regarding interests,* for a state, refer to the attainment, preservation, or extension of benefits accruing to the state and its citizens. Preservation of the lives, liberty, and property of a given state's citizens are "self-regarding" from the viewpoint of that state. *Other-regarding interests,* by contrast, refer to benefits that accrue primarily to other states or their citizens, although action on their behalf may bring indirect and intangible benefits to a country's own people (as in the feeling of self-esteem one may feel on giving money to charity). *Collective interests* differ from both other types in that, as with collective goods, one cannot clearly separate benefits to oneself from those to others. All people in the world may benefit (although perhaps unequally) from preservation of a healthy atmosphere or a viable oceans environment; within a somewhat more restricted area, all may benefit from maintenance of an orderly world economic system and arrangements to assure adequate global food supplies.

Frequently the concept of "national interest" is used only to refer to self-regarding interests. Some advocates carry this view one step further when they contend that self-regarding interests must always be given priority over other-regarding ones, or even over collective interests. In times of extreme danger, when the autonomy of a government and the lives of its people are at stake, a strong argument can be made for doing this, on the principle that the government has particular responsibility for the welfare of its own citizens. In a "war of all against all" it is every state for itself.

Most periods of history, however, are not properly characterized as "wars of all against all," with relative equals ranged against one another. Indeed, more characteristic of international politics is a situation of great inequality—inequality of power among states, and of welfare and living standards between populations of different countries. To argue *a priori* that self-regarding interests must always be given priority over other interests is not morally tenable. It would be difficult, for instance, to uphold, on moral grounds, the imposition of export quotas on American grain, for the sake of keeping beef prices lower in the United States, if the effect were to produce starvation in citizens of India or Chad. Trade-offs will necessarily have to be made between values, and in general, one can expect self-regarding interests to be given preference, in practice, over other-regarding ones; but it is not acceptable simply to assume that the values encompassed by "national interests" should have priority over all others.

The other important distinction for the concept of national interest rests on the seriousness of effects to the nation as a whole, to other nations, or to the international system of a given set of events. Frequently, for instance, claims are made on foreign policy by individuals and groups who assert that the intensity of adverse effects to their private interests necessarily implies that the national interest as a whole is involved. The weight these subnational claims have, as well as their legitimacy, needs to be carefully evaluated; it may be found that despite their seriousness to particular interests, from the viewpoint of the nation as a whole they are relatively minor.

Analysts using the concept of national interest for policy prescription have frequently found that much of its usefulness for them lay in allowing them

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to make and to dramatize precisely this distinction.[4] They have argued that while many different values are engaged by foreign policy issues, it is not useful to regard even all self-regarding values, and the interests in which they are expressed, as essential to a concept of "vital" or irreducible national interests. Since power and will are both limited, the goals of foreign policy—and therefore the values such a policy seeks to promote and preserve—must also be limited.

These two distinctions cut across one another, so that six possible categories of state interests can be derived from them. Figure 1 indicates the relationship of these various state interests to one another.

It should be clear that in order to pin down and delimit "irreducible national interests" we have differentiated this type from other kinds of interests that may lay legitimate claim to influencing a nation-state's foreign policy. We do *not* thereby assert that only irreducible national interests should influence foreign policy but, rather, that it is desirable to sort out the other kinds of interests in addition to irreducible national interests that have to be weighed in the formulation and conduct of foreign policy.

It should also be clear from Figure 1, in conjunction with the argument above, that the notion that "interests" should determine policy is incompletely specified until we know which types of interests are being referred to and what weights they are to be given. Furthermore, apart from "basic self-regarding national interests," no clear lexicographic ordering of these types of interests can be given. For reasons explicated above, it would not be justifiable to give self-regarding interests (however secondary) automatic priority over collective or other-regarding interests. In each case, the intensity of the interests needs to be considered along with the special degree of responsibility that a government has to defend the interests of its own citizens. No easy short-cuts are available.

[4]See, for instance, the works of George F. Kennan, particularly *American Diplomacy, 1900–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); and Walter Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1943).

If we cannot simply seize upon the national interest as a sound and reliable guide to policy-making, what use can be made of the notion? We attempt to answer this question in two steps. In the next section, we articulate our view of basic self-regarding national interests, attempting carefully to delimit these strictly. We refer to these as "irreducible national interests." In the following section, we discuss the different types of decision-making processes that should be followed, in our judgment, when "irreducible national interests" and other interests are at stake.

C. "Irreducible" National Interests

We consider in this section only self-regarding interests, and we take the standpoint of the United States, with its particular constitutional system, as one point of departure. Our first step is to distinguish "basic" from "secondary" self-regarding interests. Such distinctions among values are to some extent inherently arbitrary, but the familiar triad of "life, liberty, and property" (the last of these in the broad sense of economic well-being) provides a good place to start. We therefore identify three fundamental values, to which the term "irreducible national interests" seems appropriate. They are:

1) *Physical survival.* This refers to the survival of the country's citizens, not necessarily to the preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereign independence of the state. In an era of thermonuclear weapons, this value is, of course, always in jeopardy.

2) *Liberty.* Liberty here refers to the ability of inhabitants of a country to choose their own form of government, and to exercise a set of individual rights defined by law and protected by the state. For the United States, liberty can be regarded as referring to preservation of the "democratic way of life." Liberty, unlike physical survival, is a matter of degree. "Irreducible national interests" are therefore best regarded not as including all claims to liberty, but more narrowly to the preservation of a significant degree of national autonomy and the

FIGURE 1.—TYPES OF NATIONAL INTERESTS (FOR THE UNITED STATES)

Scope of Interests Principally Affected	*Seriousness of Effects:* *Major*	*Minor*
United States	basic-self regarding ('irreducible national interests')	secondary self-regarding
International System Collectively	basic collective	secondary collective
Other States and/or their citizens	basic other-regarding	secondary other-regarding

maintenance of a non-arbitrary structure of laws.

3) *Economic subsistence.* Governments have always regarded it as vitally important to preserve the ability of their people to feed, house, and clothe themselves. This is once again a minimum definition as befits a notion of "irreducible national interests." Maximizing economic welfare is generally a goal of governments, except insofar as other considerations interfere (as they often do); but it could hardly be considered part of an *irreducible* national interest to increase per capita income from, say, $4000 to $5000 per year. In times of great international stress, such as wars, it is economic subsistence at which governments aim. Economic welfare beyond subsistence is frequently sacrificed to other ends, such as maintaining liberty or ensuring physical survival against attack.

There was substantial agreement within the United States for many years after World War II that these three fundamental values—or irreducible national interests—should shape the basic purposes and objectives of American foreign policy.[5] At the same time, there was also sharp and persistent disagreement over the substance of foreign policy during this era. Quite obviously, the implications of even these irreducible national interests for foreign policy are not self-evident. There are several reasons for this and it is instructive to inquire into them.

The first to be noted is that a value trade-off dilemma between precisely these irreducible interests can be experienced when important foreign policy choices have to be made. A forced choice between physical safety and "liberty", for example, or between physical safety and economic well-being is difficult and often painful. Most American foreign policy-makers have felt, and continue to feel, that no one of these three irreducible interests should be subordinated to the others, or sacrificed or endangered in order to assure the other two. Shrewd management of foreign policy and good judgment are necessary to avoid drifting into (or inadvertently creating) situations in which a choice may have to be made between physical survival, liberty, and economic well-being. How to avoid this choice, on the other hand, has been the source of considerable controversy within the United States which has periodically shaken the foreign policy consensus.

Let us recall how this dilemma manifested itself during the Cold War and how it was generally dealt with by American policy-makers. In each successive Administration since World War II, whether Democratic or Republican, top-level officials agreed in perceiving *two primary threats* to these irreducible national interests. One of these perceived threats was, of course, the spread of international communism. The other was the danger of World War III. It was the objective of U.S. foreign policy to avoid *both* of these threats. On occasion American officials defended a particular policy (for example, economic and military aid) on the ground that it contributed both to preventing the spread of communism and the danger of World War III. But circumstances at times created a conflict between these two objectives and when this occurred, or threatened to occur, policy-makers were confronted by a difficult dilemma. For, to take active steps to support the defection of a member of the communist bloc could—as in Hungary in 1956—increase the risk of World War III. And, on other occasions, to adopt policies that would reduce the risk of a thermonuclear holocaust—as by accepting the over-running of South Korea in 1950 without intervening militarily in its defense—could facilitate the spread of communism.

A major task for U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War, therefore, was to find a reasoned and reasonable basis for coping with the dilemma of deciding to which objective to give priority in situations in which the desire to curb the spread of communism clashed with the desire to avoid actions that significantly raised the risk of World War III. The general answer to this policy dilemma took the form of an effort to invoke the "balance of power" as the critical factor for determining which of the two competing objectives to adopt and which corresponding risk, therefore, to accept. In the minds of U.S. policy-makers "the balance of power" consideration meant that no adversary or *potential* combination of opponents should be permitted to gain *sufficient power* to impose their purposes upon the United States in a manner as to *jeopardize* its irreducible national interests. Quite obviously, this criterion could provide only a loose framework within which calculation of the national interest could be made. What constituted "sufficient power" in the hands of a "potential combination" of opponents that could "jeopardize" irreducible national interests could not be easily operationalized and measured. Nonetheless, the criterion served to structure and focus the judgments that had to be made. Thus, if a Communist success in a given area were thought by U.S. policy-makers to be capable of seriously undermining the political and economic power of the non-communist world to contain the spread of international communism, then presumably the balance of power itself was at stake, and hence it could be argued that some risk of World War III had to be accepted in order to take action to thwart Communist success in that area. The converse of the argument also presumably applied.

[5]This and the following paragraphs draw upon Seyom Brown, *The Faces of Power* (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1968, Part I); see also Morton A. Kaplan, *System and Process in International Politics* (N.Y.: Wiley, 1957, Chapter 8, "The National Interest and Other Interests.")

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The balance-of-power guideline lent itself reasonably well to attempts to resolve policy dilemmas having to do with Western Europe, but encountered serious difficulties and generated much greater controversy when it was stretched to conflicts in other geographical arenas. It was much less plausible to argue that the over-all balance of power and, therefore, our irreducible national interests were really jeopardized by local communist or anti-Western successes in other parts of the world. Nonetheless, efforts to do so were made (even though it required analogies such as "row-of-dominoes" to make them more plausible) and were partly successful, at least so long as the costs of policies based on such premises were not excessive.

The difficulty of dealing with the trade-off between these three irreducible national interests is compounded by the fact, discussed earlier in this chapter, that "national interest" is a "nonoperational" goal which does not provide a measuring rod for comparing alternative policies. Hence the weight to be given each of the three irreducible interests rests on the judgment of top-level foreign policy officials and ultimately, of course, upon the president. The extent to which each of the irreducible interests needs to be furthered by means at the disposal of national policy-making is not easily determined or agreed upon; nor, once determined and agreed upon, is the relative weight to be accorded them in the allocation of policy resources stable and fixed over time. Rather, it is subject to recalculation and adjustment to new circumstances. At the same time, the fundamental judgments of these matters, on which foreign policy is based, cannot be subject to constant reconsideration. Foreign policy must have a certain stability and continuity, and this of course invites the possibility that earlier judgments of threats to irreducible national interests and appropriate policy responses to meet them will be rendered obsolete by new developments. Yet, as was noted in Chapter III, policy beliefs tend to persist in the face of discrepant information that challenges their validity and appropriateness.

Finally, the fact that "national interest" is a "nonoperational" goal encourages the tendency for particular subgoals of foreign policy with which departments and agencies identify to replace a broader, more balanced conception of what the national interest requires. Thus, parochial conceptions of the "national interest" are often advanced by different actors within the executive branch, each of whom tends to see the problem from the special perspective of his own department or agency. Often sharply competitive with each other, parochial conceptions of the requirements of foreign policy add to the internal struggle to define policy and become part of the dynamics of organizational politics that were discussed in Chapter V.

D. The Irreducible National Interest and Other Interests

The strict notion of "irreducible national interests" that we have presented can be seen as an attempt to introduce discipline and restraint into the formulation of foreign policy. Specifying the components of the irreducible national interest makes it more difficult for other interests and values to be "smuggled" under the legitimizing umbrella of the term, "national interests." Furthermore, including only *minimum* objectives of physical survival, liberty, and economic subsistence eliminates the objection, discussed above, to preferring self-regarding to other-regarding interests. If the "irreducible national interests" are fundamental as well as self-regarding, there is little reason not to give them priority.

Have we then solved the problem of national interest as a guide to policy-making? Hardly. What we have done is to delimit irreducible national interests strictly enough that a strong case can be made for giving them priority in foreign policy; but the very strictness of our definition means that many important foreign policy situations will arise in which these irreducible national interests will not come into play. The concept of irreducible national interest becomes a useful tool of analysis only by explicitly acknowledging that as a guide to foreign policy it is incomplete.

We therefore need to consider the other types of state interests classified in Table 1 and the problem of deciding which objectives related to these interests to pursue. How should we go about doing this?

Recall that the chief *function* of the concept of national interest is to specify a means by which policy-makers can make disciplined choices among interests, and therefore among policy alternatives. Our concept of irreducible national interest has done this, for a limited set of situations, by specifying three criteria for judgment. This has only been possible, however, because the criteria were specified so strictly that problems of trade-offs with other, excluded, values did not arise. We could assume that the values included in the concept of irreducible national interest had priority. Where questions of trade-offs at the margin among scores, or hundreds, of different interests and values are involved, specifying unambiguous criteria for choice will be a hopeless task. Yet if no standards, and no consistent procedures, are applied to determine what interests are to be pursued, and with what means, ideology in its worst forms can exer-

cise undue influence. Vague and potentially dangerous notions of America's "world mission," or of the "battle against communism," may override careful and prudential judgment of values, interests, and policies.

It seems to us that one way out of this dilemma would be to specify a set of procedures, or "decision-rules," that policy-makers would need to follow in order to assure the legitimacy of their actions. These decision-rules would not constitute formal or constitutional requirements, but if Congress, the press, and the public took them sufficiently seriously, the requirement that they be complied with would put real constraints on Executive policy-makers. The consultation procedures that our suggested decision-rules would require, furthermore, might lead to less hasty and better considered policy, thus saving the policy-makers themselves from costly errors.

National policy-makers would retain full freedom of action, under the Constitution, for actions that were strictly necessary to safeguard irreducible national interests, as delimited above. In cases of serious threat to the basic values of physical survival, liberty, and economic subsistence (strictly defined), the use or threat of force could be sanctioned even if carried out unilaterally, so long as the decisions were made in a careful and sober way, as discussed in sections E and F of this chapter. But the farther one went from irreducible national interests—in the direction of collective, other-regarding, or secondary national interests—the stronger the inhibitions on unilateral action would become. Congress, the public, and the press could be expected to become very sensitive to unilateral actions involving force on behalf of these interests.

Where the use or threat of force is contemplated, a carefully articulated fit between the interests threatened and the actions taken would be required. Employment of sanctions or coercive threats, at least beyond a certain threshold, might be excluded entirely for secondary national interests, on the grounds that these could be sacrificed at less cost than they could be preserved through war. To protect basic collective interests, or basic other-regarding interests, however, a case could sometimes be made for using force, as in the widely-discussed hypothetical "strangulation" of the OECD countries through a systematic oil boycott. In such a case, we would suggest as a *procedural requirement* for using sanctions agreement on action by an appropriate multilateral body, which fully represented the governments whose interests were supposedly threatened. This body could be either a pre-existing organization or an *ad hoc* multilateral forum; but it would have to be genuinely representative.

This does not mean that the United States would have to use force at the discretion of that body. On the contrary, the procedure that we suggest is meant as a *multilateral check* on the use of force rather than encouragement to it. Were our procedure to be accepted, Congress would exercise its supervisory role over foreign policy partly by asking the procedural question: have foreign interested parties been consulted, and have they consented? Even if American Executive officials wanted to employ sanctions to secure what they considered to be important collective or other-regarding interests, they would have to secure the consent of such a multilateral body, unless Congress, after serious deliberation, waived the principle. The *presumption* would be that unilateral actions, using force to secure alleged collective or other-regarding interests, would be illegitimate.

This procedure would strengthen self-discipline in foreign policy decision-making where the use of force or other sanctions was involved, and where self-regarding interests alone could not justify such drastic measures. Its rationale is clear: If it is not just American interests that are at stake, and if crucial American interests are not at stake, it is rather arrogant for the United States to use force (allegedly on behalf largely of others) unilaterally. From a policy point of view, although this procedure would be legally weak and not binding, it would at least legitimize the question to decision-makers: "Why don't you secure the consent of other interested parties, particularly our allies, for your proposed action?"

To those who regard the suggestion as unduly restrictive or even utopian, we point out that a process similar to the one we suggest actually took place in 1954, with (temporarily) beneficial results. The Eisenhower Administration at that time was considering military intervention in Indochina, but was informed by the Democratic Congressional leadership that it could only support such action if the British consented. The British Government was opposed to contemplated military measures, and largely as a consequence—in conjunction with opposition by General Ridgway and others within the American government—the project was abandoned. Here the multilateral check idea, while not hamstringing the United States government, forced it to consider the views of cooler, less committed governments before acting.

On the other side, it could be argued that the multilateral check is really no check at all. After all, the United States did secure support for its policies in Southeast Asia from a variety of Asian governments at Manila in 1966; and it could perhaps again secure the assent of assorted clients for misguided militaristic policies. Surely there is merit in this criticism: no formula or organizational device can protect the republic against bad judgment by all or

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almost all of its leaders. What our proposal would do is merely to *create a standard of legitimacy* that public figures opposed to military action could refer to in order to force wider and more dispassionate consideration of the problem. If Congress and the public were satisfied with the approval of a collection of dependent governments, there is little that any organizational device could do to prevent a multilateral check from becoming a sham.

The notion of a multilateral check may help to some extent to resolve a contemporary dilemma of American foreign policy: how much, and with what degree of self-confidence, to be involved in the world? The military and political events of the last decade, particularly in Southeast Asia, have taught us the need to be more modest about the quality of our own judgments and more restrained in pursuing grandiose military activities involving high moral, economic, and political costs. This has led some observers to suggest that the United States should withdraw to a great extent from the affairs of the world—which is what a strict definition of "irreducible national interests," *taken as the sole guide to foreign policy* might imply.

This lesson, however, is in conflict with what the political-economic events of the last decade suggest: that economic interdependence is growing and that various international economic systems, such as the money-banking system and the petroleum-supply system, on which the United States depends require active maintenance and periodic revision. There is strong evidence to suggest that to avoid system breakdown in a variety of areas, leadership from the United States will need to be forthcoming—and this means leadership that does not demand that every sacrifice on our part yield a direct and immediate benefit.[6] It is true that the United States might well be able to achieve its irreducible national interests in a world in which international economic cooperation had broken down.[7] But it would be a much poorer world, and the effects on millions of less fortunately placed people would be disastrous. To rely on the concept of irreducible national interest alone as a means to introduce discipline into our foreign policy would be to make the United States Government powerless to affect developments that may determine the destiny of millions of the world's people during the next decade, and eventually its own fate as well.

The notion of a *multilateral check* on the use of force, as developed briefly in this paper, could meet the demands for self-discipline without destroying a number of essential collective and other-regarding values which, in our judgment, the United States ought to pursue. The policy could be consistent, however, not only with restraint but leadership. Positive action by the United States, in crucial political-economic areas, is not likely to be effective without considerable confidence not only in United States-supported policies but in American willingness to consult others as situations and policy requirements change. Self-restraint, through a multilateral check, in the use of force would help to engender such confidence and thereby contribute to the efficacies of policies in political-economic areas for which force was neither required nor desirable.

These ideas have been set forth with the intention of beginning a set of discussions about how one could develop more elaborately detailed procedures for dealing with situations where irreducible national interests were not involved. Even in the simpler situations where those interests are at stake, however, problems arise in applying the concept. Presumably, similar problems would arise, perhaps in more severe form, where collective, other-regarding, or secondary national interests were at stake. In the final sections of this chapter, therefore, we turn to problems of interpreting the national interest and of operationalizing it in crisis situations.

E. The Impact of Beliefs About the Opponent and the International System on Interpretations of the National Interest

Efforts to apply "national interest" as a criterion in policy-making have been complicated not only by the intrusion of ideological values, but also by the play of other considerations. Foremost among these are the policy-maker's image of the opponent, his view of the nature of the conflict with the opponent, and his beliefs about the character of the international system. Such beliefs and images directly influence the policy-maker's perception of threats to the national interest, his evaluation of what is at stake in different situations and what actions are necessary to safeguard the national interest.

Beliefs of this kind, as was noted in Chapter III, are indispensable for enabling the individual to orient himself to a complex and often cloudy reality. But it is important to recognize that they often perform this function at the expense of simplifying and exaggerating important aspects of the situation. Moreover, once formed, such beliefs tend to be stable; they are not easily falsified or altered by new information that challenges their validity. Thus, beliefs about the opponent and the nature of the in-

[6]See especially Charles Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929–39* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[7]See, for instance, Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Myth of National Interdependence," in Charles Kindleberger, ed, *The International Corporation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1970).

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ternational setting often assume the role of axioms which guide and constrain policy-making. Their role in information processing and appraisal can be particularly important, but also questionable, when policy-makers struggle with decisions characterized by great value complexity and informational uncertainty. It is particularly tempting in these circumstances to fall back on stereotypic, simplified images of the opponent and axiomatic beliefs about the nature and imperatives of the continuing conflict.

Many thoughtful observers have come to the view that the Cold War was exacerbated and needlessly prolonged in part because of mutual misperceptions and exaggerated distrust and fears. During 1946–48 U.S. beliefs regarding the nature of the conflict with the Soviets hardened, primarily as the result of the way in which Soviet actions towards Iran, Greece, and Turkey were perceived. U.S. leaders came to feel that Soviet leaders were more hostile and were pursuing more ambitious objectives than had been thought to be the case. The first of these new beliefs was that the U.S. and S.U. were no longer limited adversaries but that the relationship between them was one of acute conflict resembling a *"zero-sum"* contest.

The second new belief that emerged among U.S. leaders was that the international system was becoming, and necessarily had to become, increasingly *polarized.* Thus, according to this view, other countries who were not with us were not necessarily against us, but they were in danger of being co-opted and absorbed into the enemy camp. Accordingly, in order for the United States to contain and frustrate Soviet ambitions, it had to organize and assume leadership of a "Free World" network of interlocking alliances.

The third new belief was that the international system was *highly unstable.* The different geographical parts of the world arena were seen as being tightly "coupled," so that a set-back in one locale could have strong repercussions in other areas—a kind of "billiard-ball" effect, or what later came to be called the danger of a row-of-dominoes.

These new beliefs about the nature of the international system importantly reshaped American perceptions of threats to the national interest and the resulting requirements for foreign policy:

1. They led American policy-makers to place a higher value on preventing distant areas, normally of peripheral interest, from coming under the control of anti-western elites, local communists, or the influence of major communist powers. American leaders were persuaded to commit the United States to the defense of West Berlin, to come to the defense of South Korea when it was attacked by the North Koreans, to undertake to maintain non-communist regimes in Indochina, and to risk war with Communist China in order to help the Chinese nationalist regime to retain control of the Quemoy and Matsu islands, lying only a few miles off mainland China.

2. Those new beliefs about the international environment of the late '40's encouraged a proliferation of U.S. commitments to defend weaker countries, a development which eventually led to criticisms that the United States had overcommitted itself and had assumed the role of "world policeman."

3. This set of beliefs encouraged a homogenized rather than a differentiated view of what U.S. interests were at stake in different parts of the world. This stood in sharp contrast with the normal practice of statesmen to make differentiated assessments of developments elsewhere in the world from the standpoint of vital, secondary, and tertiary national interests.

4. They also encouraged a belief in the "interdependence" of all U.S. commitments. As a result, American leaders came to feel that the failure of the United States to honor and implement effectively any one commitment would weaken the credibility of all other commitments and, hence, "invite" further communist challenges to other parts of the Free World.

5. Finally, these new beliefs about the international environment led U.S. leaders to rely almost exclusively on the policy of deterrence via military strength to influence the actions, policies, and attitudes of communist opponents. Left largely unused were the panopoly of other means that statesmen normally employ for moderating the conflict potential in relations with other countries.

F. Problems of "Operationalizing" the National Interest in Crisis Situations

When situations arise elsewhere in the world that pose a threat to American interests, policy-makers face the task of estimating the character and magnitude of the expected damage to the national interest in order to fashion an appropriate response. This is what is meant by the task of "operationalizing" the national interest in a crisis situation. That is, policy-makers attempt to determine just what is at stake in terms of the national interest in order to decide what level of cost and risk the United States should be prepared to accept in fashioning a response to prevent, undo, or limit the expected damage to its interests.

But it is often extremely difficult to assess the expected damage to U.S. national interests in a crisis situation, and there are various reasons for this. (1) The event may be wholly unexpected and shocking—a sudden military attack on a weak ally, the

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seizure of an American vessel, the overthrow of a friendly government, etc. (2) Information on what has happened may be incomplete, of uncertain reliability, or inaccurate. Is it a full-scale attack or a border clash? Was the friendly government overthrown by groups hostile to the United States? etc. (3) Limited time may be available to assess the information and to estimate its implications for United States national interests before having to decide on a response. (4) The crisis may generate strong emotions in policy-makers themselves as well as among the public generating psychological and political pressures for strong action to defend American interests.

Moreover, what has been called "value extension" (discussed in Chapter II) often occurs in a crisis. Personal interests and political values other than those associated with safeguarding the national interest may intrude into the motivations and incentives of the decision-maker and his advisers. Their perception of what is at stake may be colored by sensitivity to domestic political considerations, by the feeling that they are personally challenged in some way by the opponent's action, by the feeling that their ability to maintain effective power to govern or to get re-elected will be affected by how they respond to the crisis. Depending on circumstances, additional considerations of this kind may lead policy-makers either to exaggerate or downgrade what is at stake so far as national interest is concerned.

Optimal processing of available information in crisis situations can be impeded in other ways as well. Under the impact of emotional stress and the pressure of inadequate time and information, policy-makers may fail to define the *magnitude* of the expected damage to the U.S. national interest. Instead, perceiving that American interests are jeopardized in some way policy-makers are impelled to act to prevent or minimize such damage. Consensus among policy-makers on the objective of preventing damage to U.S. interests in crisis situations is often readily attained. But, for various reasons, it may be substantially more difficult for them to subject their agreement on taking some action to the test of a sober, realistic calculation of its costs and risks.

What level of cost and risk should be acceptable in responding to crises in which U.S. interests are being threatened or damaged? It is not possible to give a reasonable answer to this critical question if policy-makers fail to estimate and to "bound" the magnitude of the expected damage to the U.S. national interest entailed by the events in question. Rational calculation and choice of policy requires not merely the selection of an objective; it also requires that a *value* be placed on that objective. How much is the objective worth? How valuable is it to prevent damage to U.S. interests in the situation at hand? To answer this question, however, requires policy-makers to estimate the magnitude of the expected damage to U.S. interests. Only by doing so can they establish a ceiling on the level of costs and risks they are willing to accept, if necessary, in return for efforts to achieve that objective.

What we are calling attention to is the fact that particularly in stressful crisis situations a kind of generalized, unfocussed consensus within the policy-making group on the "need for action to defend U.S. interests" can quickly emerge which can seriously impair rational decision-making. The fact that in a crisis atmosphere policy-makers spontaneously agree upon the *desirability* of protecting endangered U.S. interests may in fact serve to discourage adequate discussion of the *feasibility* of doing so. The question of the level of costs and risks that would be commensurate with what is thought to be at stake is left unanswered. And, as a result, policy-makers tend to drift into an open-ended commitment of incremental actions.

Impediments to optimal information-processing of this kind characterized the policy-making discussions that accompanied Truman's decision to intervene militarily on behalf of South Korea in late June of 1950. The decision may or may not have been the right one; in any case, one can hardly regard the way in which it was made as a model for policy-making. The President announced his determination to act at the outset, and this dominated the ensuing policy discussions. It served to discourage those advisers who were noticeably unenthusiastic about military intervention from articulating the reasons for their reluctance. Moreover, latent disagreements within Truman's policy group regarding the value of the objective of defending South Korea did not have an opportunity to emerge clearly enough to influence policy calculations. As a result, the expected costs and risks of a successful defense of South Korea were calculated in a most casual way and, not surprisingly under these circumstances, what it would take to turn back the North Koreans was grossly underestimated.

In the Korean case and in other crisis situations as well, policy-makers have displayed a distressing tendency, not always successfully controlled, to slide into an open-ended commitment to absorb whatever costs and risks that may be entailed, and to engage in wishful thinking that clouds perception of the difficulty and costliness of the intervention that is set into motion. It is particularly when everyone seems to agree on the need for some action to prevent expected damage to the national interest that the most dangerous mistakes in policy calculation can occur. The typical error under these circumstances is a gross underestimation of the costs and risks of the action taken. Conversely, *disagreement* within the decision-making group on the

proper objectives, the appropriate means, the kinds and level of risk present in the situation, is more likely to improve the quality of information-processing and the advice that precedes final choice of policy by the President.

Thus, vigorous multiple advocacy within the Eisenhower Administration in the Indochina crisis of 1954 helped to control the psychological impediments to rational calculation noted above and to arrest the initial momentum for U.S. military intervention during the Dienbienphu crisis. The expected damage to U.S. national interest was "bounded" in this case and, of particular importance, the price tag for a successful defense of Indochina was soberly calculated. A realistic cost-benefit judgment of the utility of American military intervention was then possible, and the President could make a reasoned decision against involving U.S. military forces. In the last analysis, the expected damage to U.S. interests that had earlier seemed a compelling reason for intervention was placed in calmer, more sober perspective. It was not, after all, of overwhelming importance to U.S. national interests to prevent a French defeat in Indochina; the "dominoes" would not quickly and inevitably fall; the Administration could look to other ways of trying to minimize the damage to its interests of a French defeat. (See also Chapter XI: "Multiple Advocacy.")

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Policy-Applicable Theory

by Richard Smoke[1]

A. Introduction

The "national interest", discussed in the preceding chapter, is not the only ambiguous and problematical issue facing policy-makers who are coping with a crisis or potential crisis in foreign affairs. Usually present also are issues of what has come to be called "crisis management," and issues concerning instruments of policy like deterrence, "coercive diplomacy," conciliation, escalation, and so forth. This brings us to the difficult and somewhat confused problem of the role in policy-making of "theory" about foreign policy.

Let us begin with an example of a real problem in past U.S. foreign policy which illustrates the genuine and unavoidable need that policy-makers have for "theory" of certain kinds, in a certain pragmatic sense of the term.

In June of 1961, President Kennedy travelled to Vienna to hold summit talks with Premier Khrushchev. To the President's surprise, Khrushchev made verbal threats, and subsequently delivered a written *aide-memoire,* to the effect that the U.S.S.R. would turn over control of the Berlin access routes to East Germany in six months unless a "settlement" was negotiated in the meantime on terms that, practically speaking, would have meant handing Berlin over to the communists. It was clear to the relevant agencies and decision makers in Washington that the latest and perhaps gravest in the series of crises over Berlin had begun, but there was great disagreement over the significance of the Soviet action (and other accompanying behavior), and hence over what U.S. policy should be in response. The argument turned on differing inferences about Soviet motives, intentions, and goals, drawn not primarily from immediate events, but mainly from many other kinds of indicators, some of them stretching over years and some of them highly intangible.

Opinion divided into two main camps. The "soft school," championed by White House advisors, some influential members of Congress, part of the State Department, and by the British Foreign Office, argued that despite its immediate militance the Soviet Union was acting essentially defensively. To defuse the crisis the U.S. should negotiate issues the Soviets found most threatening, such as the exodus of refugees from East Germany. But any show of intransigence would elevate Soviet anxieties, thereby prolonging the crisis and raising the risk of war. Opposed to this was the "hard school," championed by both civilians and military in the Pentagon, another part of the State Department, and by the DeGaulle government in France and the Adenauer government in West Germany. Admitting that some defensive motives might be present, this school argued that the Soviet Union basically was acting aggressively, aiming toward objectives both in Berlin and more widely in Central Europe that would shift the balance of power significantly to Soviet advantage. A determined reinforcement of U.S. deterrence policy concerning Berlin would end the crisis by showing the Soviets they could not profit by continuing it. But to open negotiations would suggest weakness, thereby prolonging the crisis, and raising the risk of war. President Kennedy himself, while leaning toward the "soft" theory, encouraged a very free and open debate, and then decided upon a mixture of the specific action recommendations of both schools; and in the end the crisis was weathered, successfully except for the erection of the Berlin Wall.[2]

This debate is a well-known and well-documented instance of decision makers resorting to "theories" or models or images of international reality, to cope with an immediate policy problem. In this case, the primary issue of the appropriate model or image of the opponent was articulated and debated in an unusually logical way, but many similar kinds of issues arise frequently in policy making and are

[1]The author is indebted for comments on an earlier draft to Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Stephen Genco, Alexander L. George, Ole R. Holsti, Robert Jervis, Joshua Lederburg, E. Raymond Platig, Austin Ranney, and Aaron Wildavsky.

[2]The opposing interpretations are described at greater length in Theodore Sorensen's book *Kennedy,* Chapter 21, and in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s *A Thousand Days,* Chapter 15.

generally less thoroughly articulated. It is routine in foreign policy making for decisions to include, less explicitly but just as unavoidably, some "analytic" components—images of the opponent, beliefs about the way policy instruments such as deterrence work, principles of crisis management—which go beyond anything that can be settled by reference to the obtainable facts about the immediate situation. This is true for reasons *other* than divergent value-judgments among different policy makers, and would remain true even if there were universal agreement on what, in principle, the values and the "national interests" at stake in the situation were. The "analytic" components which are typically present in foreign-policy problems go beyond questions of value or of accessible fact. They concern explicit or implicit assumptions about the general nature of the problem, about the overall intentions of other states, about the techniques of crisis management, and about policy instruments, which cannot be tested in any simple and rapid way. (Some additional concrete examples will follow shortly.)

"Analytic" components would seem, in principle, to be open to theoretical analysis. But many practitioners of the foreign policy-making art have been skeptical about the value of a theoretical attack on these difficult aspects of policy problems, arguing that they are better left to the instincts and judgment of experienced high-level policy makers. The traditional skepticism of theoretical approaches has derived from the assumption that they must yield conclusions which are either (a) rigid, definite "rules" for action, which practitioners have properly doubted could be applied sensibly in most real-world situations; or (b) vague and diffuse generalizations, stating in unnecessarily abstract ways truths already familiar to practitioners.

It is certainly true that these kinds of conclusions are, for all practical purposes, useless or worse. There is also no question of the vital importance of good "judgment" among decision makers, or of the probably permanent necessity that this judgment be the final arbiter of conflicting interpretations. But it is also true that certain kinds of theoretical analysis of these components of foreign policy problems *are* possible, yielding a different form of conclusions, which although of limited scope can provide the policy-making community with some useful input. We will call this kind of theory, for lack of a better term, "policy-applicable theory." The remainder of this chapter will try succinctly to sketch out how the policy problem appears from this perspective, what the limits are of the scope of this kind of theory, and how and why, within these limits, there are some useful kinds of theory possible (and now being developed).[3]

In approaching the policy problem from this perspective, it is useful to consider separately two aspects or stages of the creation of policy: first, the stage where decision makers derive an understanding of a policy problem; and second, the stage where they reach an action decision about what to do about the problem. In practice this distinction is not very clear-cut. For example, there is a tendency in any organization (not just the U.S. government) for images of one's capabilities for dealing with a rising, hot issue to shape one's perceptions of what the issue is. And of course there is feedback: if initial action decisions seem to fail in execution, partially or entirely, there should be and usually will be a re-assessment of the nature of the problem. Nevertheless for present purposes it is more convenient to consider separately what we will call the problem of the *diagnosis* of a situation and the policy issue it gives rise to, and the problem of *"option handling"*—i.e., the search for, evaluation of, and choice among options for dealing with the policy issue. First, diagnosis.

B. Diagnosis of Foreign Policy Problems

Policy makers faced with a sudden international crisis or with the more gradual emergence of a new foreign policy problem must come to an understanding of what the situation is and what policy issues it generates. They may do so carefully and explicitly, or they may feel that "what the problem is" is obvious, and pass rapidly to the next stage. But in any case—explicitly or implicitly, self-consciously or unconsciously—they *must* form some kind of diagnosis of the situation before they can turn to creating and considering options for what to do about it. The *inferences* which they draw about the situation are of two general kinds. First, they draw inferences about what other nations are up to in the situation at hand—their motives and

[3]Scholars might wish to note that we are employing the term "policy-applicable" theory in an effort to sidestep the partially semantic debate over what is "policy-relevant" theory. There are many theories, and indeed a number of different kinds of theories, which are relevant to policy in some sense or another. Almost all theory about the policy-making process is, potentially and in principle, relevant to improving that process. Many scholars address themselves to current foreign policy issues. Many theories which are primarily of intellectual interest nevertheless contain elements which may illuminate the substance of foreign policy in one way or another, and sometimes contain even policy prescriptions.

The subject of this chapter, however, is a special class of theoretical approaches which (putatively at least) are more immediately and systematically policy-applicable than all these things; and by the same token, are perhaps of less general intellectual interest than some other kinds of theory. For a very useful analytic review of contemporary theory, see Kenneth Waltz's article, "Theory of International Relations," in the *Political Science Handbook* (forthcoming, summer 1975).

goals. Secondly, they draw inferences about the wider context or pattern of events within which the immediate situation is, or seems to be, embedded —its significance in the current historical period.[4] In drawing both these kinds of inference, policy makers have a genuine "cognitive need" for whatever analytical assistance they can get; and to a limited degree, certain kinds of theoretical assistance are possible. Let us consider each of these kinds of inferences in turn.

The Berlin crisis mentioned above is an example of the many situations in which there is controversy among policy makers regarding the appropriate and correct "image" or "theory" of other nations' motivations. As already emphasized, generally speaking such controversies *cannot* be settled by gathering more facts. (This is something which is not yet thoroughly appreciated throughout U.S. policy-making institutions.) But sophisticated policy makers recognize that the immediate situation, as defined by the accessible facts, often is inherently ambiguous: the behavior of other players is capable of more than one plausible interpretation. To reduce the ambiguity, policy makers try to go "behind" nations' immediate behavior to adduce the meaning of events in the light of images or theories about those nations' underlying motivations.[5]

In the Berlin case the competing images of the opponent within Kennedy's circle of advisers were not resolved in the policy debate. Ideally in such circumstances a policy response might be devised which *hedges* in an intelligent way against the uncertainty regarding the opponent's intentions. Actually, however, it would appear that Kennedy's response was a policy compromise that incorporated elements of both the "hard" and "soft" lines and which, with hindsight, does not appear to have been wholly effective. It was probably superior, however, to the policy that would have resulted from his uncritical and complete acceptance of either one of the two schools of thought.[6]

In any case, it is much more common for a *single* general theory about another nation to "reign" within the U.S. foreign policy-making community, and for alternatives to that theory to be considered only in a *pro forma* way or not at all. The effect may be to place blinders on U.S. policy making. For example, most historians and other specialists now believe that significant diplomatic opportunities to lessen the intensity of the Cold War were missed during the 1950's because John Foster Dulles's image of both the Soviet Union and China did not include any belief that they could be genuinely interested in measures to mitigate the conflict.

This was a case where a single dominant personality, holding strong views, determined the reigning theory for a number of years. Such periods are admittedly not frequent in the history of U.S. foreign policy. But even when a single policy maker does not hold a commanding position, there are many pressures toward the emergence within the policy-making system of a single reigning image of other major nations and of our adversaries in particular. As was noted in Chapter V, departments within the Executive Branch tend to make investments in such views as part of defining and defending their agency "position."

More subtle and more insidious, perhaps, is the psychological tendency for individuals to find it more comfortable to operate on the basis of a long-standing, "established" view. Many of the cognitive processes discussed in Chapter III tend to encourage an individual to wed himself to a single image and defend it thereafter against challenge. Thus both organizations and individuals have nonrational, but very real, institutional and psychological incentives to adhere to a reigning theory.

There are a number of ways of encouraging the re-examination of reigning images and of drawing attention to alternatives to them. The next three chapters discuss *procedural tools* that policy makers can use to widen the range of possibilities receiving real consideration: the "devil's advocate," the "formal options" system, and "multiple advocacy." At least two other important devices are also available for expanding the possibilities that are presented *to* policy makers by their subordinate staffs and bureaucracies. One of these is an under-utilized method of assessing intelligence information, called "analytical forecasting"; the other is a sensible use of "area experts."

"Analytical forecasting" is a method of constructing one or more detailed scenarios, by means of which a hypothetical situation which initially seems improbable or implausible, might nevertheless come to pass. In the process of hypothesizing the most reasonable (or least unreasonable) sequence of events that could lead to an *unexpected* situation, analysts may sometimes discover that that sequence, or a similar one, may not be so improbable after all. The technique is one of the best ways to

[4]The question of what U.S. national interests and values are activated or endangered by the new situation is, in a sense, a third kind of "inference." However we are confining ourselves in this chapter to "analytic" components of the problem; value-judgments were discussed in the previous chapter.

[5]In doing so, they typically employ some of the aids discussed in Chapter III.

[6]The debate over Berlin policy in 1961 was atypical in that it ascended to a higher level than such debates often do. When two competing images are held, what often happens is not that the basic issues are aired, but that conflicting interpretations of specific events are put forward, with inadequate comprehension that the source of the conflict lies in more basic, competing assumptions about another nation—general inferences derived over a period of years.

go beyond the simplistic practice of asking experts for their "single best guess"—which is a useful thing to know, but which by itself does not provide policy makers with all the information that is possible.

An example of a *failure* to employ the analytical forecasting method, which almost had grave consequences, occurred during the months prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. The possibility that the Soviets might be tempted to deploy offensive ballistic missiles in Cuba occurred to many responsible American officials, but they concluded, almost unanimously, that this would be a high-risk strategy which the normally cautious Soviets could be expected to reject. The available record does not suggest that any attempt was made by the administration to construct a hypothetical Soviet risk calculus, however implausible initially, by which a Cuban deployment might appear acceptable to them given hypothetical, but not unreasonable, *Soviet* perceptions of the situation and assessment of risks.

This kind of hypothetical calculus, if attempted, might have uncovered reasons why the Soviets could find the strategy somewhat risky but not excessively so. (Presumably some of these reasons actually were part of the Soviet decision to deploy missiles in Cuba.) They might plausibly believe that they could maintain secrecy until the deployment was too well along for the U.S. to do anything effective about it. (In fact, they very nearly did.) They might plausibly believe that the young American president would back down from any crisis over a Cuban missile deployment, just as he had backed down from the Cuban crisis at the Bay of Pigs about a year earlier. They might plausibly believe that, even if he did decide to make an issue of it, he would wait until after the mid-term Congressional elections in November, for domestic political reasons; by then many of the missiles would be in place. Even if all these reasons fell through, they still might plausibly believe that if worst came to worst and a crisis erupted, American policy makers could be counted upon to respond initially in a relatively peaceable and diplomatic way rather than resorting immediately to drastic military action. (This last was quite correct.) Of course it is easy to be wise after the event. Nonetheless, all these considerations and other, lesser, supporting ones could have been hypothesized by analysts in advance, leading to the conclusion that a Soviet missile deployment in Cuba, which at first glance seemed so unlikely, at least *might* appear reasonable to the Kremlin. There is no evidence in the available historical record that this kind of "analytic forecasting" was performed.[7]

So-called "national and area specialists" can be another source of perspective and of information that may challenge a reigning image of other nations. For instance, it has been widely noted that in the early years of U.S. government analysis of the developing Vietnam problem, hardly any nongovernmental experts on Vietnam—scholars who had lived there and knew the language, culture, and various social groupings—were used in any central way in the policy analysis process. One or two may have been, but this is not enough for acquiring balanced, unbiased information. Specialists who are not part of a governmental agency and have no obligations to one, can provide a perspective and a detachment very difficult to find in individuals with institutional obligations, but they are insufficiently used, particularly at the more senior levels where reigning images of what other nations are like and what they are up to, have the heaviest influence upon policy. Policy makers have tended to exclude them in part out of a concern that "experts" may try to push biased, unsound, or idiosyncratic theories; and also a concern that many experts regard their own pet area of study as all-important and are unable to see it in perspective. These concerns are valid. But they argue for a careful and sensible use of a number of "experts," not for their exclusion. "Multiple advocacy" and other techniques described in the next few chapters can be applied to the use of experts—as well as to the management of policy creation after decision makers have heard from the specialists.[8]

C. The Use and Misuse of History in Diagnosing Situations

An image or theory about the motives and purposes of other nations is not the only sort of inter-

[7]For the sake of brevity we have somewhat simplified this story. For a fuller analysis which tends to the same conclusion, see Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974) Chapter 15.

An additional important factor, underappreciated at the time even by staff experts on Soviet behavior, was the Soviet approach to risk-taking. The most common American attitude is simply to regard high risks as unacceptable. Bolshevik doctrine and Soviet practice embrace the idea that relatively high potential risks may be acceptable if they do not arise immediately, but only after some intervening stages have transpired, during which the crisis can be de-escalated if the actual risks being run seem to be mounting too high. Such, very probably, was the Soviet risk-calculus for a Cuban missile deployment.

[8]Among other things, specialists can inform policy makers about the attitudes, goals, and motivations of the major decision-making groups and individuals *within* other nations, and remind them of the importance of this perspective. Since the policies of other states, like those of the United States, are generally the products of compromises and tugs-of-war among different elements within the state's policy-making personalities, attention to these factors can provide more accurate diagnoses.

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pretation which policy makers do and must make in the process of diagnosing international situations. They also draw inferences about the *context* or *pattern of events* within which the immediate situation seems to be imbedded. In doing so, they characteristically employ what amount to *historical generalizations.* These may take the form of "laws" which it is felt that "history proves" and which appear to govern the case at hand. Or they may take the form of specific historical analogies where the present problem is alleged to be like a past one. These kinds of historical generalizations are used so constantly by foreign policy makers that they clearly are fulfilling a true "cognitive need."

"Historical laws" are frequently employed as a form of "decision rule" for guiding policy choices. For example, Secretary Dulles believed that the outbreak of nearly all the wars of modern times could be explained by the aphorism that "war is the result of miscalculation." He felt that if potential aggressors had not underestimated the high price they would probably have to pay, they would never have opted for war. The Secretary's motivation for strengthening containment was rooted, of course, in his perception of the threat of communism. The *means* he chose to emphasize in order to implement containment more effectively, however, were heavily influenced by his reading of the lessons of modern history in terms of the danger of war through miscalculation. His efforts to construct a system of formal U.S. alliances ringing the communist world rested on the premise that this would make clear to Moscow and Peking the U.S. defense commitment to the lands threatened by communism. Our adversaries would recognize the potential cost of war and would not launch one through miscalculation.

The Secretary did not consider a very different, and conflicting, historical "law"—that wars can also result from a cycle of provocative acts reciprocating back and forth between potential belligerents, and escalating. This "law" implies an opposite policy conclusion. Had both "laws" been recognized, and mutually balanced, U.S. policy makers might not have applied containment policy so ambitiously and so rigidly on a global scale. By relying too heavily on the dictum, "war is the result of miscalculation," for example, U.S. policy stretched containment in the Far East to include interference in the Chinese Civil War. By committing itself to the defense of the Nationalist regime in Taiwan, U.S. policy gave the dangerous and provocative impression to Peking that the United States was pursuing a policy of "liberation" vis-a-vis the Chinese mainland.

Secretary Dulles also employed his favorite "law" in many of the Cold War crises of the 1950's, when at the eruption of crisis he would generally diagnose the problem as one of potential or developing "miscalculation," and hasten to reaffirm and reinforce the U.S. deterrence and defense commitment to the threatened area, to make still more sure that the opponent did not miscalculate it. More recent analysis indicates that the strategic value of this, in most of the crises, was highly debatable at best. And, in any case, the Secretary did not supplement his "law" with another that would have suggested that even very successful deterrence may well buy only time—time which should be used in seeking to cope with underlying causes of potential crisis. The Quemoy Crisis of 1958, for instance, was in most respects a replay of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1954–55, and might well have been avoided by a serious effort to deal with the Offshore Islands problem during the quiescent period following the first crisis.

Many other examples could be cited, both in the United States and abroad, of policy makers' use of simplified historical "rules." Four other such that have been applied simplistically in U.S. policy making within the last few decades are: "undemocratic regimes launch aggressive wars," "if we appease the opponent now we shall have to fight a much larger war against him later," "arms races lead inevitably to war," and the so-called "domino theory." Each of these generalizations contains some truth, but none is universal or certain; they are true or false depending on additional, surrounding conditions and context.

Very similar both in use and in effect are historical analogies advanced to help diagnose a present situation by comparing it to an apparently similar past one. In a recently published book, *Lessons of the Past,* Ernest May examines some striking examples of this practice. During World War Two, American policy makers concerned about the post-war world to come, planned and acted most carefully to avoid the errors, unlikely to be repeated anyway, that had been made in ending World War One. They gave little thought to how the two situations differed. Then, faced with difficult Soviet behavior after the war, they soon turned to the view that Stalin was analogous to Hitler, and then made very sure they did not make again the mistake of "appeasement" that had been made with Hitler. They do not appear to have considered or given credence to alternative analogies, equally plausible even at the time, that Stalin was much more like Peter the Great or Catherine the Great of czarist Russia. Later, Truman came to the decision the United States must come to the defense of South Korea, substantially on the basis of historical analogies from the 1930's, as suggested both by contemporaneous evidence and his own subsequent statements.

Usually, as May points out, the historical analo-

gies that are most compelling to policy makers are those in the recent past through which they have personally lived and about which they have absorbed the conventional wisdom. In the early Vietnam years, the Malaysian, Philippine, and Greek Civil Wars and even Korea were often cited by policy makers who actually knew relatively little about them (except Korea), as precedent and evidence for a hawkish U.S. stance. The Algerian and Chinese Civil Wars, equally relevant analogies arguing the other way, had concerned the U.S. much less directly and were much less often thought of or employed.

To be sure, which of the available historical analogies was more apt often becomes clear only with hindsight. The risk of choosing the wrong historical analogy will always be present and cannot be easily avoided; it can be minimized only to the extent that all relevant historical cases are seriously examined, and the extent and manner of their applicability to the present problem is explicitly analyzed. However the mere entertainment of alternative analogies to the obvious ones—considering Peter and Catherine as an alternative to Hitler for instance—can make a contribution by suggesting additional possibilities, and hence suggesting questions to ask of the problem that might otherwise go unasked or less seriously asked.

The compelling quality even of objectively questionable "laws" and analogies is striking evidence that such things are fulfilling a genuine "cognitive need" of policy makers; a need to place present events in a wider context, as part of diagnosing their significance. If this is true, a recommendation to policy makers that they cease employing such "laws" and analogies would be foolish and would be impossible to honor. At the same time, active and busy decision makers and their equally active and busy immediate staffs cannot be expected to perform for themselves the extensive search for relevant analogies, and analysis of the real applicability of numerous possible analogies and possible "laws", that we are calling for. Rather, a greater use should be made of professionally trained analysts who can perform these functions.

This is not to imply that the "lessons" of history for the present can be drawn easily and confidently even by the most competent professional historians. But their assistance is likely to be critical in several fundamental respects. Appropriately trained policy analysts can call the decision maker's attention to the fact that the "lesson" of an earlier historical case may be dependent on special characteristics of that case that are not present in a contemporary case. They can find other "lessons", analogies, and "laws"; and they can help identify what variables within the present situation may be "key variables" for testing the applicability of competing "lessons". Even policy analysts who are only somewhat grounded in history can at least call attention to the need to consider the "lessons" of a larger number and variety of historical cases than may presently be under consideration, which have some possible relevance for the new case at hand.[9]

We conclude that policy makers have genuine cognitive needs to employ various kinds of "theory" in the process of diagnosing their problems. At risk of oversimplifying or dramatizing to make the point, we emphasize that if the policy maker's needs are not met by good theory, they will be met by bad theory—supplemented by psychological mechanisms discussed in Chapters II and III, such as denial and bolstering, which allow an individual to believe in his bad theory.

D. The Emergence of Policy-applicable Theory

We have laid particular emphasis upon some of the complications, related to theory, that are involved in the *diagnosis* of foreign policy problems, because there is often a tendency among policy makers to pass somewhat too quickly from that stage to the subsequent stage of finding, assessing, and deciding among options for doing something —called *"option handling"* here. Even when the intelligence community within the government has developed substantial competence and formulated a body of analysis that is relevant to a policy problem, it is often difficult to bring the results effectively to the focus of attention of the busy decision maker, whose agenda may exclude attention to that problem until external pressures force it upon him. Then the imperative need for action may well crowd out or limit opportunities for a careful diagnosis of the issue within the decision making group, obliging the group to jump almost at once to the option-handling stage. As many students of government have noted, one of the most challenging tasks encountered in attempting to organize and manage policy making is that of finding ways to ensure that the knowledge and analytical resources within the organization are brought to bear in a timely and effective fashion at higher levels of decision-making.

The tendency of some decision makers to jump prematurely to the option-handling stage may also be due to a bias toward action rather than contemplation in American culture, compared to many other cultures. In part it may also be due to a pre-

[9]It is one of the ambitions of policy-applicable theory, as it is conceived here, to go beyond these minimal but potentially critical contributions that historically-trained analysts can provide, by drawing the "lessons" of all relevant historical cases into a more systematic explanatory theory which states the conditions and variables that account for the variation in historical outcomes associated with the type of phenomenon in question.

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vailing feeling that to draw out the diagnosis process is negative and unconstructive because it makes problems seem larger and more difficult, whereas to turn to the search for "solutions" is positive and constructive. This bias for action, however, can easily encourage what psychologists and management theorists refer to as "premature closure" of the diagnosis phase, after which the "search" for options, their "evaluation", and "choice" among them, is likely to be handicapped at best.

* * * *

There is a tendency for policy makers who have reached the option-handling stage to make somewhat oversimplified assumptions about the nature of some of their policy instruments. In particular they tend to activate strategies, at times, without carefully considering what the "preconditions" and "requirements" may be for making effective use of a strategy or policy instrument, and whether these conditions are satisfied in the case at hand. This is eminently understandable given the time pressures and other pressures under which they usually must work, and it is fortunate that a certain kind of "theory" is possible that can assist them in the task of assessing these preconditions. A couple of brief examples will illustrate the point.

In 1965 President Johnson ordered the bombing of North Vietnam, employing a "gradualist" escalation tactic. The intention, as the Pentagon Papers establish beyond question, was not primarily to destroy the economy or war-making power of the Hanoi regime. Although that goal was sought later, the original intention of the bombing campaign was to defeat Hanoi's *will*—to coerce the regime into "voluntarily" reducing or halting its aid to the Viet Cong. It was a strategy of the kind which theorists call "compellence" or "coercive diplomacy." One of the requirements for such a strategy to succeed, as many historical examples suggest, is that the coercing power be more motivated to halt some action than the opponent is to continue it—and that both parties know this. But this "precondition" did not exist in 1965; and since motivation is a matter of perceived national interests and not something that can be turned up or down at will, it could not be made to exist. Acting, probably in part on the historical analogue of the Cuban Missile Crisis three years before (where a coercive strategy did work and where the precondition *did* exist) the Johnson Administration attempted to activate a similar strategy again, even though the motivation-asymmetry requirement, and also other requirements, were not met in the existing situation.

Somewhat similar was the earlier attempt the United States had made, throughout the early and mid 1960's, to deter Hanoi from gradually escalating its involvement in the South, by making regular declarations of the U.S. deterrence commitment to Saigon, accompanied by allusions to the great power of the United States to back up its commitments as necessary. However, one of the requirements for a successful deterrence strategy is that the opponent recognize that the deterring power possesses *usable* military options for meeting and defeating the *particular* form of threat or attack which the opponent is contemplating (or else, usable options for making a counterattack in some other form, by way of compensation). Hanoi doubted that the U.S. possessed this, and rightly. The raw capability of the United States, indeed, to obliterate the whole of North Vietnam was never doubted—and was also never relevant because it was never a "thinkable" option. What Hanoi correctly doubted was that the United States would find it politically and economically feasible to maintain very sizable counter-insurgency and main-force units in South Vietnam for a number of years. Not recognizing any usable, relevant capability, Hanoi was not deterred.

Both of these illustrations, and many others that might be cited, exemplify a tendency on the part of U.S. policy makers to employ strategies involving coercion in one form or another, without adequately thinking through the ways in which these strategies actually work or fail to work, and hence the "requirements" or "preconditions" that must be met before they can sensibly be employed. In a sense it is eminently understandable that harassed, badly overworked decision makers might feel that they do not have the time to do this kind of thinking. But it must be done, and if it is not to be done by them, then it must be done elsewhere and the results communicated to them in useful, relevant ways.

Studies of "crisis-management" and of various foreign policy mechanisms and processes such as deterrence, coercive diplomacy, escalation, alliance management, detente, conciliation, etc. have begun to appear in some quantity in the United States just within the past few years, and some valuable conclusions and principles have been brought to light. A field of knowledge and expertise is slowly developing which did not exist as recently as the time of the Kennedy Administration. In the foreign policy crisis of that Administration, scholars could contribute comparatively little in the way of "theory" to guide decision makers. President Kennedy himself derived some of the most important principles he was to use in managing the Cuban Missile Crisis, from his personal reading not long before of Barbara Tuchman's book *The Guns of August* (concerning the outbreak of World War One).[10] More re-

[10]Here is an example of a fortuitous and positive employment of an historical analogue.

cently, more systematic theory has begun to emerge.

This is not to suggest that policy making can soon be put on a thoroughly scientific or mechanical basis. Far from it. But on certain selected substantive problems in foreign policy, theory is emerging which can be of distinct assistance to the policy maker. Such theory attempts to bridge the traditional "gap" between the theoretician and the policy maker by focusing analysis upon operational considerations and by explicitly taking into account the policy maker's viewpoint.

Theory of this kind does not relieve the policy maker of the responsibility of thinking through what it would take to make each of his principal options work in any particular situation, but it does assist him with this task. Because history is indeed *sui generis* at a fine level of detail, and no problem exactly repeats another, the kind of policy-relevant theory now appearing can at best only provide various sets of guidelines that help the decision maker to diagnose present situations and evaluate options for dealing with them. Such guidelines can be valuable, but they must be available to the individual decision maker and his closest policy advisers at an early stage in the development of a problem before attitudes have hardened and while there is still time to reflect upon their implications for policy choices.

Since few individual decision makers will have the requisite time and capabilities to deal adequately with the formidable problems of diagnosis and option-handling by themselves, they will need to draw upon an institutional capability that engages in a thoughtful and sophisticated analysis of the premises, images, models, and analogies that the decision maker and his advisory staff are likely to make use of. We will not take it upon ourselves to propose a specific institutional arrangement. But if the case developed in this chapter is plausible that some kinds of intellectual, "theoretical" assistance to the processes of diagnosis and option-handling *are* possible—and if, as seems inevitable, higher-level decision makers remain too busy to do much of the necessary analysis themselves—then it would be reasonable for the appropriate agencies and bodies to begin to consider how best to institutionalize this kind of policy analysis function.[11]

[11]It *might* be appropriate for any office that emerged to handle this function, also to sponsor and/or undertake research and development of additional techniques and additional policy-applicable theory.

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The Devil's Advocate: Uses and Limitations

In recent years much attention has been given to ways of ensuring that unpopular views are encouraged and given a proper hearing in small decision-making groups in which, as noted in Chapter IV, pressures for conformity often discourage expression of dissenting opinions. Among the organizational devices often recommended for this purpose is the time-honored institution of the "devil's advocate." Following the Bay of Pigs fiasco, in which President Kennedy's policy meetings had been marked by a seeming unanimity of opinion, his brother suggested that thereafter there always be a devil's advocate to give an opposite opinion if none was pressed.[1] Indeed, the President appears to have encouraged both his brother and Theodore Sorensen to take a more active "watchdog" role in foreign policy matters. Later, President Johnson is said to have referred to Under Secretary of State George Ball as his "devil's advocate," thereby legitimizing as well as encouraging Ball's continued expression of his dissent over Vietnam policy.

While something like a devil's advocate role was perhaps played by these men and no doubt by other advisers on other occasions, remarkably little historical material describing activities of this kind is available to serve as a basis for evaluating the efficacy of this organizational device. Similarly, the experimental laboratory research on small groups that has been consulted in preparing this chapter has little to offer by way of an explicit assessment of the feasibility and utility of a devil's advocate, though it does provide support for the idea that a group's performance can be abetted under certain conditions by leadership practices that "protect" members who express minority views. (See Chapter IV).

For the time being, therefore, the case for introducing a devil's advocate into policy-making groups rests largely on a priori grounds. While the case is a strong one in principle, the introduction and effective utilization of a devil's advocate is by no means a simple matter. Indeed, those who favor the idea of a devil's advocate often have different notions of what this would mean in practice. Some are content to suggest that the leader of a group should appoint one person on an ad hoc basis to serve as devil's advocate if no one in the group will challenge the dominant view in a given situation. Others have identified a much more complex set of requirements and procedures for institutionalizing the devil's advocate function, even going so far as to suggest that a sub-group rather than just one individual be assigned a continuing responsibility to make the opposition case even after a decision has been taken.[2]

Strictly speaking, the devil's advocate performs a *role;* it is understood that the person performing this role will argue an unpopular position that should be considered, but which no one else will speak up for and which the devil's advocate himself does not really favor. The fact that he is performing an accepted role and is not a genuine dissenter is designed, of course, to protect that person from incurring sanctions for challenging the group's opinion or its leader's view. Thus defined, however, the limits as well as the potential utility of the role become manifest: for while the devil's advocate introduces some diversity into the group's deliberations or challenges some of the premises that enter into the leader's judgment, he cannot persist in his challenge nor, even more important, seek to develop a coalition within the group to oppose and, if possible, overcome the majority. Unlike a genuine policy dissident, the true devil's advocate is not a political actor with policy commitments and organizational resources of his own; he is not engaged in a competitive struggle to influence policy decisions but is merely playing a role that, at best, facilitates a dialectical, multi-sided examination of the problem that is being decided.

If the devil's advocate is not a dissident political actor, neither should the role of devil's advocate be

[1]R.F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days,* N.Y.: Norton, 1969; p. 90. A more comprehensive case for a devil's advocate function is made by Joseph de Rivera, *The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy,* Columbus: Charles E. Merrill, 1968; pp. 61–64, 209–11. See also Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink,* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972; pp. 215–216.

[2]De Rivera, *op.cit.*

confused with the much more comprehensive role of the "custodian-manager" of the policy-making process, which will be discussed in Chapter XII. The custodian-manager acts as a surrogate for the executive in attempting to assure the quality of the search and analysis phases of policy-making that precede final choice of action; in so doing, he attempts to insure that the executive will have a number of well-considered, well-presented options to choose from. To this end, to be sure, the custodian-manager (or the executive) may designate someone to play the role of devil's advocate when no genuine advocate for an unpopular option can be found. But the two roles are distinct and should not be confused.

Those who have observed with distress the repeated failure of policy-makers to consider diverse views sometimes turn in desperation to the idea that installing a devil's advocate would help. But the mere provision of a devil's advocate in small decision-making groups is hardly a guarantee that the person will be able to perform the role well enough to contribute to improved policy-making. We know very little about what kinds of persons can perform effectively in this role, and how it can be introduced and maintained so that it is not regarded as an awkward or time-wasting gimmick by members of the group.

While there is much to be learned about how best to operate a devil's advocate, and while such knowledge might indeed be utilized to make this a useful innovation, one cannot be sanguine on the basis of recent experience. There is, first, some question whether the role can be performed with the integrity required to yield the desired impact. Second, there is sobering evidence that a devil's advocate can be put to uses other than those for which the role is intended. Let us examine both of these constraints on the utility of a devil's advocate.

Accounts of Vietnam policy-making suggest that the device of a devil's advocate can be misused in an effort to "domesticate" advisers who genuinely oppose policy decisions being taken. George Ball, for example, repeatedly disagreed with the development of U.S. policy in Vietnam. From an early stage President Johnson took to calling Ball his "devil's advocate"—a misnomer in this case since Ball was a genuine dissenter. Perhaps Johnson employed the euphemistic label of devil's advocate in order to soften the import of Ball's dissent and to indicate that he would regard it as legitimate and acceptable only if Ball provided his views as a service to the group and kept them within the confines of the group.

What this suggests is that in contrast to the often noted tendency in experimental laboratory groups for the majority to exert crude and extreme conformity pressures on dissident members (see Chapter IV), in real-world policy groups it is often unnecessary or undesirable to squelch or reject a dissident member. The possibility that dissidents are likely to increase malaise within the rest of the group is often accepted and legitimized in the expectation that they will strengthen on balance the ability of the group to cope with the problems of policy-making. But, in response, the dissident may moderate the style or manner in which he expresses his dissent, if not also the full extent of his disagreement, by falling into what James C. Thomson calls "the effectiveness trap"—i.e. the trap that keeps men from resigning in protest and airing their discontent outside the government. It is possible to be overly cynical and uncharitable about such behavior. The reality of the dilemma, however, cannot be ignored. As Thomson puts it, "To preserve your effectiveness, you must decide where and when to fight the mainstream of policy. . . . [by staying and not resigning] one may be able to prevent a few bad things from happening." As for George Ball, who presumably acquiesced in his "domestication", Thomson is quick to concede that matters might have gotten worse faster if Mr. Ball had kept silent, or left before his departure in the fall of 1966.[3]

The inefficacy of devil's advocate has been strongly emphasized, but perhaps overstated, by George E. Reedy, a former press secretary to President Johnson: "It is well understood that he [the devil's advocate] is not going to press his points harshly or stridently. Therefore, his objections and cautions are discounted before they are delivered."[4]

There are a number of additional incentives, not mentioned by Thomson, that may encourage an executive to hold on to dissident policy advisers. Even a weakened form of multiple advocacy may be useful to the chief executive and his supporting advisers in several ways. First, hearing negative opinions expressed *and* rebutted may provide top-level officials with the psychologically comforting feeling that they have considered all sides of the issue and that the policy chosen has weathered challenges from within the decision-making circle. Paradoxically, then, having some dissenters within

[3]James C. Thomson, Jr. "How Could Vietnam Happen? An Autopsy," *Atlantic Monthly*, April 1968. Albert Hirschman has expressed concern over the extreme reluctance of Americans in public office to resign in protest against policies with which they strongly disagree. Hirschman's general thesis is that "exit" has an essential role to play in restoring quality performance of government, as in any organization. (*Exit, Voice and Loyalty*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970; pp. 114–119.)

[4]George E. Reedy, *The Twilight of the Presidency*, New York: World, 1970; p. 11.

A sober evaluation of the devil's advocate idea is expressed forcefully also by Chester L. Cooper (personal communication): "A formal devil's advocate role would be an artificial and contrived one, empty of real meaning because the advocate is simply role-playing and is not arguing with serious conviction."

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the group may help the others, in particular the leader, to cope with some of the stresses of decision-making.

Second, there is rehearsal value in listening to and debating dissenters within the policy-making group. Those who support the policy are then better equipped to reply when they encounter similar challenges in the public arena.

Third, the formal modalities of hearing diverse opinions can help hold the group together. The executive's task is not only to select as "wise" a policy as possible but to achieve some degree of consensus on its behalf among those actors in the system who are most concerned with the issue and those who will have to help implement it. If giving those advisers who disagree with policy a hearing does not always contribute as much as it might to achieving a wiser decision, it can be useful nonetheless as a vehicle for developing consensus. The feeling that consultation and debate took place before the executive made his decision may assuage some of the disappointment of those whose advice was not followed. It may be easier for them to close ranks, at least temporarily, behind the policy chosen.[5]

Fourth, if the "doubters" who have opposed policy in the private deliberations of the group can be cast into the role of defending it in public forums, they may well do a better job than firm, enthusiastic advocates of that policy.[6] Such a task forces the dissident policy adviser to confront his own doubts. To the extent that his original doubts are shared by outsiders, the defense of the policy he manages to develop is likely to focus on considerations that will be especially salient for them.

Finally, there may be important public relations benefits for the executive who follows the practice of hearing dissident advocates and, more generally, who structures the policy-forming process to ensure orderly consideration of alternative options.[7] In an earlier era a leader could decide to do what he and his trusted advisers thought best on controversial policy matters without disclosing in detail how and why the decision was made. He could leave the question whether he had acted wisely to the "judgment of history" some generations hence. This possibility has been increasingly denied leaders of democratic governments in the modern era of rapid communications and of acute journalistic and public curiosity as to how the affairs of government are being decided. Important elements of the public are no longer satisfied to wait for the judgment that future historians will render. As a result, new expectations have been directed towards the Presidency which its modern incumbents have incorporated into the performance of their role. Faced with the public's demand for "instant history", presidents and their advisers increasingly cooperate in enabling journalists to write inside accounts of how and why a recent decision was made.

One can see value in this. The demand of the informed, attentive public for orderly, "rational" consideration of alternative options in which all sides of an issue are considered and debated, may indeed serve to strengthen such policy-making procedures within the government. This is not to ignore the possibility that the impact of these public expectations will be shallow; the Administration may respond by routinizing its procedures for policy-making, ritualizing the conduct of multiple advocacy, and "domesticating" devil's advocates in order to secure public relations advantages. As a result, top-level officials may learn to enact their policy-making in such a way as to meet the informed public's expectation as to how important decisions should be made and to project a favorable image into the "instant histories" that will be written shortly thereafter.

It is possible to be too cynical about this. Chief executives have been driven to find more effective ways of organizing and managing their policy-making machinery for a variety of reasons, not merely to satisfy public relations needs. And, in any case, one can hope that shadow and substance cannot exist wholly apart from each other, and that the striving for a good image may serve to reinforce the hand of those in government who also strive for an effective system of policy-making.

With this in mind we turn in the next two chapters to examine two somewhat different policy-making models—the "formal options" system and multiple advocacy—which have been proposed and indeed utilized as vehicles for securing the equivalent of a rational system of policy-making. Both the formal options system and multiple advocacy are much more comprehensive in scope and objectives than is the device of a devil's advocate.

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[5]This is consistent with research findings in other settings which suggest that as long as the individual is satisfied that a proper degree of deference has been granted to his point of view by organizational superiors, his hostility reaction will, in all probability, be minimal if his superiors do not accept his judgment. Cf. Murray Horwitz, "Managing Hostility in the Laboratory and the Refinery," in Robert L. Kahn and Elise Boulding (ed.), *Power and Conflict in Organizations*, N.Y.: Basic Books, 1964; pp. 79–82; cited by Louis G. Gawthrop, *Bureaucratic Behavior in the Executive Branch*, N.Y.: Free Press, 1969, p. 42.

[6]Philip Geyelin (*op.cit.*, p. 210) notes that "It was a familiar Johnson stratagem to send known dissenters to argue on behalf of his policies."

[7]As George Reedy puts it, the objections and cautions of the official devil's advocate "are actually welcomed because they prove for the record that decision was preceded by controversy." (Reedy, *op.cit.*, p. 11.)

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The "Formal Options" System*

In Chapters V and VI we identified major impediments to information processing and nine malfunctions of the advisory system that can arise from the dynamics of organizational behavior. It is clear that these impediments and malfunctions are deeply rooted in the organizational complexity of the Executive Branch. In view of this, relatively simple devices such as the devil's advocate, even if effectively implemented, cannot possibly meet all of the requirements for designing a more effective policy-making system. Clearly, more comprehensive prescriptive theories or models are needed. Two such theories will be considered in this chapter and in the next. Before proceeding to the first of these two design models, the "formal options" system, it will be useful to recall some of the tasks and problems that must be dealt with in efforts to design effective policy-making procedures.

A. The Need for Lateral Coordination and Hierarchical Direction

The fact that responsibility for different aspects of foreign policy is distributed over a relatively large number of departments and agencies and that relevant information and competence is also widely dispersed within the Executive Branch, imposes on top-level officials the task of providing initiative, coherence, and control. An important part of this task is the requirement for internal coordination: those parts of the Executive Branch that have some responsibility for a particular policy problem must be encouraged to interact with each other in appropriate ways. Lateral coordination through such mechanisms as interdepartmental committees, conferences, a system of clearances, etc., however, cannot be counted upon to produce the caliber of policy analysis, the level of consensus, and the procedures for implementation that may be required for an effective and coherent foreign policy. Also, lateral coordination by itself may be inadequate to cope with the dynamics of organizational behavior and the phenomena of "bureaucratic politics" that create impediments and malfunctions. Accordingly, all presidents have found it necessary to impose mechanisms for control and coordination from above; that is, to supplement lateral coordination with some degree of *hierarchical coordination and control.*

Hierarchical coordination and control attempts to provide for a number of presidential interests and purposes.

1. A president needs information and advice to make top-level foreign policy decisions, and he must find ways of assuring that the quality of the information and advice he receives from departments and agencies is not distorted by their special interests and narrow perspectives.
2. The president must find ways of impressing his broader perspectives on the national interest on the functioning of lower-level foreign policy officials.
3. A president must be alert to the harmful effect that actions by departments and agencies might have on "presidential interests"—that is, the personal political resources and the tactical and strategic flexibility that he needs in order to perform effectively on a continuing basis all facets of his complex role. The "national interest" and "presidential interests" are not necessarily one and the same thing, but to promote and safeguard one or both of them a president must "preserve his choices" over important foreign policy decisions—that is, as Richard Neustadt emphasized so persuasively in *Presidential Power* (1960), he must make certain that the resolution of such foreign policy issues is not preempted by lower-level officials but that they rise to the presidential level on a timely basis to enable him to make informed judgments and decisions of his own.
4. Hierarchical coordination and control is needed to ensure coherence and consistency in foreign policy and, of course, to assure implementation of presidential policy.

The nature and extent of hierarchical coordination and control has varied from president to presi-

*For helpful comments on an earlier draft of the chapter I am indebted to Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Chester L. Cooper, Ole R. Holsti, Robert Jervis, and Curtis W. Kamman.

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dent. Each incumbent of the office tends to define his own role and participation in foreign policy-making somewhat differently. The structure and scope of hierarchical coordination and the nature of the advisory system around the president reflect his personal preferences and management style. (A fuller discussion of these matters is provided in Chapter XII, "The 'Custodian-manager' of the Policy-making Process.")

B. The Nixon-Kissinger NSC System

The most centralized and structured organizational model utilized thus far for securing hierarchical coordination and control has been the "formal options" system introduced in 1969 by President Nixon and his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, Henry Kissinger. We shall forego a detailed description of Nixon's reorganization of the National Security Council. It will suffice for present purposes to recall its major features and to articulate some of its underlying premises in order to call attention to questions of theoretical and practical interest.

Under Nixon, it should be noted, the formal options system was linked with the choice of a White House-centered organizational model of foreign policy-making. The President wished to enhance his personal role in dealing with major foreign policy issues. The formal options system was designed not only to ensure that he would retain and exercise the power of final decision, but also, as he put it, "to make certain that clear policy choices" reached the top. Well aware that the play of bureaucratic politics could limit his choices, Nixon was determined not to be "confronted with a bureaucratic consensus that leaves me with no options but acceptance or rejection, and that gives me no way of knowing what alternatives exist."[1]

Kissinger created a structure of NSC-centered interdepartmental committees that was designed to strengthen the intellectual and bureaucratic resources of the White House and to weaken the autonomy in foreign policy-making of the departments and the agencies. Kissinger chaired all of the interdepartmental committees established at the next level below the NSC to identify and examine options before they were sent to the National Security Council and/or the President. Thus, he did not leave the important task of lateral coordination of policy *formation* to the discretion of and unregulated interaction between departments and agencies concerned with a particular issue; nor did he delegate this task to the State Department (as would be the case in a State-centered organizational model). Instead, lateral coordination of policy formation was integrated in substantial measure with hierarchical direction and control from the White House. In contrast, the comparable committees on policy *implementation* were chaired by the Under Secretary of State, and the policy studies generated by National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM's) were assigned to a specific department or agency to ensure coordination and responsiveness to the deadline and framework imposed in the initial study request.[2]

As a result of Kissinger's chairmanship of the various NSC committees the new NSC system greatly enhanced presidential control over the formulation of foreign policy and weakened the ability of departmental and agency officials to exercise independent judgment and influence. In effect, Nixon and Kissinger attempted to impose the model of a unitary, rational policy-maker on the more loosely structured pluralistic policy-making systems of previous administrations. The staff of the NSC, augmented in numbers and functions, reached deeper into departments and agencies in order to identify and gain control over a wider range of issues at earlier stages in policy-making. It should be noted, too, that the NSC role went far beyond simple coordination of agency positions on security issues. Rather, the imposition of an interagency framework on many security issues (which in the past had been dealt with in semi-autonomy by the Defense Department) forced many military questions to be examined in a broader context.

Kissinger's network of interdepartmental committees drew personnel from all agencies concerned with security and international affairs into the preliminary analytic work necessary for policy-making. As a result, it is probably the case that many foreign policy specialists in the various departments and agencies were involved more systematically and more closely in the preparatory stages of policy-making, as individuals at least, than was the case in previous administrations. This was evidently the case, for example, with regard to personnel in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

At the same time, however, the formal options model as employed by Nixon and Kissinger served to discourage the departments and agencies from

[1]Richard M. Nixon, *U.S. Foreign Policy for the 1970's: A New Strategy for Peace*, A Report to the Congress, February 18, 1970 (Washington, D.C.). p. 72.

[2]A typical study might be assigned to the Department of State, which would convene a meeting of the Interdepartmental Group for (let us say) East Asia under the chairmanship of the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Representatives of all other agencies concerned would attend, the work would be parceled out, and after several more meetings the finished policy study would be forwarded to the NSC Staff for consideration by the Senior Review Group or another of the committees chaired by Kissinger. It would represent, at least in theory, a fully coordinated survey of options as developed by the entire Government.

maintaining or developing strong analytic capabilities of their own. For one thing, the fact that important policy issues were so often pre-empted by NSC directives commissioning an interagency study tended to discourage departments and agencies from undertaking independent studies of their own that might have to be re-done or abandoned when the NSC launched a request for an interagency study on the same or a similar topic. It was often difficult for a department or agency to get its own thoughts on a question in order before being plunged into the interagency process, with all of its deadlines, often unwieldy meetings and uneven expertise among participants. For another thing, departmental and agency analysts were either placed on interdepartmental committees or drawn into the task of preparing inputs to the work of such committees.

In other ways as well, the Nixon-Kissinger system discouraged and weakened competitive policy analysis at the departmental and agency levels that might differ from that produced by the NSC's formal options system. The studies produced by the NSC-oriented interdepartmental committees, available to all departments and agencies concerned with the policy issue in question, were considered to be authoritative and of superior quality. The few senior foreign policy officials who participated in the final discussions before the President made his choice of policy were at times largely dependent upon these studies. Their own experts were often well versed in the policy issue that was up for decision and could brief the principals before they met with the President. But the process of examining options in the National Security Council or discussing them *tête-à-tête* with the President was allowed to atrophy. Indeed, many of the NSC policy studies would have provided a basis for wide-ranging discussions; but the airing of competitive viewpoints was frustrated by the inadequacy of Presidential- and cabinet-level confrontation with the issues and with each other before the President made his choice.

Through the "formal options" system that has been described Nixon and Kissinger attempted to obtain an "advocate-free" form of information processing, identification and appraisal of options. (Hence, the appropriateness of the term "formal options," as against options developed and advanced by advocates in one or more agencies.) While departmental and agency specialists participated in the important early stages of policy analysis, agency viewpoints as such were not to influence the policy studies produced by the interdepartmental committees and, indeed, were not to be articulated and introduced into these preparatory studies.[3] Rather, the departmental and agency officials would presumably have an opportunity later, through the vehicle of another NSC committee—the Senior Review Group—and indeed in high-level policy discussions held in meetings of the National Security Council itself to introduce whatever special insight or wisdom their departmental perspective on the policy issue offered. But at that stage in the policy-making process their ability to perform as independent advisers, capable of challenging the authoritative options analyses produced by the prestigious NSC system was obviously limited.

Not only was the role of leading departmental officials subtly redefined and delimited in Nixon's way of organizing and managing the foreign policy-making system, the resources and opportunities available to them for influencing policy were curtailed. Cabinet officials and other senior officials were discouraged from performing as policy advocates and, as a result of the way in which the NSC system was structured, weakened in their ability to perform as forceful advisers who could back their judgment with independent analysis. As a result, when department heads finally had an opportunity —if indeed they did—at top-level meetings with the president to express their views on alternative options, as the system was supposed to provide, they were not always in a position to offer well-considered alternatives backed by solid independent analysis. Thus, even the most senior departmental officials were placed at a disadvantage in performing as advisers to the president in the final stages of decision-making.

C. Some Questions and Caveats

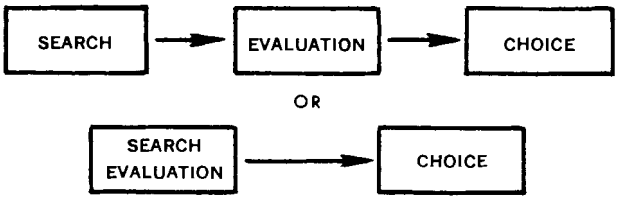
If we grant that the Nixon-Kissinger system curbed some of the dysfunctional features of "bureaucratic politics" and had other advantages as well, we are left with the question of the costs and possible risks of so centralized a system. Some reservations expressed by critics of the Nixon-Kissinger system challenge theoretical assumptions underlying the formal options system; others are directed to the way in which this system worked in practice as against the way in which it was supposed to work in theory.

1. THE DISADVANTAGES OF SEPARATING POLICY ANALYSIS FROM POLICY-MAKING

It may be noted that the formal options system attempts to separate as much as possible the

[3]Nonetheless, it is stated that on occasion an agency would seek to ensure, as the price for its concurrence in a study, that its preferred option was contained in the paper, and that the evaluation of options articulated the conflicting views of participating agencies.

preliminary "search" and "evaluation" phases of policy-making from the final process of "choice."[4] That is, the tasks of search and evaluation are to be completed and the results, in the form of options analysis, then made available to the top-level decision-maker for his choice. This is indeed an orderly, sequential procedure which appears ideally suited for providing the executive with a well-considered, "finished" set of options from which to choose. The flow of policy-making in such a system can be depicted as follows:



It should be noted that the compartmentalized, formalistic way in which search and analysis are separated from choice in such a system can seriously interfere with the necessity for intellectual *interaction* between these phases of policy-making. Recognizing this, specialists in organizational decision-making have regarded a strict separation of search and analysis from choice as highly questionable; they emphasize, to the contrary, that it is generally desirable to find ways of keeping specialists engaged in search and analysis in continuing contact with officials who will be making the final choice of policy.[5] Two-way communication between policy-makers and specialists in search and evaluation is valuable—indeed, some would say essential—in order to develop a more incisive and shared understanding of the policy problem that is to be decided.

Initial formulations of a foreign policy problem for study and analysis are likely to be defective.[6] An *iterative* procedure is often required in which preliminary search and analysis on an inadequately formulated problem helps policy-makers to reformulate the problem, which in turn generates a new round of search and analysis. Moreover, a policy-maker's preliminary effort to come to grips with the problem of choice often generates new questions that were overlooked or inadequately dealt with in the policy analysis already completed by specialists in search and evaluation, thereby posing a need for additional analysis or reconsideration of the previous analysis provided the policy-maker. In other words, timely "rehearsals" of choice by policy-makers have considerable value both for clarifying the problem, for indicating the need to search for additional information and somewhat novel options, and for reevaluating existing options on the basis of new criteria of choice formulated by the policy-maker during the course of his "rehearsal" of the decision.

There is considerable support for an iterative approach of this kind both in experimental laboratory research and in evaluations of real-world decision-making. Specialists who have studied the performance of problem-solving groups have called attention to the value of programming the group to ensure that it undertakes a "second solution" to the problem, since there is considerable evidence that an iterative approach of this kind improves performance.[7] A similar suggestion for a "second chance" meeting to review a decision just taken has been advanced by Irving Janis whose studies of decision-making in small groups have emphasized the need to avoid certain types of group dynamics that can distort judgment and lead to poor decisions.[8] (See also Chapter IV).

The flow of policy-making in a system which includes iteration, decision "rehearsals," and/or "second solutions" can be depicted as follows:

[4]In this chapter and elsewhere in this report the terms "search," "analysis" (or evaluation), and "choice" are employed to refer to three essential functions in any policy-making system. The distinction between these three functions has been the focus of some of the most useful contemporary behavioral theories of organizational decision-making.

As usually employed by organizational theorists such as Herbert Simon, James March, Richard Cyert and others, *"search"* refers to the processes of obtaining and sharing relevant information, and identifying and inventing options; *"analysis"* (or "evaluation") refers to the processes of interpreting the significance of available information and evaluating the relative appropriateness of alternative options with reference to stated or alternative objectives and values; and *"choice"* refers to the procedures and decision rules followed in choosing from among the alternative options.

[5]See, for example, Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1967; pp. 179–188.

[6]Concern with this problem underlies one of the State Department's major reservations regarding the workings of the Nixon-Kissinger NSC system: "A critical element in the preparation of a satisfactory [NSC] study is a clear statement of the policy issue. Where this is lacking, options tend to become stereotyped and artificial rather than inviting a choice among genuine alternatives." Again, "it is important that the [NSC] study directive be as clear as possible in defining the problem, or set of problems, to be addressed. Otherwise, the interdepartmental working group may spend a great deal of time trying to formulate the scope and focus of the study." Department of State Submission to the Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy, February 1974; p. 45.

[7]See, for example, N. R. F. Maier, *Problem-Solving Discussions and Conferences: Leadership Methods and Skills* (San Francisco: McGraw Hill, 1963).

[8]Thus, among Irving Janis' suggestions for preventing Groupthink is the following recommendation: "After reaching a preliminary consensus about what seems to be the best policy alternative, the policy-making group should hold a 'second chance' meeting, at which every member is expected to express as vividly as he can all his residual doubts and to rethink the entire issue before making a definitive choice." (*Victims of Groupthink*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972, p. 219).

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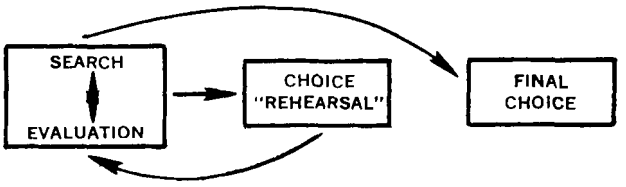

In this type of policy-making system, search and evaluation are not compartmentalized and separated from choice in the same way as in the formal options system. Rather, this system is designed to encourage and permit additional search and evaluation on the basis of the decision-maker's rehearsal of choice. Thereby, the results of search and evaluation are likely to be of higher quality and greater relevance to the policy-maker's needs.

2. THE RISKS OF SOLO DECISION-MAKING BY THE PRESIDENT

As noted elsewhere in this report, a president's style will dominate the process; any theoretical model of what constitutes an effective procedure of policy-making has to be adjusted to take this into account. Certainly the formal options system was nicely suited to Nixon's preference for solo decisions made in private. But this style of decision-making added to the risks of the formalistic separation of search and evaluation from choice. There is little in the record to indicate that Nixon made a habit of engaging in preliminary decision rehearsals; rather, having received the well-prepared formal options and heard some discussion of them, he preferred to withdraw in order to go through the final stages of deliberation privately prior to making his decision.

The combination of a formal options system and solo decision-making exaggerates the familiar risk that arises whenever, as often happens, an executive improvises at the last minute an option somewhat different from the carefully evaluated ones presented to him. As is well known, the utility of a complex option often suffers from last-minute alteration of some of its components. Unless the executive's improvised choice is resubmitted for careful evaluation, the value of meticulous preparation of options can be easily defeated. This danger is enhanced, moreover, in cases when time pressures are urgent.

3. INADEQUACY OF "FORMAL OPTIONS" FOR CRISIS DECISION-MAKING

More generally, when decisions must be arrived at quickly, the orderly but somewhat laborious collection and evaluation of formal options by the NSC apparatus may break down or work ineffectively. Evidently for this reason, Kissinger established still another committee in 1969, the "Washington Special Actions Group" (WSAG), to deal with international crises. Relatively little information is available for a rounded appraisal of WSAG's performance. But Kissinger himself has conceded that while he believes that the NSC system "works rather well" on the whole, it does "better in noncrisis situations than in crises." [9]

It would seem particularly important for crisis management, therefore, to back-stop the NSC apparatus with a system of multiple advocacy in which the representatives of the departments and agencies who sit in WSAG can draw upon competent analytical staffs of their own.

4. PROBLEMS OF "OVERLOADING"

Another criticism leveled at the formal options system concerns the enormous bureaucratic effort that goes into the preparation of NSC study memoranda and policy papers by the various interdepartmental committees. Thus, the State Department has called attention to the "dangers that extensive use of studies [by the NSC] to deal with subsidiary issues may overburden the system . . ." [10]

It is also reported that recurrent delays have taken place in both the completion of staff work and White House action. This is not surprising since a highly centralized system of this type can easily overburden the top-level decision-maker. It may be necessary, as has often been said, to centralize first before effective decentralization is possible. With the passage of time, however, signs multiplied that the Nixon-Kissinger system suffered from dangerous overload precisely because of its inability or unwillingness to build "centers of strength responsible to the President in other parts of the foreign affairs government." [11]

5. SELECTIVE USE OF "FORMAL OPTIONS" BY THE PRESIDENT

The Nixon-Kissinger NSC system has been criticized also on the grounds that the President and his Special Assistant by-passed the formal options process on many important occasions. Professor Wil-

[9]Quoted by Milton Viorst, "William Rogers Thinks Like Richard Nixon," *New York Times Magazine*, February 27, 1972.

[10]Department of State, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[11]I. M. Destler believes that the failure to do so was one of the major deficiencies of the Nixon Administration's organization of foreign policy-making. (*Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy*, Princeton University Press, 1972; p. 141) The creation of the Planning and Coordination Staff in the State Department in 1969 was evidently not as successful in this respect as had been hoped. Moreover, the International Security Affairs Office in the DOD, which played an important role in previous administrations, was allowed to become much weaker in the Nixon administration.

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fred Kohl calls attention to a number of ways in which Kissinger and Nixon by-passed the NSC framework. In his detailed study of the patterns of policy-making employed by Nixon and Kissinger in dealing with eleven major issues in U.S.-European relations, Kohl finds that they utilized the formal options system, and then only in part, in five cases. What Kohl calls the "Royal Court" pattern of policy-making, in which high policy issues were handled outside the NSC system under Kissinger's personal direction, was employed in three cases. Three other instances of low-level policy issues were also handled outside of the formal NSC system, being left largely to the play of organizational procedures and "bureaucratic politics" among the most concerned departments and agencies.[12]

6. RESTRICTED RANGE OF "FORMAL OPTIONS"

As time passed, questions were also raised regarding the possibility that the search for options and their appraisal via the NSC system was not as "open" and broad-ranging as had been initially suggested. Certainly both Nixon and Kissinger had opportunities to use their control and influence over the NSC interdepartmental committees to shape the policy analysis and the formulation and assessment of options. One observer concludes a balanced appraisal of the workings of the NSC system with the following observation:

> "The kinds of analyses that are done, the way the choices are presented to the President and the NSC, and the shape of the resulting policies inevitably reflects the biases of the President and his leading officials, such as Kissinger."[13]

Another observer, in an otherwise sympathetic evaluation of the NSC, asked whether the often-repeated phrases such as "keeping the options open" do not have "more of a liturgical than intellectual significance"; he (and other critics) also noted the common complaint that the NSC-initiated studies imposed busy-work on the departments while the Special Assistant and his own staff focussed on the essential issues.[14]

The State Department, too, has questioned whether the "formal options" system does in fact succeed in identifying and prescribing to the President a full range of choices. "Experience has shown," the State Department submission to the Commission observes, "that the presentation of options does not, of itself, ensure that all reasonable alternatives are placed before the President."[15]

7. THE MULTIPLE, CONFLICTING ROLES OF THE SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

Culminating a trend that can be traced to the Kennedy administration, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs in Nixon's presidency emerged as an even stronger semi-autonomous actor in foreign policy-making. With the control of the NSC-centered formal options machinery in his hands and enjoying the increasing trust and confidence of the President, Kissinger gradually came to play a central role in influencing and shaping not only the procedures but also the substance of policy analysis throughout the Executive Branch.

To his job of "custodian-manager" of process and procedures, Kissinger gradually added a number of other important role tasks: that of public spokesman-defender of existing policy; that of "watchdog" over the president's personal power stakes in foreign policy issues; that of implementer-enforcer of the president's decisions; that of administrative operator; and that of policy adviser-advocate. The assignment of so many additional roles to that of "custodian-manager" created the possibility of serious role conflicts that could easily interfere with the performance of his unique responsibility as neutral "custodian-manager" of the NSC-centered procedures for obtaining balanced views, objective review of policies, and multiple options for the president's benefit.

With the passage of time, it is reported, Kissinger would on occasion dominate meetings of the Verification Panel and the Senior Review Group either by force of personality or because of his strong advocacy of a particular position.[16] At one time reluctant to offer his own view when forwarding a set of options to the president, later on he began to add his own recommendation when doing so.

While the enormous enhancement of the Special

[12]Wilfred L. Kohl, "The Nixon-Kissinger Foreign Policy System and U.S.-European Relations: Patterns of Policy-Making," Paper presented to the American Political Science Association, Annual Meeting, Chicago, August 30-September 2, 1974.

[13]Samuel C. Orr, "Defense Report/National Security Council Network Gives White House Tight Rein Over SALT Strategy," *National Journal*, 3 (April 24, 1971), p. 881.

[14]John P. Leacocos, "Kissinger's Apparat," *Foreign Policy*, No. 5 (Winter 1971–72), p. 23.

[15]Department of State, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[16]Professor Wilfred Kohl, *op. cit.*, drawing upon interviews with government officials, cites one of them as describing Kissinger's participation in these important committees as taking one or another of the following forms: (1) Kissinger knew what he wanted and argued for it from the outset, tending to dominate the group's deliberations unless taken on by another forceful personality who was sure of his arguments; (2) Kissinger remained "open" at the start whereas other agency representatives expressed strong views, in which case hybrid solutions generally emerged which Kissinger accepted as a consensus; (3) Neither Kissinger nor others were sure of their ground at the beginning of the discussion of a new or unexplored policy issue and groped together for a position; (4) Everyone, including Kissinger, found it difficult to deal with the policy issue in question and, in effect, decided to put it aside.

Assistant's responsibilities and tasks no doubt reflected the President's wishes and expectations, it did introduce important new elements into the functioning of the "formal options" system. The latter was transformed into something quite different from what it had been at the outset of the Nixon administration, and the position of Special Assistant was converted into that of a second, or super Secretary of State. (A more detailed discussion of the evolution of the Special Assistant's position and the performance of the role by various incumbents appears in Chapter XII, "The 'Custodian-Manager' of the Policy-making Process.")

8. INDIRECT EFFECTS ON ROLE OF CONGRESS IN FOREIGN POLICY

It should be noted, finally, that by placing the president at the helm of a tightly controlled, depoliticized system of policy-making within the executive branch, the Nixon-Kissinger NSC system also strengthened his position in the foreign policy arena vis-a-vis Congress. A less centralized system of policy-making within the executive branch contributes to a more "open" system; it generates more information and offers more opportunities for "outside" actors (Congress) to influence presidential policies. By weakening the struggle over foreign policy within the executive branch, the NSC system thereby also limited these opportunities.

D. Concluding Observations

Several general observations are appropriate and timely in concluding this review of the "formal options" system. The reality of a policy-making system is always more opaque and inconsistent than the clarity of the theoretical model which inspired the creation of that system and which justifies it as an effective way to make policy. The Nixon Administration by no means made all of its important foreign policy decisions in a manner consistent with its own NSC model. This is not offered as criticism, rather as a reminder that any president is likely to resort to a number of different ways of making foreign policy.

In effect, Nixon operated with a mixed system, employing a variety of procedures for making policy of which the formal options system was but one. Even "multiple advocacy", an alternative to the formal options system which we shall discuss in the next chapter, could be noted from time to time in the Nixon Administration's way of making foreign policy decisions. Multiple advocacy occurred under two circumstances. Especially at the beginning of Nixon's administration, the "formal options" process was supposed to be supplemented at the last stages before the President made a final decision by discussion and debate, if there were advocates of different positions among senior advisers in the Senior Review Group or in the formal meetings of the National Security Council itself. But, in time, with his penchant for privacy and solo decision-making, Nixon utilized this procedure less and less, participating in fewer meetings of this kind and preferring to have policy disagreements among his advisers come to him in writing or as summarized by Kissinger. Multiple advocacy of sorts also took place when decisions were made outside the NSC system and were subject to the pull and tug among leading officials of different departments and agencies.

Moreover, as we have noted, the formal options system changed in important ways over a period of time. As one sympathetic observer noted in late 1971, "The NSC system today is not the tidy blueprint of January, 1969. The older it has gotten, the more informal and overlapping its procedures have become."[17]

The experience of the Nixon presidency is quite relevant, of course, for evaluating the merits of a formal options system, but it must be used with care for the purpose. In addition to the preceding observations regarding the mixed and changing system of foreign policy-making in his administration, we should note several other things that complicate the task of assessing the utility of "formal options." In the Nixon presidency, the "formal options" procedure was combined with a highly centralized presidential control of foreign policy. But "formal options" can be combined with a *State*-centered organizational model rather than a White House-centered system. President Johnson's effort to move in this direction in the last few years of his administration proved largely abortive, as did Elliot Richardson's effort as Under Secretary of State to persuade Kissinger to move in this direction.[18]

Certain ways of strengthening Nixon's foreign policy-making system, often advocated by sympathetic critics,[19] were never undertaken or inadequately implemented. Thus, for example, the "for-

[17]Leacocos, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[18]According to the Kalbs, Richardson argued vigorously for an alternative NSC model which would have given State the responsibility for coordinating foreign policy, and for chairing the interdepartmental committees, reserving the NSC itself as an open forum in which senior officials would have an opportunity to influence the President's judgment and choice of policy. Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974, p. 88.

[19]For example, Destler *(op. cit.)* stressed the need to build "centers of strength responsive to the President in other parts of the foreign affairs government," that is, multiple centers of analysis and stronger staffs for departmental and agency officials who serve as advisers to the President and key figures in implementing his policies.

mal options" portion of Nixon's system might have worked better if multiple advocacy among senior advisers at the last stages had been encouraged and energized by the President instead of being discouraged and weakened. Despite paying lip service to the need for strengthening the role of the State Department and abortive efforts in that direction, essentially little was accomplished by way of enabling it to become a stronger participant in Nixon's foreign policy system. (We do not take up here the efficacy of efforts to strengthen the State Department's role after Kissinger became Secretary.)

Finally, of course, the performance of the centralized foreign policy system of the Nixon administration depended on factors other than the inherent merits or defects of a "formal options" approach. Among these factors, relevant to the judgment whether as good or a better version of Nixon's NSC model can be institutionalized or utilized again in the future, is the fact that both Nixon and Kissinger were very special individuals. The successes and limitations of their NSC system may have depended as much, if not more, on them and on the accident of their collaboration as on the inherent utility of the organizational model they employed. Nonetheless, one can still hope that the review of the theory and practice of the formal options system in this chapter will be of help to those who have to decide how future presidents might organize their policy-making system.

Multiple Advocacy*

We noted in the preceding chapter that many questions can be raised regarding the performance, as against the theory, of the "formal options" system. It is not easy to arrive at a well-informed, balanced, overall appraisal of the workings of the "formal options" system that was centered in the National Security Council during President Nixon's first term and continued, in part at least, after Kissinger became Secretary of State. But even if the performance of the "formal options" warrants that it be continued in some form in future administrations, there would still be several reasons for considering alternative procedural models.

In the first place, it is doubtful that all future Presidents and Secretaries of State will want to rely as heavily on a formal options procedure as did Nixon and Kissinger. The critical factor in a president's choice of a policy-making model is the personal style of decision-making he brings with him into the office. While Nixon (and Eisenhower before him) found a highly formalized NSC model preferable, other presidents have not. Indeed, variations in the personal styles and preferences of past presidents help to account for the zigzag in the degree of institutionalization and centralization of policy-making procedures under successive administrations, and in the degree of actual reliance upon them in making foreign policy decisions. It is to be expected, therefore, that the personal preferences and styles of some future presidents and secretaries of state are likely to lead them to place far less reliance on a formal options system and to introduce different policy-making models. Some of them, we may expect, will prefer a more loosely coordinated, less formalistic way of conducting the search for effective policy. Or they may prefer to structure the advisory process to place greater emphasis on adversary proceedings, if not full-blown multiple advocacy, than did Nixon.

Besides, few presidents are likely to hew to but one way of making all of their foreign policy decisions. Even Nixon and Kissinger departed from the formal options system on many occasions. And it may be recalled that the foreign policy-making system they instituted called for a weak variant of multiple advocacy to be employed in the final stages of policy-making, when senior officials were to meet with President Nixon to discuss the formal options generated by the NSC system.

It behooves us, therefore, to consider other procedural models for achieving the necessary lateral and vertical coordination of efforts by the various departments and agencies concerned with foreign policy to collect and analyse information, to identify and appraise alternative options, and to perform the advisory function for the chief executive. The formal options system is one way of attempting to cope with the serious impediments that the dynamics of organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics can introduce into the processing of information and the generation of options and their appraisal. Let us recall the principal features the formal options approach adopts for this purpose. It employs highly centralized management procedures to weaken and bypass some of the normal ways in which departments and agencies contribute to policy-making, and to re-channel their their information, expertise, and judgment into well-defined and tightly controlled procedural "tracks" imposed on the system from the presidential level. Thus, a formal options system attempts to order and "rationalize" the search for effective policy; it attempts to prevent latent or actual differences over policy from distorting or biasing "search" and "evaluation"; it attempts to "depoliticize" the expression of disagreements over policy within the executive branch, to reduce interpersonal and inter-agency clashes over policy, to discourage and repress efforts of individuals and agencies to employ bureaucratic resources, strategies, and maneuvers to influence the choice of policy.

Not surprisingly, the formal options system appeals to executives who are most committed to a "rational" and orderly approach to policy-making, and who are most distrustful of a looser, competitive approach to policy-making. Other students of government, while also aware of the potentially dysfunctional effects of competitive internal processes, attach more weight to the potential advantages of a freer competition over policy within the executive branch. Moreover, they are concerned

*For comments on an earlier draft I am indebted to Chester L. Cooper, Dr. David Hamburg, and Professor Lincoln P. Bloomfield.

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that much of the value of multiple viewpoints and disagreement over policy will be lost in a highly centralized, tightly controlled formal options system. In their view disagreements over policy within the executive branch do not inevitably create abnormal strains that must be avoided in the interest of rational decision-making. Rather, they feel that the clash of opinion may help produce better policy *if* it can be managed and regulated properly.[1]

The present chapter outlines a policy-making system in which competition and disagreement among different participants is structured and managed in order to achieve the benefits of diverse points-of-view. The management model in question attempts to provide for a balanced, structured form of multiple advocacy. It should be made clear that achievement of the type of multiple advocacy outlined here is *not* left to the free play of internal organizational processes and bureaucratic politics; the top executive is *not* relegated to a passive role vis-a-vis the competition struggle among his subordinates to define policy. Rather, the theory of multiple advocacy poses sharply defined requirements for executive management of the policy-making system. It requires considerable presidential-level involvement in that system. Strong, alert management must frequently be exercised in order to create and maintain the basis for structured, balanced debate among policy advocates drawn from different parts of the organization (or, as necessary, from outside the executive branch). As such, multiple advocacy encompasses but goes beyond what is usually meant by "adversary proceedings" or use of a "devil's advocate."[2]

Multiple advocacy is neither a highly decentralized policy-making system nor a highly centralized one. Rather it is a *mixed* system which requires executive initiative and centralized coordination of some of the activities of participants in policy-making. This management model accepts the fact that conflict over policy and advocacy in one form or another are inevitable in a complex organization. (Indeed, even the highly centralized system under President Nixon did not succeed in eliminating such disagreements, though it did not have a very effective way of utilizing such disagreements to supplement and improve the workings of the formal options system.) The solution it strives for is to ensure that there will be multiple advocates within the policy-making system who, among themselves, will cover a range of interesting viewpoints and policy options on any given issue. The premise of the model is that multiple advocacy will improve the quality of information search and appraisal and, thereby, illuminate better the problem the executive must decide and his options for doing so.

A. Requirements of the Model: Three Conditions

If a system of multiple advocacy is to function effectively, each participant must have minimal resources needed for advocacy, and certain rules of the game will be needed to ensure proper give-and-take.

A system of multiple advocacy works best and is likely to produce better decisions when three conditions are satisfied:

Condition 1. No major maldistribution among the various actors in the policy-making system of the following intellectual and bureaucratic resources:

Intellectual resources:

1. Competence relevant to the policy issues.
2. Information relevant to the policy issues.
3. Analytical support (e.g. staff, technical skills)

Bureaucratic resources:

1. Status, power, standing with the president[3]
2. Persuasion and bargaining skills.

Condition 2. Presidential-level participation in order to

[1]Support for this view is also available in some experimental laboratory studies of the performance of problem-solving groups. Under certain conditions the presence of disagreement within the group has been found to have a positive impact on its problem-solving activity. Internal disagreement produces the effect by improving the quality of information processing and appraisal. Thus, the effect of internal disagreement within the group may improve the quality of "search" and "appraisal." See Joseph L. Bower, "The Role of Conflict in Economic Decision-making Groups: Some Empirical Results," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 79 (May 1965) pp. 263–277.

[2]The concept of "adversary proceedings," which is often recommended for incorporation into policy-making procedures, is borrowed from the judicial system. What the exponents of adversary proceedings in policy-making generally have in mind is that explicit provision be made that any policy recommended by staff or subordinates to the top decision-maker be subjected to critical scrutiny by someone other than those who advocate that policy. Thus, Task Force VII, "Stimulation of Creativity," of the State Department's *Diplomacy for the 70's*, notes that "the lack of a system for subjecting policy to the challenge of an adversary view" has been "a major weakness in the Department's organization." (p. 294). However valuable this suggestion, it clearly falls far short of a system of multiple advocacy.

[3]This includes a number of different things which determine the degree of influence and bargaining advantages an advocate can muster vis-a-vis other advocates and the president himself:

(a) the formal and traditional responsibilities accruing to the incumbent by virtue of the office (e.g. Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, etc.);

(b) access to and standing with the president and other senior officials, and the ability to use their confidence and trust as a bargaining asset;

(c) responsibility for implementation of policies decided upon, which amplifies one's voice in policy-making;

(d) the ability to go outside the executive branch to secure powerful allies in Congress, among foreign policy specialists, and in the media.

monitor and regulate the workings of multiple advocacy.

Condition 3. Time for adequate debate and give-and-take.[4]

The first of these conditions is a forceful reminder that *the mere existence within the policy-making system of actors holding different points of view will not guarantee adequate multi-sided examination of a policy issue.* Competence, information, and analytical resources bearing on the policy issue in question may be quite unequally distributed among the advocates. As a result, one policy option may be argued much more persuasively than another. There is no assurance that the policy option which is *objectively* the best will be presented effectively, for this requires that the advocate of that policy possess adequate intellectual resources.

Maldistribution of resources needed for advocacy can take many other forms. A marked disparity in the bureaucratic resources available to the advocates may well influence the outcome of the policy disagreement to a far greater extent than the intellectual merits of the competing positions. For example, an option put forward by an advocate with superior competence, adequate information, and good analytical resources will not necessarily prevail over an option advanced by an advocate who is less resourceful in these respects but operates with the advantage of superior bureaucratic resources or unusual persuasive skills.[5]

B. Implications for Presidential-Level Involvement

The potentially damaging effects on the policy-making process of maldistribution of the intellectual and bureaucratic resources relevant to effective advocacy pose some rather sharply defined requirements for managing the advisory system. There are three general tasks that the chief executive and designated staff aides will have to perform to ensure reasonably adequate forms of balanced multiple advocacy.

First, the executive may have to take steps if not to equalize resources among his chief advisors, then at least to avoid gross disparities in them.

Second, the chief executive and his immediate staff assistants in a given policy area must be alert to the danger that a sufficient range of policy alternatives may not be encompassed by those playing the role of advocates on a particular issue. In that event he may bring in outsiders or members of his own staff to serve as advocates for different interests or policy options.

Third, he may have to develop certain "rules of the game" to maintain due process for all advocates and fair competition among them, and to avoid "restraint of trade" among the advocates.

In brief, top-level authority in the organization—and at every lower-level of decision making at which multiple advocacy is desired—has the task of maintaining and supervising the competitive nature of policy making. Multiple advocacy does not just happen. The executive must want it, and must make appropriate provision for securing it.

C. Selective Use of Multiple Advocacy

This is not to say that multiple advocacy must be used on every occasion; rather, it would have to be employed selectively and with some degree of flexibility. From time to time the executive will find it desirable to initiate policy advocacy himself, particularly when departmental officials do not become advocates for certain policy options that deserve serious consideration either because they do not attach high enough priority to them or perceive departmental disadvantages in those options. Presidential-level initiatives from time to time, then, are part of the "balancing" that is required to achieve more effective policy-making.

Even an executive who generally favors multiple advocacy will be well advised to bypass it as a vehicle for policy making on occasion. Time constraints may not permit it; or some of the other costs and risks of multiple advocacy (see below) may make it inadvisable in certain situations. One can only hope that the executive will exercise good judgment in dispensing with multiple advocacy on occasion and will forego the temptation to do without it simply because he believes he already knows what the best policy is in a particular situation. We must deal in this connection with the observation that multiple advocacy would invariably be "bad advice" and "unwelcome" to an executive who already knows what he wants to do and regards his chief problem to be that of getting acceptance and understanding of his decision on the part of subordinates and those who would have to implement it. Certainly there will be many occasions on which an executive must, if necessary, eventually impose his policies on other actors in the executive branch.

[4]The time pressures of international crises are likely to strain the workings of multiple advocacy even while making such advocacy more important than ever for obtaining a balanced, multi-sided examination of options. The range of effects that crisis-induced stress can have on information processing is discussed in Chapter XIV.

[5]This risk can be easily enhanced by personality factors. Individuals with hyper-confident, domineering personalities often rise to high levels in the advisory system. Once such individuals become convinced of the merits of a policy option, they can be exceedingly persuasive and forceful in selling it. The impact on the group's deliberations and on multisided analysis of options can be harmful if not countered by skillful balancing.

Two observations, however, are relevant. First, the question remains whether the executive's preferred policy option is the most effective and desirable one. It may indeed be "unwelcome" but not therefore "bad advice" to an executive who already "knows what he wants to do" to expect of him that he subject his initially preferred option to serious scrutiny and debate. One can hope that a president will see that it is to his advantage to avoid reaching premature closure in his own mind as to the best course of action until the policy-making system—whether via multiple advocacy or other means—has generated sufficient information and appraisal of options to illuminate the issue and the choice that he must make. Certainly the final choice of policy has to remain with the president. Most everyone, however, agrees that he should have real alternatives from which to choose. It is not only other actors in the policy-making system who, when bureaucratic politics works badly, can narrow and delimit the president's choice; the president himself can deprive himself of genuine alternatives and an opportunity for a reasoned choice.

Second, even when the executive is confident from the beginning that he knows what the best course of action is and is concerned only with the task of imposing his policy and ensuring its implementation, it may still be useful as time permits to go through a process of multiple advocacy. This will enable those who favor another course of action to be heard, and the executive and his supporters an opportunity to articulate the reasons for favoring their course of action and opposing alternatives. Policy discussion of the president's preferred course may result in marginal improvements of that option. And if properly managed, the policy debate can enhance understanding of the basis for the executive's preferred option. Finally, allowing everyone to be heard can facilitate acceptance of the decision.

D. The Executive's Role as "Magistrate"

In addition to balancing actor resources and maintaining the rules for effective multiple advocacy, the executive must consider how to define his own role. When making use of multiple advocacy the executive should adopt the stance of a magistrate—one who listens to the arguments made, evaluates them, poses issues and asks questions, and finally judges which action to take either from among those articulated by advocates or as formulated independently by himself after hearing them. There are also some things the executive must *not* do since they would undermine the workings and utility of multiple advocacy. Thus, he should not convey policy preferences of his own or offer a particular definition of the problem or of the situation as he sees it that may constrain the options the group of advisers will consider or tilt them in the direction he seems to favor. If necessary to avoid this, the executive should absent himself from early meetings of his advisory group.

The magistrate role is of central importance to effective multiple advocacy. It is only because a magistrate presides at the apex of the policy-making system that a constructive, disciplined form of multiple advocacy can be assured. The presence of a magistrate, together with the rules and norms he imposes on the policy debate, means that the controversy among the advocates is not one which they must resolve somehow by themselves (as would be the case in a fully decentralized bargaining system that lacked an authoritative leader). Rather, the advocates in this system are competing for the executive's attention and are seeking to influence his judgment, at his insistence, via analytic arguments.

E. Emphasis on Disciplining Advocacy through High Quality Analysis

Multiple advocacy does not attempt to eliminate partisanship, parochial viewpoints, and bargaining. Rather, it attempts to strengthen the analytical component of these familiar features of internal organizational politics. As systems analysts have suggested,[6] analysis can usefully moderate bargaining processes and improve the quality of the debate. To this end, multiple advocacy not only encourages competitive analysis but, at the executive's insistence, it also forces the "partisan" analysis offered by the advocates to meet high standards. To ensure this, the executive needs to maintain a competent analytical staff of his own and use it in such a way as to evaluate and discipline the analyses offered by advocates in support of their positions.

As this implies, in his role as magistrate the executive and his staff aides do not passively accept the arguments of the advocates or simply decide in favor of the strongest coalition of advocates. Rather, the executive's central position, his own resources, and his ultimate responsibility give him the opportunity to force advocates to meet higher standards of analysis and debate. The executive's position also imposes on him the obligation to evaluate the relative merits of competing positions and, when necessary, to decide against the majority of

[6]See, for example, Henry S. Rowen, "Bargaining and Analysis in Government," and William Capron, "The Impact of Analysis on Bargaining in Government," both in Louis C. Gawthrop (ed.), *The Administrative Process and Democratic Theory* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970; pp. 31–37 and 354–371). See also Alain C. Enthoven and K. Wayne Smith, *How Much Is Enough?* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1971).

his advisers. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the executive who employs multiple advocacy will require a strong, independent, analytically-oriented staff such as that of the National Security Council.

F. Some Caveats

As do all other prescriptive theories for organizing policy-making, multiple advocacy, too, has practical limits and costs attached to it.

In the first place, the executive's receptivity to multiple advocacy is of course critical. This way of structuring the advisory process around himself is likely to suit the style and temperament of some presidents (and other officials who make lower-level policy at departmental and agency levels) more than others. Multiple advocacy is a poor prescription for a president who, as Nixon did, finds it quite uncongenial to his cognitive style and working habits. Some executives find it extremely distasteful, disorienting, and enervating to be exposed directly in face-to-face settings to the clash of opinion among their advisors. In addition, they may be reluctant to listen to the persuasive effort of any determined advocate, even in a private setting in which no other advocates are present, for fear of being swayed in favor of or against his position by non-rational considerations.

Such executives prefer a de-personalized presentation of the arguments for and against different options, either in writing or as presented orally by a neutral staff assistant. Insofar as multiple advocacy is acceptable to them, they can tolerate and benefit from it only if the element of interpersonal conflict is removed altogether from the development and presentation of options to them, or at least from the presentation. If sharp interpersonal disagreement among his advisers is altogether anathema to an executive, then he will have little confidence in or receptivity to multiple advocacy in any form. He is likely, then, to prefer some variant of a formal options system to any advocacy. If his personal antipathy to evidences of policy conflict among his advisers is less extreme, he may still be able to benefit indirectly from multiple advocacy that spares him face-to-face exposure to it. Thus, he may be willing to allow a trusted surrogate or alter ego to attend in his place meetings at which multiple advocacy takes place. Or he may be willing to read and benefit from written, well-prepared presentations submitted by advocate-advisers. (The impact of different personal styles and temperaments on the workings of the advisory system is further considered in Chapter XII, "The 'Custodian-Manager' of the Policy-making Process.")

In the second place, multiple advocacy is not a panacea that can ensure high quality policy-making. The content and quality of policy decisions is determined by many other variables—for example, the ideological values and cognitive beliefs of the policy-makers, and other factors discussed in PART ONE. The way in which policy-making procedures are organized—whether via multiple advocacy or according to some other procedural model—often may make little difference so far as the substance and quality of decisions is concerned. It would be naive and misleading to suggest that any particular policy-making model can guarantee "good" decisions in every or even most instances. Rather, the case for multiple advocacy must rest on the more modest expectation that it will help prevent some very bad decisions and should generally improve the quality of information processing and appraisal. Thus, for example, when there are competing values and a variety of beliefs within the circle of policy-makers around the executive, the procedure of multiple advocacy is more likely than a highly centralized policy-making system to secure critical examination and weighing of these values and beliefs before they are permitted to influence choices.

Third, an effective system of multiple advocacy is not easily achieved in practice. It is not easy to recruit able persons for all the senior positions in the policy-making system and to ensure that they will acquire and know how to use the intellectual and bureaucratic resources needed to become effective advocates. And, in any case, having the resources for advocacy does not ensure that the actors will actually engage in advocacy of all the options that need to be considered. They may avoid advocating options which run counter to the bureaucratic interests of their departments and agencies. They may decline to raise unpromising options, even if they believe in them, for fear of ending up on the "losing side" too often, thereby losing "influence" or tarnishing their "reputation", or expending limited bargaining resources in fruitless or costly endeavors.

Quite obviously, then, the policy system has to be designed and managed to give participants a stake in insuring multiple advocacy. Some things can be done to reduce to tolerable proportions the tendencies noted above. These would include selective recruitment of persons for senior positions, socialization of incumbents of these positions into their roles, management of incentives, and selective employment of multiple advocacy for problems and circumstances less likely to arouse these inhibitions. The executive (and surrogates charged with managing the policy-making system) must define the norms of the working of the advisory system in a manner consistent with the requirements of multiple advocacy. There is more latitude in defining

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policy-making norms than might be imagined: witness the widely different norms and role definitions for his advisers that Kennedy introduced into the policy-making group in the Cuban missile crisis as against the earlier Bay of Pigs. (See also Chapter XIII, "The Collegial Policy-making Group.")

Even though the requirements for effective multiple advocacy are not easily or consistently achieved, knowledge of them on the part of the executive is useful. Such knowledge can sensitize him and his staff to defects in the way the policy-making process is operating when important decisions are being made. It can alert the executive and/or his chief staff assistants to the emergence of one or another of the procedural "malfunctions" in the advisory process that were noted in Chapter VI, and thereby encourage some appropriate balancing or remedial action. In any case, multiple advocacy need not work perfectly in order to be valuable. In some cases even a modest amount of multiple advocacy may suffice to highlight considerations that would otherwise be neglected or improperly appraised. In judging multiple advocacy one must compare it with some alternative system, not with an ideal standard. No policy-making system looks very good when compared with the ideal.

Fourth, it must be recognized that for an executive to submit to multiple advocacy may sometimes entail costs that he would rather avoid incurring. Thus, the time required for the give-and-take among advocates may on occasion impose undue delays on decision-making. Or competition and conflict within the advisory circle may occasionally get out of hand, strain the policy-making group's cohesion, and impose heavy human costs. Then, too, cast into the role of advocates officials may be quicker to go outside the executive branch in search of allies for their internal policy disputes. This may encourage "leaks" and create political difficulties for the executive in his relations with Congress and the public; he may feel that the weakening of his control over final decisions outweighs on occasion the benefits he gets from multiple advocacy. There is no denying that multiple advocacy entails costs and risks which may be onerous and difficult to live with from time to time. But similar costs and risks are present in any but the most highly centralized policy-making system and were not altogether absent even in the centralized, formal options system of the Nixon administration. Besides, efforts to avoid and minimize some of these costs and risks, as the experience of the Nixon administration has demonstrated, lead to serious costs and risks of a different kind.

Fifth, since the executive is overburdened and cannot be expected to monitor and manage the system of multiple advocacy himself, he would have to delegate that task to one or more of his staff aides. The question arises whether a senior presidential assistant would have enough leverage to maintain and supervise the competitive nature of policy-making that is inherent in the system of multiple advocacy.[7] There is considerable historical experience that bears on this question, though it is certainly not easy to draw definitive conclusions. Insofar as all presidents beginning with Harry Truman have made use of multiple advocacy to some extent, or from time to time, they have generally relied upon the Executive Assistant or, as later retitled, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, to serve as "custodian" of the policy-making process. It seems clear that if the president turns to such an assistant to maintain and supervise multiple advocacy, he will have to provide the "custodian" with a strong presidential mandate and continuing support for his efforts to impose the procedures and norms of multiple advocacy upon departmental and bureau officials who participate in foreign policy-making. We turn in the next chapter to a detailed historical and analytical discussion of the way in which the role of "custodian-manager" has evolved and has been performed since the establishment of the National Security Council in 1947.

[7]This question is raised and argued forcefully by I.M. Destler ("Comment: Multiple Advocacy: Some 'Limits and Costs'," *American Political Science Review*, September, 1972; pp. 786–790), and will be discussed further in the following chapter.

The "Custodian-Manager" of the Policymaking Process

by David K. Hall*

No president can effectively oversee the flow of security and foreign policy issues without major staff assistance. Out of necessity, day-to-day presidential management of the security policy process has to be shared with trusted White House assistants. In July, 1947, Congress authorized the White House staff positions which, with minor modification, have to this day served as the President's principal "custodians" of the security policy process. The National Security Act of 1947 created an Executive Secretary for the new National Security Council and an NSC staff under the Executive Secretary's direction. Setting a precedent followed by his successors, Truman chose to regard the Executive Secretary and staff as *personal* assistants—albeit nonpartisan ones who hopefully would be retained by succeeding administrations. With Eisenhower's appointment of a "partisan", non-statutory Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to supervise the work of the Executive Secretary and NSC staff, an organizational format was established which has continued to this day. The nature of these officials' work has varied to some degree with each administration. For example, to the extent that a President has favored "formalistic" policymaking, as Eisenhower and Nixon did, the custodial responsibilities of these aides have tended to coincide with the work of a well-organized National Security Council system. With individuals such as Kennedy, who favor less structured, less formalistic arrangements for presidential-level policy-making, the Special Assistant is inevitably led to making greater use of *ad hoc* procedures and channels in order to exercise his custodial responsibilities.

The range of his duties and the influence exerted by the Special Assistant have varied, of course, depending upon whether the president has leaned towards a State-centered organizational model for foreign policy-making or has preferred a White House-centered system. In either case, the Special Assistant/Executive Secretary has had major responsibilities for ensuring that the over-all foreign policy process works effectively and serves the president's special needs for information and advice. The responsibilities and influence of the Special Assistant/Executive Secretary have steadily broadened since the National Security Council was established as successive presidents have come to expect important services from these staff aides that go well beyond those of administering the procedures required for making presidential-level foreign policy decisions.

This chapter focuses upon the central task assigned to the Special Assistant/Executive Secretary from the inception of the National Security Council. This is the task of "custodian-manager" of some of the procedures by means of which high-level national security policy is made. There are a number of subtasks which almost every incumbent of the position has undertaken from time to time in performing his role of custodian-manager. It may be useful to list some of these functions at the outset:

(1) balancing actor resources within the policy-making system;

(2) strengthening weaker advocates;

(3) bringing in new advisers to argue for unpopular options;

(4) setting up new channels of information so that the president and other advisers are not dependent upon a single channel;

(5) arranging for independent evaluation of decisional premises and options, when necessary;

(6) monitoring the workings of the policy-making process to identify possibly dangerous mal-

*In writing this chapter the author has drawn on his forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation, "The Special Assistant for National Security Affairs." (Stanford University). Among the sources utilized in the dissertation are documents and oral interviews available through the Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Dulles libraries; administration memoirs and histories; annual and special congressional hearings; and fifty oral interviews recorded by the author with high government officials, including many former NSC Executive Secretaries, Special Assistants for National Security Affairs, and NSC staff members. For fuller documentation, one should consult the author's forthcoming dissertation. For concepts and hypotheses the author has drawn upon Alexander L. George's "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review*, September, 1972, pp. 751–785.

functions and instituting appropriate corrective action.

This "job description" of some of the Special Assistant's custodial functions is, indeed, a composite of some of the most useful tasks performed on occasion by incumbents of the office. It seems useful to codify these tasks and institutionalize them as part of the duties of the Special Assistant, whoever he may be, in the future. In addition to his custodial functions, we shall see, the Special Assistant's job has been broadened to include, from time to time, a number of additional major tasks.

A. The Changing Definition of the Custodian Role

Definition of the duties performed by the Special Assistant/Executive Secretary has depended in the first instance on each president's operational style. Three stylistic elements appear to have had particular influence on the way in which the role has been defined and performed:

(1) The president's preferences as to how administrative jurisdiction over foreign policy issues is to be divided up among advisers, departments, and agencies, and how their interactions are to be coordinated and directed;

(2) His attitude towards interpersonal conflict over policy among his advisers;

(3) The extent to which he wishes to be involved, personally or through staff aides, in the acquisition of information and in policy analysis prior to making his final decisions.

One need look no further than presidential style, defined in these terms, for explanations of many of the variations in the custodial duties of the NSC Special Assistant/Executive Secretary. Postwar presidents have differed substantially, for instance, in their allocation of advisory responsibilities to the traditional bureaucracies and in their desires to have White House aides respect the traditional "prerogatives" of Cabinet officers. And Presidents have differed sharply in their tolerance or encouragement of interpersonal conflict over policy among top advisors. Eisenhower's and Nixon's dislike for direct exposure to interpersonal conflict was pivotal in shaping their Special Assistants' part in screening conflicting policy alternatives and analyses. (See also the discussion in Chapter XII). Truman's and Kennedy's great interest in day-to-day intelligence is ample explanation for their assistants' greater attention to information transmission. Kennedy's zeal for locating and minutely managing policy issues of central interest to him gave his Special Assistant unprecedented involvement in departmental operations, while Johnson's tendency to seize only a limited number of security issues but dominate these totally gave his Special Assistant a different cast.

Yet, in spite of basic determination of each custodian's role by the President he serves, one trend has been persistent from 1947 to the present: a steady though ragged progression from departmental dominance of the format and content of substantive inputs into the policy-making process toward Special Assistant dominance of the format and even content.

Under Truman, the NSC Executive Secretary's substantive responsibility was generally limited to faithful transmission to the President of issues, information, alternatives and analyses offered up by the departments and agencies. Only policy issues considered by the National Security Council fell within his formal jurisdiction, and his influence on the format and content of presentations to the President was generally minimal.

Under Eisenhower, the Special Assistant was more substantively active—more vigorous in identifying issues, in pressing for information, in suggesting alternatives, in seeking compromises, in *occasionally* advocating a view.

During the Kennedy administration, the Special Assistant's scope was expanded for the first time to all security decisions, including day-to-day matters. (During the Eisenhower administration, Staff Secretary Andrew Goodpaster had also served as custodian of day-to-day operations, but Eisenhower's inclination to delegate these decisions made this a less influential duty.) McGeorge Bundy and his aggressive staff forced issues to the top, searched out information at home and abroad, were openly critical of departmental proposals, felt free to offer their personal advice.

Under Johnson, following his replacement of Bundy with Walt Rostow, the custodial functions of the Special Assistant were drawn down to the narrower scope of international problems which interested Johnson. But within these areas, the Special Assistant and deputy Special Assistant were expected to perform intellectual functions quite comparable to Bundy's.

During the Nixon administration, the trend culminated in unprecedented control of substantive inputs to the President by the Special Assistant. The range of acceptable alternatives and format for intelligence and analysis were often dictated by the White House. Policy-making was centralized to insure Special Assistant screening of all inputs and decisions, including for the first time defense and budgetary decisions. The Special Assistant's own substantive advice frequently dominated debate.

Thus, as this brief survey conveys, a considerable distance has been traveled from the quite limited *substantive* role of Truman's Executive Secretary,

along a surprisingly straight trend line. It is also instructive to trace the non-substantive custodianship of successive Special Assistants over matters of procedure, for the changes on this dimension of their duties do not constitute such a definable trend. Truman often looked to Sidney Souers, his first Executive Secretary and later Special Consultant for national security matters, for advice on national security organization, on important sub-Cabinet security appointments, and on the interpretation of bureaucratic forces at work in intelligence, atomic energy and internal security. Souers' successor as Executive Secretary, James Lay, did not have comparable influence. Eisenhower's Special Assistants Robert Cutler and Gordon Gray played a role similar to Souers', exercising influence over departmental appointments to NSC committees, creation and selection of various White House assistants, and appointment of NSC consultants. Two other Eisenhower Special Assistants for National Security Affairs served brief terms and exercised less non-substantive power. Under Kennedy and Johnson, Bundy orchestrated a powerful NSC staff, NSC consultants, and ad hoc task forces. Rostow's managerial influence was never as great. An abortive attempt was made to create a State-centered system, and other White House aides emerged as rivals to Rostow. With Kissinger, bureaucratic control reached its apogee. Replacements in some sub-Cabinet positions reflected his preferences, former NSC staff were filtered into key departmental posts, all NSC committees were chaired and controlled by the Special Assistant.

As these sketches indicate, there have been frequent perturbations in the custodial activities of the Special Assistant/Executive Secretary, often during a single administration. As intra-administration change suggests, presidential style, while the principal determinant of the Special Assistant's role, establishes only rough boundaries for the Special Assistant's behavior. The changing definition of process custodian has often been profoundly influenced by such additional factors as (1) the Special Assistant's bureaucratic resources, (2) the Special Assistant's intellectual skills, and (3) the President's relations with other principal security actors. Such bureaucratic resources as the Special Assistant's interpersonal and ideological compatibility with the President, level of ambition and dedication, prior reputation, ability to work with other people, and acquaintance with key bureaucrats can be pivotal in fleshing out the precise nature and influence of his custodial role. When Rostow replaced Bundy, Johnson stated that Rostow would not inherit Bundy's broad responsibilities. Even the title of Special Assistant for National Security Affairs was temporarily abandoned. Gradually, however, Rostow's personal and professional relationship with Johnson grew, other White House aides departed, and the boundaries of Rostow's role expanded to dimensions quite similar to Bundy's. Likewise, the Special Assistant's intellectual skills—his experience, his intelligence, his stamina, his ability to articulate—will stretch or diminish his formally conceived role. While Nixon's intention to centralize policy-making was apparent at the outset, Kissinger's intellectual dominance of the system was not but developed gradually. Finally, the President's relations with other principal actors will exert influence on the role of the Special Assistant. Bundy's mandate in diplomatic affairs was greater than in defense strategy, given Kennedy's relations with Rusk and McNamara. Robert Cutler's mandate under Eisenhower was skewed in the opposite direction, given the Chief Executive's dissimilar reliance on his Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense.

B. The Custodian's "Leverage"

Discussion of these role-shaping influences raises the related but separable issue of factors influencing the amount of authority or "leverage" available to the Special Assistant for conduct of his custodial tasks. Destler, in particular, has pointed to the common failure of reorganizational analyses to pay adequate attention to how government officials will achieve sufficient bureaucratic leverage to perform their assigned roles effectively.[1] The sources of such bureaucratic leverage are typically the factors noted above which also determine the nature of the custodial role itself. As in the case of role definition, the fundamental determinant of bureaucratic leverage is the Chief Executive's will and behavior. Ambiguous statements regarding a White House assistant's authority to shape the policy-making process will not long remain untested by other policy advisers; only explicit indications of presidential direction, favor or disfavor, and choice are adequate to institutionalize an effective custodial role.

Precisely how much bureaucratic leverage the custodian needs, however, is impossible to define in the abstract. What constitutes "enough" is dependent on the exact nature of the functions assigned by the President. An assistant authorized to assemble the information and opinions of presidential advisers requires less clout than a custodian expected to question and supplement the intellectual inputs of determined departmental chiefs. Moreover, the amount of required leverage will invariably differ from one policy issue to the next, depending on the stakes involved and the power of the participants.

[1]See I.M. Destler, "Comment," *American Political Science Review*, September 1972, pp. 786–87, and "Can One Man Do?" *Foreign Policy*, 5 (Winter 1971–72), pp. 28–40.

It is sufficient at this point to say that the matter of bureaucratic leverage is an important one, and that inadequacy in this regard has typically stemmed from lack of consistent support from the President. The Eisenhower administration was a case in point. Eisenhower instinctively preferred a highly organized and centralized policy-making process managed by a close staff assistant, an approach to which he had become accustomed during his lengthy military career. But his respect for Secretaries Dulles and Humphrey deterred the imposition of such a system in security affairs. Only after the departure of his two Cabinet stalwarts did he openly propose a First Secretary for International Coordination to perform such a custodial function and begin to assign additional functions to his Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. Because of Eisenhower's ambivalence, his Special Assistants labored in an atmosphere where their bureaucratic leverage often proved inadequate for the custodial role envisioned by themselves and by Eisenhower. It should also be noted, however, that leverage once established has a momentum of its own and can provide a White House custodian with a *temporary* power base even in the absence of strong presidential support. Such would appear to have been the case of Bundy during his last months of service under Johnson.

C. The Custodian's Other Roles and Potential Role Conflicts

It is important to differentiate the requirements for managing policy-making procedures from other roles frequently performed by those who performed the custodian's tasks for the president. While not necessarily exhaustive, a list of such other roles would include:

(1) policy adviser-advocate,
(2) policy spokesman-defender,
(3) political watchdog for presidential power stakes,
(4) enforcer of policy decisions, and
(5) administrative operator.

As with the role of custodian-manager, each of these can and has been performed in a wide variety of ways. The role of policy spokesman, for example, encompasses possibilities ranging from occasional confidential informant to journalists and other opinion leaders outside the government to frequent public apologist.

These additional roles are relevant to our analysis because they have often been formally assigned to or gradually assumed by the Special Assistant/Executive Secretary in addition to his custodial tasks. Such a trend has been particularly prominent since 1961. To many, it has seemed a natural and inevitable accretion given the personal qualities and presidential intimacy expected of such a high assistant. "The guy who carries that kind of traffic," Bundy once argued, "is either good enough so you want his advice or he's not good enough to carry the traffic."[2] Destler has suggested that the performance of several of these additional roles may be required to achieve the bureaucratic leverage needed to be an effective custodian.

But the performance of multiple roles invariably creates the possibility of role conflict—conflict which could undermine the effectiveness or integrity with which an assistant performs such custodial functions as: balancing actor resources, strengthening weaker advocates, bringing in new advisers to argue for unpopular options, establishing additional channels of information and arranging independent evaluations of decisional premises. When important issues are being decided, it would be extraordinary if an individual actively involved as an *adviser-advocate* of a particular position could also dispassionately oversee the flow of information, opinions and analyses to the president, for to do so might well undermine his efficacy as an advocate. To suggest that the role conflict can be avoided, as Henry Kissinger once suggested, if the custodian confines himself to serving as a confidential policy adviser to the president, and only at the latter's request, is to ignore the ease with which a policy adviser is drawn into advocacy, as well as the danger of covert advocacy disguised as disinterested advice.

The roles of policy *spokesman* and *enforcer* of policy share common potential conflicts with custodial responsibility. Both run the risk of impairing the custodian's ability to encourage timely and objective reevaluation of ongoing policy. As Thomas Cronin points out, aides who might be able to fashion a fairly objective role in the process of policy formation often become unrelenting lieutenants for fixed views in the implementation stage.[3]

Yet another conflict exists with the role of political *watchdog* for presidential power stakes. Instead of custodial responsibility for the quality of the policy-making process, the "watchdog" is concerned with maintaining and enhancing the Chief Executive's level of political influence. The capacity to serve as an "honest broker" of ideas and information could be seriously eroded by simultaneous attempts to protect the boss from threats to his personal power stakes.

Finally, the role of *administrative operator*—defined as personal responsibility for the conduct of international operations such as diplomatic communica-

[2]Quoted in J. Robert Moskin, "The Dangerous World of Walt Rostow," *Look*, December 12, 1967, p. 29.

[3]Quoted in A.L. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review*, September 1972; pp. 782–3.

tion, negotiation, mediation, or "fact finding"—provides another set of potential role conflicts. Operational duties are invariably time consuming. They often necessitate separation from the Chief Executive and complete immersion in a single problem to the exclusion of others. As a result, the Special Assistant's capacity for monitoring the flow of issues, information and opinions to the president is jeopardized. Additionally, operational responsibility is typically tied to implementation of decisions, entailing the risk of a personal identification with policies which restricts one's ability to encourage reevaluation and review.

For those Special Assistants/Executive Secretaries who have been called on to serve additional roles, the potential of role conflict has often been sufficiently apparent to insure conscious recognition of the problem. "The art of this job," Rostow once said, "is keeping the two functions separate." [4] It is important to ask whether this is consistently possible.

D. Performance

1. THE TRUMAN ADMINISTRATION

The Executive Secretary of the NSC and the NSC staff were part of Forrestal's postwar reorganization program, but Truman quickly embraced them as useful new members of the White House Executive Office. The post of Executive Secretary he saw to be a peacetime extension of and variation on the role of wartime Chief of Staff held by Admiral William D. Leahy under FDR and Truman until 1948. In the minds of Truman and Forrestal, the Executive Secretary was to be a career civil servant who would lend bipartisan "continuity" to the work of the new National Security Council. But mindful of the difficult transitional period any attempt to coordinate and centralize security planning would face, Truman chose to appoint a proven "non-careerist," Sidney W. Souers, as Executive Secretary during the Council's formative period. Previously, Souers had been a highly successful St. Louis businessman, a reserve Rear Admiral, wartime Deputy Chief of Naval Intelligence, and first Director of the postwar Central Intelligence Group.

Both because of departmental suspicion of the new Council system and his own limited expertise in foreign affairs, Souers considered it his overriding duty to insure that Truman received an accurate and fair account of the information, alternatives, analyses and final recommendations coming from the departments and agencies participating in NSC business. He was to be the perfect neutral conduit to the president. Rather quickly, Souers proved to be an increasingly important conduit. He briefed Truman daily on CIA and State current intelligence, on the status of NSC papers, and on the outcome of NSC sessions, which the President often chose to avoid. His high-level wartime and postwar acquaintances in the Executive Branch soon found him to be a useful route to Truman. Souers, for example, was first to bring the President word of the theoretical potential for a hydrogen bomb based on information received from AEC Commissioner Lewis Strauss. In matters outside the traditional purview of State and Defense, where authority was uncertain, he proved to be a noticeably more aggressive custodian. In 1948, he arranged for major analyses of the state of U.S. intelligence and internal security operations through the precedent-setting use of NSC consultants. Eventual NSC action on the two studies had a lasting effect on U.S. security affairs. By 1949, Souers had emerged not only as an influential organizer of NSC planning but as an occasional custodian of fast-breaking items. More than any other official, he orchestrated for Truman's action the conflicting crosscurrents of scientific, military and political data and advice stimulated by initial evidence of Russia's first atomic test.[5]

While policy-making remained State-centered, with Marshall, Acheson and aides providing intellectual direction in foreign affairs, Souers provided valuable assistance to the State Department, as Acheson occasionally acknowledges in *Present at the Creation.* First, he was by all accounts an extremely fair channel to the President for departmental views on NSC matters. For Secretaries of State frequently overseas, it was an important plus. Second, despite Truman's high regard for his Secretaries of State, such regard, as with other Presidents, did not extend to the State Department as a whole. The Secretary could be inadvertently burned by a punitive act aimed at the bureaucracy. In 1949, Truman became incensed at news leaks from State and briefly ordered that diplomatic pouches be brought to him unopened. Souers was careful to see that Acheson was kept informed of their contents and Truman's responses. Third, the Secretary of State often required knowledge of the "state of the game," e.g., pressures on the President from other officials that should be countered. During the volatile tenure of Defense Secretary Johnson, Souers was frequently of assistance to Acheson as a source of knowledge about Johnson's pressures on Truman. Fourth, Acheson occasionally needed protection against himself. During the months when Acheson and

[4] Quoted in Thomas B. Morgan, "The Most Happy Fella in the White House," *Life*, December 1, 1967; p. 80B.

[5] *Fortune Magazine*, May 1953, pp. 109, 110, 230; *New York Times*, December 22, 1949, p. 6.

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Johnson refused to speak and Johnson banned Defense communication with State outside his office, Souers and Under Secretary Webb met weekly with Johnson as a means of foreseeing troubles and holding the administration together. Finally, even State Department officials who worked closely with Truman found it useful to have a reading on the President's likely response to a proposal from a man like Souers who saw the President daily. [Interviews]

At the height of his influence in December 1949, Souers sought to resign. Instead, Truman persuaded him to accept the new post of Special Consultant to the President for national security matters. Souers retained an informal mandate in NSC activities but his "career" successor as Executive Secretary, James Lay, assumed official responsibility for the conduct of NSC committees and presidential briefings. Lay performed as a sternly neutral conduit to and from the President, without Souers' personal contacts and prestige, while Souers' new job became a collection of roles: adviser to the President on important sub-Cabinet security appointments, occasional substantive adviser of undetermined influence, bureaucratic troubleshooter in operational squabbles, backup for his less aggressive successor, and confidential spokesman to a limited number of important journalists.

The custodial role set by Souers and continued by Lay had major shortcomings:

First, it did little to prevent the "quasi-resolution of conflict" among Truman's advisers, which occasionally left the President unaware of important differences of opinion. Such a private resolution of differences among Acheson, Marshall and Bradley appears to have transpired immediately prior to China's offensive against MacArthur's forces in November 1950.

Second, the Souers-Lay approach did little to counterbalance Truman's tolerance for narrow departmental views, which often precluded candid discussion of advisers' underlying assumptions. Respect for departmental interests was also keen in NSC policy-making. Agendas generally conformed to department volition, and final reports for presidential action normally consisted of a carefully worded collage of inviolate departmental perspectives. When differences were openly expressed, Souers and Lay saw that Truman was informed, but recommendations with few exceptions were unanimous. In 1949, Souers authorized a series of "option" studies, but the first was not considered until the first Soviet atomic test, and NSC-68 and the Korean War ended serious consideration of "options."

Finally, the Souers-Lay approach did not counterbalance major limits on the president's information. While Truman received cable traffic and daily reports, all were screened and forward by the executive bureaucracy. Only the occasional use of NSC consultants constituted an independent source of data.

The nature of the custodian's role was set by a small number of fundamental forces: a role definition shared by Truman, Souers, Lay and others that the Executive Secretary was ideally a nonpartisan, career official; the lack of ambition and/or expertise on the part of Souers and Lay to play an important intellectual role in shaping the substance of policy; and Truman's inclination to trust in and delegate to department heads. Had Souers wished to play a broader custodial role, indications are that he could have, given his leverage within the administration. Even with little desire to do so, he had edged toward it by 1949 and thereafter served as an unobtrusive adviser, spokesman, and policy enforcer. The available evidence also suggests that Lay lacked the bureaucratic leverage needed to play a broader custodial role than the quiet, neutral conduit that he did.

2. THE EISENHOWER ADMINISTRATION

Eisenhower entered the 1952 presidential election convinced that there had been inadequate strategic analysis and planning prior to the Korean War and that the conduct of the war demonstrated a collapse in cooperation among State, Defense and other agencies. As a remedy, he promised to turn the National Security Council into "a really effective policy maker." Upon election, he immediately assigned Robert Cutler responsibility for analyzing the NSC system and recommending improvements. In March 1953, Eisenhower approved Cutler's report and named him Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Cutler's primary responsibility would be management of a more dynamic NSC and supervision of the career NSC staff (including Executive Secretary) inherited from the Truman administration. Control of the day-to-day White House flow of intelligence and operational information, in which Eisenhower tended to take less interest than Truman, was assigned to the President's Staff Secretary.

Cutler proceeded to carve out a role which, with minor variation, was adhered to by the three other individuals succeeding him as Special Assistant for National Security Affairs.[6] His custodial role differed in important respects from that of Souers and Lay. Generally, Cutler proved to be far more active than his predecessors in testing and shaping substantive content which ultimately reached the President, though he operated with restraints that were

[6]Eisenhower's Special Assistants were: Cutler, 1953–55, 1957–58; Dillon Anderson, 1955–56; William Jackson, 1956; Gordon Gray, 1958–61.

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to be removed in subsequent administrations. One of Cutler's first acts was to create an NSC "Special Staff" of six analysts reporting directly to him, whose duty it would be to prepare for his personal use analyses of each NSC paper wending its way through the system. (Three Special Staff members would later serve on the Kennedy NSC staff.) Cutler used these analyses first at the Planning Board session of Assistant Secretaries, and later in meetings with Eisenhower and with the National Security Council. "If he were convinced," recalls one Special Staff member, "you might find some of your ideas being voiced by him at Board meetings. And even if he weren't convinced, he might still try them out on the other members just to be sure his doubts were right." Board members recall Cutler's leadership in guiding and mediating discussion; his zeal for flushing out issues, his insistence on a well-stated problem and set of views, his thorough knowledge of agency positions and motives, his encouragement of iconoclasm on the part of representatives who did not enjoy high status, and his criticism when he felt members were defending departmental interests. On rare occasions, Cutler would carry forward to the National Security Council a personal conviction, clearly identified as such, for which he failed to find a departmental sponsor. [Interviews]

Cutler extended the intellectual role of the Special Assistant in several other important respects. More than Truman's Executive Secretaries, he was more likely to dictate the content of the NSC agenda. To the occasional exhaustion and exasperation of his colleagues, Cutler was determined to see every nation, every region, every functional activity blanketed with a current NSC policy. Yet, as James Reston wrote later, "There are well-informed men in this city who believe he did as much as any other man in the post-war era to keep the big issues clearly before the Chief Executive and to see that they were discussed in an orderly fashion and acted upon."[7]

Cutler also extended the use of NSC consultants as a means of bringing new thought to bear on issues. Many of the administration's crucial choices in defense strategy grew out of such Cutler-orchestrated consultant projects as "Operation Solarium", the Technological Capabilities Panel (Killian Committee), and the Gaither Committee. Individual consultants were often retained for the annual Basic National Security Policy and lesser exercises. Finally, Cutler proved to be far more active in shaping the role of intelligence in policy-making. For the first time, there was systematic meshing of the production of National Intelligence Estimates with the NSC forward agenda, producing what Chester Cooper has called "the salad days of CIA's Office of National Estimates."[8] The annual USIB Estimate of the World Situation and annual NET Evaluation Study were programmed through the NSC. Field inspections were arranged for NSC participants.

Cutler also proved to be more active than Souers or Lay in moving the NSC toward more balanced advocacy. As he argued at the 1960 Jackson Subcommittee hearings, if the President were to find the National Security Council useful,

> then he must have the people at the table who give him the balanced view which he feels is the correct view of the national security. This is not an overweighing by more voices on one side of the issue than on the other. In fact, it is balancing of the scale which is very important.

As a means of providing such balance, representation of economic and domestic advisers was increased in the NSC, and budgetary impact statements were incorporated in all NSC papers. Balancing also included ad hoc Council invitations by Cutler to officials with an important stake in a topic under discussion. An act of lasting influence proved to be Cutler's active role in creation of the Special Assistant to the President for Science and Technology in 1957. The new post is widely felt to have usefully counterbalanced scientific advice reaching the President and Secretary of State from Defense and AEC, and to have resulted in more searching analysis of arms control and defense programs during the remainder of the administration.

The procedures established during Cutler's four years of service, and followed with minor variation by three other Special Assistants, had their critics. It is argued by many that the NSC stressed compromise and the resolution of conflict below the presidential level. Eisenhower was seldom faced with a range of policy options. Also, it is frequently noted that the papers prepared by the NSC were normally geared toward broad decisions or future contingencies and that administration officials had considerable discretion in execution. Finally, it is generally agreed that a limited number of key issues were never seriously grappled with in the NSC because of preemptive action outside the system by Secretary of State Dulles.

Such shortcomings, however, are difficult to ascribe to Cutler's role performance or that of his successors. Eisenhower explicitly wanted his Special Assistant to integrate and compromise opposing departmental views whenever possible and bring to the National Security Council only truly irreconcilable differences. According to one State Department participant:

[7] *New York Times*, March 9, 1955; p. 10.

[8] Chester L. Cooper, "The CIA and Decision-making," *Foreign Affairs*, January 1972; p. 226.

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to understand the dynamics of the Planning Board, you have to understand the context of it. During the Eisenhower years, the principals didn't want disagreement and that's what they got. Cutler didn't have the opportunity to sharpen the issues the way he knew they should be.

During the first months of the administration, before precedents and commitments took hold, Cutler did place before Eisenhower carefully defined options on Korea and on U.S. defense strategy. The general nature of most NSC decisions and planning also grew out of Eisenhower's strong preferences. "Eisenhower believed that policy decisions at the apex of Government should afford general direction, principle, and guidance, but should not be spelled out in detail," Cutler later wrote, "President Eisenhower was as impatient with too much detail as he was with lack of clarity in stating general policy." [9] Finally, while policy issues were *occasionally* resolved outside of the NSC, it was by no means a result of Cutler's unwillingness to push for their inclusion. Cutler fervently believed and advocated that all presidential policy decisions, including those taken in crisis, should receive NSC study.

Cutler and succeeding Special Assistants can be faulted for their failure to limit more stringently the number of administration officials permitted to attend National Security Council sessions. By late 1957, the number of individuals with standing permission to attend had climbed to twenty-seven. Candid debate on the spectrum of administration problems was undoubtedly difficult to maintain in a group of such proportions. Cutler might also be faulted for excessive reluctance in pushing Eisenhower, whom he fervently admired, toward a more complete airing of options and differences. But Eisenhower's other Special Assistants, generally less personally devoted to the President, were even less successful than he in insuring consideration of options and issues. In general, it seems fair to conclude that shortcomings in the Eisenhower NSC system were by and large the result of Eisenhower's own modus operandi and his tendency to give inadequate bureaucratic leverage to his Special Assistant.

In addition to an expanded custodial role, Eisenhower's Special Assistants were also more active in other roles. While Cutler and Gordon Gray, Eisenhower's other long-time Special Assistant, were very careful to avoid personal advocacy within the NSC system, on matters handled outside the NSC their role was less circumscribed and their participation as advisers more likely. During the first months of the administration, Cutler was an open advocate on several important substantive decisions. Only with Dulles' emergence as jealous guardian of foreign policy, did he quietly back away from such activity. Yet, in spite of Dulles, the Special Assistant increasingly became the President's personal representative to non-NSC committees, e.g., the 5412 Committee overseeing covert operations and the Committee of Principals handling arms control and disarmament policy. In such a capacity, he was often a substantive participant.

Several other potential role conflicts emerged. In the emotional post-Sputnik atmosphere, the Special Assistant was pushed out front by the President's domestic assistants as a confidential spokesman to friendly groups and the pro-administration press. From time to time, the Special Assistant's responsibility for guarding the confidentiality of NSC business thrust him into the awkward position of appearing to serve as "watchdog" for the President's power stakes under the guise of national security. And while the role of policy enforcer originally assigned to Cutler in March 1953 was soon turned over to the new Operations Coordinating Board, such responsibility appeared to return in 1960 with the Special Assistant's appointment as OCB Chairman. Such role conflicts appear to have had minor effect upon the Special Assistant's performance of his custodial role within the NSC system, but their appearance suggests the ease with which an important presidential assistant can, even in a highly-structured administrative environment, drift into multiple roles potentially detrimental to his primary responsibility. [Interviews]

3. THE KENNEDY ADMINISTRATION

Kennedy assumed office believing that his predecessor had allowed himself to become captive of an overly structured NSC system which tended to serve up unimaginative bureaucratic compromises. He appointed McGeorge Bundy as Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, charging him with responsibility for reorganizing the Eisenhower system and for providing the President with an independent statement of all "options" prior to decisions so as to preclude repetition of the Eisenhower pattern. Bundy proceeded to disband the NSC interdepartmental committees and recruit a small personal staff. Most of the Eisenhower NSC staff were reassigned to executive departments.

The boundaries of Bundy's role were still ambiguous when the Bay of Pigs stunned the administration. In the post-mortem, many concluded that de-emphasis on White House structure had proceeded too far. Someone had to oversee the immense flow of people and papers into the Oval Office which the new President's intense interest in

[9] Robert Cutler, *No Time for Rest*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1966; p. 300.

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foreign affairs had stimulated. The custodian was to be Bundy; word went out that he was to know what everybody was doing and thinking. The role would be different than any performed for Truman or Eisenhower, for Kennedy's modus operandi was radically different. The President did not believe in hierarchies, bureaucracies, routine procedures. He solicited advice and made assignments based on others' availability and a general sense of their competence. Further, Kennedy insisted on making as many decisions as humanly possible, many operational in nature. Policy did not exist except as it emerged from a steady stream of daily presidential actions. To influence this unstructured process required hour-to-hour association with it, as surely as influence with Eisenhower required some association with the planning process. Bundy's offices were moved from the Executive Office Building to the basement of the White House.

It was Bundy's job to see that information and advice reaching the President had been tested, supplemented and balanced. To do so entailed a number of activities: broadening and clarifying the President's options, insuring that the appropriate issues and people reached the Chief Executive, providing Kennedy with adequate analysis and questions to assess the advice of others, adding facts and considerations overlooked or buried by others, and prodding departments and agencies for intellectual inputs.

Some of Bundy's tools were old, some were new. With presidential backing, he was able to obtain teletype machines carrying the overseas cable traffic to and from State, Defense and CIA. He commenced morning staff meetings as a point of coordination for NSC staff, White House aides, and departmental representatives. Like previous Special Assistants, he sat on the committees overseeing the intelligence community and on the Committee of Principals for arms control. He kept a careful eye on administration task forces, often influencing their composition to insure intellectual balance or the presence of a trusted aide. He recruited an extremely well-connected NSC staff of aggressive academics and government professionals and permitted them to serve as unhindered extensions of himself. He affiliated with his staff a number of foreign policy professionals simultaneously holding positions in the bureaucracy, e.g., CIA's Assistant Deputy Director of Intelligence and a colonel in the Office of the JCS Chairman. He maintained cable contact with numerous U.S. ambassadors and received foreign ambassadors. After the Bay of Pigs, he went to NSC meetings ready to play the role of inquisitor. In discussion about Laos in 1961, he fed icy questions to JCS Chairman Lemnitzer until the general in exasperation conceded that U.S. intervention would probably mean war. And like Cutler, he frequently put together groups of leading citizens to advise the government on key issues, such as the spread of nuclear weapons and trade with communist countries. [Interviews]

While Bundy's custodial role impinged sensitively on the State Department, his relations with most State officials remained surprisingly good. Bundy's judgment, integrity and willingness to listen were partly responsible for this. Moreover, in an administration whose President openly held the State Department in low esteem and had little conception of administration, Bundy played a vital role in mediating between two radically different styles —translating Kennedy's desires into tangible instructions and pushing State toward increased responsiveness to the President's requests. Third, he could give or obtain a confident reply to a departmental question with exceptional speed and provide a useful window onto the President's thought. Finally, Bundy never became a roadblock to other officials. Kennedy's high curiosity and accessibility foreclosed any such development.

While Bundy is generally conceded to have played the custodial role well following the Bay of Pigs, his performance was by no means flawless. First, and as much the result of Kennedy as of Bundy, there was a tendency to avoid hard scrutiny and second-guessing of many inputs from McNamara's Defense Department. While Bundy and his Deputy Carl Kaysen were active in defense issues, they lacked the mandate and manpower to provide oversight comparable to that in foreign affairs. The problem was both one of Bundy's inadequate resources and of McNamara's strong bond with the Kennedy brothers.

Of a different nature but equally detrimental were the role conflicts which Bundy experienced. Generally speaking, role conflict resulting from participating as a substantive adviser was *not* one of Bundy's major problems, although on occasion this did occur. He was not possessed of a highly developed sense of long-range goals or strategy. On the whole, his advice was negative—"somebody's trying to sell you something, Mr. President"—or tactical in nature, rarely placing him at fundamental odds with others. The Cuban missile crisis was an archetypal performance, with Bundy switching positions twice, almost deliberately staying in the minority. Where personal opinion occasionally biased his performance, he thought later, was in the process of volunteering information to the President. "You get awfully steamed up about a problem, and it seems more important to be right than fair. Nobody's perfect at that." [10]

A more recurrent conflict with Bundy's custodial duties appears to have arisen as a result of his major

[10]Quoted in Moskin, *op. cit.*

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roles as administrative operator and policy enforcer —roles geared toward implementation. Where others were slow, hemmed in by personal doubts or bureaucratic procedures, Bundy stepped in to write the cable, mediate differences, make the decision. He had an ability to grasp and elaborate others' thoughts, and given his stylistic and philosophical compatibility with Kennedy, he was able to decide and operate with minimal guidance and supreme self-confidence. Coupled with his rhetorical ability to allay doubts and defend any position and his understanding of the executive bureaucracy, Bundy became the operator and enforcer par excellence. Often the result was a major contribution, e.g., when in September 1962 Bundy broke the bureaucratic stalemate between CIA and SAC over U-2 flights which had enabled the Soviet Union to assemble missiles in Cuba undetected. But in the process, many felt, Bundy frequently failed to insure adequate consideration of the views of those advisers with long-range perspectives, those less action-oriented, and those less certain. This failure was not one of design, i.e., intentional insulation of the President or distortion of others' views, but rather the product of Bundy's preemptive operational actions, of his rhetorical mastery, of his inclination to bypass the bureaucracy. That Kennedy shared this operational bent compounded the danger of Bundy's role conflict. [Interviews]

One other conflict is noteworthy—that caused by Bundy's role as an important spokesman on national security policy and process. In contrast to Eisenhower's tight-lipped Special Assistants, Bundy occasionally gave public speeches, appeared on radio and TV, and was a constant source of background information for leading newspaper columnists. Such activity was an extension of his efforts to secure implementation of administration decisions and posed an additional threat to Bundy's ability to encourage policy review and adjustments. But equally conflictual with his responsibilities as process custodian was his occasional willingness to engage in Washington gossip with reporters on other officials' standing with Kennedy or views expressed by officials at high-level meetings. Given Bundy's importance, such comments had great impact. Thus, Bundy came to be known as the source of stories on the President's disappointment with Chester Bowles and Dean Rusk and a notorious article by Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett on Adlai Stevenson's dovish proposals during the Cuban missile crisis. The effect was to reduce still further the effectiveness of these officials, increase the bureaucratic imbalance already disfavoring State, and make Bundy a dubious conduit to the President in the eyes of several important advisers.[11]

The multiple roles and role conflicts which Bundy had were very much a product of Kennedy's personal style, in addition to Bundy's own skills and self-conception. As we noted earlier, Kennedy, in stark contrast to Eisenhower, had little notion of organizational charts and well-defined roles. He preferred "generalists"—not simply because of their broader view but because of their ability to do a number of things. Kennedy made assignments based on general trust and availability; if a man did a job well and quickly his assignments immediately increased in number and nature. He particularly appreciated people who could make things happen; he frequently knew what he wanted already. He felt it was the White House's role to educate the country to problems and required solutions. In all of these respects, Bundy and his small staff of energetic generalists fulfilled Kennedy's requirements. It was inevitable that they would be asked to assume more than custodial functions, and it can only be a matter of conjecture what their standing and function in the White House might have become had Bundy attempted to resist such presidential requests and expectations.

4. THE JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

Following Kennedy's death, Bundy's future was uncertain. Johnson's initial inclination was to look to departmental "experts" and "line officers" for help in foreign affairs rather than the White House staff. Not until January, 1964, when a small crisis erupted in Panama while Bundy was on vacation did Johnson resolve his own doubts. With his Special Assistant away, Johnson sensed that the flow of information and ideas was not as fast and crisp as he had come to expect. The problem, he concluded, was Bundy's absence.

Bundy's custodial performance did change somewhat in response to Johnson's style. Criticism of State was softened a bit, in response to Rusk's stronger position. Bundy was more selective in carrying issues to the President. Bundy brought fewer NSC staff and foreign officials to see the President; Johnson was uneasy with strangers he had not "calibrated." Bundy was more cautious about interjecting comments. Johnson was quick to perceive or imagine condescension from former Kennedy employees. But generally, Bundy's custodial functions were little changed. He proved to be particularly effective in the case of the Multilateral Force (MLF). Sensing that the consensual bureaucratic position in favor of the MLF threatened to push Johnson into a questionable decision, he intervened with a presentation of arguments and information for re-

[11]Chester Bowles, *Promises to Keep*, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1971; pp. 354, 620; David Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, N.Y.: Random House, 1972, pp. 62–3; Stewart Alsop, *The Center*, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1968, pp. 189–91.

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jecting the MLF. Bundy's option strengthened Johnson's own doubts and the project soon died a largely unmourned death.[12] Bundy also organized several efforts to bring outside expertise to bear on foreign policy after Johnson's 1964 reelection. Blue-ribbon panels were assembled in a manner reminiscent of Eisenhower's NSC consultants, and ideas were solicited from universities and think tanks.

Major change in Bundy's activities came in other roles. As Johnson's inner circle of advisers narrowed to Rusk, McNamara and Bundy, the Special Assistant's substantive burden increased. Particularly on the crucial issue of Vietnam, Bundy emerged as a strong advocate. Following a Vietnam fact-finding mission in February, 1965, he submitted a report arguing for "graduated and continuing reprisal" which proved to mark a turning point in U.S. policy.[13] Even after leaving the administration, Bundy's advice was often solicited by Johnson.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that this Vietnam advocacy undermined Bundy's custodial performance somewhat, particularly on the issue of Vietnam itself. A crucial 1964 memo from George Ball to Bundy arguing against Vietnam escalation did not reach the President until January, 1965, when Ball resubmitted it through Bill Moyers.[14] Perhaps sensing that Bundy's objectivity had been eroded, Johnson requested Moyers to increase his involvement in foreign affairs and bring to his attention Vietnam information and ideas.[15] Simultaneously, Director of Central Intelligence McCone, who was known to be pessimistic about Vietnam, was attempting to gain entry to the "Tuesday lunch" of Johnson, McNamara, Rusk and Bundy which was charting Vietnam policy. Whether on orders or on his own initiative, Bundy made it clear to McCone that he was not invited. This exclusion from the critical Vietnam discussions precipitated McCone's resignation, and by April 1965 the administration had lost a strong voice at odds with many Vietnam assumptions. [Interviews]

Bundy's activities as an administrative operator also expanded. In addition to his pivotal Vietnam fact-finding trip, he participated in Johnson's Vietnam peace missions. And following U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic, Bundy was dispatched to negotiate a coalition regime. Johnson respected his operational skills sufficiently to recall him from the Ford Foundation during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war to head an NSC committee directing U.S. defense and relief efforts. Bundy's importance as an administration spokesman also increased. Johnson considered his Special Assistant a prize "debater," and sent Bundy to universities and media programs as a counter to his "Eastern" critics. Bundy let it be known that he did not relish the role of public spokesman, perhaps sensing that it undermined his ability to remain a flexible process custodian. Given the growing climate of distrust in the White House as a result of the war, it is surprising that Bundy escaped the role of political watchdog to the extent that he did. Johnson pressed Bundy into dampening the antiwar criticism of former Kennedy officials and plugging news leaks, but Bundy's loyalties remained basically institutional, to the annoyance of several Johnson aides.

As during the Kennedy administration, Bundy experienced conflict between his responsibility as process custodian and his heavy involvement in policy implementation. With Kennedy, this conflict had been partially compensated for by the President's own extreme flexibility. Under Johnson, Bundy's focus on execution reinforced one of the President's potential shortcomings—an intense search for an advisory consensus followed by equally tenacious efforts to preclude second-guessing or reneging. Longtime LBJ aide Harry McPherson felt that Bundy's "only conceivable limitation was that he would find it hard to reverse field—to accept evidence that a certain policy in which he believed and on which he had acted in the past was actually misguided."[16]

On occasion, it fell to Bundy to *generate* LBJ's consensus, a role which seemed antithetical to "preserving the President's options" and for which Eisenhower's Special Assistants were roundly criticized. The blue-ribbon Miller Committee appointed to study expanded East-West trade, for instance, was stacked by Bundy to insure a favorable report, with Bundy then chairing the interdepartmental committee which safely guided the Miller report through the bureaucracy.[17] Even on the Multilateral Force decision, Bundy had arranged in early 1964 for preparation of a *consensual* position to be worked out among Rusk, McNamara, Ball and himself. Only at the last minute did he perceive the shifting decisional context and respond by broadening the options and information available to Johnson.[18]

In December, 1965, Bundy announced that he had chosen to leave his post, effective March 1, 1966, for the presidency of the Ford Foundation. Fragmentary evidence suggests that personal discomfort at being forced into the roles of public

[12]John Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision*, Princeton University Press, 1974; pp. 292–94, 301–10.

[13]L.B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971; pp. 126–28.

[14]*Atlantic Monthly*, July 1972, pp. 33–4.

[15]Anderson, *The President's Men*, pp. 409–10.

[16]Harry McPherson, *A Political Education*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972, p. 257.

[17]Philip Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World*, N.Y.: Praeger, 1966; pp. 283–87.

[18]Steinbruner, *op. cit.*

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apologist and political watchdog on Vietnam played a part in his decision to leave. Bundy's last months coincided with completion of a White House study by Maxwell Taylor on security policy-making and implementation. In autumn, 1965, Taylor and his staff had concluded that interdepartmental action in Washington, once the responsibility of the NSC, had under Kennedy and Johnson been accomplished almost singlehandedly by the exceptional Bundy. With his departure, no one could count on a comparable replacement, and many, including Taylor, felt that the focus of such activity rightfully belonged in the State Department. Taylor rushed his report to completion, recommending that the Secretary of State's authority be increased in interdepartmental affairs. To do so, a permanent Senior Interdepartmental Group (SIG) would be created under direction of the Undersecretary of State. Taylor's report was approved by Johnson and formally launched, with considerable fanfare, on March 2, 1966.[19]

The decision to move toward a State-centered system altered substantially the role envisioned for Bundy's successor. He would be asked to perform the tasks of (1) neutral "transmission belt" between the President and the bureaucracy, and (2) adviser, "idea man," and long-range planner. Primary responsibility for oversight of the policy process would devolve to the State officials heading the new SIG/IRG system. The change was epitomized by abolition of the Special Group overseeing covert operations and chaired by the Special Assistant and assignment of its former duties to the SIG, on which Bundy's successor would sit as a *member*. Bundy's role as policy spokesman would be spun off to Press Secretary Bill Moyers. Implementation would be the province of the SIG/IRGs. Another effect of deemphasizing Bundy's role was the commencement of an internal White House struggle for jurisdiction and influence. White House assistants Robert Komer, Francis Bator and Moyers emerged with far greater autonomy in security affairs than during Bundy's tenure.[20]

On March 31, 1966, Assistant Secretary of State Walt Rostow, "idea-man" and long range planner of considerable talent and energy, was chosen by Johnson to fill the redefined role of Special Assistant. Within a year, Rostow would, for a combination of reasons, reinherit much of the power and several of the functions which had been Bundy's. First, the SIG/IRG system failed to replace Bundy as process custodian and policy enforcer. Undersecretary of State George Ball never shared the enthusiasm for the system of its originator, Taylor, and within six months, Ball had departed the administration. His successor, Nicholas Katzenbach, was many months in arriving, and once on the scene, showed no more interest in SIG than Ball. Only under goading by Rostow and Taylor did the system begin to function in low gear toward the end of the administration. Aside from personalities, the fate of the SIG/IRG system reflected the inescapable fact that important decisions invariably had to come to the President for choice, and Johnson, like so many of his successors, wanted a trusted associate who would insure that in making these choices he was not wholly dependent on the bureaucracy's information and compromises. Rusk might have been that associate, but he did not have the time or inclination. Following Ball's departure, the Undersecretary would not have sufficient presidential intimacy. The alternative was a White House aide. In the end, Johnson's agreement to the SIG/IRG system proved to be at odds with the closely-held, highly-personal policy-making which characterized issues in which he was interested.[21] Finally, Rostow's power and responsibilities were abetted by the departure from Washington of White House competitors; within a year, Moyers, Komer, and Bator were gone.

As the failure of the SIG/IRG system became evident, custodial activity increased at the White House. With the encouragement of Rostow and NSC Executive Secretary Bromley Smith, the President's weekly "Tuesday lunch" assumed the character of National Security Council meetings, although the agenda was typically confined to Vietnam. Routine attendance was broadened to include the Director of Central Intelligence, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the White House Press Secretary, with others occasionally invited. Preparation of the agenda and informational backup became more systematic, although never on the order of the Eisenhower NSC. Rostow encouraged formal meetings of the NSC itself for discussion of middle-level problems on which presidential action would be required in the foreseeable future. The NSC staff continued to follow the preparation of policy papers in the departments and provide independent summaries and evaluations of them for the President.[22]

In spite of Rostow's emergence as an important process custodian, the scope and impact of his activity never equalled Bundy's. Not only was he not the complete partner with McNamara and Rusk that

[19]Maxwell Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1972, pp. 360–62; Interviews.

[20]*New York Times*, April 1, 1966, pp. 1, 18, 19; Interviews.

[21]On failure of the SIG/IRG system, see: Taylor, *op. cit.*; Weintal and Bartlett, *Facing the Brink*, New York: Charles Scribner's, 1967, pp. 176–80; and Clark and Legere (eds.), *The President and the Management of National Security*, New York, Praeger, 1969, pp. 93, 125–27, 148–49.

[22]Clark and Legere, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–98; W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power*, New York: Macmillan, 1972, pp. 358–65.

Bundy had been, but Rostow and his staff were inherently less disputatious than the Bundy operation. Rostow had spent the previous four years at State and his staff increasingly consisted of foreign service officers on loan. It was natural they would be less inclined to question the bureaucracy. In defense strategy and budgeting, Bundy and his staff had been limited but important participants; Rostow appears never to have recaptured this status. On foreign economic problems, several other White House assistants exercised semi-autonomous authority. During the 1967 Middle East war, Bundy was temporarily recalled to manage the crisis from the White House. Such delegation would have been unlikely during Bundy's own tenure. Finally, given Rostow's tendency to be an undisguised advocate on some issues, departmental inclination to utilize him as an "honest broker" was somewhat less than under Bundy.

That Rostow would prove to be an open advocate is hardly surprising, for it was initially for the role of "idea man," planner and adviser that he was brought to the White House in April 1966—to provide the "new initiatives" which would prove that the administration was not excessively preoccupied with Vietnam. The actual level of Rostow's substantive influence is problematic; it apparently was less than that of McNamara, Rusk and a few other presidential confidants. The importance of Rostow's advisory mandate, in the opinion of some, was not his direct policy influence but the role conflict created with his other task of neutral "transmission belt" to and from the President. "The art of this job," he said, "is keeping the two functions separate."[23] Despite Rostow's sincere efforts, some officials felt that he was incapable of doing so on the issues about which he felt strongly. Johnson's close assistant Harry McPherson writes that Rostow faulted every assessment that suggested air bombardment of North Vietnam might not slow the invasion or produce negotiations.[24] There is no evidence that Rostow ever counseled Johnson to listen to those opposed to the war, and his own NSC staff quickly became a group which he describes as "like-minded in our view of Asia and the abiding character of the American interest in Asia . . ."[25] According to one source, because of his longstanding belief in the Multilateral Force, Rostow was hostile to a nonproliferation treaty which would restrict the sharing of nuclear control. Johnson favored the treaty in principle, but because pro-treaty advocates found it impossible to work through Rostow, concrete steps were never taken until Bill Moyers provided an alternative route to the President.[26]

[23] *Life*, December 1, 1967, p. 80B.
[24] *A Political Education, op. cit.*, p. 259.
[25] *Diffusion of Power, op. cit.*, p. 514.
[26] Anderson, *The Presidents' Men, op. cit.*, pp. 414–16.

Rostow undoubtedly served the role of neutral custodian well on most occasions, but that his integrity would be called into serious question was inevitable given his willingness to serve openly and enthusiastically the role of policy spokesman-defender on Vietnam. Rostow's emergence as public and private White House spokesman occurred with surprising speed given his initial job definition. Within three months after his appointment, he had appeared on *Face the Nation* to explain bombing policy and briefed the Democratic Governors' Conference on war progress. Following Moyers' departure, he would be heard on Latin America and the Middle East as well. By the administration's end, he was the most frequently heard official on Vietnam, and the target of considerable journalistic criticism.

As with custodial oversight, the scope of Rostow's activity in implementation—as an administrative operator or a policy enforcer—was narrower than Bundy's. Only on the issue of Vietnam was Rostow a constant operational force—working in some depth on peace negotiations, military tactics, economic development, diplomatic instructions, and presidential speeches.[27] Rostow was never employed as a roving operator like Bundy, nor was he as direct and persistent in prodding the sluggish bureaucracy. Rostow's involvement in implementation, however, did provide one new dimension. His imaginative ability to find theories, statistics and historical parallels in support of ongoing policy was reassuring to many worried officials. "For me," writes White House aide McPherson, "and I believed for the President, Rostow's most useful ability was in demonstrating grounds for optimism."[28] Unfortunately, the ability to find "light at the end of the tunnel" was in conflict with the responsibilities of a process custodian and had the effect of diverting timely and sober policy appraisal.

5. THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

On December 2, 1968, President-elect Nixon announced selection of Henry Kissinger as his Assistant for National Security Affairs. As then envisioned, Kissinger's principal function would be to reconstruct and manage a strong, Eisenhower-like National Security Council, but one backed by a stronger mandate to see that the President received a range of reasonable "options" on all NSC decisions rather than the interdepartmental compromise which frequently (but by no means always) characterized the Eisenhower NSC process. Implicitly, it was also understood that Kissinger would, like his two predecessors, serve as a confidential adviser to the President on a range of policy issues. It was also agreed that the Assistant would eschew two roles which had undermined the effectiveness

[27] Rostow, *Diffusion of Power, op. cit.*, pp. 509–25.
[28] Harry McPherson, *A Political Education, op. cit.*, p. 258.

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of Bundy and Rostow: Kissinger would maintain a low public profile to avoid public identification with administration policy, and he would avoid preoccupation with day-to-day affairs so that he could provide overall management for the entire spectrum of security issues.[29]

With a powerful presidential mandate and consent to the new National Security Council system from Secretary of State-designate William Rogers, Kissinger moved to establish the new framework and select an NSC staff before inauguration. The SIG/IRG system was incorporated into the NSC, but Kissinger would chair the Senior Review Group (SRG), as it would now be called, rather than the Undersecretary of State. The SIG's control of covert actions would be transferred to the new 40 Committee, again chaired by Kissinger. The SRG would report to a rejuvenated National Security Council, which would review SRG papers and hold crisis discussion. The system would be activated by National Security Study Memoranda (NSSMs) sent from Kissinger to the security bureaucracy outlining the options and questions to be addressed. During the administration's first week, ten NSSMs were sent; by the end of the first year, eighty-five. A large, first-rate NSC staff was assembled to spot the issues, frame the questions and options, and review the bureaucracy's submissions. By early February, twenty-eight professional members were on board; by the end of the year, approximately forty.

With the passage of time, the custodial scope and centrality of the Kissinger operation steadily increased. Despite prior agreement that Kissinger would avoid operational matters, the first administration crisis over North Korean downing of a U.S. intelligence plane led to creation of a permanent Kissinger-led Washington Special Actions Group (WSAG) for subsequent crisis management. When bureaucratic skirmishing began over the strategic arms limitation talks, Kissinger took charge through his own Verification Panel. He reconstituted the Systems Analysis shop in his NSC staff when the Joint Chiefs emasculated it at the Defense Department. When Defense Secretary Laird abandoned McNamara's systematic approach to defense budgeting, Kissinger's Defense Program Review Committee appeared at the White House. To analyze Vietnam proposals and information, the NSC Vietnam Special Studies Group was created. After years of disappointment with intelligence products, Kissinger's NSC Intelligence Committee emerged to make intelligence assignments and review performance.[30]

From those associated with the new NSC system, Kissinger received generally high marks as a process custodian during the first months of the administration. He was, like Bundy, an extremely active and effective "second guesser"—pushing the bureaucracy to consider alternatives, clarify assumptions, spell out consequences. Despite a predictable quota of departmental carping about "lost prerogatives," many top officials considered him restrained and judicious in interdepartmental affairs. Those attending National Security Council sessions were impressed by his objectivity in delineating the options and leading discussion; at the Senior Review Group, members found him willing to explore options, even when he held a strong opinion.[31] He sent NSC staff to Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Europe to provide alternative channels of information for the President. The NSC budget for outside consultants was increased to one-half million dollars for similar reasons. Many considered the NSC analysis of strategic arms limitation policy a model process; other issues effectively dealt with by the new system included the elimination of chemical and biological weaponry and the return of Okinawa to Japan.[32] Even the much criticized Cambodia "incursion" appears to have been preceded by a well-managed policymaking process, with the pros and cons of alternatives explored, information being sought out-of-channel, and Kissinger employing NSC staff as "devil's advocates."[33]

Over time, however, doubts accumulated as to Kissinger's performance as a process custodian. Much of the criticism implicitly centered on the many role conflicts which he inescapably faced as his responsibilities multiplied. When Kissinger was appointed to reorganize the NSC system, *no one* had anticipated the pivotal advisory role which would quickly fall to him as a result of Rogers' weakness, Nixon's suspicion of the bureaucracy and reclusive style, and Kissinger's own skill and energy. Kissinger perceived the potential conflict and repeatedly assured the press that his continued effectiveness with the President and the bureaucracy hinged on their belief that he was an unbiased conduit for information and opinion. Yet increasingly, protection of Nixon from self-serving departmental advocacy and compromises seemed to be equated with squeezing the bureaucracy out of policymaking altogether rather than forcing bureaucrats to think harder through intensive NSC interrogation. The vital issues on which Nixon and Kissinger had well-developed views, *e.g.* Vietnam, the Soviet Union, China and Western Europe, were increasingly

[29] *New York Times*, December 3, 1968, pp. 1, 22; interviews.

[30] Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb, *Kissinger*, Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1974, pp. 85–7; John Newhouse, *Cold Dawn*, New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973, pp. 148–49; Interviews.

[31] *Look*, August 12, 1969, p. 55; interviews.

[32] *National Journal*, April 23, 1971, pp. 877–86; I.M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972, pp. 132–34; Interviews.

[33] Kalb and Kalb, *op. cit.*, pp. 152–63; *New York Times*, June 30, 1970, pp. 1, 14; *Look*, August 11, 1970, pp. 22–25.

handled by the White House *in camera*, with only a handful of favored departmental officials permitted to participate. National Security Council meetings declined in frequency. NSC business was resolved in the Kissinger-chaired committees at the Undersecretary level, where the President's Assistant freely advocated his opinions, spoke for the President, and found less resistance from bureaucratic inferiors. Ultimately, the Undersecretaries meetings also declined, with Kissinger dealing with officials on the phone instead, passing on to Nixon a consensus that he alone had fashioned. Even where the NSC system functioned, it was occasionally redirected at the last minute by a Kissinger option or utilized by him as a mechanism for tying up the bureaucracy with peripheral paperwork.[34]

With policymaking increasingly concentrated in a tight circle of presidential advisers, Kissinger's dominant role in dealing with the bureaucracy became one of enforcing decisions already arrived at within the White House. Memoranda of WSAG meetings during the India-Pakistan war of December 1971 indicate the extent to which the forum became the mechanism through which Kissinger forcefully imposed a government "tilt" toward Pakistan. His weak invitation to "anyone who objected to this approach to take his case to the President," coupled with the remark that the U.S. ambassador in India was already "offering enough reassurance on his own," conveyed the Assistant's unwillingness to help dissenters reach the President.[35] Revelations regarding U.S. policy toward Allende's Chile reinforce the picture of Kissinger utilizing the NSC machinery to enforce a predetermined White House policy rather than acting to ensure serious consideration of other's advice. Immediately following Allende's election, Kissinger took command of the NSC Interdepartmental Group (IG) on Latin America normally chaired by the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs. Having pushed aside the Assistant Secretary who had argued against certain pre-election CIA operations in Chile, the Kissinger-chaired IG proceeded to hammer out a program of severe economic sanctions in line with White House wishes.[36]

Working through a sluggish and resentful bureaucracy, however, was time consuming, and the risk of news leaks designed to frustrate the White House was high. The radical alternative was to bypass the bureaucracy entirely in implementing key administration policies. Thus Kissinger emerged as an administrator-operator in his own right, but unlike previous Special Assistants, relying in most instances solely on the analytical support of his own NSC staff. In Washington, Kissinger's method was typically secret negotiations with a key foreign ambassador, e.g. Russia's Dobrynin on SALT, Cuba, Berlin and Vietnam, or Israel's Rabin on the Middle East.[37] Overseas, the Kissinger trademark became the secret mission as presidential plenipotentiary, accompanied only by four trusted NSC staff. Once begun, the role demands seemed insatiable: thirteen secret trips to Paris, followed by exhaustive negotiations from October 1972 until January 1973; six trips to China, 1971–1973; and five trips to Moscow, 1972–1973. Each summit with Brezhnev necessitated Kissinger's consultation with and debriefing of the European heads of state. In Southeast Asia, Kissinger's Deputy, General Haig, emerged as a surrogate operator for the overburdened Kissinger.

A combination of factors led to Kissinger's emergence as the administration's primary foreign policy spokesman-defender: Nixon's inability to deal comfortably with the media; the White House feeling that State could not be trusted to reflect administration views; Kissinger's unexpected virtuosity with reporters, columnists, congressmen and critics; and Kissinger's increasing monopoly on authoritative information owing to his role as solo operator. Thus, while Kissinger had been determined in December, 1968, to eschew public identification with policy so as not to "end up like Walt," it was one of his resolutions first broken. Two weeks following inauguration, he held what newspapers described as "the first publicized conference of any top Government official in recent years with pacificist leaders."[38] On Nixon's February, 1969, tour of Europe, it was Kissinger and not Rogers who held most of the background briefings for reporters.[39] By the end of 1969, he was, in the words of *Newsweek*, "the Presidential adviser most identified in the public mind with the administration's policy . . ."[40] The costs of such visibility were high. He was beseiged by foreign leaders, ambassadors and reporters who considered him to be the President's *only* authoritative spokesman. His suspicion of the bureaucracy and ascerbic comments about other advisers were reported in the press, further eroding his tenuous ties to the rest of official Washington. Bureaucratic opponents leaked his confidential statements in an attempt to discredit his integrity. The anomaly of his refusal to

[34]Wilfrid L. Kohl, "The Nixon-Kissinger Foreign Policy System and U.S.-European Relations," Paper delivered at the American Political Science Association meeting, Chicago, August 29, 1974; Destler, *op. cit.*, pp. 123–37; *The Boston Globe*, September 29, 1974, p. A-2; Interviews.

[35]Quoted in *New York Times*, January 15, 1972, p. 6. See also *Newsweek*, January 17, 1972, pp. 14–15.

[36]*New York Times*, September 15, 1974, pp. 1, 19.

[37]Kalb and Kalb, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–15, 199–209, 211, 214, 291–92, 315–21.

[38]*New York Times*, February 5, 1969, p. 8.

[39]*U.S. News & World Report*, April 7, 1969, p. 45.

[40]December 22, 1969, p. 24.

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appear before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee despite his role as principal presidential spokesman soured his relations with important Senators and made the Kissinger operation itself a minor 1972 campaign issue.

Not only did Kissinger's other major roles conflict with his responsibility as process custodian, they created a role overload which excluded him from providing effective management of the entire spectrum of security issues, as he had argued he would. Except for the WSAG, which convened for crisis management, the NSC committees chaired by Kissinger ground to a halt during 1972–1973.[41] Departmental responses to NSSMs piled up, waiting for Kissinger's attention. As a result, some issues simply did not receive concerted government attention. For instance, despite bloodshed in East Pakistan since spring 1971, Kissinger did not have time to focus on the problem until November, when U.S. mediation efforts proved too late to avert the India-Pakistan war.[42] Kissinger's own "Year of Europe" failed in part because he did not have the time or inclination to engage the bureaucracies responsible for negotiating questions of troops, trade and money in either the policymaking or policy implementation phases.[43] NSC staff assistants grappling with lesser issues found it impossible to obtain Kissinger's attention.[44] "When Henry is off on peace negotiations or somewhere and something happens, say in Africa," an administration official said in 1973, "the State Department just flounders around and waits until he gets in touch. Sometimes things are just put aside." [45] Kissinger's inability to devote himself to the role of custodian also insured that a balanced consideration of political, military and economic factors would occasionally be overlooked even on major international decisions. The August 1971 decisions to terminate the convertibility of dollars into gold and impose a 10% import surcharge were made in the absence of Kissinger and Rogers and apparently without any serious attention to their highly detrimental impact on U.S. political relations with Europe and Japan.[46] In Moscow, September, 1972, Kissinger personally put his signature to a Russian wheat purchase without any understanding of its future impact on the U.S. economy.[47]

On September 22, 1973, Kissinger was sworn in as Secretary of State. The appointment served as formal recognition of the many substantive roles which he had long held. The appointment also served as formal acknowledgement of the considerable role conflict which Kissinger's far flung responsibilities had created, for at Nixon's invitation he retained the post of Assistant for National Security Affairs and the NSC custodial duties associated with the position. Symbolic of the "two hats" became Kissinger's use of both White House and State Department offices and his receipt of daily intelligence packages at both locations during his days in Washington.

While the appointment stirred hope of "institutionalization" of the highly personal Kissinger operation, the organizational change appears to have had little effect thus far on the policymaking process. While reliance on State personnel increased somewhat, Kissinger also transferred the members of his NSC inner circle to such important State positions as Counselor, Director of Planning and Coordination, and Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, and continued to rely on them extensively. His retention of the post of Assistant appears to have been motivated as much by his desire to prevent another person's control of the NSC machinery as it was by any intention to rejuvenate the system. In his frequent absence from Washington, custodial oversight fell to his NSC deputy, Maj. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, but it remained clear—as it had with Scowcroft's predecessor, General Haig—that any major NSC activity could only be initiated by Kissinger. The formal system remained quiescent, except for WSAG sessions convened for the Yom Kippur War and two National Security Council sessions called in advance of the 1974 Moscow summit. The number of NSSMs directed to the bureaucracy remained negligible. One feature of the system which Kissinger did apparently utilize was the capability for dealing with foreign leaders without the knowledge of State subordinates through the alternative NSC communications network and staff.[48]

Kissinger's role "overload" remained immense given the demands of crisis management and international mediation triggered by the Yom Kippur War. He was absent from the country eleven days in November, fourteen in December, ten in January, fourteen in February, five in March, three in April (excluding his honeymoon), and every day in May.[49] Complaints about the government's failure to address important international economic issues relating to aid, trade, oil, agriculture, Europe and Japan continued to increase.[50] And Kissinger's inattention to policymaking also appeared to be having

[41] Interviews; *The Boston Globe*, September 29, 1974, p. A-2.
[42] Kalb and Kalb, *op. cit.*, pp. 257–58.
[43] Kohl, *op. cit.*, pp. 11–12.
[44] *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1970, p. 24.
[45] Quoted in *New York Times*, March 6, 1973, p. 20.
[46] Kohl, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15.
[47] Kalb and Kalb, *op. cit.*, p. 347.
[48] *New York Times*, December 24, 1973, pp. 1, 4, and *New York Times*, April 26, 1974, pp. 1, 2.
[49] *New York Times*, May 22, 1974, p. 39; *Time*, June 10, 1974, p. 35.
[50] *New York Times*, December 12, 1973, p. 45; *Newsweek*, August 12, 1974, p. 39.

a marked effect on the effective integration of political and military factors. A number of senior Pentagon officers argued that with abandonment of the NSC system as a channel for presenting military perspectives, it had become "virtually impossible to get our views to Kissinger now." [51] During the Yom Kippur War, Kissinger's personal dominance of the policy process and neglect of top-level coordination contributed to ambiguities in government direction and a dangerous breakdown in communication and action between State and the Defense Department. Only following the *first* session between Nixon and his principal advisers *seven days after the war had begun* was the problem corrected.[52] Administration inability to enter the June 1974 summit with an agreed State-Defense position on SALT II and Kissinger's post-summit insinuation that the military had sabotaged any arms limitation agreement seemed further evidence of an erosion of the policymaking process.[53]

E. Conclusion

In describing the various responsibilities and activities that have been undertaken for the president from time to time by those who have served as Executive Secretary and, later, as Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, we have found it useful to distinguish between *six major role tasks* that have come to be associated with the position—that of custodian-manager of NSC procedures, policy adviser-advocate, policy spokesman-defender, political watchdog for presidential interests, enforcer of policy decisions, and administrative operator. Our analysis of the evolution of the NSC has indicated a persistent increase in influence exercised by the Special Assistant and the NSC staff since 1947 that goes well beyond the core responsibility for managing NSC policy-making procedures. As additional role tasks have been added to that of custodian-manager, there have been increasing indications that incumbents have experienced conflict among their various role-tasks as well as overload, and that as a result performance has been adversely affected from time to time. These, at least, are the interpretations and conclusions we draw from available data. The more detailed accounts provided earlier in this chapter on each of the persons who have served as Executive Secretary and Special Assistant are summarized, with some inevitable simplification, in the accompanying chart.

Many students of national security policy-making have welcomed this general trend towards increased influence exercised by the Special Assistant and the NSC staff. The President's vulnerability vis-a-vis the now massive and complex security bureaucracy seems to demand active White House monitoring, balancing, and broadening of the policy-making process; no President should allow himself to become wholly dependent on the options, information and agreements generated through routine bureaucratic procedures. For their own part, top department officers have frequently found the Special Assistant and NSC staff to be a valuable channel for reaching an overburdened Chief Executive or a useful safeguard against some of their own subordinates' more mediocre efforts. While strong differences of opinion still exist as to appropriate status and centrality which should be assigned to the Special Assistant and NSC staff, few experienced observers and officials would argue for abolition of their custodial role.

Much more controversial, however, has been the simultaneous trend toward the Special Assistant's involvement in other governmental functions. Historically, complaints about the Special Assistant have focused on fears that he has foresaken his custodian function or exceeded his intended role. While many of these criticisms have been part of the perennial Washington struggle for administrative leverage, they have also reflected genuine concern over gradual erosion of the objectivity of the Special Assistant and NSC staff. Our historical survey suggests that there are grounds for such fears, if only in some cases because the Special Assistant's objectivity is *believed* to have been eroded. The possibility should not be discounted that continuous identification of the Special Assistant with substantive policy and operations will ultimately result in congressional action or campaign promises which would temporarily or permanently undermine the important custodial services of the Special Assistant and NSC staff to the President.

The assumption of additional functions by the Special Assistant entails the threat of role overload as well as role conflict. The proportions of this threat become acute for the first time during the Kennedy administration. Yet aside from some criticism that the Kennedy White House neglected security planning, there is little evidence that a failure to address promptly the agenda of security problems characterized Bundy's performance as Special Assistant. Bundy's willingness to delegate broad powers to and share his many roles with his senior NSC staff, and Kennedy's reliance on a number of other White House and departmental figures for major staff support in security matters precluded the development of a paralyzing role overload. During the Nixon administration, however, role overload on the Special Assistant appears to

[51] Quoted in *New York Times*, December 24, 1973, p. 4.
[52] Kalb and Kalb, *Kissinger*, pp. 450–78.
[53] *New York Times*, June 29, 1974, pp. 1, 10.

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TABLE 1.—ROLES

	Custodian	*Policy Adviser*	*Spokesman*	*Enforcer*	*Operator*	*Watchdog*	*Role Conflict*	*Role Overload*
Souers (1947–1952)	YES ("neutral conduit")	YES (infrequently after 1950)	YES (infrequently, in private)	NO	NO	NO	NO (with minor exceptions)	NO
Lay (1950–1952)	YES ("neutral conduit")	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Cutler et al. (1953–1960)	YES ("active second guesser" on planning)	YES (infrequently)	YES (infrequently, in private)	YES (collective responsibility through OCB)	NO	NO (although Cutler campaign aide prior to terms as Sp. Asst.)	NO (with minor exceptions)	NO
Bundy (1961–1963)	YES ("active second guesser" on most issues)	YES	YES (particularly as background source)	YES	YES (from White House)	NO	YES	NO
Bundy (1964–1966)	YES	YES (with increasing frequency)	YES (increasingly visible)	YES	YES (from White House and overseas)	NO	YES (with increasing frequency)	NO
Rostow (1966–1968)	YES	YES	YES (highly visible)	YES (role diminished by SIG/IRGs)	YES (from White House)	NO	YES	NO
Kissinger (1969–	YES (unprecedented Regulation with shaping inputs)	YES (chief adviser)	YES (chief spokesman)	YES	YES (from White House and overseas)	NO (though wiretaps & '72 campaign appearances raise doubts)	YES (often)	YES

have become reality. Kissinger's reluctance to delegate some of his vast responsibilities and the President's accessibility to but a handful of top officials combined to restrict severely the number of issues under active management and consideration at the presidential level at any point in time. While the departments and NSC staff were hard at work on long-neglected issues, Kissinger's centrality and dominance made his personal involvement essential to any concerted action.

Our analysis has reaffirmed the pivotal influence of presidential preference on the behavior of the Special Assistant and NSC staff. If the custodial function is to be performed effectively within the White House, the President himself must be sensitive to its benefits and persistent in his support of it. The prominence of the NSC staff operation since its inception and the regularity with which new administrations have sought to improve its organizational structure suggest that postwar Presidents have in fact recognized the importance of the custodial function. Succeeding Presidents' ability to institutionalize the role has been problematical, however. As the pressures for intelligent choice and effective action innundate the Oval Office, the need for a trusted adviser, spokesman, enforcer or operator has typically seemed far more immediate and certain than the need for a process custodian.

A Chief Executive has several tools at his disposal for safe-guarding effective performance of the custodial role. Imposition of a well-structured, highly visible set of procedures, norms, and roles constitutes one approach. A highly formalized system is less open to conscious or unconscious manipulation by the President or other officials. When routines are altered, the participants and press ask why. While any formal system at odds with the President's style will eventually succumb to the impera-

tives of the informal system, it can exert a temporary shaping influence and will provide a "standard of performance" toward which the President's assistants can work. It is interesting that with minor exceptions every Special Assistant/Executive Secretary's behavior at formal National Security Council sessions has been firmly governed by the longstanding norm calling for his participation as a non-advocate. The norm has been impervious to change since 1947, one might suspect, because of the Special Assistant's high visibility in that forum. How Ford and Kissinger deal with this practice should the National Security Council reemerge as an important advisory body will be interesting, given the latter's "two hats."

An alert President will also initiate ad hoc procedures and forums where he senses threats to the effective performance of the custodial role. No President can be expected to devote a major portion of his time to shoring up the policy-making process, but he may particularly want to intervene when the international stakes are high. When a turning point came in the Vietnam War with the February 1968 Tet offensive, Johnson established an elaborate review process which, as Rostow recalls, "called for me to operate as organizer of data and alternatives for his decision, rather than as adviser."[54] Direction of the review was entrusted to the new Defense Secretary, Clark Clifford, who had yet to form rigid views about the war.[55] A President may wish to assign formal custody of an issue to another member of the White House staff or a trusted outsider should he consider circumstances to jeopardize the Special Assistant's likely effectiveness. When the Middle East erupted in war, June, 1967, Bundy was brought to Washington from the Ford Foundation to manage the White House end of the crisis. It was felt that Rostow was likely to face an apparent or real role conflict on the issue as a Jew and that a genuine possibility existed for role overload of the Special Assistant given the heavy demands of the Vietnam War.[56]

The President's third control over the Special Assistant is selection itself. In an attempt to preclude counterproductive role conflicts, it might be tempting to recruit a Special Assistant who has relatively little security expertise and experience on the theory that he would be less likely to become an important substantive actor. Such a choice would assume, however, that the knowledge required of an effective process custodian is less than that of a substantive adviser. In fact, the ability required to spot issues where others see none, to perceive an option where others see no alternative, or to sense inadequate analysis where others are persuaded is equal to if not greater than that required of departmental advocates. Also, our survey has suggested that the governmental and private contacts of an experienced expert can be an invaluable counterbalance to routine channels. Such supplemental sources may be particularly important in a State Department-centered system, where the Special Assistant might be a less obvious route to the President. A worthy reputation will also assist any custodian in gaining necessary leverage within the policy-making process. Finally, any attempt to deemphasize the substantive skills of the Special Assistant underestimates the rapidity with which a bright but untutored generalist can become a knowledgeable and experienced official in the White House pressure cooker.

Aside from an acceptable level of experience and expertise, selection of a custodian-manager should probably turn on emotional and managerial qualifications. For well-known public servants or private executives, some evaluation in this regard seems relatively easy. For instance, several acquaintances and even friends of Walt Rostow attempted to dissuade Johnson from appointing him Special Assistant—and not simply because of Rostow's views on Vietnam. His strong commitments and irrepressible enthusiasm many felt suited him better for the role of advocate than the role of White House custodian.[57] A President should also be wary of individuals given to "hero worship," although he can rightfully expect loyalty and discretion. Excessive personal dependency can lead an assistant to withhold unwelcome issues, facts and opinions out of fear of losing presidential favor or troubling his boss. The service of Robert Cutler and Walt Rostow, some have argued, was adversely affected by such concern. Finally, James Reston once argued that a President would be best served by appointing an elder statesman as Special Assistant, for he might be better able to tell the truth and suffer the consequences without undue concern for its impact on his future career or place in history.[58]

Whatever safeguards a President employs to protect the integrity of the custodial function, one must wonder if time and success will inevitably lead any assistant to become enmeshed in several other potentially conflictual roles. There seem to be few exceptions to this rule for Special Assistants/Executive Secretaries with whom the President has formed an intimate personal and professional rela-

[54]Rostow, *Diffusion of Power*, p. 520.

[55]Johnson, *The Vantage Point*, New York: Popular Library, 1971, pp. 392–93.

[56]Moskin, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–30.

[57]Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pp. 160–62, 626–28; Interviews.

[58]*New York Times*, January 30, 1966, p. 8.

tionship. It is not surprising that a Chief Executive would wish to delegate sensitive duties to proven aides or that an anonymous custodian should find greater satisfaction and glory through direct substantive influence. It may be appropriate to ask if a general limit on tenure should be considered for any individual serving the role of process custodian, as a hedge against accumulating role conflicts.

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The Collegial Policymaking Group

Part One of the report noted that impediments to information processing may spring from the narrowness of perspective and interest often displayed by departments and agencies. Moreover, they tend to deal with new situations unimaginatively and inappropriately by drawing upon their standard repertoires of acting, and they frequently resort to the self-serving strategems and maneuvres of "bureaucratic politics." Accordingly, it is not surprising that presidents have attempted to structure and manage the policy-making system so as to minimize the adverse impact of such behaviors. Several of the organizational models they have employed for this purpose were described and evaluated in Chapters X and XI. And, as noted in Chapter XII, the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, in his role as custodian-manager, may undertake to balance actor resources and maintain a competitive relation among various advocates.

But neither the "formal options" system, "multiple advocacy," or a strong and resourceful Special Assistant can provide a reliable safeguard against all of the impediments generated by the division of responsibilities and the bureaucratic organization of functional expertise within the Executive Branch. A President must necessarily draw upon heads of departments and agencies for information and specialized judgment. So long as these advisers adopt the narrow, specialized perspective of their own departments and participate in policy-making as highly partisan advocates, the President's dependence on them entails important risks that neither a system of balanced multiple advocacy nor the "formal options" procedure may be able to compensate for. The "formal options" system, it is true, attempts to do away with or seriously weaken partisan advocacy; but it, too, will encounter difficulties if leading departmental officials approach problems of foreign policy from a narrow perspective reflecting the functional expertise of their own agencies. The "formal options" system will encounter this difficulty particularly in crisis situations when the elaborate procedures on which it depends tend to break down, necessitating reliance on ad hoc policy-making or special committees such as the Washington Special Action Group (W.S.A.G.).

Fortunately, "formal options", "multiple advocacy", and the "devil's advocate" do not exhaust the devices available to the chief executive for ameliorating the narrowness of perspective of departmental and agency officials. Many if not all of these senior departmental officials are, after all, cabinet and sub-cabinet appointees. If he chooses wisely, a President can place at the head of these functional departments and agencies individuals with the kind of personality, intellect, and experience that will lead them to maintain sensitivity to the dictates of the broader national interest even while discharging their responsibility to exert leadership of their agencies and to provide an effective voice for agency viewpoints in higher policy councils.

Indeed, cabinet officials are often expected to bridge and reconcile presidential and departmental perspectives; and certainly they are strategically placed to undertake the task of mediating the conflicting imperatives of the White House's over-all view of foreign policy matters and their own department's expertise. But it does not always work out in this way. Caught in the middle and subject to conflicting demands and pressures, cabinet-level and sub-cabinet officials may seek to avoid the ensuing dilemma by leaning heavily in one direction or the other, or by behaving erratically. There is no assurance, therefore, that his appointees will succeed in achieving what the chief executive often needs most from them—namely, their help in bridging presidential and departmental perspectives. However carefully a President attempts to select his appointees to these positions, some of them will resolve the role conflict their position places them in by becoming loyal "President's men," at the cost of weakening their ability to provide leadership and representation for their own departments; others will come to identify largely with the specialized perspective of their own agencies.

A chief executive must, of necessity, find other ways of encouraging senior officials to retain a broader perspective alongside their identification with the department and/or agency for which they

are responsible. A variety of procedures are available for this purpose. The President may set into motion policy planning procedures that encourage critical, broad-gauged consideration of all of the relevant—and often competing—factors: political, diplomatic, economic, and military. Ad hoc interagency task forces can be set up for this purpose, staffed by personnel from the various departments who are known to be capable of taking a broad problem-oriented approach and for dealing with policy issues analytically rather than via interagency bargaining.[1]

There is much that a President can do to establish a similar climate in his top-level policy discussions with senior departmental officials. He can structure and define the roles of his top-level departmental advisers in order to discourage them from perceiving themselves as partisan advocates or functional experts. In encouraging them to broaden the perspective with which they view policy problems, he can make it clear at the same time that he does not wish them to abandon the valuable identification with agency viewpoints or to weaken their ability to draw upon the expertise of their particular departments.

For various reasons, a more loosely structured and not overly formal milieu—what has been called the "collegial" model of policy-making—makes it easier for most participants to free themselves, and to encourage others to do likewise, from the constraints of organizational doctrines and from the tendency to overprotect the special interests of their sub-units and constituencies. Particularly because these inhibitions and constraints tend to be implicit and deeply ingrained, they can easily stifle creative imagination and novel ways of looking at new policy problems.

It is particularly important to dissolve these constraints when foreign policy-makers are faced with novel situations which should not be responded to by drawing upon standard responses from the organization's repertoire. To cope adequately with such challenging situations it is often necessary for the chief executive to make a special effort to rearrange the milieu and norms of the policy-making group so that they are able to ask questions at variance with the ideology and policy doctrines of the organization as a whole or of those of its sub-units which they represent. This is difficult to achieve when the quest for an effective policy response proceeds within the context of a bureaucratically-structured process of policy-making.

The possibility for fruitful restructuring of advisory roles and the introduction of new norms to guide policy deliberations was strikingly demonstrated by President Kennedy in the Cuban missile crisis. The lessons he and his close associates had drawn from his inept management of the policy-making group in the Bay of Pigs case were quickly put to use in improvising a quite different approach to crisis decision-making when they were suddenly confronted in October 1962 by Khrushchev's deployment of missiles into Cuba. Many questions arose for U.S. policy that required integrated evaluation from political, diplomatic, and military standpoints. The President immediately created a special ad hoc group of advisers from different branches of the government to consider the implications of the missile deployment for U.S. security interests and to identify, develop, and evaluate alternative courses of action for his consideration. This group came to be called the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the National Security Council.

As has been emphasized in all available accounts Kennedy quickly established a modus operandi and ground rules for the deliberations of the ExCom that greatly facilitated performance of the critical "search" and "evaluation" phases of policy analysis before the final "choice" was made. The emphasis on "final" here calls attention to the fact that search and evaluation were not separated bureaucratically or sequentially from the task of choice. Those who engaged in search and evaluation also participated in thrashing out the choice; and an iterative approach to problem solving was employed, so that rehearsal and debate over choice was allowed to have a feedback for renewed search and evaluation. (For additional discussion of the utility of an iterative approach and "decision rehearsals," see Chapter X.) Moreover, the inept leadership practices Kennedy had displayed in managing the policy discussions that led to his Bay of Pigs decision were replaced by a much more sophisticated set of techniques for conducting policy discussions on what to do about the missiles in Cuba.

In the Cuban missile crisis the ExCom was given the character of an informal problem-solving group that was to concern itself with all relevant aspects of

[1]Francis M. Bator, who served as a specialist on economic policy in the NSC under Kennedy, has argued the merits and advantages of properly constituted ad hoc interdepartmental groups over formal standing committees, such as those that operate within the NSC structure. Ad hoc groups should be staffed, he says, by a small number of people "who are senior enough to marshall the resources of their agencies; not so senior as to make it impossible for them to keep up with detail, or spend the time needed for comprehensive and sustained exploration of each other's minds. . . ." Bator also stresses the critical mediating role that members of these ad hoc groups must play: thus, they should be "close enough to their secretaries and to the President to serve as double-edged negotiators (each operating for his secretary in the task group bargaining, and in turn representing the group's analyses of the issues and choices to his secretary)." He speaks also of the need for "constant contact and collegial interaction" among the members of a task group. (Congressional Hearings before Committee on Foreign Affairs, "U.S. Foreign Economic Policy: Implications for the Organization of the Executive Branch," June 20, 22, July 25, August 2 and September, 1972.)

the problem. Each member of the group was encouraged to concern himself with the policy problem as a whole rather than to confine himself to that element of it—be it intelligence, military strategy, international affairs, diplomacy—on which he was an expert or for which he or the office to which he belonged was officially responsible. This mode of policy deliberation enhances the role of the "generalist" and gives him more scope for interacting with specialists and challenging their expert opinions. Though the importance of the generalist has often been emphasized by experienced policy makers, the role does not appear to be well defined or to have received much formal attention in studies of group problem solving. We need not see the ideal generalist as one who is broad-gauged without being, or having been, an expert of some kind. Even the expert can take the role of generalist on matters not within his expertise. The essence of the generalist's role is to ask the questions his very ignorance, naivete, and different perspective allow him to ask of experts, questions that might never occur to the experts or whose relevance would not be evident to them until pointed out.

As the detailed accounts of the missile crisis indicate, the meetings of the ExCom were marked by considerable give-and-take. Protocol was suspended. Second-level officials were encouraged to give their views even when they were at variance with those of superiors who were present. The President was encouraged by some of his close associates to absent himself from meetings when it was found that the process of mutual exploration of views was freer and more productive without him. Most participants are reported to have changed their positions at least once during the course of the six days prior to the President's final decision on a course of action.

The fact that time was available before the President would have to act and that secrecy was preserved proved to be highly useful. Time permitted the ExCom to pursue an iterative approach to its problem-solving task, which facilitated mutual education and made it possible for the group to close in on the critical factors on which the final choice of action depended.

The ExCom obtained specialized inputs on political, military, and diplomatic questions from functional and technical experts at lower echelons of the Executive Branch. Thus, the ExCom acted as an informal steering group for bringing to bear the best knowledge and analytical capabilities available in the more specialized branches of the government. The iterative approach to policy-making permitted an increasingly sharper edge to be put upon requirements for specialized inputs. But perhaps the major contribution the collegial mode made to effective policy making was to maintain a broad perspective in which all relevant considerations could be identified, and the relationships among them kept in mind in devising and assessing alternative courses of action.

A collegial policy-making group has important advantages in dealing with broad policy problems over models in which participants reflect more closely the characteristic organizational features of hierarchy, specialization, and centralization. In the ExCom case, though the collegial model probably operated at something approaching optimal performance, it did so for reasons that may not always be present. Nonetheless, it deserves study so that we might understand what these special factors were and judge whether and how they might be replicated on future occasions.

To sharpen appreciation of these features let us compare the collegial style with an extremely bad variant of the formal bureaucratic model. Planning and decision making in this deliberate caricature are highly structured, expertise is compartmentalized along narrow functional lines, and system operation is highly formalized. Information and judgment on each of the relevant elements of the policy problem up for decision are provided the chief executive solely by the recognized functional expert on that element. Role playing is narrow and inflexible, and there is no devil's advocate. Further, the chief executive makes no provision for having the functional experts engage in a genuine dialogue in order to explore the problem as a whole and to examine the interrelationships among its elements. A formal procedure is followed by obtaining each expert's judgment on his portion of the problem—a judgment, it is presumed, that others are not competent to question. Each actor may also be asked for his overall judgment, but he gives it without having understood or studied the problem as a whole; and because he is aware that he has not understood, he tempers his conclusions and holds to a conservative, even sterile, view.

Because there is little or no use of an iterative approach to problem solving in this process, the experts have no opportunity to revise their judgments. Further, the highly structured, compartmentalized approach casts each adviser in the role of spokesman for his group. This forces the participants to resort to bargaining and superficial compromises rather than to utilize analytic procedures as a means of dealing with disagreements over policy. A heavy if indeed not impossible intellectual burden is ultimately placed upon the chief executive and his immediate personal staff in attempting a blend or synthesis of the many elements of the problem. This variant of the bureaucratic model, therefore, fails to meet the critical challenge in problem solving, namely, analysis of the relationship of the various parts of the problem to one

another, and of the relationship of the parts to the whole.

In sum, the collegial approach to problem solving strengthens the analytic component and reduces the influence of the bargaining component. It does so by restructuring the roles of special advocates, enhancing the role of the generalist vis-a-vis the functional experts, providing for interactive policy analysis, and introducing new norms for the process of deliberation.

Maintaining the Quality of Decision-Making in Foreign Policy Crises: A Proposal

by
Margaret G. Hermann and Charles F. Hermann*

A. Foreign Policy Crises as a Source of Individual Stress

The chances of one or more major foreign policy crises confronting the leadership of the United States during the next several years are substantial. External crises have been a frequent feature of American policy ever since the Government of the United States associated its national interests with a vast array of different substantive issues in every region of the globe. It is possible that the origin and character of some future crises may differ in significant ways from those that punctuated the Cold War years with disturbing regularity. Furthermore, a foreign policy might be designed that would reduce the overall number of situations that surface as crises. But even if the desire to avoid international crises became a major tenet of United States foreign policy, it would be impossible to avoid all of them in the years immediately ahead. Thus, the prediction of at least one major foreign policy crisis in the next several years is hardly a risky forecast. For that reason, and because decisions and actions of enormous consequence for the well-being of this country and the world arise in some crises, the quality of decision making in foreign policy crises must receive careful attention.

From a review of the past performances of American policy makers in crisis, one conclusion seems inescapable. Although some groups and individuals performed extremely well, others performed far less well than they did in noncrisis situations. As Robert Kennedy noted of the policy makers who participated in the decision making during the Cuban missile crisis:

> "For some there were only small changes, perhaps varieties of a single idea. For others there were continuous changes of opinion each day; some, because of the pressure of events, even appeared to lose their judgment and stability." [1]

Studies of crisis behavior conducted by scholars in a variety of circumstances ranging from families in natural disasters to corporate executives facing sudden and severe business misfortunes suggest that this variability in the quality of performance in crisis is widespread and not unique to public officials conducting foreign affairs. Some individuals and groups in their coping and problem solving under crisis conditions reveal abilities and resourcefulness seldom reflected in their day-to-day behaviors; however, the behavior of others appears erratic, devoid of sound judgment, and disconnected from reality.

The understanding of social and behavioral scientists of the reasons for various reactions to crises is far from perfect. Yet the large number of studies that have been conducted do reveal certain patterns and insights which can be used to improve crisis management. One frequent consequence of a foreign policy crisis is that the policy makers involved in the situation experience stress which under certain conditions can be extremely disruptive to effective decision making. This chapter proposes a means of detecting when one or more policy makers participating in the management of a foreign policy crisis are experiencing severe stress. It also suggests—based on our understanding of the causes of stress—some possible steps that can be initiated to correct or minimize the debilitating effects of stress.

In examining stress, primary attention will be

*The authors gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments received on an earlier draft of this chapter from Davis Bobrow, Alexander George, David Hamburg, Ole Holsti, Irving Janis, and Richard Lazarus, who, however, bear no responsibility for the present chapter.

[1] Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days*, New York: Norton, 1969; p. 31.

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given to the effects of stress on individual decision makers, although the consequences for small decision groups also will be considered when the effects reinforce or are closely associated with those in the individual. Previous chapters have discussed some of the distinctive characteristics of the individual and group level of problem solving that will be considered jointly in this chapter.

B. Definitions of Crisis and Stress

Crisis and stress are terms used casually in everyday conversation to describe a variety of experiences. Before continuing, it will be necessary to stipulate precisely how these terms will be used. A crisis is a situation that poses a major threat to one or more goals or other values of the group experiencing the crisis. In American foreign policy, the threat is to a goal, policy, program, or other state of affairs which the government desires on behalf of the nation in its relations with the external environment. Threat is an *impending* danger to the desired state of affairs—not a misfortune that has already been fully experienced. Because the obstruction of the goal or deprivation of the desired state of affairs has not yet completely occurred, those experiencing the crisis can attempt to maneuver to avert the perceived danger. The threat generated by a crisis can be more or less intense depending upon how valued the endangered object is to those involved and upon the completeness of the impending obstruction. For example, the possibility of an oil embargo by the Mideast oil producing countries is quite threatening to the United States because of the centrality of petroleum products to our economy (high value of object) but the threat would be even more severe if a larger proportion of our oil came from these countries (completeness of the obstruction of the valued object).

In addition to threat, a crisis is characterized by shortness in the perceived time available for decision. In other words, unless something is done quickly the external situation will be transformed and the opportunity to do anything to avert the disaster will be gone or will be much more costly. As an illustration consider the incident where terrorists capture an entire American embassy with most of its staff and threaten to kill them all if certain prisoners are not released within 24 hours. In this case the time restriction appears in the form of an ultimatum. During the Cuban missile crisis, time constraints were imposed on American policy makers by their intelligence reports that some of the missiles in Cuba would become operational in a matter of days. If the situation was not resolved before that time, the policy makers believed that it would be much harder to use force to get the missiles withdrawn because some might escape initial destruction and be launched against the United States. As with threat, the amount of perceived time available for decision can vary—in the case of time from minutes to months. The shorter the perceived decision time is, the more severe the crisis.

Elsewhere, it has been argued that in addition to threat and decision time, surprise is a third property of crisis; that is, the less anticipated the event is by policy makers, the more severe the crisis.[2] Although the implications for decision making of adding this feature to any situation may be substantial, to date the surprise effects have received less support in research than the effects of high threat and short decision time. Accordingly, surprise will not be specified here as a necessary condition for a situation to be characterized as a crisis.

Following Lazarus,[3] individual stress is considered to have three components: a stimulus, a response, and an intervening psychological process. In the case of foreign policy crises, a major stress stimulus is the threat to the nation's goals which a policy maker has internalized. In other words, individual (psychological or physiological) stress occurs when a policy maker interprets the threat to his nation's goals as also endangering something of high value to him (her) as an individual. The danger is no longer to something "out there," but becomes personalized. Perceiving the threat personally, the policy maker becomes emotionally aroused. With a perception of threat, such emotional arousal results in feelings of distress, fear, or anxiety. The occurrence of such feelings signals that the policy maker has internalized the threat.

Not every threat to a nation's desired states of affairs is internalized as a personal threat by its policy makers. For several reasons, however, high level policy makers seem quite vulnerable to becoming emotionally involved in threats to national goals. The policies or objectives endangered may very well be ones which they personally have struggled vigorously to obtain. They probably have a strong sense of identity with the nation as an "entity" or they would not have pursued a career that led to high national office. Moreover, their success, if not their very continuation in office, may depend on their effective pursuit of the very goals or desired states that a crisis threatens. All these features make national policy makers likely candidates to internalize threats to their nation perceiving such situations as threats to themselves.

[2]Charles F. Hermann, *Crises in Foreign Policy: A Simulation Analysis.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969; also, C.F. Hermann (ed.), *International Crises: Insights from Behavioral Research.* New York: Free Press, 1972.

[3]Richard S. Lazarus, *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

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Even though a policy maker does not personalize the direct threat to national goals posed by a foreign policy crisis, the internalization process may occur indirectly. As was noted in Chapter II, in a crisis, as in any complex decision, there are uncertainties and costs associated with whatever course of action is chosen. As a result a policy maker may worry about making errors, about fulfilling his role in the government, or about maintaining respect as a national leader. These concerns about the effect of the decision on the individual can result in the internalization of the crisis problem even when the policy maker does not personalize the national goals obstructed by the crisis.

Once the threat generated by the crisis is internalized by a policy maker, it is reasonable to assume that the individual becomes more emotionally aroused if the situation also appears to involve short decision time. Perceived deadlines increase the pressure on the policy maker. With short decision time, policy makers are forced to focus on the problem—at times around the clock—until a decision is reached.

The psychological process component of individual stress is activated once the policy maker has internalized the direct or indirect threats created by the crisis. Its purpose is to mitigate or eliminate the threat and/or the consequent negative feelings which the threat arouses. "This activity is called coping, and it is based on cognitive activity involving appraisal of the conditions of threat and the consequences of [any attempted] coping behavior."[4] In effect, coping involves the individual's strategies for dealing with the threat. It is this coping process that sometimes leads to individual functioning that is inadequate for dealing with the international problem. Signs of such coping processes become observable in a policy maker's responses during a crisis. Some of these individual stress responses will be described later. With respect to the management of foreign policy crises, we are less concerned with specific stress responses—e.g., constriction of the perceptual field—than with their effect on the policy maker's ability to operate effectively in a decision-making situation. Therefore, in addition to stress responses or their observable indicators, this chapter will address the impact of such stress responses on decision making.

C. Relation of Crisis and Stress: A Schematization

It now becomes possible to describe a sequence linking the occurrence of a crisis to individual failures in decision making. A foreign policy crisis can result in a policy maker's internalization of the threat with the feelings of fear, anxiety, and distress which accompany such internalization. The individual policy maker tries to cope or deal with the threat by making various stress responses, some of which are manifested in decision making. This chain is diagrammed in Figure 1.

The scheme just described provides the basis for the proposal in this paper to control the quality of decision making in crises. Given the reported sequence, it should be possible to train policy makers or key staff members who work closely in support of groups that regularly become involved in crises to recognize the possible decision-making manifestations of individual stress. During a crisis they could check periodically for these manifestations. Although the authors judge this proposal to be technically feasible, some important qualifications must be kept in mind.

1. Policy makers involved in a crisis need not experience individual stress.
2. Not all coping processes that a policy maker may employ to deal with stress necessarily disrupt effective decision making.
3. Crises have effects on individuals, groups, and organizations other than those resulting from individual stress. These other effects include some factors that have salutary consequences for policy making and others which are negative.
4. Crises are by no means the only source of individual stress. All of us encounter a variety of stress stimuli in our daily lives and high level policy makers probably experience more stress than most people.

D. The Relationship Between Stress and Performance

What happens when a policy maker or anyone else internalizes a threat? The coping processes that occur within the individual can only be inferred. Several hypothetical constructs which provide insight and explanatory power have been advanced in psychology. For the purpose of the present proposal, however, examination of these internal processes can be skirted. What is significant for crisis management is the resulting impact on task-oriented behavior or problem solving. A wide variety of scientific studies in both laboratory and natural settings have found a similar general pattern between the intensity of individual stress and performance of some task. Those situations in which some stress occurs lead to better performance than situations in which the persons performing the task are emotionally detached. In other

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 28.

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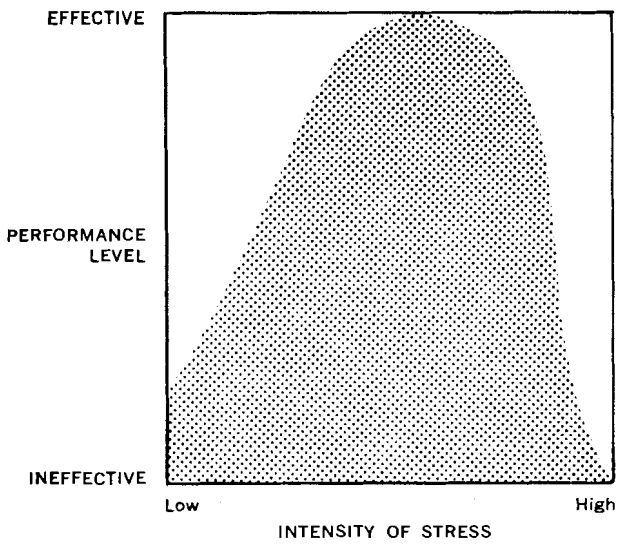
FIGURE 1.—A SCHEMATIZATION OF RELATION BETWEEN CRISIS AND STRESS

words, performance generally improves as individual stress increases when the overall intensity of the stress is relatively mild. This observation is confirmed in numerous ways in everyday life. In the classroom, for example, a teacher generates some stress in the students by announcing periodic tests or papers over the material to be covered. It is assumed that the performance of most students will be better with tests and papers than if the students believed there were no individual accountability. However, the instructor can create excessive stress by threats of extremely demanding and frequent tests. Under these conditions, increasing numbers of students are likely to be unable to perform as well and to attempt various ways to reduce their involvement in the class. The example illustrates the general pattern of findings. As the intensity of individual stress increases, the rate of improvement in performance begins to slow and then to stop altogether. If the amount of stress a person experiences continues to increase, performance begins to plummet and at some point the performance can become much worse than when there was no stress at all. This generalized relationship between stress and performance appears diagrammatically as an "inverted U" in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2.—THE GENERALIZED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMANCE LEVEL AND INDIVIDUAL STRESS



It is the downward slope of the curve in Figure 2 that poses the danger in crisis management. The task is to discover when stress has become so extreme as to seriously inhibit the quality of decision making and related tasks required of the policy maker. At this point, however, a major problem arises. *The relationship between stress and performance that is characterized in Figure 2 as an inverted U is a generalized one and varies substantially under a variety of conditions.* Three such conditions will be discussed here.

One of the conditions that alters the general relationship between stress and performance is the *nature of the task* to be performed. Some complex tasks (e.g., complex problems in reasoning) seem more susceptible to disruption by increased stress than others (e.g. routinized manual dexterity problems). Dealing with a major foreign policy crisis involves the performance of a number of different tasks which may be more or less susceptible to the negative effects of stress. It is probable, however, that most of the tasks that high level officials are called upon to undertake fall into the complex task category where performance is readily disrupted by increasing amounts of stress.

A second condition which affects the relationship between stress and performance is the *nature of the individual* experiencing the stress. Some persons appear able to tolerate only relatively small amounts of stress before adverse effects become evident in their performance of various tasks. By contrast, others seem to have an extremely high tolerance of stress. Such individuals do not even begin to perform at their best (at least for short periods of time) until the intensity of the stress exceeds that which other persons would find most destructive to effective performance. High level policy makers are probably well above average in their ability to withstand stress before it adversely affects their problem solving. It is unlikely that they would have achieved their positions or maintained them for long unless they were fairly effective at decision making under stress. But the category of "all high level policy makers" undoubtedly is quite diverse and, accordingly, individual differences in stress tolerance are probably substantial.

Performance under stress also varies with the *setting* in which the individual is located. For example, is the person experiencing the stress alone or in a

group? If the setting is a group, is the group supportive of its members or indifferent to their personal needs and feelings? How heterogeneous are the stress coping processes of the group members? What is the style of leadership exercised in the group? Some evidence suggests that a leader who conducts his group in an authoritarian manner enables the group to withstand more stress than a leader who has a democratic style. (See also Chapter IV.) In addition to the immediate group, the organizational context may be important. Some organizations are designed to cope with emergencies and to assist their leadership in handling stress whereas others are arranged to handle a large volume of routinized problems and/or have no organizational "slack" which can be mobilized to backstop key individuals in crisis situations. In the United States Government, policy makers who confront foreign policy crises normally are embedded within some group or organizational context, both formally and informally. Thus, these aspects of the setting impact on the policy maker's ability to function under stress.

Undoubtedly other conditions intervene to affect the relationship between individual stress and performance. Probably not all of the relevant factors have been isolated in research. Certainly none of the exact effects of these conditions on specific types of performance under stress are fully understood. The review conducted here, however, is sufficient to dramatize the substantial qualifications that surround the "generalized inverted U" curve used in Figure 2 to describe the linkage between stress and performance. (Instead of one curve in Figure 2, there probably should be families of curves for different tasks, individuals, and settings.)

It is essential to keep these limitations in mind and to recognize the need for much more research on how to improve decision making under stress. But the authors contend that, though restricted, the present state of knowledge has applicability to maintaining the quality of decision making in crisis management. Thus, even though it is extremely difficult to predict how much stress any particular individual can tolerate before his decision making begins to deteriorate, nonetheless *it is possible to describe various symptoms that a person under stress may display and the effects of such stress responses on decision making.* Moreover, although it is not possible on the basis of presently available knowledge to isolate stress responses that are associated exclusively with intense stress or that are found in all individuals under stress, it should be possible to establish a rough "baseline" for particular individuals. Such individual baselines would indicate a person's behavior for certain responses that can be disruptive under stress. Given these reference points, it would be possible to observe the changes in a person's normal patterns under situations with a high capacity for triggering intense stress.

Several features of crisis make feasible the application of existing knowledge about the impact of stress on performance. First, historical studies of foreign policy crises strongly support the assertion that crises are likely sources of intense individual stress which can set off the chain of reactions shown in Figure 1, above. Second, crises are reasonably well bounded in time and space. Thus, once they have been identified by knowledgeable individuals, crises require a monitoring capacity for only a limited period. Third, the number of individuals involved in the decision-making group in any given foreign policy crisis tends to be small and at least some of the probable participants are predictable (e.g. President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs). Fourth, the level of the policy makers involved in major foreign policy crises insures that they will have key aides or staff personnel who are familiar with their normal patterns of behavior. These features of foreign policy crises make monitoring for signs of disruptive stress more feasible. The enormous stakes that often arise in a foreign policy crisis make the effort of value.

E. The Proposal

In the rest of this chapter we will present a proposal for affecting the quality of decision making in foreign policy crises that builds on our previous discussion of the relationship between crisis and stress. We propose a system to help policy makers who are in a crisis to identify whether they are manifesting the symptoms or effects of severe stress. The purpose is to make possible the initiation of preventive and/or corrective actions before such stress as may occur can have an adverse impact on their decision making.

Toward this end, we need to compile a list of the verbal and nonverbal indicators that denote when a foreign policy threat has been internalized; we need to identify the responses that are occasioned by various coping processes; and we need to catalog the adverse effects that such stress responses can have on decision making. (The two sections of this chapter following the present one provide prototypes of such lists.)

The critical element in this proposal is to provide training and useable reference material that will enable a person to identify whether a crisis is precipitating severe stress. The training and materials utilize the existing knowledge about indi-

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vidual and group stress. Two variations of the proposal are advanced. In one version, the policy maker engages in self-monitoring. Using previously acquired training, the policy maker reviews his own behavior periodically during a crisis using materials that outline in clear terms the signs of stress.

In the other variation of this proposal, the periodic review of the policy maker's behavior is done by a trusted deputy or close aide who has received prior training. Of course, a policy maker in the press of a crisis and possibly experiencing considerable stress may neglect even the most abbreviated self-appraisal routines or may be unable to recognize in his own behavior the symptoms of stress or their magnitude. For this reason, the participation of a deputy as the monitor increases the likelihood of a more accurate appraisal. We will first consider the approach involving an aide as confidential observer, and then note some difficulties with this version of the proposal. Before exploring this approach further, however, one of its features must be emphasized. The staff aide as observer is not an individual outside the policy maker's daily circle of regular assistants nor is the person a psychologist or physician, he is a close personal deputy of the policy maker who has been given this additional assignment.

Individuals closely associated with those policy makers who periodically are involved in American foreign policy crises could be trained to observe manifestations of stress such as those described in the next sections that deal with verbal and nonverbal symptoms of stress, stress coping responses, and decision-making manifestations of stress. During a crisis involving the policy maker of a trained staff member, the aide would review the list of stress indicators at regular intervals (e.g., for 5 minutes each day of the crisis) and reflect on whether the stress symptoms and adverse manifestations of stress in decision making had been evidenced by his superior or his superior's associates. If the behaviors appeared frequently or were more intense than what the policy maker(s) in question normally displayed, then the aide would entertain the possibility that disruptive stress was being experienced. The list of possible corrective steps could be consulted and revised or extended to fit the occasion. The staff member could then discuss his observations and recommendations with his superior. It is assumed that even if a policy maker is experiencing intense stress, he may be able to help himself if any possible difficulties are noted in confidence by a trusted source in a constructive manner. Moreover, it is assumed that the intensity of the stress experience will probably vary among members of a decision group so that some may be able to reflect with reasonable accuracy on behaviors displayed by the group.

Several necessary or desirable qualities for the persons trained to play the role of observer-monitor are readily apparent. First, it is essential that these individuals occupy positions which bring them into regular contact with one or more principal government officials who periodically become decision makers in foreign policy crises. Second, it is important that they have the trust and respect of the primary officials with whom they deal. The kind of relationship envisioned between the selected staff member and the policy maker can be illustrated by that which existed between John F. Kennedy and Theodore Sorensen, or between Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig during the former's first years as Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs. Third, they must interact with the officials not only in normal situations, but also have a high probability of being in regular contact with them during the time when a crisis is occurring. It would appear that individuals who are deputies to one of the principal policy makers or key members of their staff would be prospects for observer-monitors. Consideration might also be given to persons in charge of key support groups likely to be engaged in foreign policy crises, such as the NSC staff member who serves as executive director of the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG).

Another qualification necessary for a reliable observer-monitor may conflict with the previous requirements. The observer should not be in a position where it is probable that he or she is a likely candidate for severe stress in a crisis. Given the other desired qualifications, such may not be avoidable. For that reason and others, it may be important to have a second person with whom the staff member can consult in his (her) periodic review of the list of symptoms in crisis. The second individual need not (and probably should not) be a participant in the crisis deliberations or the necessary support work. However, this person should have the relevant clearances and the complete confidence of the direct observer so that they can discuss the situation candidly. In all likelihood the second member of the monitor team should be in government, certainly in Washington. A psychological or medical background would be a desirable asset for the second member of the monitor team provided the person also meets the other criteria.

Any individual who is to become an observer of crisis behaviors will need to receive advanced training. Because of the probable status of these individuals and the demands on their time, such training will have to be skillfully done and will have to minimize the amount of time the trainee is expected to expend. Several sessions totaling six to eight hours fitted into the schedule of the potential observer could provide a working familiarity with

the system. The topics to be covered in any training sessions include: (1) indicators of stress, (2) need for flexibility in the interpretation of the indicators of stress (they are not unambiguous), (3) determination of baselines for particular types of behavior, (4) readily accessible sources of further information, and (5) ways of initiating preventive and/or corrective actions when evidence of disruptive stress appears. In addition, the individual policy makers with whom these observers work would have to be familiarized with the purpose and idea of the monitoring system in order to obtain their acceptance and cooperation. Some provision for updates in training at regular intervals (e.g., once a year) might prove desirable, particularly as further research contributes to the understanding of stress.

A major difficulty with the deputy-as-observer approach is that a policy maker may not feel comfortable having even the most trusted associate assuming this role. The policy maker may regard the formal assignment of such a role to another individual as an unwarranted intrusion into an extremely sensitive area—appraisal of his personal performance in a very critical time. If a policy maker resents such action, then the deputy serving as observer could become a source of stress during the crisis. Although constructive steps might be taken to minimize such concerns and to reassure a policy maker, the continued reluctance (if not outright refusal) by a high official to participate in such an arrangement should be sufficient reason to consider the self-monitoring approach as an alternative. In this approach the operation would be similar to the other one except that the policy maker would personally undergo the training program and be responsible for the systematic reviews of his behavior at intervals during the crisis.

The proposal has been presented here only in a sketchy and preliminary form. Details and necessary revisions and adaptations of the proposal should be undertaken in collaboration with several kinds of specialists, those having substantial acquaintance with the operation of foreign policy and national security machinery at the highest levels of government and those with professional knowledge concerning the effects of stress on performance. Moreover, an atmosphere conducive to stress-monitoring and the use of stress-alleviating measures needs to be created within policy-making groups most responsible for decision making in foreign policy crises. As noted earlier, such policy makers should be familiarized with the general nature of the problem of coping with stress and with the basic purpose and *modus operandi* of the monitoring system. This familiarization should convey: (1) that everyone experiences stress though in differing degrees and under different circumstances, (2) that it is not the symptoms of stress that matter but how one copes with them, and (3) that a policy maker has resources for coping effectively with stress that small group ties and organizational procedures can reinforce.

F. Observable Indicators of Individual Stress: General Types of Behavior

How can a policy maker or his aide observe that the former is experiencing stress? Our schematization in Figure 1, above, of the sequence whereby a foreign policy crisis can have a disruptive effect on a decision maker's performance indicated two points in time at which signs of individual stress might be noted. The first comes relatively early when the policy maker internalizes threat and experiences negative emotional arousal. The second point occurs when the policy maker tries to cope with the ensuing stress. This section attempts to identify verbal and nonverbal behaviors that policy makers might exhibit at both these points in time which could be observed as indicative of stress.

In the past decade psychologists have become increasingly interested in verbal and nonverbal indicators of stress. They have tried to learn when an individual is experiencing stress by observing the person's interactions with others. This research has yielded a remarkable number of indicators. In effect, researchers have found that facial expressions, gestures, body movements, vocal characteristics, and the structure as well as the content of speech give information concerning what a person is feeling and the ways the individual is coping or dealing with such feelings. Recently such stress indicators have been used to examine the behavior of political leaders.[5]

The verbal and nonverbal indicators of stress suggested by this research appear to fall into six broad categories. Table 1 indicates these six types of stress behavior and some examples of the verbal and nonverbal indicators which are in each category. The illustrative indicators were selected because they are easily observed and regularly seem to accompany stress.

The first four broad types of behavior in Table 1 reflect the negative feelings which the individual experiences as threat is internalized. The speech gets rather flustered, becoming faster and often louder; the body tenses; the person is irritable. The individual is emotionally aroused and feeling some distress. The last two categories of behavior in Ta-

[5]Robert S. Frank, "Nonverbal and Paralinguistic Behavior as a Technique for Psychological State Analysis: The McGovern-Humphrey California Debate." In Margaret G. Hermann and Thomas W. Milburn (eds.) *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders.* New York: Free Press, 1975, forthcoming.

TABLE 1.—VERBAL AND NONVERBAL INDICATORS OF STRESS

General Type of Behavior	*Illustrative Indicators*
1. Flustered Speech	a. increased use of 'ah' or 'you know'
	b. increased number of repetitions of words, phrases and sentences
	c. increased number of changes or corrections in sentences in course of conversation
	d. increased number of slips of tongue
2. Increased Speech Tempo	a. faster rate of speech
	b. fewer unfilled pauses or hesitations in speaking
	c. change in vocal intensity
3. Body Tension	a. increased nonpurposive or spontaneous movement
	b. increased eye blinking
	c. increased self-adaptive gestures or gestures which appear to help an individual relieve tension or pent-up energy-- e.g., knee jiggling, playing with ring finger, picking, head scratching
4. Irritability	a. increased number of statements of discomfort
	b. more commands
	c. more negative evaluations of others
	d. less smiling
	e. fewer vertical ('yes') head nods
5. Rigidity of Content	a. increased use of 'allness' terms such as 'never,' 'always,' 'forever'
	b. fewer different words
	c. increased use of negative words
6. Verbal and Nonverbal Withdrawal	a. increased use of outward-directed ('pushing away') gestures
	b. less eye contact
	c. increased physical distance from others in interactions
	d. increased use of words which indicate distance from objects and people

ble 1 suggest ways of coping with the negative feelings resulting from the threat and with the threat itself. In one the individual becomes more rigid, closing out further damaging information. In the other the person begins to withdraw from the situation.

Each of the verbal and nonverbal indicators in Table 1 is observable. It is conceivable that a staff member or aide to a high level policy maker could note when such behavior occurred during the course of a crisis. There are several cautions, however, that an observer must heed in using such a list of stress indicators. In the first place, stress reactions can be highly idiosyncratic, different individuals emphasizing or using different verbal and nonverbal behaviors under stress. The observer-monitor needs to become acquainted with the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of the policy maker he (she) is observing in order to obtain some crude notion of what the policy maker is like generally so any changes in crises can be noted. Such an assessment means noting what behaviors are not characteristic of the policy maker as well as those that characterize him (her). In a crisis the abrupt appearance of a behavior which is usually not a part of a policy maker's repertoire may be as important an indicator of the onset of stress as a gradual increase or decrease in a generally occurring behavior. In effect, the observer may want to compare the policy maker's behavior under easily specified stressful and nonstressful situations in order to identify the indicators which are likely to be most useful in monitoring the behavior of that policy maker in foreign policy crises.

A second caution concerns the continuous nature of the coping process in stress. The coping process cannot be considered as linking a stress stimulus to only one stress response. Rather it involves a continuing appraisal and reappraisal of the effects of any stress responses which are used in dealing with the threat and the negative feelings which the individual is experiencing. Thus, the indicators of stress may change as the policy maker tries in various ways to deal with the stress that he is experiencing. This is one reason why we proposed in the alternative to self observation that the observer be a deputy or key staff member of the policy maker. It is quite likely that such individuals have had long associations with the policy makers they are to observe and already have some notions of which behaviors come early in a stressful experience and which may suggest a prolonged stress experience.

A final note of caution involves the number of stress indicators observed. We would not expect an observer to be able to monitor all the behaviors in Table 1 simultaneously. Such would be impossible. From previous knowledge of the policy maker's styles of behavior, the observer probably will be able to narrow the list of indicators to two or three

which seem very likely to be important signs of stress in that individual.

The verbal and nonverbal indicators in Table 1 are intended to signal when a policy maker has internalized a foreign policy threat and is trying to cope with it. But what about the effects such stress responses may have on decision making? Might it not be easier to watch for direct manifestations of stress on decision making in making a judgment about whether or not a policy maker is experiencing stress rather than looking for the indicators in Table 1? It is to a consideration of this point that we now turn.

G. Illustrations of Some Disruptive Manifestations of Stress on Decision Making and Some Possible Correctives

In addition to the list of verbal and nonverbal indicators of stress in Table 1, we have developed an illustrative list of the adverse effects which acute stress can have on decision making. (This list includes many of the impediments to information processing and "malfunctions" in the policy-making system that were identified in PART ONE of this study.) The illustrations not only indicate possible negative manifestations of stress on decision making, but include possible reasons for the manifestations, several sources to check for more information about each manifestation and its effect on decision making, and ways of changing what the observer notes in order to make the group more effective in dealing with the crisis. It is conceivable that the listing, which follows, of adverse effects of stress on decision making could be developed into a catalog for observers to use in monitoring the behavior of policy makers during foreign policy crises.

1. FIXATION ON ONLY ONE REASONABLE OPTION MANIFESTATIONS IN DECISION MAKING:

a. Early consensus among all, or almost all, policy makers on appropriate action.

b. Quick detection and acceptance by policy group of inadequacies and flaws in all but one course of action.

c. Irritation and other expressions of displeasure directed toward individuals who indicate reservations or criticize courses of action favored by most members of the decision group (e.g., "you are not making sense," "you are holding up the entire group," "you are jeopardizing all of us").

Explanation:

Of course, situations do arise in which only one alternative is available given time, resources, and other constraints. But caution should be exercised whenever the behaviors listed above emerge including the too easy reassurance by the observer-monitor that only one "reasonable" alternative does exist. Stress can produce fixation on a single option in a decision group that would otherwise carefully examine various alternatives.

There are at least three effects of stress that can contribute to these observable symptoms. First, stress can make it more difficult for individuals to think of alternatives. Even a person who is normally very inventive and imaginative may experience these mental blocks under extreme stress.

Second, stress can create a feeling among members of the decision group that they are alone and that survival depends upon their "hanging together." With this sense of being surrounded by adversaries abroad and indifference at home, an "ingroup" vs "outgroup" perspective can arise. Under these circumstances, a member of the group who questions the judgment of the others (as happens if he criticizes the merits of a preferred option) may appear to undermine that which has become essential—the solidarity of the decision group. The pressure for concurrence and agreement among the members becomes a means of assuring group solidarity. It leads to attacks on anyone who appears to challenge a group preference, including the expression of reservations about a course of action that appears to have wide group support.

Third, stress increases an individual's need for action to eliminate or reduce the threat. The presence of one reasonable alternative speeds the decision process along since there is little necessity to search for others. As a result, action can be taken more quickly.

Selective References:

Charles F. Hermann, *Crises in Foreign Policy: A Simulation Analysis.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969; pp. 133ff.

Ole R. Holsti, "Time, Alternatives, and Communications: The 1914 and Cuban Missile Crises." In Charles F. Hermann (ed.), *International Crises: Insights from Behavioral Research.* New York: Free Press, 1972; pp. 66ff.

Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972; pp. 184ff.

Richard S. Lazarus, *Psychological Stress and the Coping Process.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966; pp. 357ff.

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Objective:

To get plausible alternative courses of action introduced in the decision group and to promote critical appraisal of all available options including the one that may have gained wide initial support among the participants.

Possible Correctives:

a. Have one or two individuals respected by the decision group members but who have not previously participated in its deliberations review the situation and the group's proposed course of action.

b. Have the group chairman vigorously constrain members of the group who raise non-substantive (i.e., personal attacks, appeals to group interest) or vague objections to any individual who critiques the option currently favored. Provide praise and other positive expressions to those who make such critiques or begin to sketch a possible alternative. Make sure they are allowed to develop their ideas adequately.

c. Designate several of the most respected group members to critique the option currently favored.

d. Adjourn session overnight and request each participant to enumerate all conceivable problems with preferred option.

e. Repeat (c) and (d) above, but with emphasis on constructing other alternatives to the preferred one.

2. SIMPLIFICATION OF ADVERSARY AND HIS LIMITATIONS MANIFESTATIONS IN DECISION MAKING:

a. Policy makers consistently refer to the external adversary(ies) as a unified and cohesive force by using characteristics of a single individual or an undifferentiated, dehumanized agent (e.g., "them," "the enemy").

b. Policy makers regularly interpret the external adversary's action as rational behavior that maximizes goals which are clear and unquestionably accepted by the enemy; the adversary's moves are not seen as prone to error or the product of ambiguity and confusion.

c. Policy makers project to the adversary extensive control over each instance of his country's behavior and substantial latitude for choosing among various options.

Explanation:

Ordinarily, external crises generate enormous uncertainties for the policy makers that may be different not only in magnitude from non-crises but also in their immediate consequences for the policy maker and his country. These uncertainties concern the adversary's motives and intentions and the impact that any behavior of the actor is likely to have on the adversary. At the time that uncertainties impinge crucially upon the policy maker, his abilities to cope with them are restricted. Time and costs may constrain him from gathering more information. Furthermore, stress may temporarily restrict his mental ability to handle the complexities imposed by such uncertainties. (By complexity is meant the multiplication of interpretations or possibilities.) Simplification of the adversary provides a means of reducing the uncertainty and providing the individual with a better sense that he understands the situation and can respond. The danger arises when that sense of understanding is unwarranted and the interpretation of the adversary is extremely inaccurate.

Selective References:

Jerome D. Frank, *Sanity and Survival.* New York: Random House, 1968, pp. 182ff.

Ole R. Holsti, "The 1914 Case." *American Political Science Review,* 1965, 59, 365–378.

Paul C. Rosenblatt, "Origins and Effects of Group Ethnocentrism and Nationalism," *Journal of Conflict Resolution,* 1964, 8, 131–146.

Objective:

To insure that the policy maker's interpretation of the adversary, his capabilities, and motives is at least as good in a crisis as it is in noncrisis situations.

Possible Correctives:

a. Include in the policy making group one or more individuals with detailed and current knowledge of the political and related processes in the adversary(ies) government or obtain briefings from such individuals at repeated intervals during decision making. (Assuming that any briefing would be requested on short notice and could not last long, it would be desirable to have several briefings on separate occasions by different authorities or, at the least, provide one briefing official with several opportunities.) The most important task is not to obtain consensus on the adversary's motives, rationality, or probable responses but to prevent extreme interpretations that are based on misplaced confidence in oversimplifications.

b. Explicitly review in the decision-making group the possibility that there is evidence for actions by the adversary that could be the result of error, miscalculation, or confusion. Also discuss the implications of such error for any response.

c. Delegate to some respected individual or support group the task of providing the policy makers with multiple interpretations of the adversary's motives and behavior and review the possible constraints or limitations on the adversary's ability to respond and comply with various actions the policy makers might initiate. (Specifically consider any possible political divisions within the adversary's regime and weaknesses in the ability of their highest authority to interpret your nation's actions and control any responses.)

3. PHYSICAL FATIGUE MANIFESTATIONS IN DECISION MAKING:

a. Policy maker repeatedly expresses or shows irritation or annoyance at people and things for little or no cause in a manner or with a frequency which is unusual for that person.

b. Policy maker assumes a more argumentative style with less cogency or reason than he or she normally displays.

c. Policy maker displays sudden indifference toward issues under deliberation; whereas the person might previously have been advocating a position, he suddenly withdraws from further consideration of the matter with little or no explanation.

Explanation:

Almost by definition crises are demanding decision situations requiring long hours with little opportunity for diversion or relaxation. These circumstances alone would be sufficient to generate physical fatigue. However, when the crisis creates high stress for individuals and the stress continues for a protracted period, the fatigue is compounded. Research findings suggest that extended periods of high stress lead to deterioration of various physiological systems which makes fatigue more acute.

Selective References:

Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days,* New York: Norton, 1969.

N. Kleitman, *Sleep and Wakefulness,* Rev. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963, pp. 229ff.

Thomas W. Milburn, "The Management of Crises," in Charles F. Hermann (ed.) *International Crises: Insights from Behavioral Research,* New York: Free Press, 1972, pp. 263ff.

Hans Selye, *The Physiology and Pathology of Exposure to Stress,* Montreal: Acta, 1950.

Objective:

To minimize the amount of fatigue experienced by those responsible for coping with the crisis.

Possible Correctives:

a. When signs of physical fatigue appear in the policy-making group, urge the presiding official to postpone any critical decisions and adjourn for a period of hours (preferably overnight). At the time of adjournment emphasize to the participants that the time should be used for rest, not individual work with staffs, private reading, etc.

b. If the fatigue seems to be more evident in some individuals than in others, temporarily change the decision group and excuse from participation those individuals who are suffering from fatigue.

c. Urge the presiding official to limit the responsibilities of those individuals who seem fatigued during the remainder of the crisis or until they obtain some rest.

d. When fatigue first appears, promote scheduled periods of relaxation in the decision process.

4. COLLAPSED TIME PERSPECTIVE AND NEGLECT OF FUTURE CONSEQUENCES MANIFESTATIONS IN DECISION MAKING:

a. No consideration is given to the implications of various options or actions other than those that will occur immediately, that is, in a matter of hours or a few days after implementation.

b. Longer term goals or interests of relevance to issues involved in the crisis that were assigned high priority and received considerable attention before the crisis are now ignored or quickly dismissed as no longer of importance.

c. Policy makers who raise potential difficulties that may only emerge after a period of time (e.g. domestic political effects) are urged to concentrate on the immediate issues and their references to the future are dismissed.

Explanation:

One method of coping with a problem under conditions of stress is to engage in mental efforts to bound or limit it. In order to do this, individuals may wish to deny or ignore the fact that the problem has ramifications that unravel in the future. Furthermore, the denial of the future is a means of riveting attention to the present which is required by the situation. Once the policy maker experiences the high negative effect associated with the internalization of threat, it may be very difficult for him to circumscribe the magnitude of the immediate danger. Hence, its sever-

ity becomes enlarged (as if it were a threat to personal physical survival) and all other considerations—especially those which are not immediate—are dismissed as being of trivial importance.

Selective References:

Robert J. Albers, "Anxiety and Time Perspectives," *Dissertation Abstracts,* 1966, 26, 4848.

Samuel I. Cohen and A.G. Mezey, "The Effects of Anxiety on Time Judgment and Time Experience in Normal Persons," *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry,* 1961, 24, 266–268.

Donald R. Hoffeld and S. Carolyn Kent, "Decision Time and Information Use in Choice Situations," *Psychological Reports,* 1963, 12, 68–70.

Ole R. Holsti, 1965, *op.cit.*

Ole R. Holsti, 1972, *op.cit.*

Jonas Langer, Seymour Wapner, and Heinz Werner, "The Effects of Danger Upon the Experience of Time," *American Journal of Psychology,* 1961, 84, 94–97.

George Usdansky and Loren J. Chapman, "Schizophrenic-like Response in Normal Subject under Time Pressure," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology,* 1960, 60, 143–146.

Objective:

To make certain that relevant future implications of present and anticipated actions are considered and that some effort is made to ensure that longer range interests are not adversely affected unnecessarily.

Possible Correctives:

a. Set aside a specific period of time devoted exclusively to the exploration of longer term consequences of contemplated actions and their possible secondary effects—particularly on third parties.

b. Designate some subgroup not yet as involved in the management of the crisis to undertake the task described above and defer commitments until their report has been presented.

c. Consciously seek to give positive reinforcement to those policy makers who attempt to place the present situation in a longer time perspective.

5. EXCESSIVE CONCURRENCE-SEEKING MANIFESTATIONS IN DECISION MAKING:

a. Policy makers in the decision group pressure members to defer from making arguments that question images of the external world that have been widely cited by the group and seem to be accepted.

b. Members of group emphasize the apparent unanimity of judgments among the decision-making group.

c. There are repeated references to the group's shared morality and decency, as well as repeated statements that tend to minimize any ethical or moral arguments that are raised regarding the options under consideration (e.g., statements such as "You can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs").

d. Policy makers make statements indicating their own self-censorship from raising doubts that challenge the apparent group consensus (e.g., "At first I wasn't certain about this plan, but your arguments are very persuasive; I can see my doubts were unfounded").

Explanation:

One of the widely reported findings about groups experiencing a common stress experience is that strong feelings of solidarity and group cohesiveness are likely to result. In addition, the strong need for secrecy in national security crises and the short time available for response are likely to isolate the policy makers from much of the larger organizational support system in which they ordinarily operate. When these conditions co-occur with grave personal doubts about one's ability to cope with a seemingly overwhelming situation, the group becomes a very valued source of support in dealing with stress. This explanation draws heavily on the work of Janis. As he notes:

> The central explanatory concept involves viewing concurrence-seeking as a form of striving for mutual support based on the powerful motivation in all group members to cope with the stresses of decision-making that cannot be alleviated by standard operating procedures . . . For example, few, if any, operating procedures enable a policy maker to cope with the threat of losing self-esteem from violating ethical standards of conduct . . . Each time he realizes that he is sacrificing moral values in order to arrive at a viable policy, he will be burdened with anticipating feelings of shame, guilt, and related feelings of self-depreciation, which lower his self-esteem. Similar feelings are generated whenever a decision maker is faced with a perplexing choice that he considers beyond his level of competence or that forces him to become keenly aware of his personal inadequacies. For all such sources of stress, participating in a unanimous consensus along with the respected fellow members of a congenial group will bolster the decision maker's self-esteem.[6]

[6]Irving L. Janis, *op.cit.*, pp. 202–203.

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There is another instance when excessive concurrence-seeking can occur. Excessive concurrence-seeking is often found in more hierarchically-organized groups where the members work at the pleasure of the leader (e.g., the President and the NSC staff, the President and the Cabinet). If in a crisis situation the group leader states an early preference for a particular course of action and argues strongly for its acceptance, there is likely to be little opposition or exploration of other alternatives.

Selective References:

Irving L. Janis, 1972, *op.cit.*

John T. Lanzetta, "Group Behavior Under Stress," *Human Relations,* 1955, 8, 29–52.

E. Paul Torrance, "A Theory of Leadership and Interpersonal Behavior Under Stress," in Luigi Petrullo and Bernard M. Bass (eds.), *Leadership and Interpersonal Behavior,* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961, pp.100–117.

R.L. Hamblin, "Group Integration During a Crisis," *Human Relations,* 1958, 11, 67–76.

Objective:

To minimize or offset the effects of group cohesion and the pressure for concurrence-seeking on the policy maker's willingness to critically appraise and state reservations about proposed actions.

Possible Correctives:

a. Encourage the group leader to avoid stating his personal preferences and expectations or revealing his preferences by nonverbal cues and urge him explicitly to promote a range of views on the issues under examination.

b. Divide the group into several subgroups which work independently of one another under different leaders for a period of time.

c. Encourage each participant to discuss the group's deliberations with his own trusted advisors without indicating his personal preferences and to relate these assessments to the group.

d. Encourage group to establish a "devil's advocate" role and to pass the role around among the members during the course of its deliberations.

e. If the group leader's presence tends to promote early consensus, urge him to be absent from the deliberations for brief periods of time, particularly when possible alternative courses of action are being discussed.

H. Conclusions

In the preceding pages we have attempted to show how foreign policy crises and individual stress are related. Moreover, we have suggested based on the crisis-stress relationship how stress may adversely affect decision making in policy makers with the authority to decide an appropriate response to a crisis situation. In order to assess when stress is having an adverse effect on decision making, we have proposed that a monitoring system be instituted in which either staff members of policy makers likely to be involved in foreign policy crises or such policy makers themselves are trained to note when policy makers are experiencing stress in a crisis—either by observing verbal and nonverbal indicators of stress or the adverse effects of acute stress on decision making. Some possible correctives which can be considered in the event decision making is disrupted also have been specified.

Given the enormous stakes which are present in most foreign policy crises, we argue that something like the monitoring system proposed in this paper is necessary to maintain the quality of decision making in crisis management. Moreover, the proposal we have described is not unique. It represents one of a growing number of attempts to make the findings of stress research helpful to policy makers. These attempts range from "do-it-yourself" type manuals[7] to the development of leadership training simulations.[8] In each case, though recognizing the limitations of current stress research, the authors contend that there is enough information available now to try to develop ways of improving the effectiveness of decision making under stressful conditions.

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[7]For example, Robert C. Page, *How to Lick Executive Stress.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967.

[8]For example, Phillip L. Hunsakker, William C. Mudgett, and Bayard E. Wynne, "The Leadership Assessment and Training Simulation: Training, Assessment, and Research Applications," *Catalogue of Selected Documents in Psychology,* 1974, Vol. 4, p. 151.

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Appendix E: Field Reporting

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Introduction

Appendix E contains the report of an extensive research project carried out for the Commission by William D. Coplin, Michael K. O'Leary, Robert F. Rich, and their associates of Prince Analysis, Inc. This study, "Towards the Improvement of Foreign Service Reporting," assesses the quality and utility of current foreign service reporting by taking samples of cable and airgram reporting from each of four countries, and by conducting interviews with writers and users about the purposes intended for and uses actually made of the sample documents. The study concludes that the relationship between users and producers is often vague, and that reporting is not sufficiently focused to meet completely any of the many kinds of uses to which it is put. It recommends that unified direction is needed if the quality of reporting is to be improved.

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Towards the Improvement of Foreign Service Field Reporting

William D. Coplin, Michael K. O'Leary, Robert F. Rich, and associates
March 1975

SUMMARY

This report offers a series of recommendations to improve Foreign Service field reporting. The research for this report was done for the Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy during November 1974 and January 1975. In the course of our work we consulted four sources of information concerning Foreign Service reporting:

1. A review of available literature on the subjects of information handling and organizational processes in general and foreign policy-making in particular.
2. A content analysis of 213 State Department documents selected in equal proportion from the country desk files of four countries.
3. Semi-structured interviews of 64 users of those documents.
4. Semi-structured interviews of 49 producers of those documents.

We found evidence supporting four criticisms of foreign service reports:

1. *Inadequate feedback from users regarding past reports and inadequate guidelines for future reports.* Criticisms by both end-users and producers of the reports were frequent and intense regarding the lack of communications between the field and the mission. Attempts at formalized guidelines such as CERP were seen to be only moderately successful and were limited to only routinized economic reporting. Evaluations of reports by the users were viewed by authors as sporadic and rarely helpful. We considered the lack of feedback and inadequate guidance to be a result of the complexity of the relationships among Washington end-users and officers in the field.

2. *Not enough analytical content of the reporting.* A frequent criticism, particularly from the high level officials interviewed, was that reporting was not sufficiently analytical. These criticisms were coupled with a call for more reports that interpreted the causes of events and considered their effects on the future of U.S. foreign policy. From our analysis of the documents and our surveys of users and authors, it was clear that there was a substantial amount of implicit analysis, but that such analysis tended to be appreciated only by the authors and by the working-level end-users. This suggests the need to understand the importance of "subcultures," consisting of officers specializing in a particular country, region, or functional responsibility. Much reporting is done by and for members of a given subculture. Readers outside the subculture may well miss much of what is implied in such reports.

3. *Too much reporting, both in the number and length of reports.* Many users and producers said that there were too many reports and that they tended to be too long. We found however that every document sampled was considered to be important by at least one Washington end-user. This may suggest a need to reduce distribution. But we saw it as another manifestation of the "subculture problem." Individual users found that some reports they expected to be useful actually turned out to be irrelevant. Misplaced expectations are clearly a symptom of individuals operating in one subculture trying to understand the communication of another. In any case almost all users said that in fields not germane to their interest the number of reports they received, as well as their length, should be cut down. On the producer's side, there was a feeling that junior officers especially were succumbing to a "publish or perish" syndrome in order to help their promotion by attempting to satisfy a real or assumed appetite of a country director or other end-users. We interpreted this behavior to result from the ambiguity on Washington's part as to what to report and what not to report.

4. *Poor format and style.* Some officers complained

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of convoluted and inelegant style, and a few cited the need for subtopics and more rigorous formatting (e.g., including a summary and a comment). Our reading of the documents led us to conclude that the style was reasonably clear, given the complexity of the subjects covered, but that there was too little use of tight formatting. Even the provision of a summary paragraph, a nominal requirement, was not always carried out.

Our general conclusion from the study of the stated criticisms and from our analysis of the documents and the interviews was that the four criticisms were symptomatic of the subculture problem described above. Generally, too many users were attempting to use documents written for narrow purposes and addressed to officials with detailed background information. In developing a series of recommendations we accepted the continuing existence of contextual constraints such as the present personnel system, the existence of competing functional and geographic agencies within and outside the State Department, the ambiguity of the foreign policy-making process, and the relationship between top policy officials and career Foreign Service officers. Within these constraints, we made the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1: *Each Country Directorate Should Be Responsible for Constructing and Maintaining an Information Map to Improve Guidance and Feedback.* This map would be designed to pinpoint end-users of different kinds of information from the field. We found that prototypes of such maps were partially implemented in some country directorates, but not in others. Our belief was that more attention to compiling rosters of officials within and outside the Department could provide an important service in making reporters and end-users aware of those concerned with a particular country or region. The map would also help in streamlining the distribution of cables in Washington and direct communication between the mission and end-users with particular information or analysis needs.

Recommendation 2: *Each Country Directorate Should Institute More Formal and Regular Procedures for Improving Guidance and Feedback on Policy Matters.* We concluded that the complexity of American foreign policy interests, as well as the ambiguity of the contemporary foreign policy environment, has made it necessary to develop more efficient formatting in the communications between producers and users. However, our reading of past attempts at reform and current institutional norms of the Department strongly argues against imposing rigorous formatting from above. Therefore, we recommend that each set of users work together in Washington, through their appropriate country directors, with the appropriate individuals in the field to develop acceptable formats for reporting. For example, tables that display the positions of important actors on major issues might be developed. Such tables should be developed on a country-by-country and function-by-function basis. Eventually, more general schemes might be developed to be used across countries and functions, but this should occur with usage.

Recommendation 3: *Designated Functional and Regional Agencies Should Develop and Maintain Centralized Guidance Lists on Reporting Aggregate Economic, Social, Political, Military, and International Conditions.* Just as the complexities and ambiguities of policy matters require that formalization be developed by the authors and working-level end-users, there is a growing number of aggregate conditions which could be systematically monitored for use by higher level officials. Evidence for this can be found in the relative satisfaction with the CERP. We believe that it is both possible and desirable to develop monitoring indicators of economic, social, political, and military conditions within, as well as among, nations. Such indicators can be developed and managed from centralized agencies in Washington. We also feel that the data for a majority of these measures can be attained in Washington; the field should be asked to supply them only as a last resort. Data of this type could serve as general background to help create linkages among the various horizontal and vertical subcultures in the Department.

Recommendation 4: *The Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) Should Serve as an Information Broker to Provide Policy Makers With Better Information Service Concerning Country, Regional, and Functional Questions.* INR could help close the gap between the information needs of upper-level policy-makers and working-level officers. Because the information required by the former is aggregate in nature, personnel with the breadth of knowledge and analytical capability that now exists or could exist and be maintained in INR could bring together the information across a variety of sources that serviced upper-level policy-maker needs. The staff in INR would define their role as serving a particular Assistant Secretary, Under-Secretary, or staff to the Secretary. This function would serve to translate the reporting from the field to the Department policy makers by requiring the necessary background and integration.

Recommendation 5. *Country Directorates and Policy Makers Should Systematically Evaluate the Field Reporting System.* The previous recommendations, particularly those with respect to feedback and guidance, would institute many of the on-line kinds of evaluation that are necessary to improve foreign service reporting. In addition, we recommend increased monitoring of the cable flow be conducted both at the Country Directorate and policy making levels. Systems of document classification like Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject (TAGS) could

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be employed in developing such a monitoring system.

Recommendation 6: *The Foreign Service Institute in Coordination with the Central Intelligence Agency's Intelligence Institute Should Devote More of its Resources to Improving Foreign Service Reporting.* Given the amount of time most foreign service officers spend writing and reading reports, the magnitude of effort by the FSI in training for reporting is not sufficient. Together with the CIA's Intelligence Institute, the FSI should develop well-defined programs at both the junior and mid-career levels. Educational packages that could be completed without classroom activities should be developed in areas where the training objectives are sufficiently clear (e.g., how to use the existing information retrieval systems). General conceptual training should be focused more precisely on its relevance to reporting.

Major Findings and Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter contains: (1) a list of the major criticisms of foreign service reporting, along with supporting evidence; (2) a list of recommendations for improving foreign service reporting. In the following chapters we have provided more detailed information on our methods as well as a description of our general findings. Chapter II contains a review of the literature relevant to the study of foreign service reporting. Chapter III describes our content analysis of the reports. Chapter IV describes our interviews with the authors and end-users of the reports and compares their views on the reporting process.

Findings

Our interviews with reporting officers and users, our analysis of the documents, and our review of the literature all suggest many possible areas of weakness of foreign service reporting. We decided that the following four criticisms warranted detailed discussion.

1. Inadequate feedback from users regarding past reports, and inadequate guidelines for future reports;
2. Not enough analytical content in the reporting;
3. Too much reporting, both in the number and length of reports;
4. Poor format and style.

In this section we will describe these criticisms in detail, and evaluate their validity. We will then suggest the kinds of actions which might be undertaken to correct those conditions that, in fact, warrant change.

POOR FEEDBACK AND GUIDANCE FROM WASHINGTON

The problem of feedback and guidance focuses on communication and coordination between Washington and the overseas missions. There are three dimensions to this problem: (a) communication between end-users in Washington and the Embassy; (b) communication in Washington among end-users—both within an agency and among various agencies; and (c) communication within the Embassy. Communication includes being informed of policy decisions and evaluations of field reporting.

Our interviews reveal that officers are most concerned with what they feel continues to be a one-way flow of communications. Information is sent to decision makers; however, they too infrequently respond with information about how the information was or was not used, or what decisions are in the process of being made. Many of the producers and users we interviewed indicated that individuals in Washington do not generally assess reports. Others felt that the guidance coming from Washington was banal, ambiguous, or unreasonable. The following is a typical remark indicative of the opinions of many foreign service officers: "We ask D.C. if we are meeting their needs. We get relatively little comments, even when we ask for guidance." Table 1.1 shows that over three-fourths of the authors interviewed cited lack of feedback as a problem.

The large number of producers expressing dissatisfaction is less surprising than the significant number of users who acknowledge this problem. The users cited their lack of time, the press of other duties, as the reason for neglecting to help provide feedback and guidance.

Many producers and users stated that the lack of feedback is attributable to a lack of opportunity for direct contact between the field and Washington.

TABLE 1.1.—CRITICISMS OF FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

	Percentage of Respondents Expressing At Least One Criticism	*Total Interviewed*
Producers	76.6%	49
Users	31.6%	64

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One producer stated that "We need more information as to what they (in Washington) want. A possible solution to this problem is more frequent dialogue between Washington and the field."

There are presently three channels which are used for the purposes of direct dialogue between Washington and the field: telephone calls, official-informal letters, and travel by middle- and high-level officials. Our interviews in Washington and in the field reveal that, as a whole, these channels are not used for the purposes of feedback and guidance. More often they are used for personnel matters, communicating on a particular event or person to one official exclusively, and discussing policy matters that must be resolved immediately. In other words, these channels are being used for what is considered to be more pressing policy matters.

The economic officers appeared to be particularly reluctant to use any of these channels. They felt that the nature of their work made it necessary to communicate with a broad constituency. These channels were not designed to meet this need.

The inadequacy of these informal channels is directly attributable to two basic problems. First, personal contacts are too infrequent. There is evidence that the understanding established by contacts dissipates quickly because of differences of views and perspective.[1] Second, individuals who receive feedback and guidance from personal contacts do not usually share their insights with other officers. Middle and senior officials, the most frequent users of informal communication channels, often neglect to pass information to subordinates. An excellent illustration of this problem is provided by one of our interviews with a senior Embassy official. During the interview, the official pointed out the usefulness of a recent trip to Washington by saying the country directorate had told him to provide more reporting on general political conditions within his country and less on detailed coverage of one particular group. After the interview, a junior political officer who had been present during the interview confided to the interviewer that he had not known about this request for a different emphasis in the post's reporting.

Another example of the lack of guidance was illustrated in other interviews. Some junior officers complained that they are not able to see CIA information produced within the Embassy. The Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) who sees this information told us that it is not necessary for junior officers to see it because the information is either repetitious or irrelevant.

Feedback and guidance may also be transmitted through formal channels. These include the use of centralized procedures for generating guidance lists and the Inspector General's report of a particular mission, which frequently involves an evaluation of reporting. In addition, some Country Directorates have instituted a regular monthly letter designed to evaluate reporting from the mission and give some guidance concerning the problems that are considered to be important in Washington.

The existing formal procedures for communicating guidelines and feedback suffer from many problems. There have been ocassional attempts to institutionalize evaluation of field reporting by using a single form for all missions. While methods to formalize evaluation have been suboptimal, some attempts at formalized guidance procedures have had limited success. There do exist a number of relatively formal guidelines that list the topics that should be covered by each post. Most prominent of these are the Combined Economic Reporting Program (CERP), the Economic Alert List (EAL), and the Current Intelligence Reporting List (CIRL). Each of these lists is coordinated by a central office. The Economic and Business Bureau of State sees to CERP and EAL; the Central Intelligence Agency, CIRL.

The officers who must initiate these procedures respond to the guidelines with attitudes ranging from grudging tolerance to contempt. The CERP procedure was the least criticized. We also believe that its relative support (which we estimate to be positive for three-fourths of the producers of economic reports and one-half of the political reports) is attributable to requests for specific economic and commercial information, mostly in the form of statistical data, and its schedule for supplying this information. Although one reporting officer complained that "there's a lot of crap in it," most officers had no trouble fulfilling the CERP requirements. However, the reaction to the EAL and CIRL were more negative. We believe that this is attributed to the lack of formalization of information concerning political events or major economic developments that are likely to be on those two lists.

In general, most economic and political officers feel that much of the requested information is already available in Washington, particularly with respect to economic questions. One economic officer stated that a lot of the required reporting is available in Washington in the form of newspaper clippings or host government documents. "However," he said, "it is easier for them to ask us for it again, than to retrieve it themselves." More importantly, most officers did not know why the information was needed. This lack of awareness is another manifestation of the inadequacies of the feedback from Washington.

In fact, the feedback from CERP users is occa-

[1]William I. Bacchus, *Foreign Policy and the Bureaucratic Process: The State Department's Country Director System*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974, pp. 162–165.

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sionally counter-productive. The Department of Commerce, principal user of CERP information, does provide written evaluations of the information received by individual posts. However, these evaluations often consist of nothing more than the punishment or reward of individuals or (in official inspections) entire embassies. This practice constitutes an obstacle to a feedback system that could provide the information a reporting officer needs to correct his procedures.

The responses to the CIRL and the EAL are, on the whole, much more critical. The consensus of reporting officers is that the information requested in these documents is trivial, unobtainable, or so obviously important that, as one officer said, "if I don't know by this time to report it, the government has been wasting a lot of money on me!"

Finally, the responses to these formal guidance procedures further illustrate the difference in attitude between producers and users. Reporting officers are much more critical of official guidelines than their Washington counterparts. Table 1.2 displays the divergence of the two groups:

TABLE 1.2.—NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS OF CERP, EAL, AND CIRL

	Negative	*Positive*	*Neutral*	*Total Respondents*
Producers	31.9% (15)	12.8% (6)	55.3% (26)	47
Users	15.8% (9)	7.0% (4)	77.2% (44)	57

Thus, there is substantial evidence of inadequate feedback and guidance from Washington to the field. This inadequacy extends to both informal and formal channels of communication. As we shall see in discussing other criticisms, we believe that the lack of feedback and guidance from Washington to the field has a strong impact on the current problems of reporting.

LACK OF ANALYTICAL CONTENT

One of the most frequently heard criticisms of foreign service reporting is that it lacks analytical content. Most notable of recent statements is Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's critical admonition to the foreign service:

> I require not only information on what is happening, but your most thoughtful and careful analysis of why it is happening, what it means for U.S. policy and the directions in which you see events going.[2]

Unfortunately, the Secretary has failed to offer a definition of "analysis" that is understood and accepted by FSOs. It is not surprising, therefore, that those discussing the need for analysis offered many different, and often conflicting, interpretations of what the secretary meant. Some said it meant prediction, others said it meant providing options for alternative courses of action; others said it most definitely did *not* mean commenting on American policy, since that is the job of the top level officials themselves. In general, "analysis" was taken to mean the provision of some sort of context within which a better understanding of events is possible. Merely to report that a riot has occurred is not enough. Analysis requires suggesting why the riot occurred, what its consequences might be, or both.

We found rather strong agreement among users and reporters that analysis should be an important part of reporting. However, there was sharp disagreement as to whether there is adequate analytic content in current reporting. In general, users expressed more criticism of a lack of analysis than did authors. As one senior official in Washington said, "We need more analysis. We are bogged down with what happened today, when our needs are for a long term perspective." Another official decried the lack of what he called the "atmospherics" of a situation in order to help understand a situation better.

As Table 1.3 shows, over 40 percent of the users complained about the inadequacy as opposed to 25 percent of the authors. The authors who did voice criticism were not admitting incompetence; rather, it was typically another embassy, or another section of their own embassy that suffered from inadequate analytical content in reports.

In our content analysis of the reports from the field, we attempted to provide an "objective" evaluation of the amount of "analytic content." We defined analysis as the author's efforts to consider the causes or implications of a given event. Only about 10 percent of the documents contained an appreciable amount of analysis; 90 percent were essentially straight factual reports. (For a discussion of how we operationally defined analysis, and how the documents were categorized, see Chapter

TABLE 1.3.—CRITICISM OF ANALYTIC CONTENT—USERS AND PRODUCERS

Type of Respondent	*Percent Criticizing Analytic Content*	*Number of Respondents*
Producer	25.5%	47
User	42.1%	57

[2]Henry A. Kissinger, "Reporting from the Field" *Department Notice*, United States Department of State, November 7, 1973, p. 10.

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III.) While there were some differences across the four countries in our sample, the pattern was sufficiently consistent to lead us to believe that this general situation holds for the reporting from most diplomatic posts.

Furthermore, there is a strong divergence of opinion between general policy makers, such as Assistant Secretaries and National Security Council staff members, and working level officers. As shown in Table 1.4, policy-makers were far more critical than any other officials of the lack of analysis.

These findings suggest to us that those most familiar with the details of a particular country are likely to pick up implicit cues in what appears to be factual reporting. This would explain why upper-level users feel that reports are not analytical while working-level users generally feel they are. It also would explain why the users felt that the specific documents we used for coding and interviewing were not analytical, whereas the producers thought they were. Frequently, producers would argue that the mere selection of a fact to report was itself an act of analysis.

In other words, whenever analysis is undertaken by the officers, it often goes unappreciated. Different users have different contextual frameworks and different analytical needs. In short, they belong to a different foreign policy-making subculture that prevents them from making the analytical inferences drawn by those more directly involved in the subculture.

In this context we feel that it is also important to note that the problems involved with providing analytic reporting are closely related to the problems of feedback and guidance. Insofar as there is, in fact, an inadequate amount of analysis, this is clearly not a result of the incapacity of foreign service officers to undertake analysis. Without sufficient exchanges, the author is not able to determine what the user considers the key analytical questions; while the user is not able to make the inferences that the author assumes in writing the report.

TOO MUCH REPORTING

A widespread criticism by people in the field and in Washington is that there is too much reporting. This criticism encompasses both the amount of reporting and the length of reports. Reactions of the users to reports and reporting included such statements as "too wordy," "more than I can possibly digest," "not concise and too detailed," and "interesting, but I could stand to read a little less on the subject." The producers are no less critical. One embassy official flatly stated, "We're putting out too much." A widespread fear was best summed by a Washington official, "We all agree there is too much reporting, but we do not know how to cut down. Perhaps it is better to err on the side of too much."

TABLE 1.4.—CRITICISM OF ANALYTIC CONTENT—POLICY-MAKERS

Type of Officer	*% Criticizing Analytic Content*	*Number of Respondents*
Policy Makers	61.5%	13
Others	29.7%	91

The reasons given for the existence of too many reports usually have to do with personnel and organization constraints. For example, some authors argued that there is a "publish or perish" syndrome operating among field reporters. Additional blame was laid by some on the country desk officer who wants to be protected from the criticisms of higher level policy-makers. As one source stated, "Country desk officers are too insecure."

There is some evidence from the interviews that reports are too frequent and too long. More than a third of all persons interviewed offered at least one criticism of the volume of reporting. Although this criticism varied by type of user and the position of the producer as well as the different countries we studied (see Chapters III and IV), the criticism was made across all categories of individuals we interviewed.

Nevertheless, we feel it is an oversimplification to conclude that there are too many reports written and that they are too long. First, few respondents had specific suggestions for decreasing the volume. Their inability to identify a type of report that might be eliminated suggests that all reporting has some relevance to someone. We found that every document selected for intensive study was used by at least one individual. No cables were considered expendable by everyone interviewed. Furthermore, a majority of cables had more than one user, and in general, many users said they wished they had more information from the field.

We believe that while reports could be more concise and less frequent, volume in itself is not a serious problem. The complaints about volume can be attributed in part to the distribution system that forces users to go through hundreds of irrelevant cables a week. It is also part of the general guidance and feedback problem discussed earlier; producers feel overwhelmed by demands for reports, while users are getting much irrelevant material.

FORMAT AND STYLE

Although we did not encounter it frequently, we did hear and read criticisms that foreign service reporting officers do not know how to write. Some senior officers lamented the inadequate verbal skills

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of junior officers. As one said, "I have to edit all the material that is sent out." Many junior officers complained of DCM's who "can barely write." Some producers and users argued for more basic training in writing skills.

Most of the documents we studied were reasonably well written. It is possible that the users' perception of stylistic weaknesses might be attributable to the subculture effect, described in a previous section. The use of terminology and the ordering of words and sentences are organic developments that emerge from the continuous communication between two or more people dealing with a particular subject. Typical examples of groups developing such nuances are political reporters in the field and the country desk officer, or the Commercial attache and his users in the Commerce Department and the Economic and Business Bureau of the State Department. It is likely that those not as closely involved in the exchanges between specialized reports and their users are likely to feel that the documents are poorly written because they are not as closely attuned to the nuances of that subculture.

We believe that whether some specific uniform format options are adopted is a more serious question (e.g., use of sub-topics, a summary statement, a criticism section). If there are built-in limits to communication between the field and officials above the country-directorate, then there is a need for more explicit use of format procedures. Unfortunately, approximately half of the 213 documents contained neither sub-topics, tables, nor charts. Of the 213 documents analyzed, only 54.5% contained any rigorous formatting. Specifically, "summaries" and "comments" were used more than any other kind of formatting procedure. However, their use was extremely limited. Summaries were used in only 27.2% of the documents while comments appeared on 23.9% of the cases. Other formatting procedures such as "criticism," "recommendation," "action requested," tables, graphs and maps were almost never used. Similarly, substantive subtopics were rarely used.

Our data did suggest that producers were somewhat conscious of the need for format procedures when communicating beyond the working level subcultures. We found that the higher the classification level, the greater the use of subtopics and other methods of formatting. Table 1.5 illustrates these findings.

We can infer from this pattern that many producers of reports attempted to provide more systematic cues to their users when they expected their users to be from other than working levels.

We believe that reports must increase the use of a variety of formatting techniques. Such formatting aids the communication process especially for users unfamiliar with the subcultures of the working levels. In addition, it would be especially helpful in reports that contain many types of information, factual, interpretive, predictive, and prescriptive information. Given inherent human tendencies to obscure the fact/value distinction, it is reasonable to expect that the readers would have trouble separating factual from predictive and prescriptive statements. Formatting would force the author to make this distinction.

In sum, we believe that the limited use of format is more serious than the stylistic weaknesses of cables. The problems in the language of the cables are probably a function of the differences in context between the producer and the user. Consequently, there is a need to develop formatting procedures that will help establish a mutual framework for exchanging information.

Conclusions

In this section we will describe and justify a series of recommendations that are designed to help alleviate the first four problems described above. Wherever it seemed desirable, we have provided specific examples of the types of activities or procedures that are implied by the recommendations. However, it should be remembered that the examples are included to illustrate our general recommendations rather than to direct their implementation. We realize that substantial developmental work is a prerequisite for implementation.

CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS

Before proceeding to a discussion of our recommendations, we will discuss some major contextual constraints endemic to foreign service reporting. We feel that these constraints are inevitable given the context of the foreign policy-making system. They all have to do with foreign policy decision making in general or the design of the Foreign Ser-

TABLE 1.5.—CLASSIFICATION AND PRESENCE OF TYPES OF FORMATS

Classification	*General Format*		*Summary*		*Subtopics*	
	No. of Documents	*(%)*	*No. of Documents*	*(%)*	*No. of Documents*	*(%)*
Unclassified	33	(28.4)	7	(12.4)	7	(26.9)
Classified	83	(71.6)	51	(87.6)	19	(73.1)

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vice reporting system. Consequently, we will not present recommendations for removing the constraints. Rather, we will define and illustrate each of four constraints with the assumption that they limit the extent to which foreign service reporting may be improved.

The four principal contextual constraints are (1) the nature of personnel, (2) the organization of government, (3) the nature of foreign policy making, and (4) the relationships between top-level political leaders and career foreign service officers.

The first contextual constraint relevant to foreign service reporting is the nature of the personnel of the service. Especially troublesome are the allegations of incompetence and ineptitude on the part of the foreign service officers who do the reporting. The evidence of our interviews and the high educational level of FSOs both conflict with this allegation. We know from personal experiences that they put in long working days, that they are perceptive observers, and that they are effective communicators. Nevertheless, such criticisms continue to be made by both FSOs and others. We feel this is not so much a comment on foreign service reporting as it is a reflection on the frustrations of foreign policy-making and unhappiness with the society from which FSOs are drawn.

In any event, no feasible alterations in recruitment or promotion would affect the overall nature of the foreign service rapidly enough to have any changes on the nature of reporting. The system, whether it changes or not, will continue to be operated by the same type of individuals. (We do not see this as a major problem. In our judgement the system and organization of the process is, in general, less efficient than the people who run it.)

The second constraint is the changing nature of the U.S. government's role in foreign affairs. Especially important is the increase in the number of agencies outside of the State Department concerned with foreign affairs. These agencies include the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Department, both of which have been traditional sources of inter-department conflict for the State Department. They also include such relative newcomers as the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Treasury and Justice. We heard many complaints about the demands by these organizations of foreign service reporting at the mission and in Washington.

These views are reflections of the well documented bureaucratic competition that characterizes all policy making. Perhaps this point was made most succinctly by (then professor) Henry Kissinger, who said, "If one wants to understand what the government is likely to do, one must understand the bureaucratics of the problem."[3] Any analysis of foreign service reporting must accept the continued inter-mixture of State and functional agency interest in the foreign policy area. The Department of State attempts to maintain good relations between Washington and the host country, while the functional agencies are willing to accept that goal only insofar as it is in the interests of their particular constituencies. In short, foreign service reporting suffers from organizational conflicts inherent in the growing interdependencies of the contemporary world and the consequent pressures on the relationships between State Department and other agencies.

The third contextual constraint arises from the need to report for and about such a complex phenomenon as foreign policy. Foreign policy decision-making is a task that wreaks havoc with the models of social scientists and information specialists. The goals of foreign policy and the environment in which the policy operates are sufficiently complex and ambiguous to impede the evaluation of the reporting process. In addition, this complexity and ambiguity obviate complete satisfaction by authors or end-users of existing reporting procedures.

The final contextual constraint is the relationship between the top political leaders of the Department and the Foreign Service. Secretaries of State characteristically have used the foreign service as they see fit. While their motivations for various arrangements and use of the foreign service have little to do with the process of reporting, the consequences of top level decisions frequently have major ramifications for reporting. A case in point is the classification of documents, especially classification that severely limits the distribution of messages. Many of the users we interviewed expressed complaints about the classification and distribution system when we asked for their criticisms of foreign service reporting. We have chosen to treat this situation as a given constraint rather than one that can be altered through any changes in the reporting system.

SOME OPERATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS

The recommendations offered below are designed to reduce the barriers to information exchange created by physical distance, task-orientations of users, interests of various organizations, and the variation in the context of those concerned with making and implementing American foreign policy. Before providing the recommendations, we would like to identify our principal operating assumptions.

Our first assumption is that there are information

[3]Henry A. Kissinger, "Bureaucracy and Policymaking: The Effect of Insiders and Outsiders on the Policy Process," in Readings in *American Foreign Policy: A Bureaucratic Perspective*, ed. by Morton H. Halperin and Arnold Kanter. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973, p. 84.

subcultures among those most closely concerned with a country or functional responsibility. As we have argued earlier, the growth of such subcultures occurs when two or more individuals regularly communicate among themselves about a particular set of topics more extensively than they communicate with others. A typical subculture is one that exists between the country desk officer and the several officers in the field with whom he communicates most frequently. Another example is a set of officials with a specific functional interest like agriculture. The frequency with which assignments are changed renders the subculture system more complex. A given officer is repeatedly in the position of talking to a group of other officers who have communicated among themselves more than they have with him. The complexity of the foreign policy-making process combines with the contextual constraints to create numerous and serious barriers to communication.

Our second assumption is that there are two fundamentally different types of reporting provided by diplomatic posts. The first type involves the reporting of changes in generalized aggregate conditions concerning a given country. The second involves the reporting of policy actions. In the first category, we include reports that identify general or aggregate social, economic, political and military conditions both within and among countries. Functional and regional specialists inside and outside the Department of State are the primary users of these reports. Except for political reporting and some of the reporting on regional patterns, the kinds of information describing aggregate conditions are frequently quantitative in form, or at least tightly formatted, and are often organized by a list like the CERP.

The second type of information focuses on the policy implications of the social, economic, political and military conditions within a particular country. The focus on these reports is on one of two basic topics: (1) the actions a government (or another actor) is likely to take in response to situations, and (2) the impact of a government's actions on a specified range of conditions. Questions concerning how general social, economic, political or military conditions will affect relationships among actors and ultimately the policy decisions of states are not and, given the present level of knowledge, cannot be dealt with in the formalized and quantitative ways that environmental information can be. The relative disuse and criticisms of the CIRL and other attempts at formalizing political reporting (in contrast to the reactions to CERP) indicate that policy reporting is less susceptible to formal information management than is economic and other aggregate reporting. Therefore, we are recommending that different systems of information collection and dissemination be developed for aggregate reporting than in policy reporting.

Our third operating assumption is that the upper levels of the State Department should be concerned with promoting some type of action regarding information handling. However, information management questions should not be treated as simply centralized administrative problems that can be remedied by establishing department-wide procedures intended to guide the work of every country directorate in the same direction. Reform from the top appears to have been the norm for both recommended and actual attempts to reform. It is clearly a difficult judgment to balance department-wide procedures with office-specific applications of the procedures. Our approach has been to consider the possibilities of rather great country flexibility in the application of relatively general procedures. (Some of our proposals are similar to those of *Diplomacy for the 70's*,[4] with the important exception that we propose decentralized, instead of centralized, actions.) At the same time, certain types of information problems have to be approached by collective actions of producers and users in the context of their specific problems. Our recommendations attempt to reflect on the one hand, need for coordinated activities and on the other hand, the reality of dealing with a set of specific subcultures.

In our recommendations, we distinguish between centralized coordination of country-regionally oriented information policies and centralized procedures which are applied uniformly to all Country-Directorates regardless of specific differences and needs. The first type of coordination appears most consistent with the current operations of the Department.

Implicit in this discussion is the need for individuals throughout the foreign affairs community to consider the need to formulate and implement internal policies with respect to the collection, use, analysis, and distribution of information. More human and financial resources must be devoted to design decisions involving formatting, the establishment of explicit guidelines and evaluation procedures, the staging of face-to-face information exchanges, and the packaging of educational materials for using information resources. We are not advocating the creation of new agencies or offices for attempting to control these activities. On the contrary, we feel that much of what we recommend can be accomplished through the effort of individuals throughout the Department and the overseas posts. In short, we hope that our recommendations will be viewed not just as proposed

[4]Department of State. *Diplomacy for the 70's: A Program of Management Reform for the Department of State*, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970.

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organizational changes, but also as a case to all producers and users of foreign service reporting to think and act so as to treat information handling in a more systematic and efficient manner.

Our final operating assumption is that the information needs of high-level foreign policy-makers, e.g., Assistant Secretaries, and members of the National Security Council, are different from those of country and functional officials. For that reason, we will provide separate recommendations for these sets of users.

Recommendations

In the context of the criticisms that we have already presented and the operating assumptions appearing above, we will now outline and explain the following recommendations:

1. Each Country Directorate Should be Responsible for Constructing and Maintaining an Information Map to Improve Guidance and Feedback.
2. Each Country Directorate Should Institute More Formal and Regular Procedures for Improving the Guidance and Feedback on Policy Matters.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary or some other official in the Assistant Secretary's office should be responsible for coordinating these activities.

3. Functional and Regional Agencies Should Develop and Maintain Centralized Guidance Lists on Reporting Aggregate Economic, Social, Political, Military and International Conditions.
4. The Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) Should Serve as an Information Broker to Provide Policy-Makers With Better Information Service Concerning Country, Regional and Functional Questions. INR should work closely with the various Assistant Secretaries to insure continuity and coordination.
5. Country Directorates and Policy-Makers Should Systematically Evaluate the Field Reporting System.
6. The Foreign Service Institute in Cooperation with the CIA Intelligence Institute Should Devote More of Its Resources to Improving Reporting.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Each Country Directorate Should be Responsible for Constructing and Maintaining an Information Map to Improve Guidance and Feedback. This map would be designed to pinpoint the end-users of different kinds of information produced in the field.

There is an appreciation by country directorate officials and (in a much more vague fashion) officers in the field that the reports emanating from each post are circulated broadly throughout the government. There is a potential "country group" of reporting officers and officials in Washington who share an interest in a particular country either because they have an explicit geographical responsibility, or because their functional responsibility happens to involve them with a particular country. Yet there is little use of this "potential community" in the reporting process. The first step toward developing its use is to create a list of the specific officials who have a continued interest in a given country. The responsibility for compiling and maintaining such a list should lie with the country directorate, where most information on the "country group" is currently stored. Indeed, some country offices already have specialized "contact lists" of names and telephone numbers for their own use. These lists are similar to the type of document we are proposing.

The kind of document we have in mind would be a matrix in which governmental agencies appear in the rows and specific functional topics appear at the column headings. Specific individuals and their phone numbers or addresses could appear in the cells of this matrix. Table 1.6 is a suggested format from the contact list of one of the countries we studied. Which column headings, how detailed they should be, and how many to use, would depend upon the judgement of the country directorate in consultation with users and the post. (Note that the names of the individuals at the post most responsible for each of the topics would also appear on the list.)

The list should be kept up-to-date, with potential users informed on how to get their name on the information map. Initially, the job would require some staff work, but after the list is compiled, updating by the secretarial staff in the directorate would require little time. We expect that a current, widely available list of this sort would have the following effects:

a. Reporting officers in the field would have a clear picture of who their potential users are and where they are located in the government. While

TABLE 1.6.—PARTIAL ILLUSTRATIVE INFORMATION MAP OF COUNTRY GROUP WITH RESPECT TO COUNTRY X

Position	*Textiles*	*Narcotics*	*Cultural Affairs*
Treasury	—	A. Bowen	—
Commerce	C. Dixon	—	E. Farris
EB	M. Norris	—	—
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
Post	G. Harris	I. Jones	K. Larrel

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it is true today that a given embassy officer who is engaged in, say commercial reporting, may be aware of the one or two primary readers of these reports in the Department of Commerce, it is also true that the reporting officer is not aware of the entire range of users. It might help him formulate his report according to the needs of specific users and might suggest specific users who should receive the report. In addition, the map might help the mission in assigning and maintaining reporting requirements for specific officers.

b. The routing system could be adjusted more quickly and with less criticism from those who receive too much or too little. The dissemination or routing decisions are now made by a group of highly trained individuals who carry their decision rules in their heads. They could find the information map helpful to them. They should work closely with the country directorate in keeping the map updated.

c. Because the information maps would be sent to the Washington users as well as to the country mission, the Washington users will be made more aware of the officials in Washington who have similar interests. In addition, the information map could include information on the individuals in the mission reporting on the subjects of interest to them. This would reduce the frustration of users who feel they have no influence over the authors. The list could allow them to send informal communications.

d. As we will describe below, the information maps would add in formulating and distributing guidelines by Washington users for the reporters in the field.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Each Country Directorate Should Institute More Formal and Regular Procedures for Improving the Guidance and Feedback on Policy Matters. The Deputy Assistant Secretary or some other official in the Assistant Secretary's office should be responsible for coordinating these activities.

We argued in the introduction that a large portion of the reporting involves descriptions of policy information. Much of what is written concerns the impact of environmental conditions on political actors and policies as well as the impact of policies on aggregate conditions. Many reports describe the interplay of conditions within the target country with conditions outside the target country as they pertain to United States policy interests. Thus, both geographical and functional interests in the U.S. government are involved in the policy-making process. Consequently, there is a demanding and complicated set of information requirements.

In the first place, appropriate officers in Washington should continue at least the present minimum effort of using informal channels—official-informal letters, telephone, and personal visits—to suggest changes or otherwise provide guidance for reporting. Officers should also follow the lead of some of the functional and non-State Department agencies of providing to the post information about the current state of policy-making. It appears that the agencies with more specialized interests in reporting from the field are the ones which often provide copies of memoranda, position papers and similar documents which serve to inform the reporting of the post on relevant topics. All offices which receive reporting from the field should consider keeping the posts more informed in this way.

As we noted earlier however, informal and constructive guidance is frequently deemed insufficient by officers at the post. We also noted that the subculture effect that operates across different groups with different purposes and composition quickly make communication difficult. The limited use of formal centralized guidance systems like the CIRL and even of information classification systems like TAGS indicates that the fragmentation introduced by this complexity renders the exchange of information and cues for information exceedingly difficult.

For that reason, we have suggested that the country directorate build on the information mapping procedures discussed in the first recommendation to get a country-related group in Washington and the field to formulate guidelines for policy-matters. The country directorate should conduct a survey of the country group on a systematic and periodic basis. The schedule of such surveying can be determined by the country directorate, but in no case should the intervals be more than six months. The purpose of this survey is to extract two basic types of information: (1) to discover the country group's priorities in terms of topics that might be covered; and (2) to find questions within these topics that should be addressed.

It is possible to obtain this information in a variety of ways. For example, each member of the country group might submit an individual memo outlining his or her special opinions on the two questions. Alternatively, the group might be surveyed through the use of more tightly formatted questionnaires, calling for more restricted responses. The choice of where to fall on this continuum is generally determined by whether consensus is sufficiently high to allow for more structured query and response. In general, the country directorate will be in the best position to estimate the degree of consensus among the group and it is therefore the preferable locus for such a decision.

No matter how this inquiry is formatted, we believe that there will be a basic structure to the kinds of questions that will be asked by the Washington users. In general, they will want information relevant to policy decisions by the target country. The

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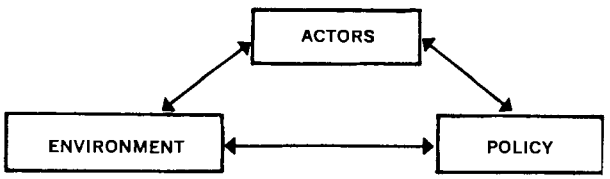
most frequent question will be: what political groups within and outside the government and what extra-national public and private groups are likely to shape the policy of the target government? This along with questions about the impact of aggregate social, economic, political, and military conditions will form the bulk of questions that are likely to be of interest to users.

We also recommend that some form of face-to-face meeting be held periodically to try to work out as specifically as possible a system for reporting the entire range of policy influences and consequences for all policy-matters relevant to the United States. This process is similar to the CASP procedures that some missions now undertake. In fact, the United States interests identified in CASP could provide at least a beginning list of policy issues that should be considered.

After assembling as coherent a list of questions as possible, an official from the country directorate should travel to the post in order to have all reporting officers participate in the formulation of a set of reporting guidelines. They can also consider the format to be used in answering the questions asked by the end-users. In meetings at the post, there should be an attempt to reach agreement on the desirable extent of formalization to be used in reporting policy information. That effort along with the earlier work in Washington should create some coherence in the reporting process so that producers and users are more efficiently communicating.

To illustrate how this process might lead to some simple kinds of formalization, we will briefly outline two simple procedures that could easily be developed. The first procedure that might evolve is built upon a social science framework for analyzing policy-making and policy impacts. Figure 1.1 presents the general framework. For any given country, one can depict the policy process by describing either what is going on *within* the Actor or Policy boxes or the relationship of these two boxes on the Environment box. If Washington users and mission reporters could reach agreement on using such a framework, it might be possible to classify reports according to the framework. To illustrate this, we have classified in Figure 1.2 some of the titles of the reports in our sample by placing them in the appropriate places on the framework. We feel that the classification gives a reasonable picture of the major focus on these cables.

FIGURE 1.1.—POLICY FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS



Several advantages might accrue from a rigorous classification scheme for reports. Reports might be organized around the topics suggested by the framework. Reports could begin with the identification of underlying social, economic, political or military conditions and then discuss their impact on political actors and ultimately policy. Even if such a convention did not develop, this kind of simple topical classification could help those members of the foreign affairs community who have functional specializations, but who lack a firm grasp on the underlying political realities affecting their technical interests. If nothing else, it could provide specific communication cues from the political reporter to functional users.

A second possible procedure involves a more concrete use of a framework to improve the communications process. It would require the use of a specifically formatted table to display information. For example, it is possible to conceive of political reporters providing information to users in the Drug Enforcement Agency in Washington using the table below. We have read many telegrams that have in a narrative fashion presented the positions of various groups or authorities on internal policy issues of interest to the United States. If users of the reports and the producers could agree on a table such as this, the information exchange process could be rapidly increased. Reports would be more precise, and might fulfill the need for analysis.

Even if such tables as the one below were not developed the long range consequence would be to increase the precision with which cues are sent from Washington to the field. Even more importantly, it would lay the groundwork for more formalized methods of exchanging information in the very complex area of the policy process. This idea is not tied to one specific set of issues. The same method can apply to all issues.

The suggestion that the kind of formalization appearing in Table 1.7 could help improve the speed and clarity of communication between the author and end-users recognizes a tension between generality and specificity that characterizes much of the

TABLE 1.7.—POSITION OF GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS ON STRICT DRUG ENFORCEMENT

	Arrest Drug Exporters	*Raise Monetary Fines Against Drug Growers*
Government	Strongly Favors	Mildly Opposes
Police	Indifferent	Opposes
Provincial Governments	Opposes	Mildly in Favor
Leftists	Favors	Opposes

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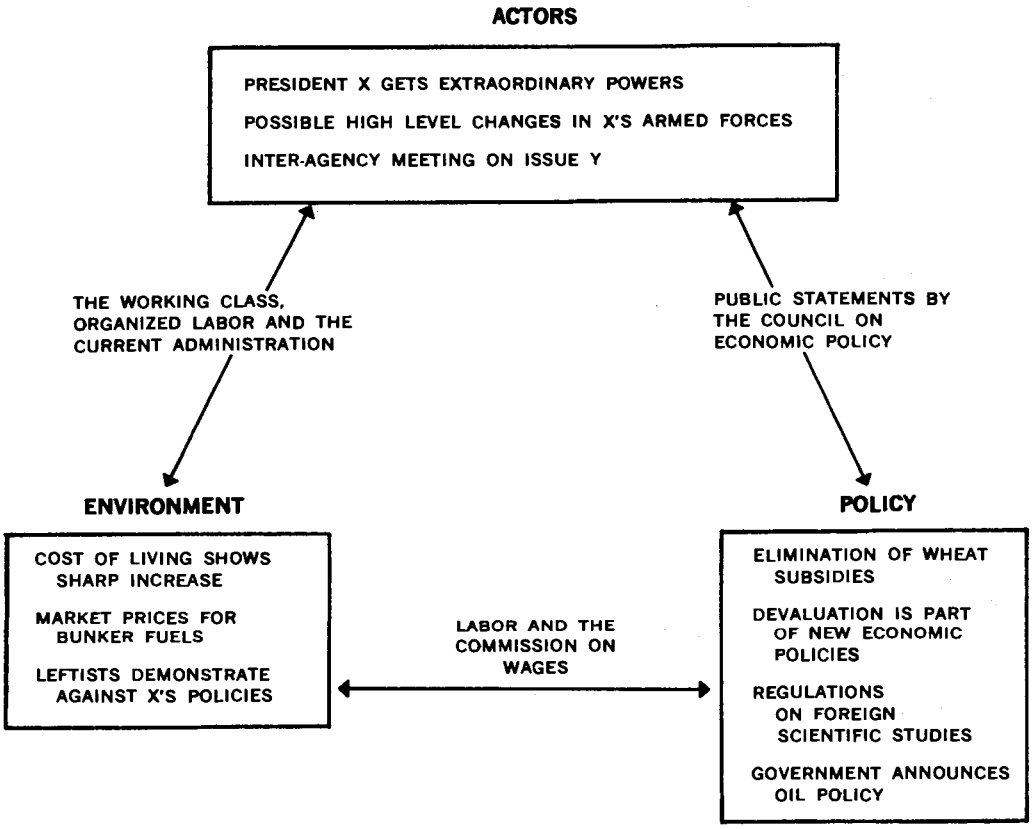
FIGURE 1.2.—CLASSIFICATION OF CABLE TITLES ACCORDING TO THE POLICY ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK



debate over foreign service reporting. On the one hand, the more formalized the structure of a report, the more likely it is that information will be transmitted quickly and precisely. On the other hand, the more formalized the structure of a report, the more likely that individuals who are not familiar with the formalization will see the information as simplistic. Those who call for the formalization of all information transmission are those who are most committed to the idea that everything can be generalized, simplified, and (usually) quantified. In the Department of State, such people are assumed to be located in the administrative offices of the Department. Those who complain about the over-simplification in the formalization process are those who are most committed to the idea of the uniqueness and non-comparability of information. Both positions have been well argued, and both have some evidence in their support. Our view is that as groups of users and authors work together towards introducing the kinds of formalization illustrated in Table 1.7, they will be able to increase the speed and precision of their information without paying an excessive price in terms of loss of detail.

We recommend that procedures of this type be adopted with the help of additional personnel. It is clear that the present staff of the country directorate would not allow for the time required to develop and maintain the process. Initially, it might be necessary for an outside contractor to work out the process in more detail in the context of a pilot study. As the process developed for the pilot project leads to more developed practices, Department officials assigned to the country directorate could assist the desk officer or the Country Director in implementing the process. However, each country directorate should work out its own process since the kinds of factors and personalities operating obviate implementation by top officials. The Foreign Service Institute or some other appropriate section should keep histories on the processes so that other country directorates may learn from these experiences.

In our Introduction we argued that some coordination would be necessary to insure the effective implementation of our recommendations. We recommend an official from the Assistant Secretary's office, because of the office's responsibility for both country and regional affairs. The coordinating function would consist of the following responsibilities: insuring for uniformity of formatting procedures, criteria for classification, defini-

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tion of analytic as well as other kinds of reporting (e.g., spot), and coordination of regional concerns as well as "third-country relations" and relations with international organizations. The major responsibility for implementation and initiations would, however, still rest with the various country-directorates.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Functional and Regional Agencies to be Designated by the Assistant Secretary Should Develop and Maintain Centralized Guidance Lists on Reporting Aggregate Economic, Social, Political, Military and International Conditions.

We argued in the last section that a set of reporting topics on aggregate conditions concerning states are more susceptible to formalization and centralization. These topics are typically a primary concern of functional agencies. We suggested that procedures like CERP be used for reporting these topics since (1) the information is relatively formalized and (2) a functional or regional rather than a geographical subculture will define the primary users.

The present CERP system does not necessarily have to serve as the only model for guiding the acquisition of environmental information. However, we do feel that some sort of centralization is both desirable in guideline formulations and the monitoring of the flow of information on those subjects that deal with aggregate information. Such procedures should be developed by those officers with primary policy interests. In the area of economics and military questions, there appears to be a movement towards such operations. We would suggest similar centralization in areas like drug use, education, crime, health, weather, and a variety of regional indicators such as economic cooperation, patterns of tourism and development.

We should say something here about reports on the aggregate "political" conditions concerning a country. As we noted in the Introduction, there is often confusion between the analysis of the country's political system and the analysis of its policy-making process with respect to U.S. interests. We believe that the political environment reporting should focus on the general situation regarding those forces affecting the likelihood of a violent overthrow of the government or civil war. If the question of political instability were clearly distinguished from the analysis of the likely policy actions of a state, as we are suggesting, we believe that much more formal procedures for reporting could be developed and maintained. Prototype studies have already demonstrated how general economic trend information, the systematic reporting of political events and the use of country experts could yield quantitative information predicting the likelihood and kind of political instability in a country.[5]

The compiling offices for these functional and regional lists can serve to develop and increase the predictive potential of the data they received. In this way, some of the latest techniques in measuring aggregate social, economic, political and military conditions within and between nations could be used in the reporting process. Because the lists would come through the country desks, the phrasing of the guidelines and the targeting of the requests would be properly focused when they reached the mission. The country desk would in a sense take on the role of translating from the regional and functional subcultures to the geographic based culture of the mission.

In addition to improving the analytical clarity of the guidelines information, the office concerned with the specific list could have its staff acquire lists from those with the specific functional interests. Moreover, that staff could use the increasing number of centralized information resources provided by regional and global inter-governmental organizations as well as private organizations to provide as much of the required information as possible. One of the frequent complaints about some required reporting was that the information requested was already available in publications that appeared in Washington. The lists could be sent out *after* Washington resources were exhausted so that those in the field would be provided only with the requests for information that could be obtained in no other way.

Again, these designated agencies would be expected to coordinate their work with the designated officials from the Assistant Secretary's office.

RECOMMENDATION 4: The Bureau of Intelligence and Research Should Serve as an Information Broker to Provide Policy-Makers With Better Information Service Concerning Country, Regional and Functional Questions.

We have indicated that the most critical of all users is the higher level official. We have also substantial evidence that it is the behavior of these upper level officials that creates to some extent the overreporting and general anxiety among working level official and field reporters that has been characteristic of junior level foreign service officers. Our argument was that high level policy-makers are too removed from the working level subcultures to understand the reports that are written. As a result, the only time they call upon working level reporting is when there is an "urgent" information question.

[5]William D. Coplin, Michael K. O'Leary and Howard Shapiro. *Final Report of Project QUEST: Case Studies in the Use of Quantitative Techniques of Estimation and Forecasting in Foreign Policy Analysis* (Syracuse: Prince Analysis, Inc., 1974), pp. 41–81.

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Our suggestion is that a variety of extensive information services be provided higher level policy-makers. These services can only be provided if all top officials in the foreign affairs community of the government be given a staff position entirely devoted to servicing information demands of the policy-makers. These individuals would be responsible for retrieving all information that comes through the reporting system, FSI's and the USIA's media reporting service, the wire services, private and public publications. He would also provide aggregate information using the growing number of indicator systems now being maintained to monitor various operations of the Department and the foreign affairs community generally. For example, he might provide profiles of countries under the direction of regional Assistant Secretary by displaying frequencies of reports on political unrest or military activity.

We believe that the job requires a full-time middle-level foreign service officer. The individual providing the information services must have substantive knowledge of the policy matters that confronts the senior level policy-maker. His responsibilities would include: developing a cataloguing system suited to his superior; becoming familiar with the growing number of automated data systems which he could use to satisfy the information needs of the senior level official; and conducting systematic interviews and surveys that could help answer specific questions. His job, in short, would be to provide as broad a range of information to his superior as possible.

This role is played piecemeal by a variety of officials throughout the Department. The staff of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) sometimes plays this role. Frequently, a substantive working-level functional specialist or a country desk officer is asked to play this role. We believe that the INR type role is more readily adapted to the kind of information services we feel could be provided higher level officials and that asking working level people to interpret a little piece of the world to a senior level policy-maker is unrealistic given the different subculture in which each is involved. No matter who plays the role, however, it cannot be divided up across three or four individuals operating at different levels in the Department. It has to be consolidated and customized to the interest and needs of the senior level official. Coordination with the Assistant Secretary's office will help to insure that "policy-relevant" information is provided.

We recommend that INR play the brokerage role because of the tradition of multiple sources of information and analysis in the State Department as well as the general overload experienced by Assistant Secretaries and their staff. Assistant Secretaries can be expected to provide guidance. They should not be expected to be responsible for all of the recommended functions. Experience has taught us that such coordination cannot be given full attention, and it tends to cause political tensions.

We have so far emphasized the desirability of having all our proposed changes instituted according to the special needs of country, regional, and functional offices. We nevertheless feel that relatively high-level concern should be devoted to making sure that *something* is done in all operating sections to improve the communication and reporting process. It seems to us that one feasible administrative arrangement for seeing to action with respect to all the suggestions so far offered is to have this concern be the responsibility of the office of the Under Secretary, flowing downward through the Director of INR. In this fashion, a chain of officials would be charged with generating action to improve the information-handling process, and with keeping track of what that action was. Furthermore, as the collation of procedures was done at the level of INR Director and Under Secretary, these officials could record instances of similar formatting and work for more common formatting which would be mutually acceptable to different divisions of the Department.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Country Directorates and Policy-Makers Should Systematically Evaluate the Field Reporting System.

We have not said much about evaluation because we believe that informal evaluations will be built into the processes described in the first four recommendations. If the kinds of interfaces between producers and users can be developed that we have outlined, evaluation processes will result. However, there is still a need for information on the operation of various information systems so that evaluations can be made.

In this respect, there is clearly more need for systematic information on the number and types of cables being sent. There is already a system by which authors of all incoming and outgoing telegrams and airgrams assign one or more descriptive words to each document. This is the system of Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject (TAGS). Using the TAGS classification system, for example, a monthly report of the frequencies of telegrams in specific categories for each country could be supplied. Some questions that could be answered through the use of such information would be:

—Is the balance among the Administration, Business, Operations, and Consular TAGS consistent with the work-load and operational responsibilities of the post?

—Is the balance among the Economic, Military, Political, Social, and Technology TAGS consistent with reporting requests and requirements levied on the post, and with the nature of the country in which the post is located?

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—Do changes in the levels of the use of particular TAGS groupings reflect the changing importance of the corresponding events and conditions in the country?

—What is the relative balance of the general subject fields for incoming and outgoing messages?

Each of these questions is general, and each is a simple descriptive informational question. This is deliberate, because we do not feel it is appropriate at this point to suggest what the most desirable situation is with respect to these or similar questions.

Part of the reason for the lack of any standards for evaluation at this time is the fact that so far the computer routines with which to analyze the cable and airgram traffic are designed primarily for information retrieval. That is, they are so set up that requests must be made for a listing of individual documents, or numbers of documents, according to specified TAGS. These procedures are quite appropriate for the purposes they were designed to achieve. But TAGS can possibly be more richly used than it has been so far as a general information system. If easier access to traffic analysis by general or specific TAGS categories was possible, desired standards based on feedback on the profiles of reporting from various posts could be developed. If one post has many more administrative and operational TAGS than other similar posts, this might indicate a special concern for checking with Washington by that post. It would likewise be possible to check to see if the proportion of Consular TAGS was commensurate with the consular business done at a given post.

As an illustration of the kind of monitoring that could be done, Table 1.8 presents the principal TAGS used in classifying reports sent from each of our sample posts during a three-month period—one from Western Europe, one from Eastern Europe, one from Latin America, and one from the Middle East.

As mentioned before, there is no basis for evaluating these profiles at this early stage of monitoring. However, it might be noted the PFOR is such a widely used TAGS that it clearly encompasses a wide gamut of topics, and thus may be of questionable usefulness. Other than that it would be up to the various users and reporters from the countries concerned to evaluate whether the profiles as sketched in Table 1.8 correspond to the amount of effort in various areas of reporting.

TABLE 1.8.—THE MOST FREQUENT TAGS (AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL REPORTS) FROM THE FOUR POSTS

Western Europe		*Eastern Europe*		*Latin America*		*Middle East*	
PFOR	14%	PFOR	14%	PFOR	9%	PFOR	11%
EFIN	8%	PINT	5%	SNAR	5%	PINS	11%
PGOV	7%	ETRD	3%	EFIN	4%	EAIR	4%
ENRG	4%	EFIN	2%	PINT	3%	EFIN	3%
TECH	4%	PINS	2%	ETRD	2%	ENRG	2%

What we would like to see is that the questions and information of the type we have suggested should be the subject of a dialogue between the administrative and policy-making officials in Washington and the respective posts in order to try to achieve a consensus as to what the proper composition of traffic should be, and what changes should be made if it deviates from generally agreed consensus.

We also feel that the use of telephone surveys on a random sample of users could yield vital information about the effectiveness of the kinds of procedures described earlier. Information on the currency of the information network maps or on the degree to which functional users thought their formal information requirements were being met could be quickly elicited. While the Inspector General's investigation of posts is generally valuable, it is not sufficient to maintain a high level of guidance and feedback among users. Systematic sampling techniques could be used to select cables and content analysis procedures to determine the degree to which more structured formats were being used.

We suggest that the information be collected and made available to the level of user and producer involved. Hence, upper level officials would use TAGS to monitor the general flow of communications while country directors or functional offices might use the telephone or survey for more disaggregate types of questions (e.g., is a given guideline meaningful or are reports from post X relevant to a given interest). By getting those involved with the information system to carry out the evaluations and keeping the information generated by those evaluations among those concerned, the threatening overtones of summary evaluations can be avoided.

A word should be said on the evaluations of the individual providing the information services to the top level officers. Because the scholarly and popular literature is so full of theories and stories about the withholding and biasing of information going to top level officials, we suggest that some form of evaluation be developed for those serving higher level policy-makers. This evaluation could take the form of informal interviews with information consultants or with lower-level bureaucrats most relevant to the interests of the senior official. Questionnaires and interviews of the senior level officials might also serve to insure that the information broker for the senior official is providing the coverage that the official needs.

RECOMMENDATION 6: The Foreign Service Institute in Coordination with the Central Intelligence Agency's Intelligence Insti-

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tute Should Devote More of its Resources to Improving Reporting.

The Foreign Service Institute has a tremendous ability to improve reporting and the use of information in the Department of State.

At present, the Foreign Service Institute offers a wide curriculum of courses of varying lengths for officers from the entry level up through those holding some of the most responsible positions in the foreign service. Furthermore, the curriculum contains a rich mixture of specific operational topics, as well as a sound infusion of social science. However, except for a recent minicourse, scarcely any of this curriculum is devoted to improving the reporting process. Almost without exception the officers whom we interviewed felt that little, if anything, could be done by way of formal training to improve the foreign service reporting process. A few did suggest that training in writing might be helpful on this score.

In our view, however, this situation is far from desirable given the fact that the typical FSO spends about sixty percent of his career overseas, and that, according to our interviews, many officers spent one-half or more of their time on the reporting process. See Table 1.9. There is a heavy responsibility on officers for gathering information, putting it into the best form for communication, and for administering and directing the reporting process.

At the very least, therefore, the FSI should attempt to bring considerations of training into its various courses, as appropriate. Specific suggestions for curriculum change include:

—The junior officer's course should include information and exercises on the content, the readership, and variety of uses of foreign service reporting. It should also include some training in how to acquire information—selective reading of newspapers and government documents, effective interviewing techniques, and similar techniques.

—Courses in economics, administration, and consular matters should contain relevant consideration of the appropriate reporting matters.

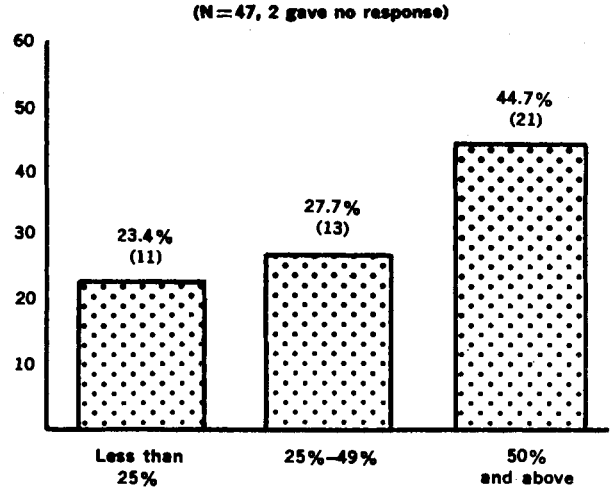
—The academic courses in quantitative methods and social science theories should concern themselves with the content and methods of reporting. Guest lecturers should be asked to relate, if possible, their presentation to possible uses in the reporting process.

—Special courses should be introduced on information handling, storage, and retrieval that would be relevant to the reporting process. FSOs should understand the rationale and the uses of TAGS and similar information-handling procedures.

Finally, we might note that by "courses" we do not necessarily mean the traditional arrangement of FSOs attending the FSI. Many of the techniques of the reporting process (for example, the use of formal interview techniques to assess the consensus of experts on a given topic) or information processes within the department (for example, the possible uses of TAGS) could easily lend themselves to being taught through self-instructional learning packages which would be administered by the FSI and which could be "taken" by FSOs at posts around the world as well as in Washington.

In fact, the Foreign Service Institute has to be more heavily involved in developing the educational materials necessary to disseminate new ideas in the reporting and information handling. It must develop the capacity to educate all levels of foreign service officers in new developments like the TAGS system or, if it were to be implemented, the use of interviewing and group processes to develop formalized reporting schemes. To accomplish this, the FSI must realize the importance of producing case studies, user's manuals, self-instructional guides, and other concrete materials, as appropriate for the particular technique or procedure. Officers will truly "learn" these new techniques, in the sense of actually using them in their jobs, only when they have relevant illustrative examples and specific instructions available while they are performing their duties. These materials, whenever possible, should be used in formal FSI classes. But they should also be made available to officers unable to attend the classes, and they should certainly be designed so that students in FSI courses will keep them and use them when they return to work.

TABLE 1.9.—PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT REPORTING, ALL PRODUCTS
(N=47, 2 gave no response)



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Relevant Literature

The Problem

When Henry Kissinger became Secretary of State he noted that the information provided by Foreign Service officers was critical for the conduct of U.S. foreign policy. He stated that:

> We must have timely, accurate, and useful reporting from abroad. Such reporting should be characterized by: (a) analysis, not just description; (b) quality over quantity; (c) open and free expression of differing views.[1]

The Secretary's concern over information points to its critical importance for the day-to-day operations of the foreign policy making bureaucracy.

In another context, Kissinger has suggested that "if one wants to understand what the government is likely to do, one has to understand the bureaucratics of the problem."[2] Furthermore, he suggests that "if one wishes to influence American foreign policy, the time to do so is in the formative period, and the level is the middle level of the bureaucracy . . ."[3] Moreover, he suggests, it is virtually impossible to implement a policy decision without the approval of the bureaucracy.

The Foreign Service comprises the largest and most significant portion of the foreign policy bureaucracy. Furthermore, it is significant to note that the middle level bureaucrats Kissinger is describing are more dependent upon the information produced by foreign service officers than are their superiors in the decision-making hierarchy.

Given the immediate interest in foreign service reporting within the State Department and the importance of this information, a review of the foreign service reporting system would appear to be critical for an understanding of foreign policy. In this chapter we will focus on the issues central to our study by: (1) reviewing previous studies and evaluations specifically focusing on the quality of Foreign Service reporting, as well as the uses made of the information produced by foreign service officers, and (2) reviewing some of the more general literature on the uses made of information by the decision-makers responsible for the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy. This critical review of the literature will concentrate specifically on two dimensions: (a) what the literature can tell us about the quality of, problems of producing, and the uses made of Foreign Service reporting, and (b) the organizational/bureaucratic problems related to the production and use of information related to foreign policy decision-making.

[1]Henry A. Kissinger, "Reporting From the Field," *Departmental Notice*, State Department, Washington, D.C., November 7, 1973, p. 1.

[2]Henry A. Kissinger, "Bureaucracy and Policymaking: The Effect of Insiders and Outsiders on the Policy Process," in *Readings in American Foreign Policy: A Bureaucratic Perspective*, ed. by Morton H. Halperin and Arnold Kanter. Boston: Little and Brown Co., 1973, p. 84.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 85.

Central Issues to be Examined

The literature has raised a number of important issues, which will be examined empirically in later chapters.

1. What are the major reporting responsibilities of foreign service officers?
2. What kinds of information (reporting) are of most interest to decision-makers and other end-users in Washington?
3. What determines whether information will be useful to the end-users in Washington? What are the differences among end-users in terms of what is found to be useful?
4. Are there components of the Foreign Service reporting system, or the bureaucracy of which it is a part, that affect the kind of reporting that is produced (e.g., spot reporting, descriptive reporting, analytic reporting) by Foreign Service officers as well as the use that is made of this information in Washington?
5. What other kinds of information are considered to be of importance to end-users in Washington?
6. Are there changes in the Foreign Service reporting system that could be implemented in order to maximize its usefulness in Washington?

Defining the Reporting Responsibilities of Foreign Service Officers

"In contrast to career officials in the military services and in the C.I.A., Foreign Service officers are agreed on the essence of their profession . . ."[4] Charles W. Thayer, a career Foreign Service officer, suggests that the U.S. embassy, and hence the Foreign Service officer, is responsible for carrying out four functions: to report on what was happening in a foreign country, to represent the U.S. before foreign governments, to negotiate U.S. government business, and to look after American lives and property.[5]

More specifically, in the area of reporting and the gathering of intelligence information, a 1973 Inspector General's report notes that political reporting should be aimed at:

a) Describing a country's political system.

b) Monitoring the status of the systems insofar as it related to U.S. interests.

c) Assessing the results of all U.S. activities in a foreign country and the significance of these results for our understanding of the country and the quality of our monitoring.[6]

In the area of economic reporting this same report notes that economic reporting should be related to the structure and mechanisms of a foreign country's economic system, and to the movement of scarce goods and services.[7] "The U.S. pursues its economic objectives through . . . export promotion, trade, transport, monetary arrangements, foreign investment and (the) safeguarding of energy supplies."[8] Presumably, economic reporting should be related to each of these U.S. interests. In meeting the economic and political needs related to U.S. interests, it is important to collect data on what is happening in a country, both substantive and biographic data, as well as developing good formal and informal contacts with officials in a country to insure that accurate information is being reported.

In the economic area, the State Department in consultation with domestic agencies in Washington has developed a Comprehensive Economic Reporting Program. For all foreign missions, this has provided guidelines for economic and commercial reporting. In the political area, more general guidelines have been developed (PARA, CASP, CIRL). These guidelines are to aid the embassy in providing information which will be found useful in Washington.

What Kinds of Information are of Most Interest to End-Users

There is some debate in the literature and in previous studies of Foreign Service reporting concerning what kind of reporting should be encouraged. Should it be descriptive, analytic, or some combination of these two? From another perspective, should reporting be done exclusively on the initiative of the embassy and the individual officer, or should there be some "required reporting" as well? Required reporting can take two forms: (a) overall requirements for all embassies, and (b) regular reports required by a particular country directorate.

In terms of determining whether reporting should be more descriptive or more analytic in nature, it is clear that the Inspector General's comments about the importance of assessing trends is consistent with Secretary Kissinger's views:

> Over the last four years I have been struck . . . by the sheer volume of information which flows into the State Department, contrasted with the paucity of good analytic material. . . . Mere reportage of events which have already taken place and about which in many cases we can do little is not sufficient. For that reporting to be useful to me, I require not only information on what is happening, but your most thoughtful and careful analysis of why it is happening, what it means for U.S. policy, and the directions in which you see events going.[9]

In a report prepared for the Department of State, Luigi Einaudi confirms the notion that little analytic reporting actually reaches Washington; when there is analysis contained in a Foreign Service report, it tends to be informal and judgmental.[10] He notes that:

> The traffic between the embassy and Washington was devoted largely to "bureaucratic housekeeping," to reports centered on immediate events or personalities, or to the transmission of unanalyzed materials, such as the seemingly endless tables of quantitative indicators employed in AID justifications.[11]

[4]Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*. Washington, D.C. The Brookings Institution, 1974, p. 36.

[5]Charles Thayer, *Diplomat*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1959, p. 81.

[6]Edward M. Rowell and Andrew G. Thoms, Jr., *Special Study: The Political Function of the Foreign Service*, Office of the Inspector General, State Department, Washington, D.C., July, 1973, pp. 7–8.

[7]*Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

[8]*Ibid.*

[9]Kissinger, "Reporting," *op. cit.*, p. 1.

[10]Luigi Einaudi, *Assistance to Peru: A Case Study, 1963–68*. Santa Monica, California: RAND, January, 1974, pp. 36 and 42.

[11]*Ibid.*, p. 42.

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His specific study of Peru also indicates that the State Department files he examined contain "few serious attempts to spell out different U.S. interests in Peru and to relate them concretely to courses of action designed to attain specific objectives."[12] The parallels between this description and Secretary Kissinger's views are striking.

However, the end-users in Washington are not uniformly in favor of receiving more analytic reporting from the field. On the basis of his interviews with officials in Washington Roger Hilsman reports that "intelligence should be defined not as 'evaluated information,' but simply as 'information.' "

> Intelligence ought to collect facts, organize them, and assign weight to the body of facts collected and organized. If intelligence did this, they would be doing a worth-while job—others parts of the Department would then have an independent check on their own work. What to do about a problem, however, was a function of the policy people, who had had practical experience with this sort of thing.[13]

In other words, Hilsman found that the officials he interviewed advocated a division of labor between collected and reporting information on the one hand and analyzing it and reaching decisions on the other.

This "division of labor" is just what Einaudi and Kissinger seem to be criticizing. The perspective advocated by Hilsman would logically lead one to contend that analysis should be done in Washington where an official can draw upon many different sources of information and a number of different country-specific reports within a particular region. Furthermore, this perspective would argue that the analysts in Washington are in a better position—in terms of information available to them—to make the kind of analytic judgments the Secretary of State is most interested in.

The other dimension of providing the kind of information end-users are most interested in is whether required reporting should be implemented to insure the desired kind of information being provided by the officers in the field. Einaudi found that the existing systems of required reporting do not succeed in producing analytic information.

> Even the Country Analysis and Strategy Paper (CASP) process instituted in the mid-1960's seems to have largely involved a listing of interests with relatively little discussion of how these interests relate and no indication that they occasionally conflict. Despite the recurrent nature of the problems, there was little effort to establish a clear time frame for analysis beyond the vagaries imposed by the Fiscal Year, or to evaluate the consequences of acts designed to foster one objective or the potential for achieving other objectives.[14]

Along similar lines, William I. Bacchus notes that the PARA reporting system was not successful in providing long term trend information of the kind the Secretary advocated.

> Even those developing PARA, however, agreed that in its current form it was too simplistic. Critics noted that . . . the fatal flaw was a misunderstanding of the worth of country planning documents, which were of value only on the day written due to continuously changing situations.[15]

Bacchus goes on to highlight what appears to us to be one of the major flaws of a required reporting system:

> In this view, the drive for centralization, coordination, and control at the top, while perhaps necessary, would be fulfilled only at the expense of reducing the weight and quality of State's input into the broader policy-making process. This would be shortsighted, and would disrupt the department and would ultimately make corrective action necessary.[16]

Coplin and O'Leary try to strike a middle ground between required and self-initiated reporting. With respect to PARA, they also found that it was of little help in formulating strategies for achieving policy outcomes.[17] Required reporting seems to be aimed at providing analytic information on the most significant aspects of complex environments: regional affairs, international organizations, and country affairs. Some officials were inclined to accept this solution because they were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information and found that the useful, analytic material was lacking. In their study of INR, Coplin and O'Leary found most officials in the State Department involved in the policy-making process are predisposed toward attempting to increase the amount of information available to them instead of trying to constrain the volume coming in.

> The solution to the problem, therefore, depends on providing information that is sufficiently structured so that it can be used efficiently, but

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Roger Hilsman, *Strategic Intelligence and National Decisions.* Glencoe, Illinois; The Free Press, 1956, pp. 52 and 55.

[14] Einaudi, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[15] William I. Bacchus, *Foreign Policy and the Bureaucratic Process.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974, p. 283.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] William D. Coplin and Michael K. O'Leary, *Case Studies in the Use of Quantitative Techniques of Estimation and Forecasting in Foreign Policy Analysis,* Conducted by Prince Analysis, Inc. for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, 1974, p. 132.

not so structured as to prevent its being used flexibly.[18]

This position would seem to take into account the fact that some sort of systematic, routinized reporting may be helpful in achieving the goal of providing analytic information that is useful to decision-makers while at the same time not becoming so structured as to not be flexible to the day-to-day needs which arise.

One of the approaches suggested in the 1973 Inspector General's report seems to adopt the approach suggested by Coplin and O'Leary. This report suggests that the section chiefs in each mission compile with their subordinates one year plans for reporting based on a knowledge communicated from Washington of the major U.S. goals for a particular country. Specifically, each section chief was responsible for compiling section plans. The plans were to allow for probable special, and as yet unknown, demands Washington would place on the mission.[19] Moreover, the plans were to be reviewed periodically throughout the year, and revised in order to meet immediate needs.

Some Foreign Service officers believe that required reporting is just what is needed in the area of political reporting. James Ford Cooper noted that ". . . political reporting is sadly deficient in systematically providing the Department of State with relevant information, analysis, and interpretation."[20] He suggests that the deficiency could be remedied by the following proposal:

> 1. The Department of State should develop a framework of political analysis appropriate to the political information requirements of the Department. It should be the responsibility of a small working group of FSOs with experience.
>
> 2. After developing an appropriate framework the working group should develop a political reporting schedule, analogous to the Comprehensive Economic Reporting Program schedule.[21]

The Department of State's study, *Diplomacy for the 1970's*, concludes that the Department's experience with required reporting has been a useful one. The experience to date should serve as a foundation upon which to develop present systems and to create new ones. This study envisions a system with world-wide applicability that is capable of orienting and directing the programs and policies of the entire foreign affairs community.[22]

[18] *Ibid.*

[19] Rowell and Thoms, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[20] James Ford Cooper, "Toward Professional Political Analysis in Foreign Service Reporting," *Foreign Service Journal*, February, 1971, p. 24.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Diplomacy for the 1970's, op. cit.*, p. 453.

What Determines Whether or Not Information Will be Useful to End-Users in Washington

Our analysis up to this point has been based on a literature which focuses almost exclusively on the quality, quantity, and structure of Foreign Service reporting. However, it is important to underline the fact that this only represents half of the puzzle surrounding the overall Foreign Service reporting system: the production and use made of field reporting. The use made of field reports is not only dependent upon the factors influencing the production of this information. Studies which focus primarily on this part of the system ignore two important dimensions central to an understanding of the overall system. (1) Effective use is dependent upon organizational interests and constraints as well as the quality of the information produced in the field. (2) The quality of the relationship between producers and consumers (i.e., the feedback and guidance given to the field as well as the quality of overall communication) affects the accuracy, timeliness, and quality of the information produced.

EXPERTISE

On the whole bureaucrats and decision-makers are hired on the basis of their expertise and knowledge in a given field. To a great extent their credibility, prestige, and legitimacy is related to the reliance of their superiors upon their knowledge. As a result, many decision-makers are reluctant to collect or contract for information from outside their agency or even from a different department within their own agency. Individual decision-makers appear to feel more comfortable with traditional channels, whose value they can assess, than with an agency or individual with whom they have had little or no experience, and for whom the decision-maker has no basis upon which to judge the reliability of the information provided. This conclusion is underlined by Irving Horowitz in his study of "Project Camelot."

> . . . It is a contention that conventional political channels are sufficient to yield the information desired or deemed necessary on policy grounds. It further reflects a latent State Department preference for politics as an art rather than politics as an object of science.[23]

Coplin and O'Leary also found this preference for expertise in their study of INR. "The system we present is based on the analyst's preference for using experts as one of his major sources of informa-

[23] Irving L. Horowitz, *The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot.* Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1967, p. 20.

tion. . . ."[24] Halperin also points to the strong preference of career officials to defer to expertise:

> Their own involvement and influence depend in large part on other officials deferring to their expertise. To challenge the expertise of another career group is to risk retaliation. Thus, Foreign Service officers have been extremely reluctant to challenge the military on strategic questions or to challenge Treasury officials on economic matters.[25]

Officials defer to expertise in the expectation that they will be likewise deferred to in what is considered to be their specialty. Without a doubt, this has a major effect on the information that will be considered to be useful and meaningful by decision-makers and other end-users in Washington.

Specifically, in terms of Foreign Service reporting, there is some feeling among FSO's that the reporting system is not designed to directly influence policy decisions, instead it is to provide data so that "experts" will be in a position to make judgments.

> The Foreign Service has generally conceived of its reporting as being primarily informational, i.e., designed to place the necessary information (and much that is unnecessary) in the hands of Washington officials.[26]

PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Manfred Halpern points out that deference to expert opinion is based on belief that the calculation and the process of reasoning by which experts reach their conclusion is impenetrable by outsiders.[27] To the extent that (1) these experts are members of the bureaucracy and (2) decision-makers rely on "their expert opinion," the bureaucracy is successful in protecting its interests and position of power. Robert L. Lovett, who once served in the State Department and the Defense Department, clearly states the bureaucratic organizational point of view in this area:

> Civilian and military executives alike should stick to the fields in which they have special training and aptitudes; if they do, the chance of making the machinery work is excellent. One of the few humans as exasperating as a civilian businessman who suddenly becomes an expert on military strategy is the military adviser who magically becomes an expert in some highly sophisticated production problem in which he has no background or experience.[28]

It is also clear the the judgment of what constitutes "meaningful information" is more closely related to the questions of values and insulation of power, than it is to science or the "objective, technical" quality of information. Thus, what is meaningful is closely tied to the individual decision-maker and his values. With respect to this point, Richard Rose contends that:

> The more salient the information is to the core values of the policy-maker, the greater his use for it. The greater the incongruence between the value connotations of information and the values of a policy-maker, the less is his use for it.[29]

Sartori underlines the same point:

> The stronger and more interconnected a policy-maker's values, i.e., the more ideological his outlook, then the less a man's mind is open to new sources of information. He does not need to be told more, because he knows deductively and as a matter of belief, all that he needs to know. The most structured intellectual outlook, i.e., the most ideological, is likely to be that of the expert, whose professional training will make him predisposed to recognize some types of information and not others . . .[30]

It should therefore be clear that the expert has definite bias towards the information he has not produced himself, information he finds potentially threatening, and information which is not consistent with his "core values." Given this analysis, it would seem logical to believe that on the basis of his training, an expert will selectively collect and report information according to his intuition for what seems to be right and what seems to be wrong. This represents a definite potential source of distortion affecting the use of information, e.g., end-users in Washington.

Halperin and Thomson both have found this type of bias in their studies of foreign policy decision-makers. Bureaucrats use information to serve their interests and the interest of their organization. Halperin contends that in some cases bureaucrats: (1) report only those facts which support the stand they are taking, and (2) structure the reporting of information so that senior-participants will see what you want them to see and no other information. The history of American involvement in Vietnam serves to illustrate both of these types of distortion. Based on his experiences in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, James C. Thomson contends that U.S. involvement in Vietnam illustrates bureaucratic politics at work. He argues that the substantial American commitment seems to have been the intention of few, if any, in the early

[24] Coplin and O'Leary, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[25] Halperin, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

[26] Michael A. Michaud, "Communication and Controversy: Thoughts on the Future of Foreign Service Reporting," *Foreign Service Journal*, October, 1968, p. 29.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 148.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Richard Rose, in *Social Policies and Social Indicators*, ed. Andrew Schonfeld and Stella Shaw. New York: Social Science Research Council, 1973, p. 134.

[30] *Ibid.*

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1960s. The commitment was made because of the firm State Department stand developed in the 1950s; the bureau's orientation and information were simply passed on to the Kennedy administration without careful review.[31]

Halperin expands on Thomson's analysis by illustrating how partial information was distributed concerning the Vietnam War according to the interests of the military establishment.

> The quantity of intelligence information produced in American government each day is overwhelming. . . . Some of this information, such as the CIA daily report for the President and the State Department summary of major cables, almost inevitably reaches the President. Other information such as pouched reports from embassies about economic and social conditions are unlikely to reach any senior participants at all. Thus, a participant can select information which is likely to reach the President by putting it into channels which will assure getting to the top. Other information can be reported in more routine ways that almost guarantees that it will not surface before senior participants . . . (T)his technique was used by the U.S. military commanders in Vietnam to signal either optimism or pessimism.[32]

From 1964–65 to 1966–67, for example, the U.S. military officials in Saigon advocated the increase of U.S. troop strength. As a result they tried to bring every piece of evidence to the attention of senior officials and the President that could show that enemy infiltration was increasing. The enemy's capability to recruit forces from the South Vietnamese population was also emphasized. Then, when the decision was made that the U.S. was "winning" the high-level information coming out of Saigon changed radically. The new information emphasized the enemy's reduced capability to recruit, and slowdown in infiltration due to our bombing. The Bay of Pigs invasion is also an example of limited information being sent to the President and senior decision-makers. President Kennedy was sent only information which supported the military's contention that the U.S. should go through with a full scale invasion of Cuba. As a result of the "fiasco" of the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy ordered a full scale investigation to determine why he received limited information.[33]

Alexander George concludes that the situations described above result from a decision-maker relying on a single source of information as the basis for an important decision.[34] He contends that:

> "U.S. leaders have allowed themselves in several crises to remain dependent upon a single channel of information. . . . Among the many malfunctions of the policy-making process evident in the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961 was the fact that Kennedy and his advisers, including the JCS, depended on the CIA's estimates of Castro's military and political strength. Both were miscalculated and underestimated by the CIA."[35]

In confirming the desire to rely on perceived expertise George concludes that "Washington's dependence on single channels of intelligence cannot be explained on the ground that the crisis developed too swiftly to initiate additional channels."[36]

Our discussion of "expertise" and the accepted role of the expert is of critical importance for our understanding of the Foreign Service reporting system. This system is designed to serve many agencies and bureaus in Washington. Cables and airgrams sent by an embassy are routed to many different departments. Thus, in order to understand the overall effectiveness of this system, one must concentrate on the factors which determine its use.

George's analysis also confirms Halperin's notion that organizations, at times, only report facts which support the position they want a decision-maker to adopt, or a position which they perceive their organization has a stake in. "In this variant of the workings of bureaucratic politics the other actors in effect 'gang up' on the chief executive and try to sell him the policy they have worked out among themselves."[37] Clark Clifford gives a clear account of this kind of practice:

> The idea was that the six or eight of us would try to come to an understanding among ourselves on what directions we would like the President to take on any given issue. And, then, . . . we would try to steer the President in that direction . . .[38]

Wilensky argues that the short-term nature of foreign policy-making aids in reinforcing the central place given to the "expert."

> . . . Where the end is knowledge, as in the scientific community, time serves as intelligence; where the end is something else—as in practically every organization but those devoted entirely to scholarship—time subverts intelligence, since, in the long run, the central institutionalized structures and aims (the maintenance of authority, the

[31] James C. Thomson, "How Could Vietnam Happen? An Autopsy", in Halperin and Kanter, editors, *Readings in American Foreign Policy, A Bureaucratic Perspective.* Boston: Little and Brown Company, 1973, p. 98.

[32] Halperin, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[33] David Wise and Thomas B. Ross, *The Invisible Government.* New York: Vintage Books, 1974, p. 185.

[34] Alexander L. George, "The Case for Multiple Advocacy in Making Foreign Policy," *The American Political Science Review*, September, 1972, p. 777.

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 778.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 775.

[38] *Ibid.*

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accommodation of departmental rivalries, the service of established doctrine) will prevail.[39]

Another dimension of protecting organizational interests is the tendency to report a single, mainstream point of view. In terms of Foreign Service reporting this has the effect of pressuring Foreign Service officers to report information which will support the embassy's point of view. In other words, to have the maximum affect in Washington some Ambassadors and Deputy Chiefs of Missions (DCMs) feel that it is best to speak with a single voice. One FSO writes that:

> Reporting officers are under pressure from their superiors (and more subtle pressure from Washington) to make their reports conform to the post's previous reporting, and to the views of senior officials. The result is to encourage adherence to the 'conventional wisdom' or the 'establishment' point of view. Equally unfortunate is that this emphasis requires that differences of opinion be resolved before the report is sent, and that those differences not be shown in the report.[40]

This tendency to conform to a single point of view reinforces the value placed on the knowledge of the "experts."

Finally, in outlining the dimensions of organizational interest and its relationship to information handling, Halperin states that these are tactics often employed by a bureaucracy to defend its perceived interests. (1) Reporting only those facts that support the stand they are taking; (2) Structuring the reporting of information so that senior-participants will see what the organization wants them to see and not other information; (3) Not reporting facts which show danger; (4) Preparing careful and detailed studies which present facts in what appears to be an authoritative manner in order to bolster the organizational position; (5) Requesting a study from those who will give the "desired conclusion;" (6) Keep officials away from senior-participants who might report facts that the organization wants suppressed; (7) Expose participants informally to those who hold the "correct views;" (8) Asking other governments to report facts that the organization considers to be valuable; (9) Advise others on what to say; (10) Going around formal channels; and (11) Distort facts if necessary. These are all cases of maneuvering and selecting information in order to maximize an organizational interest. In contrast to decision-makers who are not open to alternative sources of information, these factors just cited may apply to the producers and consumers of information.

[39]Harold Wilensky, *Organizational Intelligence*. New York: Basic Books, 1967, p. 77.

[40]Michaud, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

COMMUNICATION BLOCKAGES AND PROBLEMS

The tendency to rely on expertise and known inputs is complicated and exasperated by the problems involved in establishing good communication between Washington and the field. A second dimension of the problem is the difficulties that different agencies have in establishing a good relationship.

The Relationship Between Washington and the Field

The problems involved in establishing a good relationship between the Department and the field has a long history. In 1948, the Hoover Commission recommended that the personnel of the State Department be integrated with the Foreign Service, and this was again urged in 1949 by the Rowe-Ramspeck-DeCourcy Advisory Committee on Personnel.[41] Robert Murphy, a career Foreign Service officer, noted that little positive action had been taken on these measures during his career in the field.[42] There were sharp differences between the Foreign Service and the Department, poor coordination, and jurisdictional conflicts.

By allowing many FSOs to take State Department positions in the 1950's, the problem of coordination and communication was not solved. The most recent problems seem to lie in feedback from Washington to the field. The 1973 Inspector General's report points to the fact that communication seems to be a one-way street: all from the field to Washington. The report states:

> There also is a tendency to restrict distribution of information on Washington's negotiating plans and supporting activities. This is understandable since confidentiality often is crucial to successful negotiation. But it has embarrassed overseas representatives when they are ignorant of major U.S. moves which their friends and counterparts in foreign governments knew of. It undermines the potential usefulness of overseas personnel.[43]

This report points out that regular exchange between Washington and the field is necessary for good and effective coordination.[44]

Another State Department study also suggests that the problem of communication and coordination between Washington and the field is crucial. Much like the Inspector General's report, it recommends more planning in the collecting and reporting of information. This study also suggests that the problem of coordination is closely tied to providing

[41]Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1964, p. 452.

[42]*Ibid.*

[43]Rowell and Thoms, *op. cit.*, pp. 36–37.

[44]*Ibid.*, p. 39.

an "adequate" amount of analysis of information. The conclusion was that the Ambassador and DCM establish and implement methods

> for reviewing the need of the mission and the government for information of all kinds, decide how it was to be collected, and to relate it as necessary to the overall foreign affairs information requirements system which should be established. . . .[45]

Beyond keeping the field informed of the decisions that are being made in Washington, another type of feedback and guidance is also of critical importance: evaluation of reporting and review of reporting requirements. The 1970 study entitled *Diplomacy for the 1970's* also deals with this latter problem. The authors suggest:

> The evaluation of roles and functions of our diplomatic missions cannot be performed as a one-time operation. A continuing review mechanism is required . . .[46]

Given this problem of coordination, it would seem logical that certain questions flow directly from it. (1) Is the quality of information in terms of its usefulness to decision-makers affected by this lack of coordination; and (2) is this tendency proof of the fact that we should be spending a great deal of our time in analyzing the Foreign Service reporting system focusing on end-users and the use they make of this information?

The Relationship Between Lower Level Bureaucrats and Decision-makers, as well as the Field

The problem of coordination is related to shared conceptions of goals, and of how policy is to be made. This, in turn, implies the need for a shared and clear understanding of policy. A "clear understanding of policy" is central to the communication relationship between lower level bureaucrats and their superiors as well as lower level bureaucrats in the field.

Einaudi, for example, is careful to point out that embassy reporting should not bear the brunt of the blame for the fact that more analytic reporting is not produced. The intelligence community itself only focused on spot reporting and short term "political froth," rather than long term research or analysis directly related to key policy issues.[47] "Research contracted outside the government also seems to have lacked a policy focus."[48] Thus, one must conclude that the government has not been successful in communicating its needs or requirements. As a result, it has only received technical reports, general information, and abstract studies. Furthermore, the Einaudi study points to the fact that there were fundamental misperceptions as to what U.S. policy was and what it should be. As a result, no one felt that they could understand what it was necessary to do.[49] This represents a fundamental break-down in communication which reinforces the critical importance given to the "expert" in a given area.

The consequences of the communication failure and the traditional reliance upon expertise are grave: there is a surprising level of ignorance with respect to the problems that we, as a nation, face. The 1968–69 annual report of the Social Science Research Council made this point quite emphatically:

> The difficulty we as a nation face in solving our problems is not will but knowledge.[50]

The State Department is no exception to this finding.

> The information needs of State are not met and technology has been inadequately applied. Both the Secretary and the ambassadors are deprived of the department's best information . . .[51]

Yet, there is a crisis of confidence with respect to developing knowledge capabilities. Robert A. Levine reports that bureaucrats and decision-makers have consistently resisted developing information producing capabilities.[52]

Another dimension of the problem of shared images of what policy consists of is directly related to high-level decision-makers. Before becoming Secretary of State, Kissinger wrote that decision-makers responsible for foreign policy had a non-policy oriented perspective. Leaders spend too much time getting elected and cannot think about policy alternatives; furthermore, the typical leader has no image of what he wants to do when he is in office.[53] The lower-level bureaucrat and FSO is forced to rely on his intuition and experience; therefore, "usefulness" cannot be built into the system because the top level decision-makers are often not sure of what their priorities and interests are.

Moreover, many high level decision-makers are not sure that the lower-level decision-makers or the bureaucracy should become directly involved with decision-making. There are a number of important factors which are operational in determining this

[45] *Diplomacy for the 1970's, op. cit.*, p. 457.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 462.
[47] Einaudi, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[48] *Ibid.*

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.
[50] Daniel P. Moynihan, *Coping*, New York: Random House, 1973, p. 267.
[51] Daniel O'Flaherty, "Problems in the Conduct of United States Foreign Policy: A Compilation of Recent Critiques," Paper prepared for the Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy, May, 1974, p. 14.
[52] Robert A. Levine, *Public Planning: Failure and Redirection*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1972) p. 149.
[53] Kissinger, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

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attitude. (1) The desire to avoid elaborate distribution procedures; everyone in Washington should not know that a decision is being made. The present Foreign Service reporting system requires many officials to give clearance and "sign off" information before it can be sent to Washington;[54] (2) This elaborate procedure for transmitting information increases the likelihood that information will be "leaked." Given this likelihood and the traditional concern for secrecy in foreign policy circles,[55] it is logical to exclude the bureaucracy from central decision-making; and (3) The bureaucracy is most effective in dealing with routine matters that do not require creativity and innovation.[56] In this sense, the bureaucracy may become an obstacle to effective decision-making. As National Security Advisor, Kissinger summed all of these components quite well, when he stated:

> Because management of the bureaucracy takes so much energy and precisely because changing course is so difficult, many of the most important decisions are taken by extra-bureaucratic means. Some of the key decisions are kept to a very small circle while the bureaucracy happily continues working away in ignorance of the fact that a decision is being made in a particular area. One reason for keeping the decisions to small groups is that when bureaucracies are so unwieldy and when their internal morale becomes a serious problem, an unpopular decision may be fought by brutal means, such as leaks to the press or to congressional committees. Thus, the only way secrecy can be kept is to exclude from the making of the decision all those who are theoretically charged with carrying it out. . . . The relevant part of the bureaucracy, because it is being excluded from the making of a particular decision, continues with great intensity sending out cables, thereby distorting the effort with the best intentions in the world. You cannot stop them from doing this because you do not tell them what is going on.[57]

This attitude reinforces both the communication blockages which exist and the tendency for the bureaucracy to push for its own interests over any other ones.

Communication Blockages Between Agencies

Another factor affecting the effective use of information is communication between the end-users in different agencies in Washington. In the foreign policy area, this failure of communication can affect our relations with foreign countries and intergovernmental attempts to coordinate a uniform policy.

David Wise illustrates that communication has been particularly bad between the State Department and the CIA. This type of communication failure can take many different forms: (1) The State Department and the CIA pursuing two different policies, (2) the CIA pursuing a policy without the knowledge of the State Department or vice versa, (3) both agencies claiming that they are pursuing the policy of the United States.

U.S. involvement in Burma in the early 1950's illustrates this type of communication failure. 12,000 Nationalist Chinese troops were in Burma in defiance of the Burmese government. Ambassador Sebald assured the government that the CIA was not supporting these troops. He made this assurance on the basis of conferences with his superiors in the State Department. David Wise reports:

> From the very first days of his two-year assignment in Rangoon, Sebald regularly warned Washington that the troops threatened Burma's very existence as a parliamentary democracy which was friendly to the West. If U.S. relations were not to turn completely sour, he insisted, the Nationalists would have to be removed. Each time, the State Department responded that the U.S. was not involved, and that Burma should logically complain to Taipeh.[58]

It turned out that the CIA was deeply involved in what it perceived to be an anti-Communist movement in Burma.

> The CIA was intimately involved with the Nationalist troops, but Sebald's superiors—men just below John Foster Dulles, were officially ignorant of the fact. Knowledge of the project was so closely held within the CIA, that it even escaped the notice of Robert Amory, the deputy director of intelligence . . . Yet on Burma he could honestly protest to his colleagues in other branches of the government that the CIA was innocent.[59]

Wise concludes that the result of this incident was that the Burmese government moved closer to Peking—despite its initially pro-Western orientation, and that Sebald returned to the U.S. as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs with the object of opening up lines of communication between the State Department and the CIA. Sebald spent three years doing this so that the left hand of the government would know what the right hand was doing.[60]

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[54]Halperin, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

[55]Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Imperial Presidency*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

[56]Henry A. Kissinger, *American Foreign Policy*, (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 18.

[57]Henry A. Kissinger, quoted in Ray S. Cline, "Policy Without Intelligence," *Foreign Policy*, Number 17, (Winter 1974–75), p. 123.

[58]Wise and Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

[59]*Ibid.*, p. 131.

[60]See "Public Access to Information and the Freedom of Information Act," *Northwestern Law Review*, (May/June), 1973.

This observation would lead one to conclude that poor interagency communication has the potential to reduce the overall quality of information available to decision-makers.

New Technologies

However, poor communication and coordination does not provide the full explanation of ineffective use of Foreign Service reporting and other information resources available in Washington. Technical changes have also radically changed the patterns of information use.

First, Foreign Service reporting no longer represents the unique source of information that it once did.

> Most important is the information explosion and its associated effects. It was not many years ago that Washington depended on Foreign Service reporting as its most reliable source of information on events in most foreign countries. The Embassy's views had a definitive 'official' quality which distinguished them from more erratic and unfocused information from other sources . . .[61]

Thus, often, Foreign Service reports only confirm information which has already reached decision-makers in Washington.

In addition, foreign affairs is substantively more complicated than it once was. An embassy can no longer divide the world into neat, packagable entities and assign officers to report on one area.

> Traditionally, Embassy operations have been divided into well-defined garden plots with each patch of ground separately cultivated. . . . It is organization by section: Economic, Political, Consular, Administrative, Intelligence, Military, A.I.D., USIS, and others. . . . Yet it is already obsolescent. The changing world no longer operates in neatly constructed boxes. . . . The arbitrary division of the mission contributes to the paper flow with an overemphasis on reporting. . . .[62]

This is another indication that the present Foreign Service reporting system is not responsive to "modern needs." Thus, this contributes to a decision on whether or not to use this information.

Third, new quantitative techniques have not been systematically introduced to the Foreign Service. In many cases, officers have resisted their use. This resistance exasperates the already present problem of imprecise data that is of little practical use.

> At the same time, there has been resistance to developing quantitative approaches to aid in foreign policy decision-making, generated to a great extent by misconceptions about the nature of quantification. Many traditional political analysts consider that quantification is designed to replace human judgment. . . .
>
> Another problem in introducing quantitative techniques into the field of foreign policy decision-making has been the lack of perception on the part of those trained in the techniques about what the decision-maker really wants.[63]

This reliance upon traditional judgment reinforces the trend to rely upon expertise; moreover, it should be noted, the development of quantitative techniques will be very important for information processing in the future. By resisting its use, Foreign Service officers, by definition, make the information they produce less useful to decision-makers in Washington.[64]

Changes That Have Been Recommended in the Foreign Service Reporting System

Changes in the Foreign Service reporting system that have been recommended fall into one of three categories: (1) technical; (2) organizational; and (3) philosophical. We will consider one study which is representative of each of these categories.

On the technical side, a study completed by the RAND Corporation on "Information System Applications for a High Level Staff," concludes that

> The national security community collects and generates vast quantities of information. . . . Their pressing need is for information that is relevant and timely, and in a form suited to the problem at hand.
>
> A computer based information system can serve policy-makers and the staff that support policy-makers at the highest levels by making it possible (1) to analyze problems more thoroughly in the available time; (2) to perform their normal tasks more quickly, thus saving time to reflect upon problems; (3) to better anticipate forthcoming problems; and (4) to handle problems hitherto intractable or unmanageable.[65]

This plan addressed all the issues that we identified as central to our study and proposed a primarily technical solution.

The Inspector General's report, on the other hand, suggested organizational and substantive changes that were aimed at addressing the same

[61] Michaud, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[62] *Diplomacy for the 1970's, op. cit.*, p. 467.

[63] David E. Long, "Quantitative Analysis and Foreign Policy Decision-Making," *Foreign Service Journal*, July, 1973, p. 10.

[64] Michaud, *Ibid.*

[65] Bruce F. Goeller, Paul Y. Hammond, John E. Koehler, and William B. Quandt, *Information System Applications for a High Level Staff*, (Santa Monica: A RAND Corporation Study, August, 1972), p. v.

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issues. By developing long-term plans that would be reviewed at regular intervals, and by implementing management techniques, this report claimed that successful results were achieved. The work of sections in the Embassy were well coordinated, there was good communication between the Ambassador and Washington, the plan proved to be flexible and changes were easily implemented, and there was better communication with other agencies in Washington as well.[66]

Finally, Alexander George's study is arguing fundamentally at a philosophical level. He outlines the favorable attributes of a multiple advocacy system for decision-makers and lower-level bureaucrats. He feels that it reduces tension, makes for more effective use of information, and improves communication among all parties involved in foreign-policy making.

Conclusion

This chapter has raised and discussed the issues and problems to be dealt with in the empirical analysis in the subsequent chapters. As a whole, it is clear that the previous studies of Foreign Service reporting and the general literature on information is characterized by (1) its piecemeal, incomprehensive approach to the complex system under investigation. Most studies concentrate solely on the quantity and content of the information produced in the field. By doing this scholars and other investigators have artificially analyzed one part of a larger system. One cannot hope to understand foreign service reporting and the characteristics of production in the field without systematically understanding the requirements and peculiarities—both individual and organizational—of the end-users in Washington; and (2) its tendency to remain on the general level and thus not provide suggestions and recommendations which can be implemented or even be thought of in an operational manner by bureaucrats and decision-makers.

In our pilot study we hope to overcome some of these difficulties by examining the system as a whole and focusing on specific organizational and substantive questions.

[66]Rowell and Thoms, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

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Analysis of the Documents

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the documents that we included in our sample. The documents were selected from four countries, each from a different geographic region. Throughout the study, we will refer to each country by the initials of the region in which it is located. The four countries are as follows:

1. A South American country (SA)
2. A Middle Eastern country (ME)
3. An Eastern European country (EE)
4. A Western European country (WE)

In this chapter, we will discuss (1) the procedures for sampling the documents, (2) the procedures for coding the documents, (3) the general characteristics of the documents, and (4) patterns of characteristics within documents.

Procedures for Sampling the Documents

For each of the four countries under study we sampled fifty to sixty documents according to the following criteria: First, we eliminated all administrative reports (pick up so-and-so at the airport, so-and-so is coming for a visit) from the sample. Second, we selected documents dating from the period of September 1 to November 30 to insure that the subjects of our interviews would still be familiar with the material being discussed. Third, we limited the sample to telegrams and airgrams. This was done because of the classification restrictions on "official and formal letters" and because telegrams and airgrams are most widely distributed throughout the government. Fourth, we were limited to documents that were classified up to and including "secret." Fifth, given all of the telegrams and airgrams sent to Washington during the time period of interest, we sampled the documents in order to maximize broad coverage of the issues and problems reported. In order to insure this "broad coverage" and that our criteria would produce an accurate sample, we consulted with officials from each country directorate in the State Department. During these meetings we asked these officials to tell us about the issues and problems covered during the time period we were interested in, whether or not this three-month time period is representative of field reporting, in general, whether or not telegrams and airgrams are representative of field reporting, and whether or not our sample is representative of field reporting despite the fact that we are not able to examine documents that were classified above secret. In each case these country officials informed us that the three-month time period was representative, and that we would not miss any major issues or forms of reporting by using these criteria.

After these meetings we proceeded to read through the office files of all the reports submitted from the field during the three-month period we were interested in. Each of the major investigators read through the documents and chose those which seemed to meet the criteria laid out above. After this initial selection procedure was completed (approximately 75–100 documents chosen), we then met as a group to review the documents and make the final selection of the sample.

We then showed the sample to some of the country officials and asked them to tell us whether or not the sample we had chosen was "representative." In addition, we asked this question during each of our "user interviews" in Washington. We discovered that our sample was representative of the substantive (non-administrative) reports produced in the field.

Procedures for Coding the Documents

The total set of documents were coded according to the scheme appearing in Appendix A of this report. That scheme was built in part of one used in a previous project analyzing the studies of the Intelligence and Research Bureau.[1] All documents were coded by two different coders. Where disagreements occurred, a third coder was used to resolve the problem. A third coder was needed in less than ten percent of the coding decisions.

[1]William D. Coplin and Michael K. O'Leary, "The Analysis of Government Intelligence Reports: A Codebook," (Syracuse: Prince Analysis, Inc., September, 1972), mimeo.

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In constructing our coding scheme we were particularly concerned with the following questions: (1) Where were the documents routed; (2) How were the documents classified; (3) What was the format used in writing these documents (e.g., use of summary, "comment," tables, graphs or maps, or substantive subtopics); (4) Did the document reference another written in the field or in Washington, D.C.; (5) What type or kind of reporting does the document represent (e.g., spot reporting, routine or required reporting, reports specifically solicited by Washington); (6) How can the contents of the document be classified (e.g., in terms of factual versus predictive versus prescriptive content, in terms of sources uses, in terms of issues covered).

General Characteristics of the Sample

In this section, we will present our findings with respect to the general questions listed above. We will present the distribution of documents across various categories for the total set of documents. Our intention in presenting this discussion is to provide an overview of the characteristics of the sample we drew.

CLASSIFICATION MEASURES

Table 3.1 shows the two types of classification measures that we used for our analysis: the official classification scheme of the State Department (unclassified versus classified) and the priority classification assigned by the author of the documents (routine priority versus immediate). For all four countries in general there are more "unclassified" and "limited distribution" documents than any other kind (71.8%). In addition, we found 23.5% "confidential" and only 4.7% "secret" documents. In contrast, the vast majority of documents for all four of our countries were classified as "routine" as opposed to "priority" or "immediate" (80.3%).

In terms of the office responsible for taking action on a particular message sent in from the field, we found that the country directorates were by far the greatest recipients of cables. This is illustrated in Table 3.2. Of all documents from the field, 75.1% were sent to the country directorates.

In terms of the distribution throughout the government given to a particular document, on the average a document is sent to 18 departments and 89 copies of a document are sent to the government as a whole. In addition, in the vast majority of cases the author of a document does not assign a specific distribution pattern (routing pattern): 85.7% of the documents are not given specific routing by their authors.

FORM

An analysis of the form of the document can be divided into a number of different categories: the type of document, whether or not TAGS were used, the average length of the document and the format of the document. On the question of form, Table 3.3 shows that 78.9% of the documents in our sample were telegrams.

In the vast majority of cases, "TAGS" were assigned by the authors of the documents in 88.3% of the cases. However, it should be noted that on the average 3.2 TAGS were assigned per document. The average length of a document for all four of our countries is approximately 4 pages. In terms of format, Table 3.4 shows that in 54.5% of the cases some format was used in writing a particular document. Specifically, "summaries," and "comments" were used more than any other kind of formatting procedure; however, even in the case of a summary and/or a comment this formatting procedure was only used in 27.2 and 23.9% of the documents respectively. "Criticism," "recommendation," "action requested," and tables, graphs, or maps were almost never used. Along these same lines our analysis showed that substantive subtopics were also not utilized in the vast majority of the cases. Moreover, we found that foreign service re-

TABLE 3.1

Type of Classification	*% of Documents*
Unclassified	34.7
Limited Official Use	37.1
Confidential	23.5
Secret	4.7
Routine	80.3
Priority	12.2
Immediate	7.5

TABLE 3.2

Action Office	*% of Documents*
ARA	16.4
EUR	37.1
NEA	21.6

TABLE 3.3

Type of Documents	*% of Documents*
Telegrams	78.9
Airgrams	17.8
Other	3.3

ports are almost never (only in 2.3% of the cases) specifically solicited from the State Department or any other federal agency in Washington, D.C.

CONTENT

Table 3.5, p. 173, summarizes our findings on the following topics:

1. The citation of sources used in writing the documents.
2. The mention of other government documents as "references" or in the body of the reports.
3. Reference to letters in the reports.
4. The analytic, evaluative, predictive and prescriptive content of the documents (see Appendix A for a definition of these terms as coded on the documents).
5. Reference to any kind of "operational" activity (day-to-day details like meeting an official at the airport).
6. The types of reporting that the documents represent (spot reporting, routinized monitoring, required reporting, or briefing for an upcoming event).
7. Requests for specific actions or decisions.
8. Mention of past or future events.
9. Substantive issues discussed in the documents.

Our analysis shows that the news media and private contact with government officials are the primary sources for field reporting. Non-government sources, official government documents, and public speeches are secondary sources for the field reports. Private unidentified sources and government news decrees are only used infrequently as the basic source material for writing a field report (8.9% and 10.8% respectively). In addition, we found that in some cases U.S. government documents are referred to in the body of the field report (19.7% of the cases); letters are almost never referred to in the body of a field report (4.7% of the cases). On the other hand, our analysis shows that one document (either a previous field report or an official U.S. document) is usually referred to in a report that is sent in from the field.

In terms of the general contents of the document, we found that the vast majority of field reporting represents factual reporting only. In almost 80.8% of the cases almost all of the material in a field report was "factual." We also found some reporting that could be classified as either evaluative or interpretive and a small amount that could be called "predictive reporting." There was virtually no "prescriptive" reporting or reporting that was a mixture between factual and predictive reporting. In addition, operational activity was only referred to in 15% of the documents that we sampled.

The vast majority (80.3%) of the field reports that we analyzed represent "spot reporting"; only 17.4% of the documents that we analyzed represent routinized monitoring or regularized reports (e.g., the week-a or month-a). In addition we noted that only 15% of the documents submitted by the field were designed for the purpose of briefing the State Department for an upcoming event. Moreover, in the vast majority of the reports that we analyzed (91.1% of the cases), no specific decision or policy was requested.

We also analyzed the documents in order to determine whether or not the past or future was mentioned in the body of the field report. In 62.5% of the cases these documents made some reference to the future—either specific or unspecific; however, in only 24.4% of the cases was the past mentioned. (See Table 3.5)

In terms of the specific contents of the documents we found that three major issues were dealt with in the reports submitted by the four missions. Table 3.6 shows that internal economic conditions and diplomatic concerns in general are the ones most frequently reported on; trade and investments were the next most frequently reported upon. In the vast majority of the cases (83.1%) only one issue was dealt with per document.

TABLE 3.4

Formatting Employed in Document	*% of Documents*
Yes	54.5
No	45.5

Type of Formatting Employed in Document

	Yes	*No*
	(% of Documents)	
Summary	27.2	72.8
Comment	23.9	76.1
Criticism	.5	99.5
Recommendation	1.9	98.1
Action Requested	4.7	95.3
Tables	3.8	96.2
Graphs	.5	99.5
Maps	0.0	100.0
Use of Substantive Subtopics	12.2	87.8

Patterns of Characteristics

Having described the basic characteristics of the entire sample of documents, we will describe some basic patterns of characteristics found within the documents by looking at the degree to which some critical distinctions account for differences in the

TABLE 3.5

Contents of Documents			*Percentage of Documents*	
A) *Documents Referenced*			*Yes*	*No*
U.S. Government Documents Referenced			19.7	81.3
Letters Referenced			4.7	95.3
B) *Type of Reporting*				
Spot Reporting			80.3	19.7
Routinezed Monitoring			17.4	82.6
Briefing of Upcoming Event			15.0	85.0
Operational Activities			15.0	85.0
Specific Decision or Policy Request			8.9	91.1
C) *Time Mentioned*				
Past			24.4	75.6
Future				
Specific			32.9	67.1
Non-specific			29.6	70.4
D) *Sources of Information*				
Sources Explicitly Mentioned			86.4	13.6
Public Speeches			14.6	85.4
Government Documents			16.0	84.0
Government News Decrees			10.8	89.2
News Media Reports			32.4	67.6
Private Contact with Government Officials			25.4	74.6
Protected, Unidentified Sources			8.9	91.1
Other Non-Governmental Sources			16.0	84.0
Other Sources			9.9	90.1
E) *Specific Content*			*(% of Documents)*	
Percentage	Factual	Predictive	Prescriptive	Evaluative-Interpretive
0-25%	3.8	86.4	92.0	63.8
26-50%	4.6	11.8	5.6	16.9
51-75%	10.8	.9	1.9	10.8
76-100%	80.8	.9	.5	8.5

TABLE 3.6

Issues	*% of Documents*
Internal Economic Conditions	18.3
Diplomatic	18.8
Trade	13.6
Total Number of Issues Mentioned in Documents	*% of Documents*
1	83.1
2	11.3
3	3.3

documents. First, we will examine the degree to which the classification of the document is related to the form and content of the document. Next, we will look at the differences resulting from the country in which the document originated. We will also discuss the differences between telegrams and airgrams.

CLASSIFIED VERSUS UNCLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS

One of the most striking findings of our analysis is that there are major differences in both form and content between classified and unclassified documents. In this section of the chapter we will contrast and highlight the differences we have found. It should be noted that the classification was highly correlated with the type of routing (priority, etc.). Hence the classified/non-classified distinction also applies to the distinction between priority and routine.

FORM

On the question of form, Table 3.7 shows that classified documents will almost always be transmitted as telegrams while in some cases the unclassified ones will be sent as airgrams. Classified documents tend to use "TAGS" slightly more than unclassified ones (89.9% versus 85.1%). In addition, fewer TAGS were assigned to classified documents than to unclassified ones (an average of 2.6 versus 4.2). The average length of the classified documents was significantly shorter than unclassified ones: 4 pages versus 6.6 pages.

In terms of format, Table 3.8 reveals that unclassified documents utilize format procedure significantly less than classified documents do. Our analysis shows that 55.5% of unclassified reports are submitted with no particular use of any for-

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TABLE 3.7

Type of Document	*Unclassified (% of Documents)*	*Classified (% of Documents)*
Airgram	25.7	13.7
Telegram	67.6	84.9
TAGS		
Yes	85.1	89.9
No	14.9	10.1

mat. In contrast, 59.7% of classified documents make some use of one or more formatting options. Specifically, classified documents make far greater use of "summaries" and "comments" than unclassified ones. For example, 36.7% of the classified documents use summaries, while only 9.5% of the unclassified reports use summaries. In terms of the other format options open to an author of a document (e.g., criticism, recommendation, action required, use of tables, maps or graphs) our general finding holds true for unclassified as well as classified documents: there is little or no use made of these options. If anything, unclassified documents make smewhat more use of the latter options. Our analysis of the use of substantive subtopics follows the same pattern set by the use of summaries and comments. The classified documents make greater use of this option than the unclassified documents do.

CONTENT

Table 3.9 summarizes our analysis of the differences in content—both general and specific—between classified and unclassified documents. Examining the sources used to write field reports we find that unclassified reports rely more on the news media and less on protected unidentified sources. The authors of classified reports also rely much more heavily on private contact with government officials. In addition we found that classified reports tend to refer to U.S. government documents more often than unclassified documents (23.7% versus 12.2%). In addition, letters are referred to slightly more often in the body of a classified report. Beyond these differences, there are no other significant findings in the comparison of the classification with sources used in writing field reports.

TABLE 3.8

Format Used Type of Format	*Unclassified (% of Documents)*		*Classified (% of Documents)*	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Format	44.5	55.5	59.7	40.3
Summary	9.5	90.5	36.7	63.3
Comment	16.2	83.8	28.1	71.9
Criticism	1.4	98.6	0	100.0
Recommendations	1.4	98.6	2.2	97.8
Action Requested	4.1	95.9	5.0	95.0
Tables	9.5	90.5	.7	99.3
Graphs	1.4	98.6	0	100.0
Substantive Subtopics	9.5	90.5	13.7	86.3

In terms of the general content of the documents, Table 3.10 shows that there is less factual material in the classified documents than in the unclassified ones. Similarly, there is a significantly greater amount of predictive and prescriptive material in the classified documents compared to unclassified ones. Classified documents also make significantly greater use of interpretive material.

Both types of documents make equal use of spot reporting. However, routinized monitoring tends to appear more often in unclassified documents than in classified ones (20.3% versus 15.8%). In contrast, briefing material tends to be transmitted more often as a classified report. Moreover, our analysis shows that "operational activity" is cited equally often in both types of reports. Finally, classified reports will tend to ask for a specific decision or policy more often than unclassified ones.

Table 3.11 illustrates differences in how often the past or future is mentioned in these types of documents. Our analysis shows that the past is men-

TABLE 3.9

	Unclassified (% of Documents)		*Classified (% of Documents)*	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Differences in Content				
U.S. Government Documents Referenced	12.2	86.5	23.7	74.8
Letters Referenced	2.7	96.9	5.8	93.2
Type of Reporting				
Spot Reporting	79.7	20.3	80.6	19.4
Routinized Monitoring	20.3	79.7	15.8	84.2
Briefing of Upcoming Event	15.0	85.0	18.7	81.3
Sources of Information				
Government News Decrees	14.9	85.1	8.6	91.4
News Media	41.9	58.1	27.3	72.7
Private Contact with Government Officials	12.2	87.8	32.4	67.6
Protected, Unidentified Sources	4.1	95.9	11.5	88.5

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TABLE 3.10.—GENERAL CONTENT OF CLASSIFIED VERSUS UNCLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS

	Unclassified				*Classified*			
	Factual	*Predict.*	*Prescrip.*	*Eval-Int.*	*Factual*	*Predict.*	*Prescrip.*	*Eval-Int.*
0–25%	2.7%	95.9	94.6	79.7	4.3	81.3	90.6	56.1
26–50%	2.7%	4.1	4.0	10.8	5.8	15.9	6.5	20.1
51–75%	5.4%	0.0	1.4	9.5	13.7	1.4	2.2	10.9
76–100%	89.2%	0.0	0.0	0.0	76.2	1.4	0.7	12.9

tioned more often in unclassified documents, while the future is mentioned significantly more often in the classified ones. For example, in 62.6% of the classified documents some mention is made of the future; this is true of only 52.7% of the unclassified ones.

The specific contents of classified and unclassified documents do not differ in the types of issues they report. Both report diplomatic concerns, trade issues, and internal economic conditions more than any other issue. However, classified documents report on diplomatic issues most often, while the unclassified documents give priority to internal economic conditions.

Country-Specific Differences

In this section, we will report discrepancies from the general findings that are peculiar to specific countries under investigation.

CLASSIFICATION MEASURES

Table 3.12 reveals that the South American (SA) and Middle Eastern (ME) countries produce more unclassified and routine documents than either the Eastern Europe (EE) or Western Europe (WE) countries. As one would expect, the Eastern Europe country submits the most classified, non-routine information, although it should be noted that WE also produces a significant amount of this kind of reporting.

TABLE 3.11

	Unclassified (% of Documents)		*Classified (% of Documents)*	
	Yes	*No*	*Yes*	*No*
Time Mentioned				
Past	28.4	71.6	22.3	77.7
Future				
Specific Mention	25.7	74.6	31.7	68.3
Non-Specific Mention	27.0	73.0	30.9	69.1
Issues Mentioned				
Trade	16.2		12.2	
Diplomatic	8.1		24.5	
Internal Economic Conditions	20.4		12.9	

In terms of distribution of a document throughout the government, a somewhat different pattern emerges. The reports sent from ME and EE are given more specific routing than those sent from WE or SA. By far, the documents sent from SA have the least specific routing—only in 2% of the cases. The largest number of copies of a document are made from reports sent from SA, and the fewest number from the reports sent from EE. Similarly, the reports sent from EE are routed to the fewest number of departments or agencies inside the government. The other three countries received approximately equal distribution. (See Table 3.13)

FORM

It is interesting to note that more telegrams are sent from SA than from any of the other three countries. TAGS are used most often on reports sent from WE and least often on reports sent from SA. Reports sent from ME, on the average, have significantly more TAGS assigned to them than reports from other countries in our sample (5 as opposed to an average of 2.6).

In terms of format Table 3.14 reveals that the longest reports are sent from WE and the shortest from EE. Moreover, ME and WE documents make more use of formal formatting procedures than either EE or SA. Specifically, reports from SA and WE make the greatest use of "summaries"; reports from ME and WE make the greatest use of the "comment" procedures. EE makes the most use—albeit limited—of the "action requested" option while reports from WE utilize tables more often than reports from any of the three other countries. Finally, reports from EE make the greatest use of "substantive subtopics" and reports from WE make the least use of this option.

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TABLE 3.12

Type of Classification	*Country*			
	SA (*% of Documents*)	*ME* (*% of Documents*)	*WE* (*% of Documents*)	*EE* (*% of Documents*)
Unclassified	41.2	43.1	30.8	25.4
Limited Official Use	43.1	19.6	30.8	52.5
Confidential	13.7	37.3	30.8	13.6
Secret	2.0	0.0	7.7	8.5
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Routing	90.2	78.4	76.9	76.3
Priority	9.8	15.7	9.6	13.6
Immediate	0.0	5.9	13.5	10.2
Flash	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CONTENTS

Table 3.15 summarizes the country-specific differences with respect to the contents of the documents. In terms of the materials used to write a field report, SA and ME are most explicit in citing the sources used for their reports. Given this, as one would expect, these two countries make the greatest use of public information as the basis for their reports. In the case of ME, in 54.9% of the cases the "news media" is used as the source of reporting; in SA public speeches or the news media are used as the source for their reports more often than any other one (53% of the cases). In contrast, WE and EE rely much more heavily on private contacts with government officials.

In terms of the general contents of the documents we found that SA has less purely factual reporting than the other three countries (72.5% as opposed to an average of 84%). WE has more evaluative and/or interpretive reporting than any of the other three countries. (See Table 3.16). EE has more predictive and prescriptive reporting than the other three countries.

There is significantly more "spot reporting" from ME and EE than there is from the other two countries. (See Table 3.17). WE has more "routinized monitoring" than any of the other countries and EE writes more reports for briefing purposes than any of the other countries. (See Table 3.17). Moreover, we noted that reports from EE contained significantly more requests or descriptions of "operational activity" than any of the other reports in our sample—25.4% versus an average of approximately 10%. Similarly, reports from EE contain the most requests for specific decisions or policies.

Finally, it is striking to note that there are few differences in the nature of the issues that are being reported by these four diplomatic posts. Diplomatic and economic issues are the ones most often reported. The only substantive differences which exist are in the reporting of SA and ME. The latter is the only country to report on political unrest and the only one not to spend a significant amount of time reporting on internal economic conditions. SA is the only one not to report on trade and investment; the only other differences are ones of magnitude; that is, the number of reports sent on a particular subject.

It should be pointed out that some of the differences found across the four countries may be a result of the sampling procedure. On the whole, however, we found the patterns to be relatively similar; hence we can describe our findings in terms that are generalizable to all of the foreign service reporting.

TABLE 3.13

Author Routing	Y	2.0	21.6	13.5	18.6
	N	98.0	78.4	86.5	81.4
Mean # of Departments Routed		19.4	18.1	19.5	14.4

TELEGRAMS VERSUS AIRGRAMS

Because there is a different cost and time dimension to telegrams and airgrams, we attempted to see the degree to which differences in content and form could be associated with the two types of cables.

FORM

In terms of our two "classification measures," our analysis shows that telegrams tend to be "classified" more often than airgrams and tend to be stamped "priority" or "immediate" more often than airgrams. (See Table 3.18). For example, 93.3% of the airgrams are stamped "routine" while only 76.8% of the telegrams are classified in this manner. In addition, we found that more airgrams are sent to the South American Bureau than

TABLE 3.14

		Country			
		SA (% of Documents)	*ME* (% of Documents)	*WE* (% of Documents)	*EE* (% of Documents)
Mean # of Pages		4.7	5.3	7.2	2.86
Format	Y	47.1	62.7	59.6	49.2
	N	52.9	37.3	40.4	50.8
Summary	Y	31.4	25.5	34.6	18.6
	N	68.6	74.5	65.4	81.4
Comment	Y	17.6	33.3	26.9	18.6
	N	82.4	66.7	73.1	81.4
Criticism	Y	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N	98.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Recommendation	Y	0.0	2.0	1.9	3.4
	N	100.0	98.0	98.1	96.6
Action Request	Y	2.0	5.9	0.0	10.2
	N	98.0	94.1	100.0	89.8
Tables	Y	3.9	2.0	7.7	1.7
	N	96.1	98.0	92.3	98.3
Graphs	Y	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0
	N	100.0	100.0	98.7	100.0
Maps	Y	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	N	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Substantive Subtopics	Y	11.8	13.7	7.7	15.3
	N	88.2	86.3	92.3	84.7

TABLE 3.15

		Country			
		SA (% of Documents)	*ME* (% of Documents)	*WE* (% of Documents)	*EE* (% of Documents)
Sources Explicitly Mentioned	Y	94.1	90.2	78.8	83.1
	N	5.9	9.8	19.2	16.9
Public Speeches	Y	27.5	5.9	15.4	10.2
	N	72.5	94.1	89.6	89.8
Government Documents	Y	13.7	11.2	15.4	2.2
	N	86.3	88.2	84.6	97.8
Government News Decrees	Y	23.5	5.9	1.9	10.2
	N	74.5	94.1	98.1	89.8
News Media	Y	23.5	54.9	23.1	28.8
	N	76.5	45.1	76.9	71.2
Private Contacts with Government Officials	Y	15.7	19.6	38.5	27.1
	N	89.3	80.4	61.5	72.9
Protected Sources	Y	3.9	13.7	9.6	8.5
	N	96.1	86.3	90.4	91.5
Non-Government Sources	Y	17.6	23.5	7.7	15.3
	N	82.4	76.5	92.3	84.7
Other	Y	5.9	15.7	9.6	8.5
	N	94.1	84.3	90.4	91.5

either of the other two in our sample.

In terms of distribution throughout the government *fewer* departments or agencies receive airgrams than foreign service reports in general (13.2% versus 17.7%). In addition, specific routing is assigned by the author of a telegram in significantly more cases than in the case of an airgram (17.3% versus 2.2%).

An analysis of the differences in "form" between telegrams and airgrams is summarized in Table 3.19. First, TAGS are used less often in telegrams than in airgrams; however, a greater number of

TABLE 3.16

	(%)	Country			
		SA (% of Documents)	*ME* (% of Documents)	*WE* (% of Documents)	*EE* (% of Documents)
Factual	0–25	0.0	3.9	3.8	6.8
	26–50	9.8	0.0	3.8	6.8
	51–75	19.6	11.8	7.7	5.1
	76–100	72.5	84.3	84.6	81.4
Predictive	0–25	88.2	88.2	88.5	81.4
	26–50	11.8	11.8	7.7	15.3
	51–75	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.7
	76–100	0.0	0.0	1.9	1.7
Prescriptive	0–25	90.2	96.1	96.2	86.4
	26–50	7.8	3.9	3.8	6.8
	51–75	2.0	0.0	0.0	5.1
	76–100	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Evaluative-Interpretive	0–25	68.6	68.6	53.8	64.4
	26–50	21.6	13.7	17.3	15.3
	51–75	5.9	11.8	15.4	8.5
	76–100	3.9	3.9	13.5	11.9

TABLE 3.17

Type of Reporting		Country			
		SA (% of Documents)	*ME* (% of Documents)	*WE* (% of Documents)	*EE* (% of Documents)
Spot Reporting	Y	76.5	90.2	71.2	83.1
	N	23.5	9.8	28.8	16.9
Routine Monitoring	Y	21.6	15.7	19.2	13.6
	N	78.4	84.3	80.8	86.4
Briefing	Y	9.8	7.8	15.4	25.4
	N	90.2	88.2	84.6	74.6
Operational Activity	Y	7.8	13.7	11.5	25.4
	N	92.2	86.3	88.5	74.6
Specific Decisions or Policy Request	Y	9.8	5.9	3.8	15.3
	N	90.2	94.1	96.2	84.7

TAGS is assigned to airgrams than telegrams. Moreover, airgrams are significantly longer than telegrams: 8.7 as opposed to 3.9 pages.

In terms of formal formatting procedures telegrams generally make greater use of these procedures. Specifically, telegrams make significantly more use of summaries and comments and less use of substantive subtopics. In the case of airgrams, it is important to note that they make more use of tables and graphs. However, telegrams contain more explicit requests or descriptions of "operational activity" than airgrams: 17.3% as opposed to 6.7%. Airgrams also tend to be solicited slightly more often than other kinds of foreign service reporting: 4.4% versus 2.3%.

TABLE 3.18

	Telegrams (Percentage)	*Airgrams (Percentage)*
Unclassified	29.8	44.7
Limited Official Use	38.7	36.8
Confidential	26.1	15.8
Secret	5.4	2.7
Routine	76.8	93.3
Priority	13.7	6.7
Immediate	9.5	0.0

CONTENT

Table 3.20 summarizes the differences in content between telegrams and airgrams. In terms of the sources used to write a field report, airgrams tend to cite their sources more explicitly than other types of foreign service reporting. Consequently, airgrams make greater use of government documents and the news media and less

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TABLE 3.19

		Telegrams (% of Documents)	*Airgrams (% of Documents)*
TAGS			
Yes		89.3	97.4
No		10.7	2.6
Average TAGS Assigned		2.6	4.2
Type of Formatting Employed			
Summary	Yes	29.8	17.8
	No	70.2	82.2
Comment	Yes	25.6	17.8
	No	74.4	82.2
Substantive Subtopics	Yes	10.1	20.0
	No	89.9	80.0
Operational Activity	Yes	17.3	6.7
	No	82.7	93.3
Tables	Yes	3.0	7.9
	No	97.0	92.1
Graphs	Yes	0.0	2.6
	No	100.0	97.4

use of private contacts and protected unidentified sources than other types of foreign service reporting.

In terms of the general contents of the document telegrams tend to contain significantly more factual material than airgrams do. In 97.8% of the cases airgrams are almost purely factual, while this is only true of 76.2% of telegrams. Similarly, telegrams contain more prescriptive and predictive material than airgrams. (See Table 3.21).

Our analysis also shows that airgrams are used significantly more often for "routinized monitoring" than telegrams are: 31.1% of the cases versus 13.7%. Similarly, telegrams are used significantly more often (17.3%) for purposes of briefing of the State Department than airgrams (6.7%). In addition, it should be noted that airgrams are almost never used for the purpose of asking for a specific decision or for a policy.

Finally, there is no substantive difference in the issues covered between telegrams and airgrams. However, it is important to note that airgrams are used significantly less for "diplomatic" issues than telegrams.

TABLE 3.20

Sources of Information		*Telegrams (% of Telegrams)*	*Airgrams (% of Airgrams)*
Sources Explicitly Mentioned	Yes	85.7	92.1
	No	14.3	7.9
Public Speeches	Yes	14.3	18.4
	No	85.7	81.6
Government Documents	Yes	13.7	26.3
	No	86.3	73.7
Government News Decrees	Yes	11.3	7.9
	No	88.7	92.1
News Media Reports	Yes	31.5	34.2
	No	68.5	65.8
Private Contact With Government Officials	Yes	26.2	23.7
	No	73.8	76.3
Protected, Unidentified Sources	Yes	8.3	10.5
	No	91.7	89.5
Other Non-Governmental Sources	Yes	16.1	15.8
	No	83.9	84.2
Other Sources	Yes	7.7	15.8
	No	92.3	84.2

Summary

Below we have listed what we consider to be the major features of the documents we selected to study. It should be remembered that these findings are based solely on the interpretation our coders made of the documents using the coding scheme in Annex A.

1. The majority of documents tend to be factual, with some interpretive material in the form of identifying underlying "causes" and important conditions. Little predictive and prescriptive material is contained in the majority of reports.
2. The majority of reports are not written in response to an explicit request that is referenced in the document.
3. The classification systems appear to affect the form and substance of the reports.
4. Telegrams and airgrams also account for a

TABLE 3.21

	(%)	*Telegrams (% of Telegrams)*	*Airgrams (% of Airgrams)*
Factual	0–25	4.2	2.2
	26–50	6.0	0.0
	51–75	13.7	0.0
	76–100	76.2	97.8
Predictive	0–25	83.9	95.6
	26–50	13.7	4.4
	51–75	1.2	0.0
	76–100	1.2	0.0
Prescriptive	0–25	89.9	100.0
	26–50	7.1	0.0
	51–75	2.4	0.0
	76–100	1.6	0.0
Evaluative-Interpretive	0–25	60.7	75.6
	26–50	19.0	8.9
	51–75	16.1	11.1
	76–100	10.1	2.2

substantial number of differences in documents.

5. The type of country does make a marginal difference in both the form and substance of the report, but not to the degree that would prevent us from generalizing from the total set of documents.

6. The news media in the host country is the major source of information cited in the reports.

Analysis of Interviews

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the basic information generated by the interviews of the producers and users of foreign service reports. First, we will present information obtained from the interviews of producers. Secondly, we will present the information supplied by our interviews of the end-users of foreign service reports. Finally, we will examine producers and users on comparable items of the interview schedules.

Producer Interviews

PROCEDURE

Each of the diplomatic missions in the capital of the four countries was visited by a member of the project staff. The primary purpose of this visit was to interview those individuals who had authored the documents in our sample. In addition, the ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission and mission personnel from agencies outside the Department of State were interviewed. Annex D contains a list of the positions held by those individuals interviewed. A total of forty-seven interviews were conducted with approximate equal coverage of the four countries in the report.

The interviewing schedule was based in part on the basic content of the documents selected. We also attempted to tap the producers attitudes toward foreign service reporting in general. (See Annex B) In order to elicit specific responses, we selected for each respondent a sub-sample of between five and ten documents that had been sent to the respondents' office. This small sample was intended to represent the range of topics and types of cables received in a given country office.

The preliminary questions of the interview schedule were designed to investigate the relationship between the requirements of a respondent's job and his use of foreign service reporting. Each respondent was then asked a series of questions about each of the specific documents. These questions focused on the specific use that was made of each document, and why the document was written. Using the selected sample documents, the respondents were asked to select what they considered the most and least useful reports and to suggest ways in which they might have been improved. Respondents were then given a list of other sources of information that may have been useful to them in preparing their reports. For each source of information, we asked whether or not it was used, how useful it was, and to what extent the source was utilized. Finally, the foreign service officers were asked for their general evaluation of the document routing and retrieval system and of foreign service reporting in general.

The responses by each producer were coded using the scheme outlined in Annex C. Subsequently, these data were compiled and analyzed. The results of our analysis are contained in the following sections.

1. Producer Function:

Foreign service officers appear to classify themselves into one or more of the following categories: reporters, research analysts or operational-administrative personnel.

Table 4.1 displays the breakdown of the producers' opinions of their roles in foreign service reporting.

The table demonstates that approximately one-half (42.6%) of the producers interviewed considered themselves reporters within the mission, while only 25.5% felt they were involved in policy research and analysis.

TABLE 4.1.—PERCEPTION OF ROLE IN FOREIGN POLICY REPORTING SYSTEM

Role	*# of Producers*	*% of Total Producers*
Reporter	20	42.6%
Research Analyst	12	25.5%
Operational-Administrative	7	14.9%
Combination of Two of the Above	8	17.0%
	47	

2. Percentage of Time Reporting:

Producers were asked to approximate the percentage of their time occupied by reporting. Table 4.2 summarizes our findings. A majority of those producers interviewed (46.7%) spent more than 50 percent of their time on tasks involved with reporting, while only 24.4 percent spent less than a quarter of their time on similar assignments.

3. Responsiveness:

The producers were asked if they considered themselves responsive to Washington's needs. Of the producers interviewed 68.1 percent (32) responded affirmatively, that they were responsive to Washington's needs and requests. The remaining 31.9 percent expressed doubts about the responsiveness of producers to the demands and needs of Washington.

4. Report Initiator:

Producers were asked to identify who provides the initiative for the reports that are ultimately written and disseminated throughout the government. This question was intended to identify whether reports were written on the initiative of the producers themselves or in response to specific cues from either Washington or their own mission.

Table 4.3 indicates that the highest percentage of documents written and sent were at the initiative of the producer himself (38.3%). A significant percentage of reporting was some combination of the categories, usually a combination of self-initiated or mission-prompted and explicitly requested. However, the majority of reporting as appears in Table 4.3 is other than explicitly solicited, 55.3 percent of all reporting being cued by other mission officials or self-initiated.

5. Awareness of Other Sources of Information:

For this item we asked the producer if he was aware of any other sources of information external to foreign service communications that he would like to have available in the compilation of written reports. Of the 47 producers interviewed, 66 percent (31) stated that they were currently unaware of any other sources of information that would be useful to them in the preparation of reports. Where other sources were cited, the local press, host government documents, news decrees and personal contacts were used most frequently in the preparation of reports as Table 4.4 indicates.

TABLE 4.2.—PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT ON REPORTING DUTIES

Average % of Time Spent on Reporting Duties	*# of Producers Responding*	*% of Total Producers*
0–24%	11	24.4%
25–49%	13	28.9%
50 and Above	21	46.7%
	45	

TABLE 4.3.—WHO DECIDES ON WHAT INFORMATION IS SENT TO WASHINGTON

Report Initiator	*# of Responses to Specific Documents*	*% of Total Responses*
Mission Officials	8	17.0%
Self-Initiated	18	38.3%
Explicity Requested	11	23.4%
Combination of Two of the Above	17	36.2%

6. General Criticisms:

We asked the producers for their general criticisms of the foreign service reporting system and received a variety of responses. However, in most cases the criticisms may be classified according to six general categories. Table 4.5 displays the six categories of producers' criticisms and the percentage of all producers who expressed each criticism.

The two most frequent criticisms were "lack of feedback and guidance" and "poor style and format"—two of the major criticisms discussed in

TABLE 4.4.—OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION MENTIONED

Source	*# of Respondents*
Local Press	47
Host Government	30
Own Office	9
Interest Groups & Lobbyists	9
Public or Private Individuals	8
Other U.S. Embassies	7
International Organizations	3
Books and Articles	2
Consultants	1
	116 (Multiple Responses Allowed)

TABLE 4.5.—GENERAL CRITICISMS BY PRODUCERS

Feedback and Guidance	*Lack of Analytic Content*	*Lack of Pertinent Information*	*Volume of Reporting*	*Style and Format*	*Classification and Dissemination*
78.6	25.0	39.3	39.3	53.6	32.1

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TABLE 4.6.—SPECIFIC CRITICISMS OF PRODUCERS

The following is a list of specific criticisms of foreign service reporting mentioned by producers during the course of the interviews:

1) Inadequate training	**********
2) TAGS too general	***
3) Too many uniform messages	**
4) Minimal internal communication	**
5) Need more economic training	**
6) Don't know if meeting Washington's needs	**
7) Duplication of efforts	**
8) Should be monitoring of junior foreign service offices	*
9) Staff shortage	*
10) Telegrams too long	*
11) Too much formatting	*
12) Reports generally too long	*
13) Not enough statistical information	*
14) Not enough use of airgrams	*
15) Reporting takes too much time away from other programs	*
16) Only receive guidelines from our office	*
17) Too much required reporting	*
18) Reporting is a waste of time because most U.S. decisions made without reference to reports	*

Chapter I. The other categories received less critical attention from the producers.

Table 4.6 provides a more specific breakdown of the criticisms held by producers of foreign service reporting. That table indicates that the other most frequent negative comment by producers with regard to the operations of foreign service reporting is the inadequacy of current training.

7. Analytic Content:

In addition to recording producers' criticisms of the analytic content of reports (Table 4.5), we also asked each producer to evaluate the analytic content of specific sample documents. A total of 89 documents were evaluated as follows (Table 4.7):

TABLE 4.7.—PERCEPTIONS OF ANALYTIC CONTENT

	Little/None	*Moderate*	*A Great Deal*
Factual	00.0%	37.2%	62.8%
Interpretive	20.9%	48.8%	30.2%
Predictive	62.8%	32.6%	4.7%
Prescriptive	86.0%	9.3%	4.7%

Table 4.7 displays the mean percent of documents and the amount of specific components of analytic content each possessed. Producers considered the majority of the sample documents to be primarily factual and interpretive in content. Fewer reports had any predictive content (37.3%) and scarcely any of the sample were attributed with prescriptive content (14.0%).

8. Use of Reports:

This item was included to determine the producers' perceptions of the possible uses of the reports they authored. Table 4.8 indicates that the majority of documents were intended to provide the end-users with general background information alone and with no other specific type of usage in mind (52). Of the one hundred responses to the uses of specific documents, nearly equivalent responses were made that our sample documents were intended for position papers and briefings, 19 and 14 responses, respectively. Usage of the documents for the writing of reports by the end-users only accounted for eight of the producer responses. Even fewer responded that the documents would be used for Congressional presentations or meetings of any type.

9. Intended Users:

A related question sought to identify who the intended end-users of specific documents were. Producers were allowed to select from four possible end-users: (1) working-level desk officer, (2) intelligence analysts, (3) working-level functional officers, or (4) policy officials.

TABLE 4.8.—USES OF DOCUMENTS

	# of Respondents
General Background	52
Position Papers	19
Oral Briefings	14
Written Reports	8
Congressional Presentations	3
Meetings	4
	100 (Multiple Responses Allowed)

TABLE 4.9.—INTENDED END-USERS

Working-Level Desk	1	49	55.1%
Intelligence Analysts with Country Responsibilities	2	12	13.5%
Working-Level Functional	3	37	41.6%
Policy Officers	4	25	28.1%

As depicted in Table 4.9, the intended users of the specific reports were primarily working-level officers, nearly equally divided between the desk and functional working-level officers. Fewer of the documents were perceived to be of use to intelligence analysts or policy officials, 12 and 25 responses, respectively.

User Interviews

PROCEDURE

This section conveys the findings of the researchers' interviews with sixty-four individuals who had the opportunity to utilize foreign service reports included within our four-nation sample. The members of the project staff conducted approximately forty-five minute interviews of each "user." Interviews followed standard interview schedules similar to the example contained in Annex B and asked each applicable question within the interview schedule to all users.

Our selection of respondents was based on (1) our understanding of the general working patterns of the State Department, (2) the official routing records of the documents in our sample, and (3) leads to potential users supplied by those we interviewed in the initial stages of our research.

Five types of users of foreign service reporting were interviewed:

(1) The Country Director and country desk officers of each of the four countries within the sample.

(2) Officials at the policy-making level, including Assistant Secretaries of State, and members of the National Security Council.

(3) Country specialists within the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and Central Intelligence Agency.

(4) Officials within the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Bureau of International Organization Affairs, and the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs.

(5) Officials within other governmental agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Treasury and United States Information Agency.

Of the sixty-four interviews conducted within these offices, thirty-six provided complete information, and twenty-eight supplied partial information. The responses by each user were coded using the scheme outlined in Appendix C. As with producers, these data were compiled and analyzed. The results of our analysis follow.

1. Responsiveness:

The users were asked whether or not they considered the foreign missions responsive to their needs for information. Of the 57 users interviewed, 73.2% responded positively, i.e., they were satisfied with the information they received from the foreign missions.

2. Awareness of Other Sources:

Users were asked whether they were aware of other sources of information that would be useful to them. Of the responses given, 48.2% of the users stated that they were aware of other sources that could possibly be useful, while 51.8% of the users responded negatively.

We were also interested in the nature and extent to which other sources of information were used to supplement reporting, what, in effect, were alternative or supplementary sources of information and the extent of their use in comparison to foreign service reports. During the interviews, respondents were asked to estimate their usage of other sources of information related to their usage of field reports. The results are given in Table 4.10.

It appears from Table 4.10, that where other sources of information were used, they were generally other governmental agencies, international organizations, the press, books and articles and the U.S. Mission in the Host Country (other than reports). Very little reliance on the departmental library, other contacts in the host country, and interest groups and lobbyists was mentioned by most users.

3. General Criticisms:

Interviewers were asked whether they discussed their complaints of the reporting system with others. Answers were divided about equally, with over half, 53.5%, responding that they have discussed their complaints with other foreign service officers.

There were virtually no foreign service officers interviewed who were found to be completely satisfied with the present reporting process, for all offered criticisms and recommendations for change. These ranged from relatively minor complaints to complete revampings of the entire process. The most frequently heard major criticisms have been discussed within Chapter I, and these are related to the lack of analytical content, the deficiency in format and style, the volume of reports, and the feedback and guidance problem. Table 4.11 illustrates the percentage of major criticisms voiced by users of foreign service reports.

Users in general perceived that "lack of analytic content" and the dissemination of reports were major problems in the foreign service reporting sys-

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TABLE 4.10.—USE OF OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION EXTENT OF USE (%)

Type of Source	*None*	*Less Than Field Reporting*	*Equal to Field Reporting*	*More Than Field Reporting*
Other Offices Within the State Department	19.4	27.7	44.4	1.0
Others Within Your Own Office or Bureau	44.4	38.8	13.8	2.7
Departmental Library	63.8	30.5	5.5	0.0
Other Governmental Agencies	16.6	55.5	22.2	5.5
International Organizations	47.2	38.8	8.3	5.5
Interest Groups & Lobbyists	68.8	30.5	5.5	0.0
Press	38.8	27.7	27.7	5.5
Host Government	63.8	22.2	13.8	0.0
Books & Articles	30.5	55.5	8.3	5.5
Consultants	66.6	27.7	2.7	2.7
Contract Research	55.5	44.4	0.0	0.0
U.S. Mission in Host Country (Other Than Reports)	47.2	36.1	11.1	5.5
Other Contacts in Host Country	75.0	13.8	5.5	0.0

TABLE 4.11

	% Users Voicing Criticism	
Feedback & Guidance	31.6	
Lack of Analytic Content	42.1	
Volume of Reports	33.3	(N=57)
Style & Format	22.8	
Routing	52.6	

tem and accordingly expressed their criticisms of these two points. Nearly equivalent percentages of all users expressed discontent with "lack of feedback and guidance from Washington" and with "too much reporting," 31.6 percent and 33.3 percent respectively. Even a smaller percentage of all users were concerned with the style and formatting of reports, only 22.8 percent expressing critical comments on this item.

4. Usages of Documents:

The users were asked about the particular usages to which a document was put. This included such categories as general background, and more specific uses—position papers, written reports, oral briefings, meetings and congressional presentations. The summary of the usages of the documents by users is presented in Table 4.12.

In general, the documents were used primarily to provide the users with general background information alone. With regard to specific usages, other than general background, the highest number of users stated that documents were useful for oral briefings and written reports. A nearly equivalent number of respondents reported usage of documents for meetings and position papers. Very few of the documents were considered useful or necessary for congressional presentations.

5. Analytic Content:

During the course of the interview, respondents were asked to categorize documents by the amount of factual, interpretive, predictive and prescriptive material within the document. Table 4.13 presents the information obtained from this inquiry.

The results indicate that most of the documents used in the intensive interviews were considered to be primarily factual in their content (84.2%) and somewhat interpretive. Users also attributed some predictive content to the documents, 22.8 percent

TABLE 4.12.—USAGES OF DOCUMENTS

	# of Respondents	
General Background (Alone)	103	
Oral Briefings	30	
Written Reports	25	
Meetings	17	
Position Papers	14	
Congressional Presentations	3	
	192	(Allowing for Multiple Codings)

TABLE 4.13.—ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS BY USERS

	None or Virtually None	*Moderate Amount*	*A Great Deal*
Factual	7 (3.8%)	22 (12.0%)	155 (84.2%)
Interpretive	90 (48.9%)	57 (31.0%)	37 (20.1%)
Predictive	128 (69.6%)	42 (22.8%)	14 (7.6%)
Prescriptive	161 (87.5%)	18 (9.8%)	5 (2.7%)

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of the documents were considered to at least have a moderate amount of predictive content. Very few of the documents were considered to have any substantial amount of prescriptive content. Users reported that 87.5 percent of the documents had little or no prescriptive content.

Producer-User Synthesis

In the first two sections, there were several issues raised by both producers and users during our interviews. In this section, we will compare the responses of both groups as they relate to these issues.

RESPONSIVENESS

During our interviews, we asked producers if they believe they are responsive to the needs of Washington. We also asked users if producers are responding to their requests. The results are tabulated below:

TABLE 4.14.—RESPONSIVENESS OF PRODUCER TO USER

Are Producers Responsive to Washington?	*(% of Respondents)*	
	Yes	*No*
Producers	68.1	31.9
Users	72.2	27.8

Table 4.14 shows that both users and producers themselves believe that producers are responsive to the demands of the policy process. Users tended to agree more frequently that the producers in the field missions are being responsive to their needs.

AWARENESS OF OTHER SOURCES

A second comparison was made between the users and producers in their awareness of other sources of information needed for the performance of their functions. (See Table 4.15)

A majority of both users and producers agreed that they were unaware of other potential sources of information. However, users more frequently expressed a desire to have access to sources of information that are not presently available.

GENERAL CRITICISMS

Although most basic criticisms of the reporting system were mentioned in Chapter I, it is useful in this section to examine the pattern of user-producer criticism over the entire range of responses. Table 4.16 presents a breakdown of all criticisms mentioned in the interview schedules by user and producers. The percentages indicate what proportion of those interviewed made each of the types of criticism.

TABLE 4.15.—AWARENESS OF OTHER SOURCES

	(% of Respondents)	
	Yes	*No*
Producers	34.0	66.0
Users	48.2	51.8

In general, producers as a whole tended to criticize the lack of feedback and guidance, the incredible volume of routine and spot reporting, and the style and format of the cables.

NOTE: On the other hand, most users had two basic criticisms: the lack of analytic content in the documents (discussed in Chapter I and in the first section of this chapter) and the dissemination of reports. The latter criticism arose from the inability of many users to obtain needed reports.

USAGE OF DOCUMENTS

The only noticeable differences in the perceived usage of reports by producers and users appear in the categories of "position papers," and "written reports." Producers felt that a good percentage of their reports were suitable as a source of information and background for the development of position papers, i.e., papers dealing with the policy positions held by the U.S. government toward the host country. At the same time users felt that only a small portion of the numerous documents coming in from the field were suitable for the development of policy papers. Of all other categories of usage, users felt that a good percentage of reports could be or were used in the development of written reports summarizing the economic, political or social conditions in the host country. Producers tended to play down this role of usage for the reports they send to the Department. (See Table 4.17)

TABLE 4.16.—CRITICISM OF FOREIGN SERVICE REPORTING BY USERS AND PRODUCERS

	Feedback and Guidance	*Lack of Analytic Content*	*Volume of Reports*	*Style and Format*	*Dissemination*	
Producers	78.6	25.0	39.3	53.6	32.1	N=47
Users	31.6	42.1	26.3	22.8	52.6	N=57

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ANALYTIC CONTENT

Following is a comparison of the perceptions of producers and users concerning the analytic content of the documents we selected for the interviews.

In general, producers found moderate to greater amount of analytic content (including interpretive, predictive and prescriptive material) in the documents. Producers tended to perceive considerably more interpretive content in the reports (79.0%) than users (51.1%). Producers also believed a greater amount of predictive and prescriptive material to be present in the documents (37.3% and 14.0% respectively) than did users (30.4% and 12.5% respectively). Both users and producers tended to agree on the enormous amount of factual materials contained within the documents selected (100.0% and 96.2% respectively).

Summary

Below we have listed what we consider to be the major features of the interview schedule responses we received. It should be remembered that these findings are based solely on the responses coded from both the user and producer interview schedules.

TABLE 4.17—USAGE OF DOCUMENTS

	(% of Documents)	
	Producers	*Users*
General Background	58.4	89.4
Position Papers	21.3	8.0
Written Reports	9.0	23.9
Oral Briefings	15.7	17.0
Congressional Presentations	3.4	2.0
Meetings	4.5	2.0
Public Speeches	.0	1.0

1. Users and producers agree that the foreign service reporting system is responsive to the needs of Washington.
2. A majority of both users and producers agreed that they were for the most part, unaware of other potential sources of information.
3. Both producers and users tended to have different perceptions of the major general criticisms of foreign service reporting.
4. Producers and users perceived somewhat different types of usages for reports written. Producers believed the reports to be especially useful for position papers while users believed them to be useful for specific written reports on the general conditions in the host country.
5. Producers and users had different perceptions of the analytic content of documents used in the interviews. Producers believed them to contain more interpretive and predictive material than did users. But both agreed on the high content of factual material.

TABLE 4.18.—COMPARISON OF PRODUCERS AND USERS EVALUATION OF ANALYTIC CONTENT OF DOCUMENTS

	Producers		*Users*	
	(% of Documents)			
FACTUAL CONTENT				
Little or None	00.0		3.8	
Moderate Amount	37.2	100.0%	12.0	96.2%
Great Amount	62.8		84.2	
EVALUATIVE/INTERPRETIVE				
Little or None	20.9		48.9	
Moderate Amount	48.8	79.0%	31.0	51.1%
Great Amount	30.2		20.1	
PREDICTIVE				
Little or None	62.8		69.6	
Moderate Amount	32.6	37.3%	22.8	30.4%
Great Amount	4.7		7.6	
PRESCRIPTIVE				
Little or None	86.0		87.5	
Moderate Amount	9.3	14.0%	9.8	12.5%
Great Amount	4.7		2.7	

Instructions for the Coding of Foreign Service Reports

Introduction

The purpose of this coding scheme is to describe the basic characteristics of the documents surveyed in the Foreign Service Reporting Project.

Coding will be done on scanning forms. Each form has eighty consecutively numbered spaces as found on a machine-readable card. A specified number of spaces is allotted on the form for the coding of each item in this manual. The number of spaces or the field an item may occupy on the form is a function of the range of values an item assumes. For example, a nominal level and dichotomous variable will require only a one space field where the value "1" may equal a reply of "yes" and "2" a reply of "no" to a particular item. A field greater than a single space will be required for other items. Values for these items must be right-justified on the scanning form. Thus, if an item is allotted three spaces, but has a value of "1" for a case, that value is right-justified and is written "001" in the appropriate spaces. Similarly, if the value is "10" or "100," it is written "010" and "100" respectively on the form.

The instructions for each item are intended to aid the coder in correctly classifying each document of the sample. The sample consists of at least fifty documents received by four separate country-desks at the Department of State during the last three months of 1974. Each document is to be double-coded to test reliability. Two scanning forms will be required for the coding of each document, that is, there will be two computer cards per case.

SCANNING FORM #1

1. Country-desk Identification Number (Columns 1–3)

Each document is first identified by the country desk at the Department of State or by the name of the host country mission from which it originated. This item identifies the document by a general sender category and country-desk receiver. On the document locate "FM" or "From AMEMBASSY *Location of Embassy*" Washington and fill in the first three spaces with the appropriate respective three number code:

999 United States

The codes for the country are located in Annex A-3. Note this operation will be repeated for the second scanning form of each case.

2. Document Identification Number (Columns 4–9)

This item identifies each specific document. Locate the following on the first page of any document:

EXAMPLE PAGE 01 Washington, D.C.
<u>05555</u>999999Z

The above format will be found on the majority of documents, and in this instance the underlined five digit number immediately following the embassy location would be coded. This would be written "005555" on the scanning form. However, when coding Airgrams the identification number is located below the rubric "File Designation." This will take the format "A-555." The "A" is to be placed with "9's" for machine-readable use and this example would then be coded "999555."

3. Date (Columns 10–13)

This item identifies the document by the date it was written. The first two columns (Columns 10–11) are for the day and the last two (Columns 12–13) for the month during which the document was written. The date is easily identified on documents which are Airgrams. On all other documents locate:

EXAMPLE R <u>21</u>9999Z OCT 74

The first two underlined digits above immediately following the "R" on any document's first page indicate the day authored. The abbreviated month "OCT" must be transformed to its numeric equivalent. Thus, this date would be coded "2110" on the scanning form. Were the document written on the first day of the month, it would be right-justified and coded "0110."

4. Security Classification (Column 14)

A document will carry one of four security classifications appearing on the top of each page:

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1 Unclassified
2 Limited Official Use
3 Confidential
4 Secret

5. Priority Classification (Column 15)

This classification indicates the importance attached to any message. On the document locate:

EXAMPLE TO SECSTATE WASHDC *PRIORITY* 999

The example message is classified "PRIORITY" and would be coded "2" in column 15. Where no classification appears on a line of the above format, the document is "Routine." Locate the priority classification and code:

1 Routine
2 Priority
3 Immediate
4 Flash

6. Action Office (Columns 16–17)

This item identifies the office from which a document originated. On Airgrams the action office may be located under the heading "Origin/Action" in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. On all other documents locate:

EXAMPLE ACTION *EUR*-99

The abbreviated title of action office immediately follows the cue word "ACTION." This example would be coded "13" in the appropriate columns indicating the action office "EUR." The action office codes are located in Appendix A-1. The listing is not exhaustive of all possible action offices, but includes those to be encountered in the sample.

7. Number of Copies of Document Sent to Action Office (Columns 18–19)

The value for this item may be located immediately following the abbreviated identification of the action office.

EXAMPLE ACTION EUR-*02*

Two copies were sent to the action office.

8. Author Routing (Column 20)

If the author specifically requests an individual(s) receive the document this item is coded "1" for yes. Author routing is located on the first page of any document and is indicated by the cue words: "ATTN:; Routing Request on Airgram; or FOR." Code for the presence or absence of author routing:

1 Yes
2 No

9. Total Number of Departments to which a Document is Routed (Columns 21–22)

This item is the sum of the individual departments to which a document is routed. On Airgrams this item may be answered by locating the section labeled "Dept. Distribution." On all other documents the total number of departments follows in abbreviated form the cue "INFO."

10. Type of Document (Column 26)

This item is located at the top of any document and indicates the form of transmitting the message:

1 Cable
2 Airgram
3 Telegram
4 Memorandum
5 Intelligence Information Report
6 Routine Briefing

11. Other Documents Referenced Prior to Body of Document (Columns 27–28)

The reply to this item is the sum of individual documents referenced prior to the body of the case document. Such documents will be introduced by "REF" on the first page of any document of the sample. Each document referenced will be displayed by an alphanumeric code:

EXAMPLE STATE 999999

Sum the document identification codes appearing after "REF" and place the appropriate value in columns 27–28.

12. TAGS (Column 29)

In column 29 indicate whether the author has employed TAGS. TAGS is "Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject" and TAGS are applied by a drafting officer for distribution, storage and retrieval purposes. Each "TAGS" is a code identifying either subject matter, country, geographic area or organizations with which the document is concerned. Where TAGS are used they may be located on the first page of any document and are introduced by "TAGS." Indicate the presence or absence of TAGS:

1 TAGS
2 No TAGS

13. Total Number of TAGS (Columns 30–31)

In the columns provided indicate the number of TAGS following the cue "TAGS."

EXAMPLE TAGS: PFOR YO AU

The individual codes will be separated either by a blank space, commas, or both. The above example would be coded "03" in the appropriate columns.

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14. Total Number of Pages (Columns 32–33)

This item is to indicate the length of each document. Place the value for this item in the appropriate columns remembering to right-justify.

15. Format (Column 39)

This item is to indicate the presence or absence of a format. Code:

1 Format
2 No format

A document has a format when it assumes a specific form or organization. A value "1" will indicate the document has some special organizational attribute. The format emphasizes certain elements within the body of the document. A document has a format when for example individual paragraphs are distinguished from all others by some special notation. A document has a format when any of the following cue words are found at its margin: Summary; Comment; Criticism; Recommendation; Action Requested; or where graphs or tables are employed in the body of the document. A format may include one of the above, some combination, or all of those attributes mentioned. In the following items indicate the specific type of format employed by the author:

15a. Summary (Column 35)
15b. Comment (Column 36)
15c. Criticism (Column 37)
15d. Recommendation (Column 38)
15e. Action Requested (Column 39)
15f. Other (Column 40)
15g. Other (Column 41)
15h. Tables (Column 42)
15i. Graphs (Column 43)
15j. Maps (Column 44)

Indicate the presence or absence of each specific type of format by coding:

1 Yes
2 No

16. Substantive Subtopics (Column 45)

1 Yes
2 No

This item also has to do with the organization of a document. A code of "1" indicates the document is divided into subtopics of the general subject. Subtopics may be cued by individual title headings or by a more formal outline. An example of a document with substantive subtopics would be an economic report with subheadings: Domestic Economy, Employment, Production, Balance of Payments. The clue for correctly classifying documents in this item is that each subtopic is delineated and a logical component of a more general subject.

17. Explicitly Solicited (Columns 29–46)

1 Yes
2 No

If a document is explicitly solicited it should be indicated on the first page. Either prior to the body of the document or in the introductory sentences a document which has been explicitly solicited will be cued by "In response to your request of . . ."

18. U.S. Government Documents Referenced in Body of Report (Column 47)

1 Yes
2 No

This item refers to other documents referenced *within* the body of the report. Simply indicate the presence or absence of reference to other U.S. documents.

19. Total U.S. Government Documents Referenced in Body of Report (Columns 48–49)

In these columns place the sum of U.S. government documents referenced in the body of the report.

EXAMPLE STATE 99999
STATE
STATE

A document having the above references would be coded 03 in the appropriate columns of the scanning form.

20. Letters in Body of Report (Column 50)

1 Yes
2 No

If the author refers to any letters in the body of the document this should be coded "1." Again, this item is simply to indicate the presence or absence of referencing letters.

21. Total Number of Letters in Body of Report (Columns 51–52)

Count the number of letters which an author references in the body of the document. If no letters are referenced write "00" in columns 51–52, and if three separate letters were referred to "03" would be written in the appropriate columns.

22. Operational Activity (Column 53)

1 Yes
2 No

If a document is a description of some activity the mission or any of its personnel has undertaken, you will code "1" in the appropriate column. A wide range of activities may fall under this category, any-

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thing from arrangements for official visits to mission receptions. The major point is that activities which may be classified as operational are largely administrative type details.

23. Spot Reporting (Column 54)

1 Yes
2 No

This column will be coded "1" where spot reporting occurs. This item refers to the reporting of "events as they happen." Spot reporting would include such items as a host country media reaction to a domestic or international event; a report on the visitation of a foreign diplomatic official; a report on a natural catastrophe; a report on a commercial conference; or a report on an agreement undertaken by the host country and any other country. Spot reporting refers to the reporting of events that are either anticipated or totally unexpected, but in either case are not of routine importance, but significant at a particular point in time. This is the reporting of events as they occur and as they progress.

It would be appropriate if you thought of the mission author as a news reporter. Spot reporting in the document is equivalent to what you would read on the first page of a newspaper. It is not routine or a regular feature like the "Stock Exchange List."

24. Routinized Monitoring (Column 55)

1 Yes
2 No

A document will be coded "1" for this item where the subject title indicates the content is supplied on a routine basis. The title will denote that the information to be reported is supplied at given times during the year.

Example: (Monthly, or Annual) Economic Report

25. Briefing for Upcoming Event (Column 56)

1 Yes
2 No

An upcoming event may be anything from an official visit by a host country official to the U.S. to the opening of a trade fair or some embassy social function. Here the author is reporting information on an event that is about to occur.

26. Factual (Column 57)

1 none to 25%
2 25% to 50%
3 50% to 75%
4 75% to 100%

For this item estimate the percentage of the total content of the document which is factual. Some portion of a document may be factual material or the entire document may be a factual presentation. By factual is meant the description of an event or the presentation of "real world" behavior or attribute type variables. Code "1" where a document presents little or no factual material; "2" where little or a moderate amount of factual material is presented; "3" where a moderate amount to quite a bit of factual material is presented and "4" where a document is primarily factual in its content.

27. Predictive (Column 58)

This item refers to the portion of the document that predicts some event in the future. The author is stating his expectation of the occurrence of some activity. A clue to locating predictive statements from certain words and phrases: "probable or likely outcome; expect; anticipate; low or high probability; chance; predict; projection; forecast; will probably." Estimate the percentage of the document that is predictive in its content and place the code in the appropriate column, according to the codes in Items 26 and 28.

28. Prescription (Column 59)

1 none to 25%
2 25% to 50%
3 50% to 75%
4 75% to 100%

Estimate the percentage of the documents where the author prescribes or recommends that certain action, steps or policy be undertaken.

29. Factual, Prediction, Prescription (Column 60)

In this column code whether the document is primarily factual, predictive, or prescriptive, by referencing the replies for the three previous items.

1 Factual
2 Predictive
3 Prescriptive
4 Tie

30. Specific Decision or Policy Request

1 Yes
2 No

This item will be coded "1" where in the body of the document the author requests a reply to a question of policy or requests a decision on any other matter.

31. Time—Past (Column 62)

1 No Mention of Past
2 Past Mentioned

Does the document reference past time, events or activities occurring at an earlier date? Where past date is mentioned specifically or where the past is referred to in general terms, code "2"—past mentioned. If no mention of the past is made in the body of the document then code "1."

32. Time—Future (Column 63)

1 No Mention of Future
2 Future Mentioned but Unspecific
3 Future Mentioned Specifically

Here code for mention of the future and how the future was mentioned. Simply code "1" where no mention of the future occurs in a document. Code "2" where the future is mentioned, but in very vague or general terms. Code "3" where the future is mentioned specifically. By specifically is meant a fairly precise date is set. Thus, you would code "3" where an author uses "in the next decade," or the "21st century." A "3" would be coded for a statement like "in ____ months," "next year," "by August," or "within three years time."

33. Sources Explicitly Mentioned (Column 64)

This item is simply to indicate the author's mentioning or not mentioning his sources within the body of the document.

Code:
1 Sources Explicitly Mentioned
2 No Sources Mentioned

The following items list the type of sources an author may refer to. Indicate the specific type of source(s) the author mentioned:

33a. Public Speeches (Column 65)
33b. Government Documents (Column 66)
33c. Government News Decrees (Column 67)
33d. News Media Reports (Column 68)
33e. Private Contact with Government Officials (Column 69)
33f. Protected, Unidentified Source (Column 70)
33g. Other Nongovernmental Source (Column 71)
33h. Other (Column 72)

Code:
1 Yes
2 No

34. Evaluative/Interpretive (Column 73)

This category refers to the amount of analysis and personal appraisal integrated within the document by the author.

1 0–25%
2 25–50%
3 50–75%
4 75–100%

SCANNING FORM #2

1. Country-Desk Identification Number (Columns 1–3)

2. Document Identification Number (Columns 4–9)

3. Scanning Form or Card Number (Column 10)

In Column 10 write "2" to indicate that this is the second card or scanning form of a case. There are two cards per case.

4. Total Number of Issues (Column 11)

In this column indicate the total number of issues with which a document is concerned. Probe for the type of policy-questions which a document discusses and indicate the total number of issues discussed. The following items require the identification of each issue-area with which a document is concerned and the actors or geographic region which the issue involves. Space has been allotted for up to four issues per document and the identification of two geographic areas per issue. First identify the type(s) of issue(s) discussed using the issue-codes in Appendix A-2. Issues are the specific topics of foreign and domestic policy the author discusses such as population control, trade and investments, use of troops, economic aid, fishing rights, etc. Upon identifying the issue, next identify the country or countries (or the region or regions) involved with the issue. If a document discusses a financial problem between two countries, those two countries would be coded under the geographic location of the issue. The codes for the geographic location may be found in Appendix A-3. There need not be two geographic locations per issue. In sum, probe for the issue and probe for where the issue takes place.

4a. Issue-Area 1 (Columns 14–16)
Geographic Area 1a (Columns 17–19)
Geographic Area 1b (Columns 20–22)

4b. Issue-Area 2 (Columns 23–25)
Geographic Area 2a (Columns 26–28)
Geographic Area 2b (Columns 29–31)

4c. Issue-Area 3 (Columns 32–34)
Geographic Area 3a (Columns 35–37)
Geographic Area 3b (Columns 38–40)

4d. Issue-Area 4 (Columns 41–43)
Geographic Area 4a (Columns 44–46)
Geographic Area 4b (Columns 47–49)

5. TAGS (Traffic Analysis by Geography and Subject)

In the following spaces write out the abbreviated code for the TAG. Where TAGS are used, they may be located on the first page of any document and are introduced by "TAGS." Four spaces are allotted for each TAG, and remember to right-justify.

5a. TAG (Columns 50–53)

5b. TAG (Columns 54–57)

5c. TAG (Columns 58–61)

5d. TAG (Columns 62–65)

5e. TAG (Columns 66–69)

5f. TAG (Columns 70–73)

ANNEX A-1.
INSTRUCTIONS FOR KEYPUNCHING THE FOREIGN POLICY CODE SHEET

Action Office Codes	
AGR	- 01
AID	- 02
ARA	- 03
CO	- 04
COA	- 05
COM	- 06
COME	- 07
CU	- 08
DES	- 09
DLOS	- 10
EA	- 11
EB	- 12
EUR	- 13
H	- 14
HEW	- 15
INR	- 16
IO	- 17
L	- 18
NEA	- 19
NSF	- 20
OES/SCI	- 21
SP	- 22
SS	- 23
TRSE	- 24

Issue Coding Scheme

10 Use of Troops, Bases, or Arms
11 Search for or Proposals for Peace
12 NATO, reorganization of, or other issues
13 Attempts at Unity or Detente
14 General Tensions between States
15 Balance of Tensions and Detente between States
20 Non-Military Intervention
30 General Arms Control and/or Limitation
31 Non-Proliferation Treaty
32 Underground Tests
33 Missile Limitations or Freeze
34 Force Cuts
35 Arms Expenditures
40 Territorial Rights including Border Disputes
41 Diplomatic Recognition and Independence
42 Espionage
43 Fishing Rights
50 Use of the United Nations
51 Use of other International Organizations

60 Cultural, including sports and student exchanges
61 Scientific Research and Exploration
62 Joint Work on Construction Projects
63 Travel and Communications
64 Trade and Investments
65 Diplomatic
66 Economic/Technical Aid and Emergency Relief
67 Military Aid, including Arms Sales
68 News Media Personnel
70 Financial Problems between Countries
71 Pollution
72 Hijacking
73 Control of Common Waterway
74 Drug Control
80 Problems of Refugees
81 Asylum for Individuals or Groups
82 Extradition
83 Expulsion, Seizure, Arrest, Killing
84 Population Control and Management
85 Energy
86 Terrorist Activities
87 Transnational Actors

Domestic/Internal Conditions

90 Internal Economic Condition (excluding trade & other external)
91 Political Unrest
92 Elite Maneuvering & Character
93 Elections
94 Interest Group Activity
95 Political Parties (non-electoral activities)
96 Legislative Behavior
97 Social Policies
99 More than 3 of any above subjects, whether Foreign Policy or Domestic Issue

Annex A-3.—Identification Number for Countries

Western Hemisphere (002-199)

002 U.S.A
020 Canada
040 Cuba
041 Haiti
042 Dominican Rep.
051 Jamaica
052 Trinidad & Tobago
053 Barbados
070 Mexico
090 Guatemala
091 Honduras
092 El Salvador
093 Nicaragua
094 Costa Rica
095 Panama
100 Colombia
101 Venezuela
110 Guyana
130 Ecuador
135 Peru
140 Brazil
145 Bolivia
150 Paraguay
155 Chile
160 Argentina
165 Uraguay

Europe (200-399)

200 United Kingdom
205 Eire (Ireland)
210 Netherlands
211 Belgium
212 Luxembourg
220 France
225 Switzerland
230 Spain
235 Portugal
255 West Germany
265 East Germany (German Dem. Rep.)
290 Poland
305 Austria
310 Hungary
315 Czechoslovakia
325 Italy
328 Vatican City
338 Malta
339 Albania
345 Yugoslavia
350 Greece
352 Cyprus
355 Bulgaria
360 Rumania
365 U.S.S.R.
375 Finland
380 Sweden
385 Norway
390 Denmark
395 Iceland

Africa (400-599)

420 Gambia
432 Mali
433 Senegal
434 Dahomey
435 Mauritania
436 Niger
437 Ivory Coast
438 Guinea
439 Upper Volta
450 Liberia
451 Sierra Leone
452 Ghana
461 Togo
471 Cameroon
475 Nigeria
476 Biafra
481 Gabon
482 C.A.R.
483 Chad
484 Congo, B. (Congo Republic)
490 Congo, K. (Congo Dem. Rep.)
500 Uganda
501 Kenya
510 Tanzania
511 Zanzibar (After 4/64 code as 510)
516 Burundi
517 Rwanda
520 Somalia
530 Ethiopia
551 Zambia
552 Rhodesia (Code as 200 to 11/11/65)
553 Malawi
560 South Africa
570 Lesotho
571 Botswana
572 Swaziland
580 Malagasy Republic (Madagascar)
590 Mauritius

Middle East (600-699)

600 Morocco
615 Algeria
616 Tunisia
620 Libya
625 Sudan
630 Iran
640 Turkey
645 Iraq
651 U.A.R.
652 Syria
660 Lebanon
663 Jordan
666 Israel
670 Saudi Arabia
678 Yemen
680 Southern Yemen
690 Kuwait
698 Muscat and Oman

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Asia (700-920)

700 Afghanistan
710 China, Mainland (Chinese Peoples Republic)
712 Mongolia
713 Taiwan, Formosa (Nat. China
731 North Korea
732 South Korea
740 Japan
750 India
770 Pakistan
771 Bangladesh
775 Burma
780 Ceylon
781 Maldive Is.
790 Nepal
800 Thailand
811 Cambodia
812 Laos
816 North Vietnam
817 South Vietnam
820 Malaysia
830 Singapore
840 Philippines
850 Indonesia
900 Australia
920 New Zealand

Special Areas (950-989)

950 Outer Space
951 Ocean Floor
952 High Seas
953 Airspace
980 Worldwide or non-geographically specific
981 Western Europe (NATO)
982 Eastern Europe
983 Latin America
984 Caribbean
985 Middle East
986 Africa
987 South Asia
988 Southeast Asia
989 Far East

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ANNEX B

Producer and User Interview Schedules

Country_____

PRODUCER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

Name_____ Interviewer_____
Position_____ Time Begun_____Time Ended_____
Date_____

Introduction: As you know, we are conducting a study of foreign service reporting for the Murphy Commission. We are especially interested in the production of foreign service reports. We want to talk to you as one producer of this information.

1.a) To begin, how would you describe the main responsibilities of your job?

b) How much time do you spend on each responsibility?
(For each responsibility:
almost none; about ¼; about ½; about ¾)

c) How do you decide which information you have access to should be sent on? Do you think you should do most of the sifting, or do you let more of the sifting be done in Washington? Do you see yourself primarily as a reporter of facts or an analyst?

[First go through list of 10 to see if respondent helped draft them. Let respondent choose from rest of list up to 10 he has helped draft.]

Document_____

2.a) Looking now at the first (next) document, how did you expect it to be used?

General background yes no
Writing reports (To whom?)
Oral briefings (To whom?)
Position papers (For whom?)
Congressional presentations yes no
Public speeches or conversations (With whom?)
Meetings (Types and with whom?)

b) We are especially interested in 4 types of users:
(1) working-level desk officers; (2) intelligence analysts with a country responsibility; (3) working-level functional positions; (4) policy officials. Who would find this document most useful/least useful?

c) For whom was this primarily written?

d) Does the embassy maintain a file on this subject?

e) How would you categorize the content of this document? (List #2)

	None or virtually none	Moderate amount	A great deal
Factual			
Interpretative			
Predictive			
Prescriptive			

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f) What sources of information did you use in writing this document? (For each, get as specific information as possible) (List #3).

A. Your office
B. Embassy library or other library
C. Local press
D. Host government
E. Books or articles
F. Consultants
G. Other missions in host country
H. International organizations
I. Interest groups or lobbyist
J. Other U.S. embassies
K. Other

g) Why was this document written?
(1) initiation by Embassy; (2) general reactive reporting;
(3) solicited by whom?

(How was this request made? CERP/CIRL/Economic Alert List Other)

3.a) If relevant, how representative of the reports you produce are those contained in the sample we have shown you? How do they differ?

b) We have found that there are several different channels of communication between an Embassy and Washington. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each of the following channels? (PROBE: What goes into the decision of each? Why?)

telephone

airgram

telegram

official-informal

third person

other

c) In general, can you think of any changes in foreign service reporting that would help you do your job better? (PROBE: "WEEKA"? Monthly Report?)

d) What kind of things do you do in the embassy to evaluate reporting?

e) Do you feel that your reporting is responsive to what Washington wants? (PROBE: Do they use the reporting form?)

f) What are the guidelines (official and unofficial) upon which you base your reporting? (For each, distinguish between specific requests, guidelines, and evaluation of reporting.)

1) CERP

2) CIRL

3) personal contact with Washington desk?

4) personal contact (official information) with State Dept. other than desk?

5) foreign reporting analysis form (how often used?)

6) others?

g) Are you aware of any other sources of information that you are not now using which you would like to have easier access to? What? How would it be used?

h) Which of these documents that you wrote do you feel represents especially good reporting? Why? Are there any other reports that you can recall as being an especially good job of reporting?

i) Is there anything else concerning your feelings about foreign service reporting that you would like to discuss? (PROBE: Is there anything important that we haven't talked about?)

USER INTERVIEW SCHEDULE INTERVIEWER_____

NAME_____
OFFICE_____TIME STARTED_____FINISHED_____
DATE_____

TYPE: COUNTRY FUNCTIONAL POLICY

INTRODUCTION. As you know, we are conducting a study for foreign service reporting for the Murphy Commission. We are especially interested in the *different uses* that are made of foreign service reporting. We want to talk to you as one user of this information.

1. How would you describe your job in terms of foreign service reporting? (PROBE: Do you summarize or synthesize the information you receive? Are you a "gatekeeper," sending information on to others? Do you use the information as the basis for analyzing, advocating, or making policy?)

NOTE: (on interviewing "functional" users) Have available up to 5 documents (from the set of 10 and/or from the set of 50) which were routed to respondent's office. Do you yourself recall receiving them? If "yes," go through question 2 with each one.

If "no," see if any others on list of 50 were received (get no more than 5). Go through question 2 with each one.

If still no, go through question 2 one time on the basis of general uses which are made of reports from the given country.

If you don't identify any specific documents to go through list with, after going through question 2 once, go to question 6.

Questions about specific documents

Document_____

2A. Looking now at the (first) (next) document, what type of use did you make of it:

General background. yes no Other (please specify)

Writing reports. To whom?

Oral briefings. To whom?

Position papers. For whom?

Congressional presentations. yes no

Public speeches. To whom?

Meetings. Types and with whom? (International conference or negotiations. Intra-departmental. Inter-departmental.)

2B. How have you filed it?

Office file Personal file Not filed Other (specify)

2C. How would you classify the content of the document?

	None or virtually none	Moderate amount	A great deal
Factual			
Interpretative			
Predictive			
Prescriptive			

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2D. In your opinion, why was this document written?

1) Initiation by Embassy ____

2) General Reactive Reporting____ (How was request made?)

3) Solicited (By whom?)

3A. In your work, you know that different people use documents in different ways. Of these documents, tell me the one or two which were the most useful to you in particular.

Documents_____

Why were they especially useful?

3B. Which one or two were least useful?

Documents_____

Why were they not especially useful?

3C. Are there any other documents on this list which stand out in your mind as being either more useful or less useful than the ones I gave you?

More useful: Which ones? Why?

Less useful: Which ones? Why?

4. Considering these documents in front of you, in what ways could they have been made more useful?

(PROBE: Is this also true of the one(s) you picked as most useful?)

5. How representative of the reports you receive from the field are those contained in the sample we have shown you? In what ways do they differ?

6. I would like to go through a list of other possible sources of information that you may use. Would you please tell me if you get written material—that is, letters, reports, or memos—oral information, or no information at all from each of these sources. In those cases where you do get information, is it more useful, the same usefulness, or less useful than what you get from foreign service reporting.

A. Other offices in the State Department

written oral none which?

more same less

B. Your office or bureau

written oral none which?

more same less

C. Other offices or agencies in the federal government

written oral none which?

more same less

D. International organizations

written oral none which?

more same less

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E. Interest groups or lobbyists

written oral none which?

more same less

F. Press

written oral none which?

more same less

G. Host government

written oral none which?

more same less

H. Books or articles

written oral none which?

more same less

I. Consultants

written oral none which?

more same less

J. Contract research

written oral none which?

more same less

K. U.S. mission in the host country (other than foreign service reports)

written oral none which?

more same less

L. Other contacts in host country outside the mission.

written oral none which?

more same less

7. Now I would like to ask some *general* questions about foreign service reporting. In general, can you think of any changes in foreign service reporting that would help you do your job better?

8. Do you talk to others in your office, in the mission, or elsewhere about the nature of and problems of the reporting process?
(PROBE: for whom respondent talks to, and try to get codable
answer: A great deal some little for each person talked to.)

9. Do you feel that reporting is responsive to your needs? What kinds of activities or programs could be established to make them more responsive? (PROBE: Changes in training? Meetings between field and D.C. offices, etc.)

10. Is there a system for document retrieval in your office? How is it organized?

11. How is your own personal filing system organized?

12. Do you find TAGS useful? Why? Are there any ways you would like to see it changed?

13. What might be done to change the system of document routing throughout the Department and in your office?

14. What might be done to change the system of document retrieval throughout the Department and in your office?

15. Are you aware of any other sources of information that you are not now using which you would like to have easier access to? Which? How would it be used?

16. Is there anything else concerning your feelings about foreign service reporting that you would like to discuss? (PROBE: Is there anything important that we haven't talked about?)

17. (If appropriate) Earlier in the interview, you mentioned some material produced on the basis of these documents. Could you spare copies of any of this material?

MAKE SURE TO GET BACK ALL THREE LISTS AND THE SET OF DOCUMENTS.

Producer Interview Schedule Code Book

The purpose of these coding schemes is to describe some of the basic attitudes and opinions of the authors and end-users interviewed in the Foreign Service Reporting Project. The attitudes and opinions coded were taken directly from questions asked each interviewee on the schedule. (See Appendix B for an example of the interview schedule for producers and users. Because of the different schedules employed, slightly different variables were coded.)

Producer Interview Schedule Codebook:

#1 Country Identification Number: Each respondent was first identified by the country-desk or host country in which he was employed. A three digit code was given to each country for this identification purpose.

#2 Respondent Identification: Each respondent was arbitrarily assigned a two digit identification number for quick and easy reference to the interview schedule. For example, the first producer was assigned "01" as his identification number.

#3 Percentage of Time Spent on Field Reporting: This variable was coded off Question #1 of the Producer Interview Schedule (see Appendix B). This variable was assigned a three digit percentage figure depending upon the producers' perception as to the percentage of time he felt that he spent on field reporting. The range of values for this category was 0 to 100%. For example, if a producer answered that he spent 50% of his time reporting, his figure on the variable would read "500." If a range of time spent on reporting was given, i.e., 10–15%, the mean percentage was taken (12.5%). If this information was not available from the interview schedule, the producers' figure on this variable was assigned "999" signifying missing data.

#4 Perception of Function in Field Mission: This variable was coded from Question 1c of the Producer Interview Schedule, "Do you see yourself primarily as a reporter of facts or an analyst?" This variable taps the perceptions of the producer as to his primary function in the field mission. The following codes were employed:

1 Reporter
2 Analyst
3 Other
4 Missing Data

In case a producer mentioned a function that could be classified neither reporter nor analyst, such as an administrative officer, those functions were coded "3," other. If no response to this question was given for any producer, a code of "9," missing data, was assigned.

#5 Whose Decision on Which Information is Sent from the Mission: This item was similarly coded from Question 1c of the Producer Interview Schedule, "How do you decide which information you have access to should be sent on?" This variable examines who the producers believed to be primarily responsible for the information sent from the mission. The following codes were employed:

1 Mission Officials
2 Self-Initiated
3 Explicitly Requested
4 Combination of two of the above

A value "1" indicates that the producer believes that other mission officials are primarily responsible for information sent to Washington. A value "2" indicates that the producer himself decides on which reports written are sent on, while a "3" indicates that most reports are explicitly requested from the appropriate departments in Washington. A "4" was assigned in those cases where the producer believed most information sent was on both the request of mission officials and the initiation of the producer himself, or on explicit request and the initiation of the producer himself.

#6 Responsiveness to Washington's Needs: This variable was coded from Question 3e of the Producer Interview Schedule, "Do you feel that your reporting is responsive to what Washington wants?" The item indicates the producer's attitude or opinion on whether the information sent from the field mission provides Washington with the material they need or desire. The responses were coded as follows:

0 No (not responsive)
1 Yes (yes, responsive)
9 Missing Data or Unavailable

#7 Awareness of Other Sources: This variable was coded from Question 3g of the Producer Interview Schedule, "Are you aware of any other sources of information that you are not now using which you would like to have easier access to?" Any mention of a potential source of information by the producer was assigned a code of "1" regardless of the type of source. The response "No" by the producers was coded "0." If no response was present, the producer received a "9," missing data, or unavailable. Therefore, the coding scheme was:

0 "No" mention of other sources
1 Yes, some source mentioned
9 Missing data or unavailable

#8 Good Documents: Each respondent was asked, "Which of these documents that you wrote do you feel represents especially good reporting?", during the course of the interview. (See Item 3h, Producer Interview Schedule.) In each case, where the producer responded to this question, the 4–6 digit code on the document was noted. (See #2 in the Content Analysis Codebook.) These documents were noted to facilitate the analysis of the producers' perceptions of the characteristics of "good" documents.

User Interview Codebook:

#1 Country Identification Number: This item is identical to #1 in the Producer Interview Codebook.

#2 Respondent Identification: This item is identical to Item #2 in the Producer Interview Codebook. A two digit number was assigned to each of the end-user respondents.

#3 Main Functional Role: This item was coded from Question #1 of the User Interview Schedule (see Appendix B), "How would you describe your job in terms of foreign service reporting? Do you summarize or "synthesize the information" you receive, are you a "gatekeeper," sending information on to others? Do you use the information as the basis for analyzing "advocating or making policy?" If they considered themselves "synthesizers of information," they were coded what we called an "information bank" and assigned a value of "1." If the end-user considered himself a policy analyst, he was coded a "policy analyst" and assigned a value of "2." If the end-user considered himself a "gatekeeper," he was coded, what we have called an "operational-administrative personnel" and was assigned a code of "3." If the user responded that his function entailed a combination of the functions listed above, or was a function that couldn't fit within these three categories, special codes were assigned as indicated in the following summary:

1 information bank
2 policy analyst
3 operational-administrative personnel
4 other function
5 mention of two of the above functions
6 mention of three of the above functions
7 mention of functions 1–4

#4 General Talk of Reporting System: This item was coded from Question #8 in the User Interview Schedule, "Do you talk to others in your office, in the mission or elsewhere about the nature of and problem of the reporting process?" We did not attempt to code the varied content of responses but merely the fact of whether or not they have talked about the reporting system. Therefore, this item was coded:

0 No discussion of Reporting Process
1 Yes, have discussed Reporting Process
9 Missing data (if no answer)

#5 Responsiveness of Producers to Users' Needs: This item was coded from Question 9 in the User Interview Schedule,

"Do you feel that reporting is responsive to your needs?" This item examines the users' perceptions of the adequacy of the reporting system on providing them with essential information from the field. The item was coded:

0 No, field reporting not responsive to needs
1 Yes, field reporting is responsive to needs
9 Missing Data

#6 Awareness of Other Sources of Information: This item is identical to Item #7 in the Producer Interview Codebook.

0 No
1 Yes
9 Missing Data

#7 Other Feeling: This item was coded from Question #16 in the User Interview Schedule, "Is there anything else concerning your feelings about foreign service reporting that you would like to discuss?" This item was coded to observe if users were willing to discuss any other feelings that they believed were important and not discussed within the context of the interview. The item was not coded for the content of the opinions expressed, but merely whether any other comment was voiced. Therefore, this variable was coded:

0 No, no other feelings mentioned
1 Yes, other feelings expressed

#8 Good and Bad (Most and Least Useful) Documents: This item was coded from Questions 3a and 3b in the User Interview Schedule, "Tell the one or two documents which were the most useful? Which one or two were least useful?" In each case, where the user responded to these questions, the 4–6 digit code on the document was noted. (See #2 in the Content Analysis Codebook.) These documents were noted to facilitate the analysis of the users' perceptions of the characteristics of "good" and "bad" documents.

ANNEX D

Positions and Number of Producers Interviewed

Position	*# Interviewed*
Chief, Political Section	3
DCM	2
Political Officers	9
Political Counselors	2
Chief, Economic Section	1
Economic Officers	6
Economic Counselors	2
Chief, Consular Section	1
Chief, Administrative Office	2
Political-Military Officers	2
Legal Advisor	1
Labor Attaché	1
Assistant Labor Attaché	2
Commerce Attaché	1
Assistant Commerce Attaché	3
Press Attaché	2
Science Attaché	2
Technical Monitor	1
Civil Air Attaché	2
Treasury Attaché	1
Acting PAO	1
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Appendix F: Policy Planning

Introduction

Appendix F consists of a paper by Lincoln P. Bloomfield on "Organizing for Policy Planning," which discusses several alternative organizational patterns for meeting foreign policy planning needs. It is accompanied by commentaries prepared by Robert R. Bowie, Chester L. Cooper, and Henry Owen. Additional aspects of planning are discussed in the paper by Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye in Appendix B.

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Organizing for Policy Planning

Lincoln P. Bloomfield
April 1975

What passes for planning is frequently the projection of the familiar into the future. . . . Lip service is paid to planning; indeed, planning staffs proliferate. However, they suffer from two debilities. The "operating" elements may not take the planning effort seriously . . . there is a bias against novel conceptions which are difficult to adapt to an administrative mold. (Henry A. Kissinger, "Domestic Structures and Foreign Policy," *Daedelus,* Spring 1966.)

I. PURPOSE

The chief purpose of this paper is to sketch a range of organizational and structural arrangements that might be considered for doing the job of foreign policy planning in the United States Government.

In order to make intelligent comparisons, it is first necessary to define what we mean by "policy planning," and to identify the important desirable characteristics of the planning function.

Along with its analytical aim, this paper embodies a normative purpose: to improve the capability of the United States Government to plan effectively in the years ahead. Stated more broadly, the larger issue is to improve government's capacity in an interdependent era to confront world problems "in the round," across traditional institutional and topical boundaries, in order better to anticipate and organize for the future; and to do this in a fashion that brings to bear on definitions of the national interest the authentic values of the American people in a more purposeful and systematic way.

No government in the world is adequately structured today to cope, with foresight and authority, with what might be called "interdependence" issues. The unique power and influence of the United States persuasively argues that it should be in the best possible position to adapt to and help shape these transforming forces. One avenue toward mastering them with adequate responses and policies is to ensure the presence of a policy planning capability in the government adequate to meeting new responsibilities and complexities. It is no criticism of the often superb efforts of policy planners past and present that the various organizational options reviewed later in this paper will go beyond the traditional designs and consider alternative planning structures without being constrained by what has gone before.

II. ASSUMPTIONS

The approach which follows rests on several premises which should be made explicit.

First, when we speak of policy planning, the experience on which we draw is predominantly that of the Department of State since 1947 (although significant policy planning staffs did function actively in the DOD Office of International Security Affairs in the 1960s and, more briefly, in the Kissinger NSC staff in the White House 1969–1973). *Second,* the State Department's planning staff, while it has at times functioned very effectively, has had, at best, a checkered career since 1947 and has never really found a form that can durably survive changes in the personal style and idiosyncrasies of Secretaries of State. *Third,* however well S/P may function, the agenda of global and regional problems and trends facing this nation for the remainder of this century runs well beyond the scope of traditional State Department responsibility. *Fourth,* debates about foreign policy planning are handicapped by serious differences as to what people mean by "planning."

III. DEFINITIONS

A. If foreign policy planning is defined in some of the ways employed in the last 28 years, the prob-

lem can be defined out of existence. In order to try to break new ground, I am ruling out as nondefinitive the following definitions of policy planning: "Policy planning is what the Secretary of State may feel he needs or wants"; or, "policy planning is adding a paragraph of broader implications to action papers"; or, "policy planning is what S/P happens to be doing at any given time."

The first definition has been standard over the past 28 years; the difficulty was that when a Secretary of State did not feel a need for serious planning (as several did not), the function was downgraded and played no significant role. The second definition was furnished by a senior planner who served both with the Pentagon planning staff and the NSC staff; but his definition also describes what any good operational memorandum-drafter should have done in the first place. The third is a pragmatic definition inferred from past assertions by State Department planners, and is clearly inadequate to the nation's problems.[1]

B. I would postulate at the outset what appear to me to be the main things policy planning does—or ought to do—that distinguishes this function from what country directors, legal advisers, Assistant Secretaries, or Ambassadors normally do.

I would suggest four broad functions for the distinctively "non-operating" function of planning, namely: *conceptualization, anticipation, post-audit,* and *challenge.*

Conceptualization implies consideration and, if necessary, redefinition of broad national and global interests, goals, and objectives (some U. S. war colleges traditionally define goals as valid for longer than 15 years, objectives less). Occasionally (as at present) there is a Secretary of State with a powerful capacity for conceptual thinking and articulation. The more common approach is pragmatic and even impressionistic; in my view (which Dr. Kissinger apparently shares) the system ought not to be designed so as to depend entirely on a genius at the top. Planning should be "strategic" not "tactical," (and might perhaps better be styled "Strategic Thinking"[2]).

Anticipation centers the planner on the future, which in turn must be longer range than the operator's horizon if the planner is to make use of his role's comparative advantage.

Post-audit entails critical analysis of those broad strategies previously settled upon, and reexamination of the assumptions underlying policy.

Challenge involves the key qualities of independence and "audibility" that provide a built-in corrective to the hierarchial and consensus pressures which in any institution tend to inhibit the process of rational decision-making.

At the very heart of this definition are a) *the clear distinction between planning and operating;* b) *the maximizing of functions not normally performed by officials with operating responsibilities; and* c) *the optimizing of the services of analysts assigned to play this different role in the policy machine.*

C. According to the Commission staff paper entitled "Study Plan: Policy Planning," dated November 29, 1974, (full text at Annex A), planning can, at least in theory, include the following functions:

1. definition of "national interest"
2. articulation of interest, goals, and actions for specific areas
3. anticipation of emerging problems
4. long-range thinking
5. cross-sectoral and cross-regional analysis
6. coordination with NSC staff
7. weighing alternative actions
8. "adversary" role
9. search for new ideas and directions
10. contingency planning
11. matching of resources to objectives
12. reevaluating past objectives
13. consultation and research links

In my opinion functions number 2, 6, and 11, should be eliminated from our working definition in order to focus on those functions that are not elsewhere normally carried out and, if my reasoning is accepted, sorely in need of improvement.

Number 2, as the Commission staff memo correctly suggests, is in fact what thoughtful operating officials should do in respect of their specific areas or functions of responsibility.

Number 6, while made a part of the State Department "planning function" from 1969–1973, is more properly a staff secretariat function, concentration on which may produce greater coherence in policy papers and efficient paperwork flow, but not necessarily imaginative thinking or better anticipation.

As for the rest, two relate to planning but have mixed features. Number 7, is, *par excellence,* the role of decision-maker, although the planner can and should help identify the alternatives.

Number 11 is an administrative planning function to which policy planners could make a major contribution, both in the definition of policy objec-

[1]Several writers have recently tried to rethink the policy-planning function to correct, at least in part, for massive difficulties the U. S. Government has had both in seeing clearly enough the longer term implications of current policy trends, and in anticipating better the changes not only in the details of international system, but in the nature of the system itself. See, for instance, I. M. Destler, *Presidents, Bureaucrats, and Foreign Policy* [Princeton, 1972]; Robert Rothstein, *Planning, Prediction, and Policymaking in Foreign Affairs* [Little, Brown, 1972]; Lincoln P. Bloomfield, *In Search of American Foreign Policy: The Humane Use of Power* [Oxford, 1974], and *The Foreign Policy Process: Making Theory Relevant* [Sage, 1974]. All of these have worked from a definition of planning that goes beyond present philosophies of planning and the organizational arrangements based on those concepts.

[2]A suggestion made to me by Miriam Camps. Henry Owen suggests it be called "Long-Range Thinking".

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tives and in proposing policy-relevant techniques of systematic analysis (the latter function, so far as I know, has never been acknowledged by non-Pentagon planners).

Number 13 is a desirable *characteristic* of the policy planning function, rather than a definition of the function.

This leaves functions 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, which, summarized and rephrased, find policy planning to be:

> the conceptualization of foreign policy by the continuous defining and redefining of the U.S. external role and goals (*i.e.* the "national interest") and the shape of the international system, including past strategies, with emphasis on *emerging and over-the-horizon problems and opportunities, without limitation of subject matter or area, free to challenge conventional premises and assumptions at the most fundamental level if necessary,* and at the same time *linked to authority in such a way as to insure access to both information and top decision-makers.*

IV. PARAMETERS OF PLANNING

From that definition come four specific qualities, which can be summarized as *scope, time-horizon, independent-mindedness,* and *linkage to authority.*

1. SCOPE

The range of subject matter embraced by the mandate of the planners. I argued earlier that regardless of limits on the mission of the State Department (or any other agency), U.S. policy planning, to be genuinely responsive, must be unhampered in ranging across regional, sectional, and functional boundaries. In the years ahead the linkage between issues of diplomacy, strategy, resources, technology, and the nature of both domestic and foreign societies calls for greater assurance that government can grasp problems in the round and cope with them comprehensively.

A still broader dimension of the meaning of scope implies not just Executive-Branch-wide, but Government-wide. When the Executive Branch is in a position to take the principal initiatives in foreign policy (as in the last several decades), planning within the Executive Branch could, if effective, be sufficient. However, the growing role of the Congress in foreign policy suggests that even this may not be enough. The Executive Branch will of course always need to be in a position to make forecasts of alternative futures and explore a range of U.S. alternative strategies in order better to accommodate a changing environment: the same may also be true for the Congress.

At a minimum, no foreign planning staff in the U.S. Government will be up to the job in the years ahead if it does not operate within an authoritative and understood mandate that embraces with equal legitimacy both political-military-strategic issues *and* the erstwhile "low politics" issues of international trade, investment, money, food, resources, science, technology, ideology, and social change, including issues of balance between foreign and domestic concerns.

In addition, in order to relate planning—and thus future policy—better to domestic effects and values in American society, "scope" is taken here also to subsume a mandated degree of contact with public opinion, including heterodox or dissenting sectors of the public. This point is of great importance, since it is at the "strategic" level of broad national goals and definition of future interests that foreign policy in a democracy most needs to be attuned to the goals and the values of its people.

The place where value judgments are made about the future is in planning. But ironically, planning is where the internal governmental processes are the most insulated from outside inputs. The reason is that indecision, unsettled questions, and speculation are potentially embarrassing or sensitive and thus often highly classified. Yet if the above argument is accepted, it is precisely here where there is most need for the very thing the private sector can best contribute—a sense of national purposes, values, beliefs, concerns, intellectual boundaries, and assumptions. Invariably public opinion impacts on details of such *current* issues as Most Favored Nation legislation, or aid to Turkey, or numbers of bushels of export wheat. But it is rather in the more general sector of *value judgments* concerning the nation's *role and purposes* that the sovereign people are most expert, and where they should be more systematically consulted.

2. TIME HORIZON

The customary timeframe in the United States Government's day-to-day foreign policy operations ranges from today's crisis to, at most, next year's election, UN General Assembly meeting, NATO ministerial meeting, or summit. The present clientele of policy planning will naturally wish for ideas or material that appear usable within the timeframe of their own responsibilities. Long-range planning is thus often seen by harassed or skeptical operational officials as "visionary," "speculative," and—that ultimate put-down—"unrealistic."[3]

Arguing against the traditional definitions of "realism" and "relevance" are some massive mis-

[3]Six months has sometimes in the past been defined as the outer limit of "relevant" planning—see Lincoln P. Bloomfield, "Short-Order Futures: Short-Range Forecasting in Foreign Affairs," in Nazli Choucri and T. W. Robinson, *Forecasting in International Relations: Theory, Method, Problems, Prospects* [San Francisco: W. H. Freeman, 1975].

calculations in the past decade, ranging from failure to foresee the extent of U.S. involvement in Indochina, to failure to link the growing energy problem to international politics and strategy. Yet the dominant policy perspective invariably has defined "realism" and "relevance" in ways that put the burden of proof on the planner to be "helpful." This basic disparity in perspective often contributes to a Gresham-type law to the effect that "operations drive out planning," with the planners consequently giving short shrift to the longer term in order to be acceptable. Most present and former planners believe that their involvement in current activity—for example writing speeches for the secretary—enables their perspectives to have an impact they would otherwise not have. But the price for this may be to sacrifice the planners' most needed comparative advantages.

At root, this problem of differing time perspectives is also structural and cannot be resolved by fiat, or simply by encouragement to planners on the part of sympathetic chiefs—although that clearly helps. The roles of planners and operators are—*and should be*—different. When the planner plays the role of operator in order to be "relevant," an important function is in fact not being performed.

3. INDEPENDENCE OF MIND

A related test of policy planning is the extent to which planners are really free to challenge not just third- and second-order, but first-order policy premises.* Over the years it can be fairly asserted that the policy planning product has been deemed "useful" only when it fitted within the *general* framework of agreed policy. The reason for this is not complicated. After all, how many Secretaries or Under-Secretaries of State wish to be told, "I can't help you with tactics because your overall strategy is wrong"? Or, worse, to be told, "The President is wrong"? Secretaries also are loathe to have basic policies re-challenged over and over once they appear to have been settled. With occasional exceptions, what is valued is the planner who can accept fundamental policy decisions and premises and, within that framework, be "helpful" or "stimulating."

In many and even most instances this adaptability on the part of the planner may be entirely reasonable—so long as devices also exist for subjecting that framework to sharp evaluation and testing.[4] But may it not be that elements of that framework of ongoing policy are precisely the ones most in need of responsible in-house challenges?

There is no dearth of such challenges by unfriendly critics. Perhaps the most sobering lesson of the last ten years is the failure of those *within the system* who had grave doubts about the wisdom of broad policy directions to air their convictions. Some examples that at least arguably could have benefited from serious in-house challenge in recent years are: the Bay of Pigs; the Dominican Republic intervention; escalation and spread of the Vietnam war; keeping China out of the United Nations; the Soviet wheat deal; continued support for Chiang Kai-shek (and a host of other undemocratic regimes); opposition to international commodity agreements; the international energy crisis; the "destabilization" of Chile; the persistent neglect of Japan, Western Europe, Latin America, Africa, and Canada; the lack of overall solutions for the Arab-Israeli dispute, South Africa, and Rhodesia; the "tilt" toward Pakistan in 1971; failure to cultivate opposition elements in Greece, Portugal, Spain, etc.; independent revenues for UN peacekeeping; loss of influence at the UN. Not that all these policies were necessarily faulty, only that more effective in-house challenges to overall policy might have been in the highest national interest.

A greater degree of genuine independence to dissent from broad policy guidelines and bounds could correct for at least some of the built-in defects of *any* system of consensus pressures and hierarchical governance. Occasionally officials ask for contrary argumentation. This has proved adequate to make that vital correction. What is needed—and seems uniquely appropriate to a protected policy planning function, divorced from operational responsibilities—is a systematic, potent internal capacity to challenge, to critique, even to lobby for the unpopular, all on the basis, not of partisanship or alienation, but on the basis of responsible independent analysis, fortified and enriched by adequate consultation with a variety of outside sources and views.

4. LINKAGE TO AUTHORITY

A basic dilemma of policy planning cited earlier is that without independence, planners are not free to plan; but with no direct connection to decision-making, their planning is done in a vacuum.

Admitting the dilemmas should not absolve us from efforts to improve on the compromise that typically results. The planner should remain close enough to the operational situation to be well informed and able to influence decision-makers. The

*Examples of these various orders of premises in, say, the NATO context would be: Third order: "Four and one-third U.S. divisions are needed in central Europe." Second order: "Some U.S. ground forces are needed in central Europe." First order: "There is/is not a valid issue of military deterrence in Europe." The same ordering of premise-challenging can be specified for virtually all major policy sectors.

[4]Certain devices can be built in to help ensure this. See paper prepared for the Commission by Professor Alexander L. George; also Bloomfield, *The Foreign Policy Process, op. cit.*

price the planner pays for this is some loss of detachment and some degree of involvement. But *there is an equivalent price the system ought to pay* to ensure that the planner will optimize his own comparative advantage, which involves using different time horizons and generating heterodox thoughts. That price should take the form of built-in protection of the planner's independence and access, no matter how irritating his challenges to the conventional wisdom. The need is not to grant the planner new authority. It is to structure and "empower" the planning function sufficiently to *ensure* its constant interaction with the decision-maker. This cannot happen if it exists at the whim of a single individual. The planner must of course always struggle to persuade. But only through structuring the function adequately in the central apparatus of power and governance can his argument be guaranteed a hearing.

Thus planners must be "empowered," whether by Executive order or by legislation, in order that they have a) the necessary credentials, b) access to officials and to information, and c) an official audience for their product. That audience will not necessarily agree (or even sympathize). But it will listen to the degree that the planners represent a respected element in the official power structure. (The analogy might be to the former National Estimates Board. There might have been disagreement over the substance, but because of the way the process was structured, it had an ensured audience and a fair hearing.) Past weaknesses argue that to achieve this condition in foreign policy strategy planning, it is necessary to empower future policy planning in a more formal way.

Indeed, given the obstacles to planning found in the administrative lifestyle in *any* operational institution or setting, one might think about a built-in right to *publish* sanitized versions of unpopular (or even popular) think-pieces, and to *testify* as to them before appropriate Congressional committees, either in public or in executive sessions.

To sum up, four desirable characteristics for policy planning sufficient to the problems of the remainder of the twentieth century can be deduced from the preceding analysis: a) It should be of broad enough *scope* to authoritatively embrace the whole spectrum of U.S. external concerns. b) It should be mandated to deal at least in part in a nonoperational *timeframe,* both the middle term of three to seven years and the long range of a decade or more. c) It should be *independent minded,* the acid test of which would be its ability to generate and secure attention to responsibly conceived planning papers and projects that may be unsettling to particular agencies and even to a particular President or a particular Congress. d) It should be linked to authority by a structured *empowerment* to do the above rather than being at the mercy or whim of those who, because of their different role, prefer not to be challenged or stretched.

V. LIMITATIONS ON PLANNING

The foregoing is clearly an idealized definition of planning, however logical it may be. In practice it has been difficult if not impossible for State Department planners to achieve the ideal for reasons which are partly organizational and partly inherent in the planning function itself.

Organizationally the notion of foreign policy planning is beset by three dilemmas already cited: (a) the greater the "independent-mindedness" of the planner, the less likely his product is to be considered "relevant," i.e., acceptable to those in authority; (b) the further his planning time-horizon departs from the short-run perspective of the operator, or the more detached he becomes from day-to-day affairs, the more "unrealistic" and thus "irrelevant" he seems; yet the more involved in day-to-day policy, the less he can plan; and (c) because Secretaries of State have a priority need—and recognize it—for a challenge mechanism—an adversary—for day-to-day policy and operational recommendations coming to them from "line" offices, they are strongly impelled to divert planning resources to this purpose (which suggests the need for not "either" but "both" resources).

The organization of the planning function has always been totally dependent on the personal preferences and style of the Secretary of State, who by his office is dealing with essentially short-term decisions and administrative constraints, and is thus not likely to welcome precisely those attributes which represent the ideal of planning—longer term, speculative, and, if necessary, heretical. Virtually without exception, the policy planner has pragmatically tailored the planning function in order to seem maximally useful to the Secretary and often other senior officials. The planning function thus seems destined to remain forever a profound compromise between its theoretical ideal and what seems possible given the existing structure and ground rules according to which it exists.

Moreover the *inherent* limits must be acknowledged to *any* planning process, no matter how ideally structured, empowered, and staffed it may be: (1) The future can be anticipated in a variety of creative ways, but it certainly cannot be predicted in any detail.[5] (2) The chief "clients" of policy plan-

[5]The technical literature on forecasting often distinguishes usefully between "anticipation," which connotes a general sense of trends; "forecasting," which means prediction of classes of events; and "prediction" of specific events.

ning, whether Presidents, Secretaries of State, or Congress, will inevitably set limits on what they are willing to regard as permissible or legitimate in the way of options or scenarios they are prepared to consider seriously. On all the historic evidence they are going to be hostile to advice that clearly goes outside the bounds they have set for themselves in defining reality, the national interest, or their value priorities. (3) Governments are organized by differing functions, and thus the mandates of agencies will differ, and planning (if it exists) within each agency will reflect those differing missions and priorities. (4) The social sciences remain weak in moving toward reliable and persuasive techniques for forecasting or even for policy analysis.

These limitations are severe, particularly the first, which is inherent in reality and should keep both planners and doers healthily skeptical of their capacity to manipulate the contingent future. But the other three represent limitations which it might be in the national interest to overcome.

My own strong belief is that the United States Government would have been better served in recent years by planners freer to make responsible challenges to current policy, not just in detail but in the large; that is, planners free to challenge policy premises not only at the second or third level, but, when necessary, at the level of first-order premises.

As to the limits imposed by organizational missions and mandates, the global problems to which U.S. foreign policy needs to be attuned surely call for planning that is unconstrained by domestic organizational boundaries. On the contrary, the need is for foreign policy planners who enjoy entree, expertise, and influence in the economic, financial, and technological realms every bit as much as they traditionally have had with respect to the political, military, and intelligence spheres of official activity.

As for the imperfect and even primitive state of the art in the quantitative social sciences, the complex nature of global and regional problems calls for taking advantage of such techniques as have been reasonably well developed in the natural and social sciences in the realms of data handling, policy analysis, and forecasting. Even given the modest claims the latter still must make, there seems little justification for the persistent innocence on the part of substantive foreign policy planners of such technologies, techniques, and methodologies as *do* exist and may be potentially promising as aids to more systematic planning and thinking. Their absence in practice so far reflects the widespread intellectual lag in conventional foreign policy analysis compared with other contemporary sectors of economics, defense planning, and business management.[6]

I need hardly point out that the essential prerequisite of any policy planning function, whether hobbled or ideal, is the presence of individuals of the highest intellectual quality, integrity, and open-mindedness, plus a talent for conceptual thinking. Without human quality control, no administrative or organizational reforms have any meaning whatever. S/P has in my judgment more often than not been staffed with very high-grade personnel. What is not so certain is that they have been given a genuine opportunity to plan in the fullest sense I am using in this paper.

VI. EIGHT MODELS OF POLICY PLANNING

While recognizing both the inherent and structural limitations of policy planning, it still is worthwhile to consider some alternatives for its placement and operation, in order to see better what trade-offs are involved, and to suggest possible ways of improving the longer term prospects for effective planning.

While there may well be others, the following eight models seem to cover the basic spectrum of alternative possibilities for organizing the United States Government for improved foreign policy planning.

A. Within the Department of State (as at present).

B. Organizationally within the Department of State, but with an extended mandate embodying the major "interdependence issues," including those of primary substantive concern to other federal agencies.

C. Executive-Branch-wide, i.e., a semi-autonomous body covering the same terrain as B, but not located in any one Department.

D. A White House planning staff, comparable to the NSC staff, but, like B, expanded to cover non-security issues of foreign policy concern.

E. Congressional, e.g., an expanded Foreign Relations Committee staff, or a joint planning staff serving Senate and House committees, or perhaps part of the proposed Congressional Institute.

F. A joint Executive-Legislative staff, e.g., a variant of the General Accounting Office model in which the head is nominated by the President, but reports to the Congress and serves for a fixed term.

G. A private-public combination. One variant would be a quasi-independent nonprofit corporation such as the Public Broadcasting Corporation, or early versions of think-tanks such as RAND, IDA, SORO, RAC, et al, when their research was dedi-

[6]Gerard Smith made the admirable suggestion to me that one important insight on the forecasting capability could be revealed by a systematic review of earlier planning papers in order to identify earlier (and perhaps chronic) blind spots, biases, and the like.

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cated exclusively to the needs of the Air Force, DOD, and the Army, respectively. Another mutant (suggested by the Commission staff) would combine an in-house S/P with a contractual or otherwise related "private" arm—a dual staff with a "dumbbell" shape.

H. A purely private organization, such as an existing university or private research organization.

Each of these models can be tested against the four criteria advanced above for improved policy planning—*scope, time-horizon, independent-mindedness,* and *linkage to authority.* The models are displayed in the following table, with a brief characterization of the capabilities of each in terms of the criteria. It can be seen that while no single model is perfect, some fulfill the stipulated desiderata better than others.

Four can be eliminated from consideration as improvements over present arrangements, for the following reasons:

Model A—the present S/P model—since it is directly tied to one agency's mission and priorities, cannot score highly on scope, although it can of course take some account of questions of primary concern to other agencies. In terms of timeframe there is no inherent bar to longer term projections, but the record suggests the presence of intensive departmental pressures for "relevance" which by their very nature discourage the capability for longer range planning. Clearly this model, like all in-house planning staffs—or those empowered by statute or fiat—is "linked to authority." But the negative side of that coin is that independence to challenge *first-order premises,* when that is necessary, cannot be realistically expected of a staff, within any operational institution, that is wholly dependent on the interest or favor of a busy and usually embattled executive. To remedy that weakness, it is theoretically possible, but impractical, to ensure formal protection from punishment for unorthodoxy (or heresy), and encouragement to think boldly.

The same deficiencies of time-horizon and independence-mindedness would affect Model D—the White House planning staff—to the extent it simply mirrors at a higher level the complete dependence on a single "action officer." A White House staff that resembled the recent NSC planning staff also would perpetuate the incompleteness of scope of planning traditionally restricted to political-military sectors, with only modest deviations.

The third model I would exclude is the Congressional staff version—Model E—however much the Congress itself might benefit from its own policy planning staff. Here the scope would be optimal in the sense of being truly government-wide. The timeframe would be possibly flexible, although Congressional pressures for "relevance" would inevitably be working to bring planners closer to day-to-day concerns of members of the Congress, committee chairmen, etc. It would be more possible

TABLE 1.—ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF POLICY PLANNING

MODELS CRITERIA	*MODEL A Dept. of State*	*MODEL B Extended DOS*	*MODEL C Executive Branch*	*MODEL D White House*	*MODEL E Congressional*	*MODEL F Executive-Legislative*	*MODEL G Private-Public*	*MODEL H Private*
Scope	Insufficient but could be mandated	Could be made adequate by Executive Order	Adequate	Could be adequate	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal
Timeframe	Could be made more flexible but pressures for "relevance"	More possible with wider mandate	Same as B	Less possible because directly serves No. 1 Action Officer	Possible but Congressional pressures for "relevance"	Possible	Optimal	Optimal
Independence	Not really possible	Still very difficult	Unpromising—conflicts with agency programs	Not really possible	Possible though Congressional constraints	Close to optimal	Optimal	Optimal
Linkage to Authority	Built in (although can be ignored)	Same as A	Might be weak	Same as A	Natural antagonist to Executive Branch	Theoretically optimal	"Dumbbell" version could be optimal	None

to challenge policy premises, although partisanship might become an issue. Certainly empowerment by statute is likely here. An overriding drawback, however, is the fact that a purely Congressional agency tends to appear to be a natural antagonist of the Executive Branch. So in terms of "usable clout," influence on the foreign policy machine is problematic, and thus linkage to foreign policy decisional authority is not satisfied.

Finally, the last Model, H, cannot be considered since it is without any linkage whatsoever to authority.

What then is reasonable to contemplate? In theory, the ideal might be Model F—an Executive-Legislative joint or combined agency, set up along the lines of the General Accounting Office (perhaps even part of the latter). Scope is optimal and, like the present GAO, it could display impressive independence to challenge the Executive's conventional wisdom. Executive-Legislative cooperation or joint activity is frequently a logical solution to a policy bind. But the difficulty with this model may arise in part from its "unnatural" nature. This model also falls short on linkage to authority, especially the closeness for interaction with policymakers. Such joint activity is problematic, at best temporary (as in crisis), and contrary to the grain of the system.

This leaves B and C as strong candidates which embody the notion of expanded, Branch-wide scope in order to embrace "interdependency issues"; also G, the private-public combination. Together, they point to a solution.

One version of G—a quasi-independent private-public corporation model, perhaps along the lines of the RAND Corporation as originally conceived by the Air Force—while optimal in scope, time-frame, and independence, would not be organically connected to either branch of the government, and would thus inevitably lose in the necessary influence and access. It would not be linked to authority. But the other—the "dumbell" variant—seems to fulfill all four of my essential criteria better than any other. It also would score high on some secondary desiderata, such as the needful inputs of people and ideas outside the usual foreign policy culture (referred to earlier as a subordinate feature of "scope").

The "in-house" half of this variant could be either an expanded version of the present S/P, or a newly defined Executive-Branch-wide body performing the same functions. If it were an "Extended S/P" it would include personnel seconded from the "interdependence" agencies. Location in the State Department is preferable on balance, due to assured linkage to authority.

But "authority's" disposition to ignore or resent an independent-minded planning staff (as has sometimes happened in the past) is corrected for in Model G by virtue of the "outside wing." For the latter, one could envisage a small "Planning Group" of thoughtful and personally influential individuals, perhaps retired or on academic or other leave, at work in a Washington-based research or public service organization, meeting separately as well as with the "Extended S/P" staff, holding their own seminars, conferences, and consultations as well as joint ones, initiating agenda issues of their own as well as helping think through those on S/P's agenda, and as individuals continuing to do some writing, speaking, testifying, and publishing even while on duty in the Group, although always within the bounds of confidentiality and security.[7]

The groups at both ends would be, of course, staffed by individuals chosen for their imagination, wisdom, and intellectual integrity. S/P staff would, as at present, be seconded from Executive Branch agencies, including the Foreign Service. But there should be a greater leavening in S/P itself than in the past of outside talent, including women, minorities, and non-Establishment types, and *a fortiori* in the outer wing.[8]

Both staffs would be encouraged to experiment with modern techniques of analysis, simulation, and forecasting. In connection with the second, perhaps the resources of the Political-Military gaming division of SAGA in the Joint Chiefs of Staff should be placed under the substantive direction of the expanded planning staff so the functions could be harnessed to broader national policy planning purposes. Better still, these resources might be transferred, so the personnel of the planning could freely use gaming as a tool for pretesting strategies, devising alternatives, and uncovering future possibilities. Even at a more modest level, the outer "Planning Group" could regularly "game out" complex and disputed future possibilities with full freedom to invite as participants anyone of their choice, whether "clearable" or not.

In sum, on the one hand the "Extended" S/P would ensure the desired bureaucratic scope and formal linkage to authority; on the other hand the related Planning Group would optimize the variables of flexible time-horizons and independent-mindedness. Together they might go a long way to improving the promising but imperfect policy planning function this nation needs—and deserves—as it faces an uncertain future.

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[7]For the shape of this outside portion of the organization I have adapted here an excellent suggestion made to me by William Hyland. An adaptation suggested by Robert Bowie sees such a group as analogous to the former P-S-A-C.

[8]Henry Owen suggests that as a first step a mixed government-academic committee be set up to meet periodically.

Study Plan: Policy Planning

I. The Problem

What organizational and procedural steps can be taken to make policy planning more effective in the conduct of foreign policy.

The function of planning for foreign policy is widely misunderstood and disputed. As Rothstein points out:[1]

"Before we can begin to understand what we mean by better planners, and how to recruit them and train them, we need a clearer understanding of planning itself. The notion of planning encompasses a wide variety of activities, and different planning tasks imply different planning staff—and planners. Making and understanding these distinctions is a necessary prerequisite to the establishment of a useful planning function; doing so also provides us with an opportunity to move from the rhetorical sloganeering that dominates most discussions of planning—planning can never work, or, planning is our *only* hope—to a careful analysis of who can do what for whom." (p. 88)

In fact, planning is an important component of almost every aspect of the conduct of foreign policy but is not itself a separable, definable function. For example, planning can be all—or a limited selection—of the following:

- the effort to define the *national interest;*
- *the articulation of interests, objectives and courses of action* for any country, geographic area, functional problem or international institution (Note that this is a respectable definition of "policy" itself);
- forecasting and predicting, and so anticipating *emerging problems* which will or should call for designing courses of action;
- exploration of problems and functions over *"longer" periods of time,* and *crossing geographic and functional boundaries;* those not normally comprehended by "operating" units;
- the *coordination* of foreign policy objectives and courses of action with other agencies and in particular with the National Security Council mechanism of the President;
- consideration and weighing of consequences of alternative directions and courses of action; the role of "adversary" to operating offices;
- the search for *"new directions"* and *"new ideas"* and *"initiatives"* in all matters relating to the conduct of foreign policy; frequently on the occasion of major speeches, summit negotiations or VIP visits and travels;
- the preparation of choices for *contingencies* (Note: because the number and variety of possible eventualities for which preparations might be made in foreign affairs is almost infinite, "contingency planning" has less pertinence for foreign policy than for other parts of the national government);
- the matching of *program resources*—personnel, budget, assistance, etc.—to stated objectives and agreed courses of action; "PPB";
- *re-evaluation* and testing for continuing validity of previously announced objectives, established programs and of ongoing courses of action;
- the maintenance of close and profitable links for *consultation and research* with the outside, and particularly academic, world.

If all of the foregoing activities are, one way or another, part of a planning function, they are also the assigned role of operating bureaus and to some extent of intelligence support. In foreign policy there is at once an identicality and a disparity between the roles of planner and/or "operator," or "action officer." Thus, as O'Leary points out:[2]

". . . the overwhelming traditions of diplomacy charges each individual practitioner to be his own planner. (p. 117)

. . . the planner will . . . argue for more specificity in formulating goals for the group, more precision in setting forth the alternative means which should be chosen to advance towards the goals, and more sophistication in evaluating ongoing policy in terms of correspondence to appropriate means, and in terms of advancement towards longer range goals . . . (p. 120) . . . the needs and procedures of the formal planner exhibit a marked incompatability with the needs and procedures of the professional diplomat . . . (p. 121)

. . . one much broader reason for the incompat-

[1] *Planning, Prediction and Policy Making in Foreign Affairs.* Rothstein, Robert L. (Boston, Little, Brown & Co. 1972)

[2] *Policy Formulation and Planning.* O'Leary, Michael Kent.

ability between formal planning and diplomacy [which] transcends the detailed procedures in which the planner engages in the pursuance of his job . . . may be simply stated as the reduction of ambiguity (p. 126). For the professional diplomat unlike nearly every member of a national society, not only is more tolerant of the international ambiguity in which his nature is embedded, but in fact depends upon the very ambiguity of environment as the principal justification of his profession . . . (p. 127)

Not surprisingly every Secretary of State since General Marshall has used his planning staff in a different way—radically different. Each Chief Planning Officer has rationalized his role in support of the Secretary quite unlike his predecessors. The operating "style" of the Secretary, and to some extent of the President himself, therefore will be the principal determinant of the manner in which the planning function will be carried out; which role will be emphasized; what importance will be attached, in what form, to the planning staff. Each Secretary of State decides whether he wishes his planning staff to be small or large; close or distant; rigorously limited to specified functions or loosely empowered to move in all directions; a long range "think tank" or an operational, "adversary view" to balance against ongoing policy recommendations; a substantive staff close to his right hand or an intellectual storehouse to be drawn upon for the "larger picture." In somewhat over simplified terms the Secretary of State, in organizing a planning staff, must choose between two alternatives or variations upon the two alternatives:

a. A personal staff which, by his own close involvement with it, will equip him more effectively and more currently to deal with the infinite complexity of diplomatic matters which involve the future direction of policy. This concept of a planning staff is consistent with Harlan Cleveland's view: [3]

> . . . "The most usable end-product of planning is not a paper, but a person thoroughly immersed in the subject—a person whose mind is trained to act, having taken everything into account, on the spur of the moment. And that is why the ultimate decision-maker must himself participate in the planning exercise. A busy boxer, training for the bout of his life, cannot afford to let his sparring-partners do all his daily calisthenics for him . . ."

b. An institutional organization which seeks to fulfill as much of the formal planning function as is possible in the diplomatic environment. Such an organizational unit would constantly strive to clarify "national interests" and "objectives," would emphasize "the longer range outlook" and "across-the-board perspectives." In particular such a staff would bring to the foreign policy process the resources of the academic world not alone in the field of foreign policy but also in formal planning techniques and especially in forecasting and prediction.

A Secretary of State needs both roles performed. Neither, however, can be fulfilled in an altogether satisfactory manner, not least because they both impinge upon the responsibilities he must assign to other operating offices in the Department. Moreover the two roles, almost surely, cannot be effectively combined in a single staff without an excessively large staff and an even greater conflict with other Departmental offices.

The problem for the Commission thus is to identify the major issues which are involved in the planning function in the conduct of foreign policy, to explore the options which may be available in organizational and procedural patterns and to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of some of the options.

II. The Study Plan

Almost all of the studies being prepared under the research program will relate importantly to the problem of planning for the conduct of foreign policy. The findings of these studies will need to be properly collated. However, other important considerations, substantive and organizational, will not necessarily arise in the research papers, and these must be carefully identified, analyzed, and weighed.

The need, therefore, is for an analytical paper—conceptual at base but involving practical specifics of organization and procedure. Such an analysis, which might postulate atlernative models, can serve as a basis for discussion in a review group of experts drawn from inside and outside the government. Such a review group, in turn, can formulate for the Commissioners' review the major choices, including advantages and pitfalls, in the organizational challenge which planning for foreign policy presents.

[3] *Crisis Diplomacy*. Cleveland, Harlan

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Organizing for Policy Planning

Robert R. Bowie
April 1975

This memo takes off from the Report on this topic prepared for the Commission by Lincoln Bloomfield. While I would differ on a few points, on the whole I would concur with his description of the nature, parameters, and limitations on planning. Thus there is no need to repeat that discussion or to note my dissents in detail. It seems to me, however, that policy planning needs to be put into a wider context of policymaking both for the analysis of its role and for deciding on structures.

I

1. Planning (as the Study Plan says), is actually an inherent *component* of the whole process of conducting foreign policy. In deciding on a course and in choosing among means, any statesman has to engage to some degree in most of the activities embraced in the concept of planning. In simpler or more settled periods, however, these aspects of the process are less likely to attract or require special attention.

2. But the conditions of our era create an urgent need for conscious planning. In an evolving, interdependent world, foreign policy must achieve coherence over time in order to be effective. It will be feasible to shape an international order or to manage interdependence only by actions which reinforce each other over an extended period, and by continuing cooperation with others on many fronts (political, economic, military, etc.), which impinges directly on the daily life of the citizen. Thus basic policy must have long-term goals and priorities and be consistently pursued, both to provide the basis for cooperation with other nations and to mobilize domestic political support. At the same time, there must be means for adapting policies in an orderly and timely way to respond to changing conditions and to anticipate emerging problems.

3. Hence the processes and institutions for making and carrying out foreign policy must be able:

(a) to define long-term purposes and priorities —to develop a policy framework or strategy;

(b) to assure that specific day-to-day decisions take account of the longer term objectives and priorities;

(c) to anticipate the need to modify objectives or priorities and develop new courses in response to changing conditions.

4. The entire process of conducting foreign policy should be designed to fulfill these requirements. But as experience shows, there is a tendency for those engaged in day-to-day operations or with limited jurisdictions to neglect or resist some of these needs. After all, coping with immediate problems is often made harder by adhering to long-term objectives which restrict flexibility or narrow the range of choice; conversely, critical review and revision of premises and objectives may disrupt familiar patterns of analysis or action.

5. The primary reason for establishing policy planning as a *separate* function is to help to overcome, or compensate for, these deficiencies or tendencies in the system.

II

Quite clearly, however, policy planning cannot succeed unless it is part of a compatible system of policymaking designed to promote coherence. To my mind, this implies, inter alia, the following:

1. The guidelines for basic objectives and priorities (strategy) must ultimately emanate from the President. Only he has the requisite political authority within the executive branch, with the Congress, and with the electorate. He must recognize the need to adopt and expound a general strategy understandable to bureaucrats, Congress, the public, and foreign nations.

2. The President's problem is to extend his reach so that his basic purposes and priorities are given effect in the regular operations of the bureaucracy,

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where most decisions and actions are inevitably taken.

3. For this purpose the Secretary of State and his department should be the chief instruments, both in devising the guiding purposes and priorities, and in monitoring the day-to-day actions. The other major Cabinet officers and departments, however, must also have a role in developing the broad guidelines and in the key decisions which give them effect.

4. The policy process at various levels must assure an opportunity for orderly inputs from different viewpoints before decisions are taken. On important issues, the decision-maker should hear the debate among differing views.

III

The structure for policy planning proposed by Bloomfield does not seem to me adequate to meet these various requisites.

1. As he suggests, the Policy Planning Staff in the State Department should certainly have the widest authority to consider all aspects of foreign policy. Indeed, it has, I believe, always had that scope. The staff would, of course, seek to perform for the Secretary and the Department the functions already discussed. And since the direction of foreign policy is so largely shaped by specific decisions, the planning staff should also participate in key decisions in order to present their broader or longer range implications or consequences. Admittedly, this entails the familiar tensions between the "planning role" and sharing in the operational decisions. But that dilemma is inevitable: it cannot be escaped if planning is to be more than an academic exercise.

2. But more is needed to inject the longer range or strategic aspect into policymaking. There should be a system for developing the strategic framework and for key decisions involving other agencies substantially involved in foreign affairs. It should assure that the various inputs are brought together and synthesized into a coherent and consistent policy.

3. For this purpose, three further components are needed:

(a) One is a forum, such as the National Security Council, for debate by the heads of agencies in the presence of the President to discuss the broad lines of policy and major decisions. Some members would attend regularly and others only where issues arose which bore on their responsibilities.

(b) To assist the NSC, there should be a group of planners to prepare studies and proposals on the strategic framework and key issues of foreign policy. It would consist of the head of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department and similar officials from the other key departments concerned. These planners should not only represent their agencies, but should have a specific charter to initiate proposals on their own responsibility. On many technical issues, the proposals would be worked up by expert committees designated for that purpose.

(c) A small NSC staff would be required in the White House to make the system work. But this staff and its Executive Secretary would not be principal policy advisors. Their task should be the more neutral one of making certain that critical issues and diverse views on them were adequately presented to the President when decisions were actually made. Thus the Executive Secretary should not come between the President and the Cabinet officers charged with making and executing policy. In particular, he would not be a competitor of the Secretary of State.

4. The Secretary of State should still have primacy in foreign affairs within the Cabinet. The President should look to him to take the lead in developing and discussing many of the matters to be taken up. But the other agencies concerned would have an active role, which would also assure greater understanding and acceptance of the framework and decisions.

5. This procedure would not, of course, be expected to handle most decisions in the day-to-day conduct of policy. It should focus on key issues which set the direction of policies and guide day-to-day decisions. The purpose should not be to produce a blueprint, but rather to clarify long-term purposes, objectives, and priorities, and to relate key decisions to them and to involve Cabinet officers and their staffs in this process.

6. Finally, within their agencies, the planners would be expected to inject the long-term or wider considerations into the handling of day-to-day decisions.

IV

1. No system or structure can, by itself, assure that policy will be made or carried out in a consistent manner, or that the day-to-day decisions will be compatible with long-term objectives. How far that occurs depends first of all on whether or not the President and the Secretary of State recognize the necessity for policymaking to meet those requisites and work together to achieve that result.

2. If they do, however, then the procedures and structures can make a significant contribution. In particular, they can facilitate planning and coherence by clarifying the direction, objectives, and priorities of policy; by assuring that competing views

are aired and considered in reaching decisions; and by involving the major department heads and their staffs in the process.

3. Such procedures will need to be supplemented by many other devices, both to assure radical re-examination of accepted premises and objectives and to help to anticipate emerging problems. In my experience, the Planning Staff has been more ready to play this role than Bloomfield suggests. And it should be able to do so in the future if the Secretary and President are so minded. In some cases, special commissions may be useful for reassessment or for new issues. The proposal by Bloomfield for an outside research and policy institution might be helpful, though it, too, might well develop vested interests in specific outlooks or approaches. Another possibility would be to establish a group of qualified outside experts for foreign policy on the pattern of the former Science Advisory Council, which might serve a similar function without creating a new institution.

4. Any particular scheme for organizing policy planning and policy making has its own strengths and weaknesses. Other structures and procedures may well be better than those proposed. But whatever the form, the purposes should be:

first, to foster the pursuit of long-term, coherent purposes and priorities in our foreign policy;

second, to enlist the active cooperation of the bureaucracy in carrying out such policies.

Both aims run counter to tendencies of recent Presidents and their closest associates. The first requires the sacrifice of flexibility and keeping options open. And the second entails sharing authority more widely in order to include upper and middle officials within the policy process. Both appear to dilute or constrain his power. Yet only by such means can a President hope to extend his reach and influence so as to conduct a foreign policy suited to our times.

Policy Planning—National and Foreign

Chester L. Cooper
April 1975

I. An Introductory Note

In less complex times or in less complex societies the kind of brooding we are engaged in now about the intricacies and nuances of national decision-making could, with much justification, be regarded as over-intellectualizing a relatively simple problem. But now, in the United States, the complexity of the issues involved, the degree of international interdependence, the high costs (political and monetary) attached to major policy determinations, the short-time fuses, and the minimal room for maneuver warrant serious thought about the process through which foreign policy is made. And, too, these considerations put a high premium on forethought, rationality, and a sense of direction; in short, on planning.

A discussion of foreign policy planning, even in the context of an essay which concentrates on "organization," has some unique facets. We are addressing a function which, by definition, is future-oriented; forecasting or prediction is implicit in planning. This sets planning and planners apart from the normal conduct of foreign policy.

Moreover, policy planning is really a *process* rather than a function: it involves an intellectual commitment by a government to a style of policy-making rather than simply a series of discrete acts by a specialized staff. From this flows the need to consider "planning" as an important element, possibly even the center, of a web of policymakers, operators, researchers, and intelligence officers.

Any discussion of policy planning, whether from a substantive or an organizational point of view, is bound to be influenced by *conceptual* considerations. The matter does not lend itself solely to organizational charts and institutional jiggering. Once there is agreement on the nature of the process and what the process should attempt to accomplish, the "organization of the government for the conduct of planning" can follow.

This essay, then, will first put forward some thoughts on the policy planning process, taking note of Bloomfield's views[1] along the way. And because, after all, this is not an examination *de novo*, I will select from Bloomfield's essay the most promising routes toward a planning process that might meet the real world of constraints and imperatives. On the basis of these, and buttressed by a few thoughts of my own, I will present some ideas for the development of a national "Strategic Policy Assessment" function.

II. The (Sorry) State of Planning

The flow and pace of international affairs and the emergence of profound global forces and foreign personalities are largely beyond the control of American policy, much more so than in the case of domestic affairs. Advocates of policy planning frequently overlook this in their enthusiasm. Bloomfield is no exception here. His discussion (Section V) of "Limitations on Planning" omits what I regard as this critical point. It is for this reason that rational, carefully planned foreign policy initiatives so frequently must give way to hasty reaction in the face of unforeseen—sometimes unforeseeable-developments.

But even when the issues involved deal with long-term trends subject to thoughtful analysis, there is a tendency to ignore them until the trends become problems and the problems take the form of crises. Thus, despite lofty rhetoric on the part of Secretaries of State or Defense, by Assistants to Presidents, or, on occasion, by Presidents themselves, long-range planning, as Bloomfield reminds us, is rarely done in Washington; when done, it is usually ignored. Indeed, even midterm (say, from 2–5 years) planning is a rare and sometime phenomenon. Washington's top-level foreign policy makers,

[1]Lincoln Bloomfield, *Organizing for Policy Planning*. An essay prepared for the Commission.

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many of whom have come from (and plan to return to) academia, many of whom would describe themselves as "political scientists," typically operate pragmatically on a day-to-day, week-to-week basis. On the level below them, the process is dominated by experts in one or another aspect of international affairs rather than by social science theorists. Planning has remained the thankless and frequently bootless task of the "boys in the back room." Indeed, except for occasional golden moments, and with some minor differences of tone and nuances of style, this is how Washington's foreign policymaking establishment has regarded the planners since the end of World War II. And, one must hasten to add, how most Foreign Offices have regarded *their* planners.

The effectiveness of planning depends, in the last analysis, on whether the function is taken seriously by key officials in the policy hierarchy. This, in turn, depends not only on how well planners plan, but at least as much on factors beyond their control, sometimes even beyond their ken. Planners usually find themselves operating in a system where policymakers are preoccupied with crisis management and damage limitation, and where these activities must take precedence over the orderly consideration of long-term objectives and long-term strategy.

Discussions of the policy planning process must recognize that no matter how sophisticated the planning techniques or methodologies, no matter how soundly conceived the plans, the planners, themselves, must ply their art within the system. Not only the working style of any given President, but his personal and professional relations with the Secretary of State, or Secretary of Defense, or Director of Central Intelligence must be reckoned with. And, in turn, of course, there are the working styles of *these* high officials and *their* relations with the Chief Policy Planner, or the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, or the Director of the Office of National Estimates. And finally and perhaps, most importantly, planning enthusiasts must recognize that despite the pejorative that Washington is a "paper factory," Washington is an *oral* rather than a *written*-driven community. In the last analysis, the telephone and the small meeting are the operative instruments, and these effectively exclude the planner. This point, too, is often overlooked by—or is unknown to—students of the policy process. Bloomfield seems to recognize the problem when he addresses the need to "empower" the planning function so that it will have "constant interaction with the decision-maker." But in the real world, "empowerment" may not provide a ticket to admission when the President meets in emergency session with his close advisors.

However it is defined—and I have no quarrel with Bloomfield's definition—planning is obviously not an end in itself. Indeed, the difference between a foreign policy *planner* and a foreign policy *essayist* is that the former is an integral part of a larger foreign policy process: he is linked substantively and organizationally with information collectors, analysts and forecasters on the one hand, and decisionmakers on the other. Although only the hopelessly naive would maintain that planners' plans should always be adopted by high-level policymakers, a planning paper can become an effective contribution only if policymakers take cognizance of it as they come to their decision. Unfortunately, this does not happen very often, not because high policymaking officials consciously choose to ignore the planning function, but because the pace of events, actual or perceived, is such that "policy" (i.e., a *decision*) tends to be postponed until it is forced on the top level of government. (The euphemism for this is "keeping the options open.") The very atmosphere that surrounds the making of consequential decisions—tension, secrecy, the pressure of time—tends to shut policy planners out of the process. This does not mean, obviously, that decisions are reached mindlessly or without plan. What happens under these circumstances is that "planning" becomes part of the intellectual process the policymaker employs to reach his decision. "Planning" in this sense is informal, unstructured, and frequently divorced from the work of the nominal planning staffs: the role of the planners and their elaborate planning papers get short shrift.

Ideally, communication between planners and policymakers should flow in both directions. Planners, for their part, should share with others the fruits of their unhurried study; decision makers should, in turn, keep planners in touch with their current concerns. But all processes are less perfect in their implementation than they are on flow charts. The foreign policy process breaks down at several critical points, and in terms of planning, at the most critical point of all: decisionmakers, by design or oversight, rarely inform planners of their current or likely future interests. Thus, planning staffs tend to be insulated from the real world. Much of the planning effort is consequently self-generated, based on what planners, in their innocence, assume the decisionmakers want, or based on what they think they ought to have.

This is not good enough. If the planning function is to serve a useful purpose, and if advances in planning methodology are to contribute to a more rational American foreign policy, planners must be given a more active and direct role. It is one thing to write essays outside the government for a wide audience that might include (as it would in the case of such journals as *Foreign Affairs* or *Foreign Policy*) influential government officials; it is another to

write "essays" within the government and have them ignored, especially by those same officials.

There are three key questions that could properly be asked: Is the kind of long-range policy planning now being done (and having been for many years past) effective in influencing the course of American foreign policy? The short answer to this stems from the discussion above and has been anticipated in Bloomfield's paper. It is *No.* Has policy planning been ineffective because of the quality and relevance[2] of the planning or because, regardless of quality and relevance, the policy process has not been geared, philosophically and/or institutionally, to incorporating the fruits of a planning function? The short answer is *Both,* and the reasons for this are, by now, familiar. But the key question for present purposes is, can arrangements be devised to improve quality, relevance, and effectiveness? This is what the remainder of this essay will be about.

III. National Planning vs. Foreign Policy Planning

With the few minor exceptions I have noted above, there is little that I would take issue with in the Bloomfield essay until Section VI. My problem can be briefly explained, and having done this, I shall put forward my own proposal.

Bloomfield's view of the planning problem, "to improve government's capacity to confront world problems 'in the round,' " is one to which I wholly subscribe, and his attempt to create a model planning organization is worthy. Difficulties arise when he moves into the models themselves. Here I think there is something awry between Bloomfield's objectives—a national planning requirement and a State Department planning requirement—and his chosen models. This will become apparent, I believe, as I develop my own thoughts below.

The problems 'in the round' that Bloomfield refers to are truly *national* in scope and implications. They cover some areas which at first blush may seem either strictly domestic or international in character. But more often than not, they spill over into a gray area in which the Department of Interior, on the one hand, and the Department of State, on the other, are but one of several foci of policymaking. In short, the most vexing issues we confront cut horizontally across disciplines and federal departments. And since most of them carry long-term implications and call for long-range solutions, rational decisionmaking in regard to them requires long-term planning.

And so we confront, headlong, a key logical and organizational difficulty with the Bloomfield approach: A *national* planning staff and a *State Department* planning staff are *both* necessary. There are some issues (even some touching on international affairs) which only a national planning group could deal with; there are some which should be dealt with by a national planning staff, but only after soliciting contributions from State (and other Departmental) planners; and there are some which could (and should) be the exclusive responsibility of State Department planners. This argues not for an either/or arrangement, but rather for *two* types of planning staffs: one dealing with broad national issues, "strategic," as Bloomfield (or Camps) rightly calls them, and the other providing inputs into national planning, but also undertaking the somewhat more limited departmental foreign policy planning. Let us first address the *national* planning function.

IV. A Plan for National Planning

An approach that could effectively address problems that go beyond the capacity of a particular discipline or the responsibilities of a particular department can best be conveyed by the term, "National strategic policy assessment." The operative concepts are *"national"* as opposed to either *domestic* or *foreign; "strategic"* rather than "tactical"; *long-term* rather than short-term; policy relating to *major issues,* rather than minor irritants; *"assessment,"* rather than "prescription"; *evaluation,* rather than take-it-or-leave-it recommendations; and *integrated analysis,* rather than a narrow, uni-disciplinary examination.

The clusters of issues which bear on national strategy are so large that each cluster, in itself, presents formidable policy planning problems. They are interrelated, too, and must be examined one against the other, each against all of the rest.

Further complicating the analytical and policy process (and the reason why such a planning effort is so intimately tied to the Commission's concerns) is the fact that America is not a closed system; what takes place here is part of a web of actions and reactions that extends to virtually every corner of the globe. Aspects of American growth policy, problems of existing or impending shortages, even many social questions, impinge on or are impinged upon by what is happening or could happen elsewhere in the world. The planning and implementa-

[2]Bloomfield and I may or may not have a difference on this score. He seems to suggest (page 10) that long-range planning and "relevance" are mutually exclusive. If that is, indeed, his point, I disagree: planning—long or short range—must be related to objectives with which policymakers have some empathy or must deal with problems which trouble policymakers. Otherwise, planners will turn out to be merely essayists—a matter I deal with elsewhere. But this may be simply a semantic issue, depending on his and my definition of "relevance."

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tion of national policies regarding agriculture, energy, inflation, and a host of other problems touches upon issues where a distinction between domestic and international interests fades and blurs.

What are the trade-offs among seemingly independent, but possibly incompatible courses? To what extent will solutions on the domestic front create difficult problems for America in the international arena? Which choice costs how much in terms of social tensions, closing out other choices, dollars, and foreign goodwill or international prestige? When will we have to face up to such costs—now? A decade from now? Are short-term policies consistent with long-range objectives? Are long-range objectives realistic in terms of real-world constraints? For all too many issues, we really do not now know.

Efforts have, of course, been made to bring such complex questions with their wide-ranging ramifications under intellectual control. More than a decade ago, the Department of Defense under Secretary McNamara introduced the concept and the techniques of "systems analysis." This effort to reduce large problems to manageable proportions has had its share of successes and failures, but the euphoria surrounding the process has faded since the mid-'60's. Although further refinement in the techniques of modelling and more sophisticated computers have advanced the state of the art, the basic methodology of all systems approaches relies on quantitative analysis. In the real world, however, there are few troublesome and important social and political problems that can be quantified: most turn on qualitative, even normative, considerations. All great matters of public policy are, in the last analysis, reduced to the exercise of judgement rather than the reliance on mathematical formulae. The task for a National Strategic Policy Assessment function would be to assure that the analysis and planning—quantitative as well as qualitative, short-term as well as long-term—precedent to a decision would provide a basis for the soundest judgement possible. In short, a Strategic Policy Assessment staff would provide a policy "think-tank" for the President and his immediate advisors, and for Congress.

V. Organization of a National Strategic Assessment Function

The Strategic Assessment staff should be placed within the Executive Office of the President. The Council of Economic Advisors comes to mind as an example, but it is actually not an appropriate model: its charter is limited to economic forecasting, analysis, and policy prescription; its time-scale is relatively short-range; and its principal officers serve at the pleasure of the President and consequently are under considerable White House pressures. Benjamin Cohen, advisor to President Franklin Roosevelt and wise elder statesman, has suggested that Congress establish a small "executive council" in the Office of the President comprised of outstanding men from a variety of fields and charged with evaluating, approving, and coordinating the policies and programs of government agencies. A good model would be one designed on Mr. Cohen's executive council. The council should have its own staff and—following the example of the Federal Reserve Board—its councillors should be appointed for terms well beyond the standard presidential tenure.

The council should be comprised of a small group of first-class minds with its leadership and staff drawn from a mix of quantitative and qualitative backgrounds: technologists, sociologists, economists, international affairs specialists, experts in social accounts and information handling, political scientists, environmentalists, and systems analysts. It should have three major components: a National Goals Staff, a National Forecasting Staff, and a National Planning Staff.

The Council should not only identify national goals—domestic as well as international—but also keep them under constant review in the light of physical constraints, economic opportunities, social tolerances, and popular aspirations. It should initiate as well as integrate departmental planning and analyze the choices available for the policymakers. It should, in collaboration with outside experts, develop new and better techniques for goal setting, forecasting, and planning.

An important responsibility of the council would be to review and analyze proposals which may emerge from various parts of the government and which cut horizontally across major sectors of the domestic and global economy and society. Such proposals often involve long-term resource allocations and commitments which become increasingly expensive to reverse. It should also review and comment in advance on the President's annual messages, including the State of the Union, the Budget, the State of the World, energy, economics, and the environment.

The Strategic Assessment Staff should seek the views and guidance of appropriate experts both within and outside the Federal structure. Indeed, the concept of "outreach" is essential if the Staff is to avoid becoming iconoclastic and "elitist." Although there is no substitute for a determination by the planners, themselves, to seek and share wisdom throughout the government and private sectors, insurance should be taken to assure that this is done.

Thus, the charter of the Strategic Policy Assessment group should provide for a continuing exchange of views with planning staffs within the departments of the Federal Government.

The establishment of advisory boards consisting of senior representatives from appropriate departments and agencies in the Executive Branch and the chairmen of appropriate congressional committees would also break down walls of isolation by providing a high-level, two-way channel for guidance and information. To assure communication with the world outside of Washington, non-governmental advisory groups should be organized, with representatives from universities, foundations, industry, environmental groups, labor, and other relevant groups. The assessment staff should also maintain close links with state and local governments and with industry, labor, consumer, and environmental groups. And, finally, it should keep apprised of the activities of long-range planning staffs in other industrially advanced countries for advance warning of major shifts in national economic and social policies.

But the issues of concern here are too consequential to rely on judgements emerging from the Executive Branch, alone. Even under the most ideal institutional arrangement, experience has shown that the concept of "direct access to the President" is likely to be more apparent than real. Moreover, Congress, rather than the higher reaches of the Executive Branch, seems to have its antenna more closely attuned to the aspirations and tolerances of the American people.

Regardless, then, of the ultimate form and parenthood of a strategic policy assessment function within the Executive Branch, a similar function should be organized within Congress to ensure that the law makers have access to integrated, long-term analysis and planning, and to help them initiate far-seeing legislation. Capitol Hill must be able to tap into the policymaking process well before budgets are presented and legislation is sought. Congress could make good use of such assistance. The Executive Branch has a virtual monopoly of expertise: senators and congressmen frequently must live off their wits, scooping up the crumbs of information that happen to come their way.

Congress is, if anything, more fragmented than the Executive Branch, and the professional capabilities of committee staffs leave something to be desired. The strategic assessment function, therefore, should not be grafted on to any of the existing Congressional committees. (An exception might be the new Joint Budget Committee which could conceivably create a National Planning Subcommittee.)

The effectiveness of a strategic assessment staff in the Executive Branch and of a counterpart staff on Capitol Hill will depend on close and frequent consultation between the two. One important link could be an annual Presidential Message on Growth and Development, containing specific legislative proposals discussed in advance between the two assessment staffs. On a day-to-day basis, close cooperation could be assured through some joint analytical efforts and through joint sponsorship of outside research.

• • • •

The discussion of the functions and organization of a National Strategic Planning Staff is obviously suggestive and superficial, although, hopefully, it conveys some idea of how I would deal with issues that are of national importance, that transcend strictly domestic or international considerations. However, such a planning function, as I have noted earlier, is no substitute for the kind of planning that must be carried on at subsidiary levels of the Federal structure. In fact, unless such lower-level planning does take place, national strategic planning can hardly do so. Thus, we must address the problem of the Department of State.

VI. Planning in State

The considerations that will influence the role and professional well-being of planners at the national strategic level are also apposite to planners at the departmental level. Their effectiveness is not simply a function of the quality of their planning: much depends on the attitude of their audience, the policymakers. This, in the last analysis, is why planning is a *process* rather than a *function*. A "plan" takes on life only when it enters policy deliberations; otherwise it is just a sterile intellectual exercise. As indicated above, this is not to say that a "plan" must necessarily be adopted, but, rather, that it must not be ignored. Policymakers and planners can properly have a relationship based on tension, but not one dominated by indifference.

There are three definitive qualifications for an effective planning staff in the Department of State (or, for that matter, in the Department of Interior). First, the staff must be insulated from the pressures of day-to-day crises, but it cannot be isolated from the ebb and flow of real-world events. Second, planners must have regular and direct access to the Secretary of State, not only for the purpose of sharing their views with him, but also so that he can share his concerns with them. (But only those concerns relating to evolving, long-run issues: the planners must not be sucked in—however tempting it may be—to current operational questions.) Finally, the planners must have vertical access to the national planning staff and lateral access to the

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planners in Defense, AID, etc., and to the academic and think-tank worlds. Bloomfield, I think, would agree with these cautionary prescriptions.

What does this tell us about the kind of people who should staff a planning activity in State and where they should be inserted in the structure? As for the people, "the planners," there is much to be said for making planning a career service outside the regular Foreign Service. It is the rare FSO who is intellectually able to remove himself in mid-career from an operational cast of mind and turn into a contemplative, long-range thinker. Those that can—and find it congenial—are probably not very effective desk officers or first secretaries.[3] This does not necessarily mean that a planning staff should consist solely of Brooders who spend their professional lives in the Policy Planning Staff (S/P). Some of the most effective planners have been those on two or four-year assignments from universities or think-tanks. But it does mean that the Planning Staff should not be a disposal dump or holding area for FSO's, even for those who have an affinity for reading and writing. One of the major problems identified by Bloomfield—the parlous state of planning techniques and methodology in the Department—could be corrected if the planning staff was graced with professionals having interest and expertise in *both* international affairs and planning.

The other problem, that of optimal institutional placement to insure easy access and a serious hearing is all too familiar. Various arrangements have been tried and found wanting. The old Policy Planning Council was too isolated from the rest of the Department; the current arrangement is insufficiently insulated from daily crises. The problem, I'm afraid, is not one of institutional refurbishing (and I suppose I part company here with Bloomfield), but of personalities. There is no guarantee, even with Bloomfield's "empowerment" idea, that a Secretary of State will pay more than passing heed to his planners. Indeed, except for George Marshall (who, after all, first established the planning staff), no Secretary has really been a committed participant in the process. During the Dulles period, to be sure, the planners played an important role, but only via the NSC Planning Board, rather than within the Department, itself.

Having said this, I believe that the original concept of policy planning in the Department of State must somehow be reconstituted with a small group of innovative thinkers close to the policy process, but protected from the demands of day-to-day pressures. The group must have the confidence of and ready access to the Secretary of State (although, here again, we revert to personalities rather than organizational arrangements). Its senior members must be *persona grata* in meetings at the White House and National Security Council levels directly (Bloomfield's "empowerment" idea) and indirectly (through the National Planning Staff). Moreover, State planners must establish close associations (perhaps through representatives seconded to it) with other forecasting and planning components of the international relations community: the estimators in the Central Intelligence Agency, program planners in the Agency for International Development, appropriate officials in the Department of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the United States Information Agency.

* * * *

I am constrained to close on a pessimistic note. I believe that planning advocates frequently put too much faith in the ability of the "soft" scientists, in terms of the present state of the social science art, to bring the complex, interdependent issues of the modern world under intellectual control.[4] We could do better than we have, of course, but that is probably still not good enough. Even if the arts of forecasting and planning gave much more reason for hope, however, there are institutional rigidities beyond easy or rapid change which would constrain the effectiveness of the planners. The current energy plight is not quite the same as (but neither is it altogether different from) a foreign crisis, but it provides a good example of this overall problem. Thus, five years ago, where were the forecasters of an energy crisis? And if they were there, and doing their thing, where was their audience within the upper reaches of the government? And even if the Great Men had the time and wit to pay attention to the forecasters, what would they have done? What mechanism was there (*is* there) to undertake the comprehensive, across-the-board planning that would have been necessary in 1968 to avert a crisis in 1975? Or must we wait for the problem to evolve into attention-grabbing dimensions before we become seized with it and then merely flail around for the quick fixes and the policy band-aids?

And yet, as Lord Keynes said three decades ago, "There will be no harm in making mild preparations for our destiny."

[3]There are several cases that come to mind that document this proposition, but this goes beyond the scope of this essay.

[4]In my more ebullient moments, I, too, have been guilty of this.

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Foreign Policy Planning

Henry Owen
May 1975

Purpose. The purpose of policy planning is to enable the U.S. Government to make current decisions with an eye to their long range and global effects. It follows that planning is most useful if it makes a contribution to operational decisions. If, instead, it focuses largely on planning for future decisions, it will be of marginal utility. Few of us have enough insight to predict what will happen or to decide what should be done in the foreign policy field several years hence: there are too many independent variables. What we can hope to do is to project the general trend of future events, define where we want to go over the longer term, and analyze how current decisions will move us in this direction.

Scope. The range of issues should include the whole field of activities that affect the foreign scene. Lincoln Bloomfield has defined it well.

Conceptualization. This kind of thinking is essential, but it is mainly a guide to the planner's own work. By the time a man becomes Secretary of State he has his own conceptual design (or else—and this has been more usually the case—has decided that he doesn't want any): he will not be much influenced on this by others. But he will be influenced in facing concrete problems if planners can bring to his attention long range or global factors that he had not previously considered. Planners cannot do this with any confidence of being right if they have not spent a good deal of time in conceptual thinking themselves.

Time Frame. Clearly, the planners and the Secretary will have different time frames in mind, and this is as it should be: The Secretary is driven by the immediate; the planner looks to the longer range. But the planner must, in the end, deduce from his long range analysis a recommendation that is relevant to present problems and decisions. Otherwise he will not affect U.S. policy, which is the object of the exercise.

Challenge and Innovation. Lincoln Bloomfield is on sound ground in suggesting that planners must be prepared to challenge present policies. Why are top policymakers resistant to challenge? There are many reasons, but one is that often the challengers don't have alternative visible answers to the problems that they must grapple with. To be effective, challengers need not only to say what's wrong with the present policy but also to suggest what they would do instead to meet the needs that are driving that policy. This, in turn, requires innovation, which is, to my mind, an even more difficult problem than that of challenge. A successful foreign policy is one that is constantly changing as it anticipates and adapts to changing circumstances in pursuit of its long range goals. This requires innovation, the hardest thing to come by in a large bureaucracy. The test of a planner is whether he can help to meet this requirement—not only to conceptualize his goals and foresee future trends but to suggest in persuasive terms specific feasible innovative actions that will help to advance these goals in light of the trends that he foresees. Unless he can be successful in devising and presenting feasible innovation in persuasive terms, his challenges to existing policy are likely to be ignored.

Linkage to Authority. I doubt that planning can be forced on a reluctant Secretary: he will find ways to ignore it, if it is of no use to him. The remedy lies in (i) appointing Secretaries who have some interest in long-range strategy and in gearing present decisions to such a strategy; (ii) finding planners who have the ability (i.e., the creativity and imagination) to relate their long-range work to current concerns; and (iii) making sure that the planners are close enough to the Secretary, personally and institutionally, to find out what his concerns are.

Long Range Planning. As I have suggested earlier, the word "planning" is a misnomer derived from the concept of military planners, who try to figure out what to do in some specific future possible war. Few foreign policy futures can be defined as clearly as a U.S.-Soviet war. What foreign policy "planning" means is trying to think through longer range prospects and goals, and figuring out how current decisions can take account of both. Long-range thinking (which is a more apt term than planning),

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like conceptualization, is essential to the planner's work, but it will be the result of that thinking—i.e., the policy recommendation—which will be of most help to the Secretary.

Models. I would favor planning staffs in each of the main agencies concerned with foreign policy: in DOD, ISA, and the office of the Under Secretary of Treasury concerned with international affairs, as well as State (where I agree its scope should be global). In each of these agencies there are important decisionmakers who will benefit from long-range thinking.

I'm rather tempted by the notion of a small planning group in the White House: foreign policy is at least 50 percent domestic politics and economics, and I suspect these can be more adequately taken into account in the White House than elsewhere. I might add, as a footnote, that one of the weaknesses of State planning in the past has been its failure to take adequate account of these domestic factors; having people from domestic agencies (such as Treasury and the CEA) seconded to the State planning staff might be one way to remedy this deficiency.

An intergovernmental staff not linked to any specific decision-makers seems to me to be a non-starter: the linkage to authority is too weak.

The question of how to link inside planning to outside work is a complex and difficult one, which I suspect deserves a separate paper and investigation. Lincoln Bloomfield is surely right in suggesting that top notch outsiders be periodically brought into the Policy Planning Staff (S/P): about half its membership should come from this source. His dumb-bell concept is an imaginative and ingenious approach, but I'm somewhat worried about the possible loss of independence of outside scholars who become privy to the government's short-term plans and concerns, which inevitably involves access to classified data. I suspect an arms-length arrangement which involves close contact between State planners and a wide range of outside scholars (not merely those in a selected group), with a view to helping to focus the outside scholarly community's work to a greater degree on middle range issues of interest to the Government, may have something to commend it. Perhaps a mixed government-academic committee, which could meet periodically to this end, would be a useful first step. The committee might be charged with exploring the issue and further remedial measures in greater depth.

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Appendix G: Analytic Techniques For Foreign Affairs

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Introduction

Appendix G consists of a paper, "Utilization of Computer Technology and Formal Social Science in Foreign Policy Decision-making," prepared for the Commission by Warren R. Phillips and Richard E. Hayes of CACI, Inc. (Consolidated Analysis Centers, Inc.). The study is concerned with current and future applicability to foreign policy decision-making of computerized information processing: new modes of interagency communication and coordination, formal decision aids, techniques for forecasting the future environment, and approaches to evaluating possible alternative actions in specific situations. The study concludes that the strengths of such techniques are not fully appreciated in the government, and recommends possible steps to insure that they would be used when appropriate.

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Utilization of Computer Technology and Formal Social Science in Foreign Policy Decision-Making

Warren R. Phillips and Richard E. Hayes
April 1975

PREFACE

There seems to be a general consensus as to the configuration of the world over the next ten years. It is expected that the policentric world will be facing further fragmentation. Old quarrels over territory, seas and straits, and control of populations will be augmented by frictions arising from economic welfare and the steadily rising likelihood of military action in the less developed countries. Most, perhaps nearly all, major new developments will occur in land and sea areas distant from the United States. While physical distances will remain great, technological developments will continue to force more and more rapid decisions and to permit greater involvement around the globe for the United States and other industrialized states. New actors, both governmental and non-governmental, will emerge with more and more multinational enterprises, international organizations and subnational groups gaining the resources to be major actors in the global system. Perhaps equally important, there will be new kinds of power relations and influence based on social and economic changes. Terrorism, nuclear blackmail, consortiums of producer and consumer states, questions of pollution and cooperative use of the international waters of the world are only a few of the emerging issue areas in which imaginative new diplomatic approaches must be found. Increasingly rapid international system transformations and transitions are expected by many scholars such as Janowitz, McClelland, and Pfaltzgraff to further complicate foreign policy decision making.

Policy and guidance, both diplomatic and military, seem to be centered along the following lines: U.S. diplomatic efforts must be able to exert influence by means other than military presence—political and economic influence are likely to replace guns in many situations; diplomatic and military representatives abroad must be prepared to cooperate promptly and efficiently with allies who may change from one situation to the next; general purpose forces must exist with rapid reaction times, high mobility, and austere force levels.

The national decision process that must meet these situations is generally the same whether the time requirements for decision are a matter of hours, days, or months. The President and his principal national security advisors will seek information, intelligence, and policy inputs from as many command and staff levels as time permits. It appears to be a human reaction that difficult decisions are hard to make and supporting inputs are sought, whether necessary or not. Furthermore, there is an automatic chain reaction through the various channels and levels of the several departments and agencies as they are queried by elements above them. Nearly all policy situations are time urgent, at least until they are evaluated and the time frame for planning U.S. responses is better understood. Before sound crisis management can take place, a consensus at the national level must be quickly reached concerning what has happened, what might happen, and the nature of U.S. interests related thereto. This requirement is central to the first need of the decision maker while plans for U.S. responses are being formulated and evaluated.

Computer technology provides mankind with the capacity to read, store, edit, retrieve, analyze, and display huge amounts of information. Mathematical problems requiring years of hand calculation at the turn of the century can be solved today in a few seconds. Information, whether statistical or textual,

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can be stored on magnetic tape in a fraction of the physical space required for paper files and can be accessed instantly over common telephone lines from distant points. Partly as a result of this new capacity to handle information, the social sciences —sociology, psychology, political science, geography and economics—have developed new and more sophisticated methodologies for handling research problems. Businesses today solve complex marketing questions based on analysis of surveys or simulations dealing with dozens of social and economic indicators. Operations research specialists have constructed simulations of warfare situations based on complex concepts such as weather, terrain, and firepower and involving randomization of many components. Cyberneticists, ecologists, and future scholars have built large computer simulations on global and regional levels. (See bibliography attached: Choucri, *et al.*, 1972; Forrester, 1971; Mesarovic and Pestel, 1974).

Decision makers and managers in a wide variety of fields benefit from computer technology and the management tools and decision aids which high-speed, large capacity information processing makes possible. Foreign policy decision makers have benefited somewhat from these tools. Accounting functions such as payroll were computerized at the Department of State in the 1960's. A system for coding and retrieving recent cable traffic has been developed and implemented, though fiscal constraints have limited the number of uses of the system. Computer simulations are utilized by AID as a portion of population control training programs. By and large, however, the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy has had neither the time, the resources, the background, nor the inclination to take advantage of newly developed information handling techniques and formal social science decision aids.[1]

An effort to bring the techniques and the substantive knowledge of the social sciences to bear upon these problems should be worthwhile because:

1. The problems of planning and policy making are so important that those charged with these tasks should draw upon a wide-ranging set of intellectual resources, not only extending across topics, but also delving deeply into critical problem areas that appear to be relevant.
2. The nature of scientific development is that it is cumulative. Knowledge gained in the past five years has added considerably more to the warehouse of knowledge than the preceding ten years. The five years have seen substantial support for basic research. It is now appropriate to use this information in applied, mission-oriented projects.
3. The advances in the social sciences include not only substantive material but new methods and techniques as well. These techniques include methods of forecasting outcomes of given actions and of ranking a set of strategies against a list of desired outcomes in terms of effectiveness. These are logical and formal equivalents of decision processes utilized every day in the foreign policy bureaucracy and can therefore be applied there.
4. There is a growing interest on the part of policy-oriented social scientists in practical problems. Their contributions could include analytical skills, basic research knowledge, experience with data retrieval systems, and the capability to assess current sources of information used by planners and forecasters. Their interest in becoming involved, directly, with planners and policy analysts provides a renewed hope for useful exchanges between social scientists and users in the foreign policy bureaucracy.

The purpose of this paper is to review the potential applications of formal social science and computer technology to foreign policy decision making. This review focuses on both the "state of the art" in each area of potential application and innovations or developments that might reasonably be expected to emerge in the next 10 to 15 years. Where possible, it also enumerates problems that can be anticipated to delay or hinder applications in a foreign affairs context. The basic review deals with the following areas of interest to foreign policy planners, analysts, and decision makers:

1. Information Processing
2. Inter-Agency Communication and Coordination

[1]This is not the first effort to suggest that computer science and formal social science have a contribution to make in the conduct of foreign affairs. Howe (1966) had some ideas on the subject a number of years ago. Lamb's Master's Thesis at M.I.T. (1970) reviews some of the early uses of information systems within the Department of State. Platig has written several pieces on the potential and actual uses of social science as an aid to INR and foreign policy bureaucrats generally (see especially Platig, 1968). The most recent effort in this area is summarized in the final report of Project QUEST (Coplin and O'Leary, 1974), an analysis of the utility of estimation and forecasting in the conduct of foreign policy. A summary of other marginally related literature can be found in the introduction to that volume.

In addition to the existing literature, we made some effort to survey informally the people within the foreign policy bureaucracy currently using or interested in using formal social science techniques and computer technology. This unsystematic sampling included people in ACDA, the Foreign Service Institute, INR, USIA, AID, and several of the substantive and country desks within the Department of State. The openness, candor, and willingness to help of all the people we contacted were impressive. Unfortunately, the brief time available for preparing the study forced us to rely on a few individuals. Whatever shortcomings may have resulted are entirely our fault since all those contacted were extremely cooperative.

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3. Decision Aids
4. Forecasts of Future Environment
5. Evaluations of Alternative Actions

A final section of the study deals with the organizational and personnel dimensions of these potential application areas. The paper suggests no specific blueprint for action but instead deals with current and future opportunities for improved foreign policy making.

Information Processing

The area where computer technology has been most readily accepted within the foreign policy bureaucracy is information processing. Information processing involves at least two specific areas of interest—administration of day-to-day financial and personnel matters and handling of information about the international system.

Large businesses and government bureaucracies such as the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration have found computers to be an invaluable tool for keeping track of people and money. Almost all major corporations handle their payrolls by computer today, as does the Foreign Service. Computers can also provide a large variety of other day-to-day administrative services. Systems have been built, for example, which keep track of personnel names, skills, promotion and pay records, career objectives, and willingness to move to different areas or regions of the world. A system of this type, including the areas of particular expertise, language qualifications, and other key factors about members of the U.S. foreign policy bureaucracy would be a valuable tool. In normal operations this type of data bank provides information to personnel administrators on expected transfers and would be used to identify individuals with particular skills or expertise needed briefly by bureaus or desks which normally do not require their services. If expanded to include consultants and contractors with established relationships to the Department of State, AID, ACDA, or other foreign policy agencies, a much wider range of skills could be located quickly and efficiently. This type of personnel system is widely used today, though it would require adaptation to the particular skill fields applicable to the conduct of foreign policy. The cost of such a system would be relatively modest since only a minimum amount of information about each individual need be filed or accessible.

A similar information processing system of potential utility is a bibliography system for keeping track of government documents and/or reference materials of particular interest. Because of the relatively steady rotation of foreign service officers and others in the foreign policy community, organizational memory is often difficult to maintain. The time necessary to identify, locate, and retrieve documents can be greatly reduced by applying a key word index system.

Indexing—the ability to reach for a word, phrase, code number, or other symbol and identify all relevant items in a large mass of information—is one of the most useful attributes of information processing systems. Beginning in the late 1960's the Department of State developed a highly sophisticated system for coding cable traffic on a large number of different dimensions. It is possible today to find and read any cable (below a fixed classification level) sent or received within the past three months. This large system, which requires 25 coders to handle daily cable traffic, was adopted in response to the need for high-speed information processing for dealing with the massive volume of cable traffic in the foreign affairs area. The system was designed and constructed by Foreign Service personnel and seems quite adequate. It is expensive and its utility thus far has been reduced by (a) the small number of terminals available for accessing the system (about one-half of them are used by the coders for the system; only a few are currently available to users); (b) the high costs of secure cable for transmitting classified information within the building (several thousand dollars per foot of running cable and conduit) and (c) the huge amount of computer storage space occupied by message texts. Currently three months of cable traffic are maintained for immediate access. In-depth analysis of a particular issue often involves more than three months of information flow.

In addition to cable storage and recall, the indexing system has been expanded to include a variety of factual documents about each state of interest to the foreign policy bureaucracy. This information includes economic, political, and elite information in immediate recall form. The data in these files (some 17 files are maintained for each country) are a source of quick reference for analysts and desk officers. They are underutilized today, in part because of the small number of terminals available to access the system and in part because substantively oriented officers do not know how to use the available terminals and hence find it easier to get the same information elsewhere in the system.

A final major potential area for applying pure information processing is the construction and maintenance of data banks related to major international actions. Information is the basis of intelligent foreign policy. A vast amount of data on economic, political, military, sociological, and other features of nation-states already exists in machine readable form at universities and in government computers. The proper selection, storage, and accessing of in-

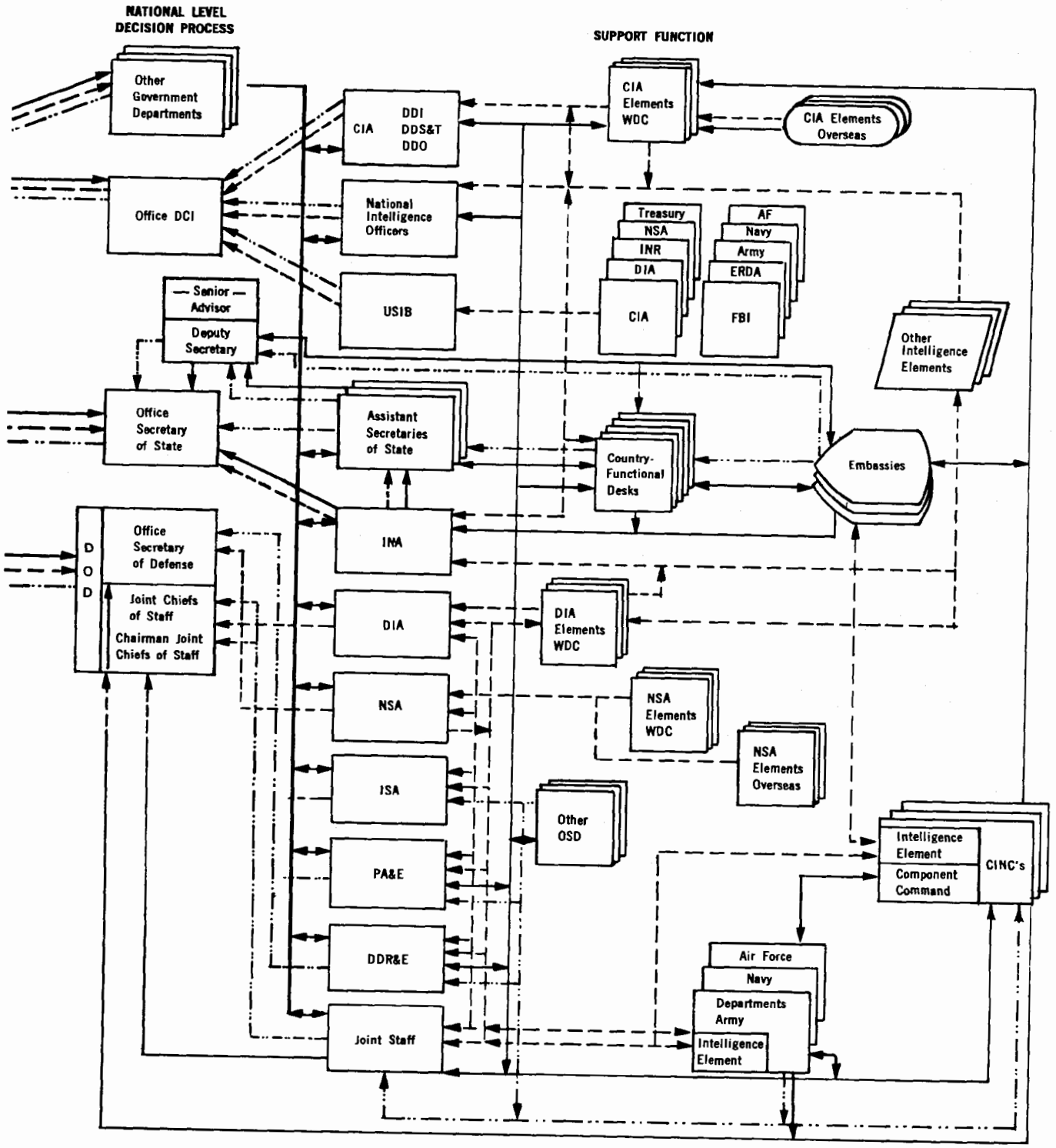
NATIONAL LEVEL DECISION PROCESS
SUPPORT FUNCTION
Other Government Departments
CIA
DDI
DDS&T
DDO
CIA Elements WDC
CIA Elements Overseas
Office DCI
National Intelligence Officers
Treasury
NSA
INR
DIA
CIA
AF
Navy
Army
ERDA
FBI
USIB
— Senior — Advisor
Deputy Secretary
Other Intelligence Elements
Office Secretary of State
Assistant Secretaries of State
Country-Functional Desks
Embassies
D O D
Office Secretary of Defense
Joint Chiefs of Staff
Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff
INA
DIA
DIA Elements WDC
NSA
NSA Elements WDC
NSA Elements Overseas
ISA
Other OSD
PA&E
Intelligence Element
Component Command
CINC's
DDR&E
Air Force
Navy
Departments
Army
Intelligence Element
Joint Staff

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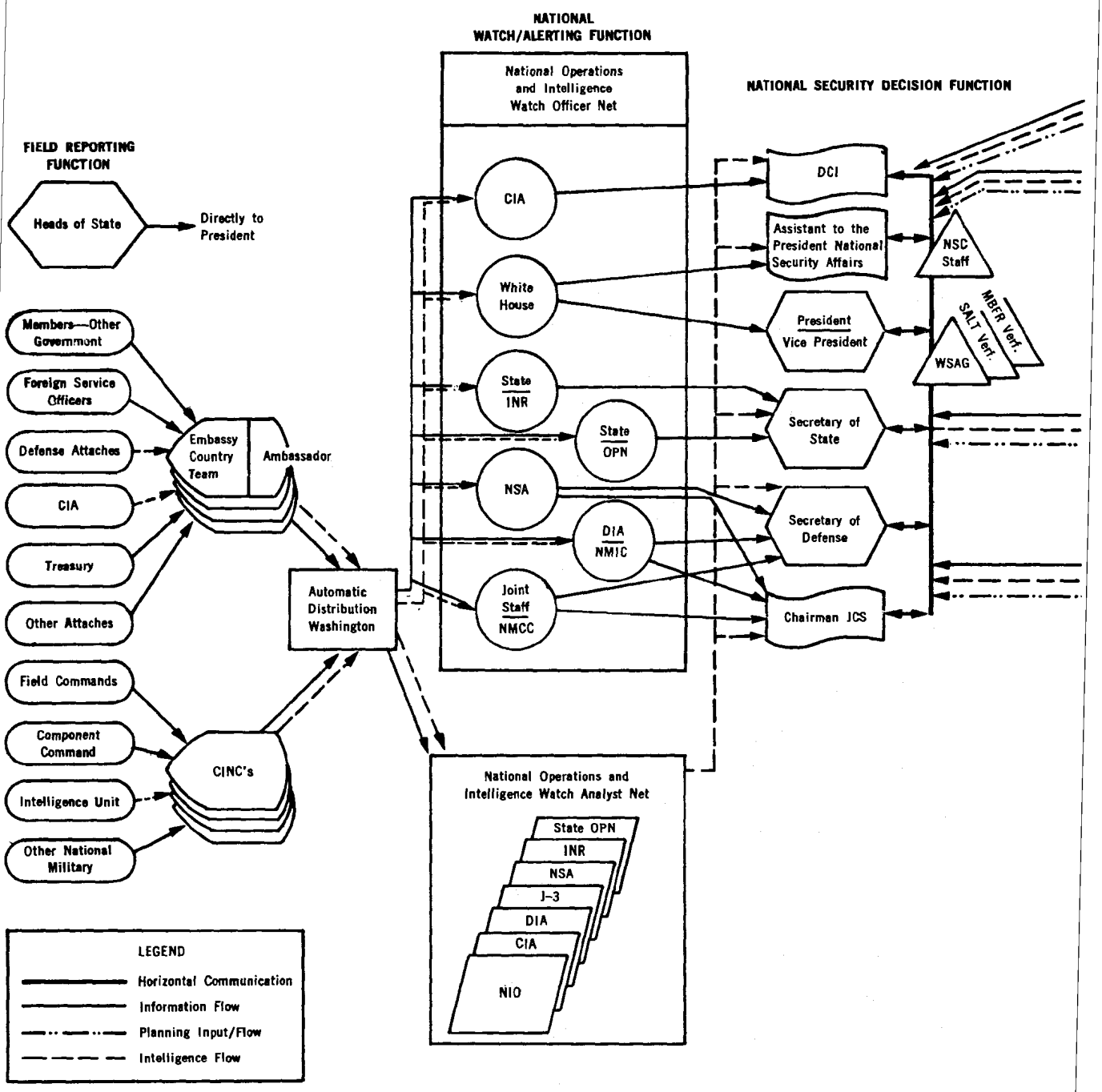
FIGURE 1.—NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION PROCESS



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formation of this type could save desk officers and analysts a great deal of time and energy. On the other hand, this information is scattered throughout the country and across the government bureaucracy and considerable effort would be necessary to identify, collect, and design storage and retrieval systems for it. The work is well within the state of the art but should proceed carefully and cumulatively, as the cable coding program has, in order to conserve resources and focus on most needed information first. As the terminals and other hardware necessary for the cable traffic system become generally available, the marginal costs of accessing other information are greatly reduced.

In short, there are a variety of simple data storage and retrieval functions which are natural to the foreign policy enterprise. Some of these, particularly cable coding and routine administration tools, have already been adopted. Others, particularly data bases, personnel expertise files, and bibliographic files have great potential for use in the existing foreign policy structure, but have not yet been adapted to serve that master. All of them are within the "state of the art" today and none is prohibitively expensive. The organizational problems these approaches imply are (1) that specific personnel be detailed to keep files up to date (a time-consuming task, but one performed today by filing clerks, analysts, and librarians, though not in machine readable form) and (2) that potential users in the foreign policy bureaucracy have access to and familiarity with the equipment and systems necessary for information retrieval.

Inter-Agency Communication and Coordination

If all that is desired is rapid communication, computers are not better (and no worse) than telephones and teletypes. Indeed, they often operate on telephone lines. Their advantages as communication devices derive from (1) the variety of information they can transmit and (2) their ability to link data in one location with output devices in another. These qualities make them useful as communication systems whenever great distances, complex messages, or high-speed transmission of data is desired.

Different department levels and agencies have different uses for related data and give different importance weights to similar information; the information holding and the analytical conclusions reached by these entities vary widely. There is not a common data base and it is doubtful that one could or should be established. Since most crises involve political, military, and economic interests, the National Command Authority needs a means for sharing information with others. This is necessary for early identification and quick resolution of ambiguities as well as for understanding the differences in evaluation for different conclusions among the agencies involved in assisting the National Command Authority. Given the variety of information and files which it may be necessary to transmit from one portion of the foreign policy system to another and uncertainty of the specific lines of communication, a sophisticated data processing system linking these points seems necessary.

Figure 1 delineates the flow lines of information, intelligence, and policy planning to national security decision making. The figure is divided into two areas on the basis of the time element. To the left, the alerting function is diagrammed, showing the flow of critical information from the reporting units which alert the several quarters in Washington. The alerting messages are distributed to seven watch offices which comprise the National Operations and Intelligence Watch Office (NAIWON). The figure shows the dual role of the watch officer in the initial phase of a learning process. He confers with his colleagues and informs his principal advisers. As a result of his conferring with other members of NAIWON, an immediate request will be drafted and sent to the field units deemed appropriate to fill in gaps in essential information. If the event reported is in fact the beginning of a crisis that could involve U.S. interests, the National Operations and Intelligence Watch Analysts Net (NOIWAN) is called into action. NOIWAN is initiated by the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) responsible for the geographic area involved.

As shown in the figure, appropriate geographic area analysts in CIA, DIA J3, NSA INR, and State Department bureaus will confer with the NIO to give initial analysis of the events being reported. This indication monitoring function of the national security process is one in which the State Department participates fully through both INR and the various Department bureaus. It is envisioned through project SAFE that these procedures shall be paper free by the 1980's. Such a development will require heavy reliance on computer technology. This capability will be useful in terms of the distribution of cable traffic, accessing data located at different points in the system, and joint computer conferencing on the interpretation of events.

The Secretary of State, in the planning phase, has several routes or channels through which to proceed. His decision will depend on the situation at hand and, most importantly, on the confidence which he places in individual advisors. Normally his tasking will go to one of his assistant secretaries directly or through one of his immediate staff. Depending on the time urgency of the situation, the senior official might initiate requests to the embassies concerned for information as well as for policy

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suggestions. If time is not critical, the path will be from the Assistant Secretary to the country desk and then to the embassy.

If the situation is urgent, the various echelons of the Department of State may either seek information from their horizontal partner in the Department of Defense or request the embassies to go to the CINC's. The responsible action officer may request intelligence inputs from INR, and request INR to get intelligence inputs from other intelligence agencies or he may go directly to other intelligence units outside the department.

These envisioned developments to current communication systems lead to a number of requirements for future State Department consideration.

I. A conferencing capability—Interconnecting White House, State, CIA, NSA, and DOD as needed. This secure conferencing capability should include:

- A system for multi-node voice data and graphic transmission;
- A means for simultaneous rapid exchange of messages, reports, and assessments;
- Means for transmission of high resolution photos and other visual materials;
- Online message generation capability to expedite coordination.

This system must be designed to handle a string of data from a variety of high level sources (state embassy messages, sensitive raw materials, White House reports, and military assessments) during peak periods (normally encountered during the initial stages of a crisis).

The intelligence community and the military operations personnel at the national level and at the unified command level, when military operations are envisioned, will receive through their individual systems large quantities of information and judgment data, directly or indirectly applicable to a potential situation being assessed, or an actual crisis being managed. If the sources of these data are different, divergent interpretations or assessments may be made because some essential elements of the situations may not exist or may be neglected in the data from which the assessments are made by the various components of this community. The operations planning group at each location will need to coordinate mostly with the intelligence and military components, and compare and interrelate these assessments in order to provide a firm base for action, to avoid conflicting actions, and to achieve maximum effectiveness. While face-to-face dialogue between the multiple communities is most desirable, time and distance factors may make it impossible. Communications (conferencing) interfaces must be established to ensure coordination under all conditions. A secure conferencing capability interconnecting operational elements directly with the Washington area national decision community is needed. This capability should comprise:

- Multi-mode voice transmissions (instant)
- Simultaneous transmission of printed data (one page per two minutes)
- High resolution transmission of photographs and visual materials

II. A secure two-way communication capability at the country level is also needed, interconnecting the embassy/consulate with military commanders, if a U.S. military presence exists. This compatibility should comprise:

- Two-way voice transmission
- Simultaneous transmissions/reception of text message traffic and data graphics

These communication channels should be independent of foreign-owned facilities or power sources.

A partial solution to these requirements is being sought in the development of World Wide Military Command and Control Systems (WWMCCS) which are designed to permit the rapid dissemination of information, decisions, and commands to the multiple commands of the national decision-making community in response to developments such as crises, tactical nuclear attacks, and strategic nuclear war. The current state of the program is represented by numerous computers in the National Military Command Center (NMCC) in Washington. These computers are beginning to take on the task of providing an organizational memory for emergency operating procedures during crises. As with all systems, their developmental stages are full of successes and considerable failures. Time will tell whether the wisdom of decisions today can produce a command, control, and communication system for the complexity of the future. WWMCCS is, however, a clear signal of developments in the future. Currently many government computers either work from different logical structures or utilize different "languages" which makes linking them difficult. Current work on computer interfacing and netting, such as is currently available in the ARPANET facilities in the continental United States and in the new command and control internetting being developed among NATO headquarters, promises to resolve these difficulties in the next few years.

In the next decade clear data ADP communications will exist in the Washington area in two respects. Initially this will involve national intelligence operations in the NAIWON system. This will be followed by computer conferencing and access to individual departments' computer data and information banks for extra departmental coordination.

As inter-agency communication and coordination through the use of data processing equipment become common, they will force foreign policy

bureaucrats to deal with and utilize computer technology on a day-to-day basis. This type of involvement, similar to the "hands on" experience which the Foreign Service Institute includes in its two-week introduction to computers and foreign policy, may go a long way to break down the natural concern and distrust of planners and analysts for complex machinery. On the other hand, these changes are coming through the Defense Department, NSA, and intelligence agencies, and the State Department will have to keep pace with them to maintain an active position, particularly in crisis management.

Decision Aids

In an increasingly complex world one can envision an almost infinite number and variety of potential situations. The predictable conflicts of national interest relating to the exploitation of former colonies, non-territorial waters, food, minerals, and energy resources will provide countless scenarios for crises. Under such circumstances it is apparent that no system, however sophisticated or complex, could be preprogrammed and preplanned for more than a small fraction of the potential situations that might escalate to crisis proportions. Consequently, a system designed to deal with future conditions must provide the capability to perform ad hoc planning. For ad hoc planning, which will be performed by senior policy makers in the Department of State, decision aids should provide the resources necessary to generate and evaluate alternative courses of action based on a situation, and a procedure for orderly execution and monitoring of the chosen plan. Such decision assistance must provide a smooth man-machine interface for having a system which is designed in the decision maker's image rather than in the system engineer's image.

The data potentially available to decision makers are too voluminous and too detailed to be of much use during an emergency situation. Net assessments of a situation were conceived as an attempt to help decision makers operate effectively under emerging situations. These net assessments were originally designed to support ad hoc planning and to provide decision-maker-oriented data. If high level decision makers become overloaded with unmanageable amounts of data, or data that are not oriented to their needs, or data that cannot be traced for reliability (source and date), decision-maker confidence is lost and important decisions become delayed. This, unfortunately, has occurred in many net assessment systems within the Department of Defense, with the result that systems fall into disuse.

At high levels in the decision bureaucracy, information should be highly synthesized; but the capacity to answer questions concerning the information must be anticipated. Decision support ought to provide traceable, timely data output that is decision-maker-oriented in content, detail, and format, and that can be accessed without extensive training. The Secretary of State or other senior official ought to be able to query this system from his office for such routine presentations as:

- New developments or changes in the situation since the last briefing.
- The state of current intelligence and/or reconnaissance information about a particular subject or host country.
- The status of our programs in a particular country.
- Changes in host country posture and behavior.

Information files and their presentations should be structured from the top down. Abbreviations should be avoided and formats uncomplicated. The outputs designed for use during a crisis situation should be similar to those used in day-to-day situations. As innovations for interacting with information processing systems prove themselves, they should be tested and the successful ones incorporated into decision aids available to the Secretary of State. Thus, over the next several years we envision considerable pressure in the form of alternatives to the traditional position paper and grease pencil to update the current briefing strategies.

Since there is a need at the higher levels of the State Department for quick retrieval and display of a wide range of data during many situations arising in a day, it is imperative that senior decision makers have assistance in locating the required information by providing a directory of information locations. This requirement would support data analysis in forecasting future environments, in evaluating alternative actions, and in processing information. The decision to provide top State Department personnel with terminals and administrative personnel competent to handle them is a sign of progress in the necessary direction.

A directory of the location of major management information systems is desirable. Potentially, an efficient directory capability can reduce the volume of data to be stored. This directory must be a highly screened descriptive listing of the top 300–400 sources of expert management information (that is, a listing of both automated data sources and personnel sources), indicating the location, availability (including time needed to locate), and description of each. The system must provide the capability for real time display of the appropriate directory listings in response to any query, and the capability to connect immediately the senior policy officer to any expert or data file listed upon request. The

connection to the expert must be by secure phone where possible and the connection to the data file should be by the most convenient practical means (for example, direct display of data or telephone connection to a computer operator or at the data base site).

During normal day-to-day operations, the directory capability must be able to operate at the rate of several queries and connections per day. During the early stage of a crisis, however, this required rate is likely to increase to 100–200 queries and connections per day.

Finally, if high level decision makers do not become familiar with the decision aids available to them, these aids, like earlier computer-based systems, will not be used in situations where they are needed. To enhance their familiarity with, and confidence in, such systems, major decision makers should not have to leave their offices to interface with the system. Such easy access should also have some day-to-day utility in presenting information. Presentations that could be presented or would be available for daily call up might include:

a. Agency and departmental DIA, CIA, and INR analyses of the implications to the United States of significant changes in the international situation;

b. Daily intelligence and/or status of forces or civilian personnel updates;

c. Status of action reports on unusual incidents, foreign and U.S. military operations, national disasters, status of terrorist threats and organizations;

d. Location and accessibility of senior U.S. officials;

e. Movements of key foreign personnel, arms, or nuclear materials.

All such briefings and displays should be designed to encourage utilization from the highest level of decision makers, thus familiarizing them with the system and its capabilities for support in emergency situations. Such day-to-day communications with decision makers will also act as training exercises for key staff officers and personnel. This capability must be supplemented by exercises keyed to potential crises conducted with and without developed scenarios; to the review of contingency plans; to personnel conferencing exercises; to data input exercises; and to indoctrination training for personnel at various levels.

The urgency that usually attends the onset of a crisis has previously led decision makers and key personnel to ignore such available support simply because they were not familiar with the system's potential and it was too cumbersome to use. By 1985 new systems will similarly suffer if key personnel are not able to utilize the total capacity properly. It is necessary, then, not only to develop new skills throughout the foreign policy bureaucracy but to use current capabilities on a daily basis.

In the stress of managing a crisis, time can be wasted if the actors do not know the most expeditious way to accomplish the actions required of them. Additional time may be lost if required actions are performed in a haphazard fashion or important details are incomplete or omitted altogether. Because of unavoidable absence, fatigue, or other reasons, a substitute may be called upon to perform duties thoroughly familiar to a regular country desk officer but only generally known by his substitute.

Standard operating procedures can be developed based on time or motion studies, security requirements, other restraints, and analyses of past activities to support that function at the functional area level and even down to the individual team member level. The SOP's developed include standard formats, checklists, and answers to such questions as what, how, who, where, when, and why that are applicable to each functional area for daily activities as well as crisis management. The SOP's can be incorporated into one or more data bases and required portions of them can be retrieved upon demand, not only during a crisis but also during daily activities or training exercises.

Computer SOP's should be located in, or in close proximity to, the command centers that will use them, and accessible from within those centers. The SOP data bases should be updated for accumulated small changes and as large procedural changes occur. As an adjunct to the SOP data bases, there should be documented description of the data bases, a description of the equipment used, and a computer-aided instruction package for training users in the operation of the capability while the command center is in a non-crisis mode.

Standard operating procedures are essential to good crisis management. Written and documented procedures, even though well indexed, are unwieldy and prone to be neglected under stress. Crisis management is a complex process involving many people in a variety of functions. Preprogrammed data processing-based SOP's quickly and easily accessed are more likely to be used than the documented ones. This capability will increase the effectiveness and timeliness of the management processes and stimulate and enhance the training of crisis managers.

Decision aids now exist which will allow the display of frequency data, examination of trends, one or two variable plots, and a whole variety of pattern analysis applications. In addition, factual information sheets and verbal texts can be displayed instantaneously. All these simple, straightforward decision aids are readily available and can be inexpensively programmed to reflect the particular needs of the foreign policy bureaucracy.

Forecasts of Future Environments and Evaluations of Alternative Actions

Periodically, policy makers, the public, or scholars urge social scientists as researchers to cast the results of their studies in terms of forecasts or expectations about the future. The reasons seem clear enough. We all have an interest in anticipating aspects of future global politics and the ability to produce accepted forecasts confers power upon their makers. Another reason for urging more forecasting is the effect on policy. If an individual or collectivity accepts the projected results of a forecast, it becomes the basis for prescriptive action. Humans, thus, participate consciously to shape their future and to engage in self-fulfilling or self-denying forecasts.

In addition, certain types of forecasting lead to the expansion of knowledge. If the forecasts have involved comprehensible calculations or other explicit methods, investigators can use them to revise their own forecasts and procedures. New estimates of future developments can be made using the revisions, and these in turn can be subsequently checked to provide a further round of modifications in the underlying forecasting procedures. Such a cyclical process produces successive approximations that hopefully achieve a gradually improved fit between forecasting and subsequent observation. With these improved forecasts, we can expect improvement in the explanatory base that generated them.

Perhaps few proponents of improved forecasting in foreign affairs would state their case in such unqualified terms; but the reasons advanced above appear to capture the core of such advocacy. Notice that all the arguments for more forecasting of international relations assume that someone can eventually determine their accuracy. A forecast that is stated in such a way as to permit its verification against the unfolding future or previously uninvestigated historical event (retrospective forecasts) introduces the problem of forecast validity. Unfortunately, accurate point-in-time prediction is not in the cards for social scientists as scientists. Indeed as the cyclical process of forecasts of impending doom or nirvana over the 75 years of this century have proven, forecasting ought not be considered an error-free process. For forecasts to be useful we must not lose sight of a few basic points:

- All forecasts are low-probability futures. Thus, planning in an area as important as national security policy should not rely upon single, deterministic forecasts.
- Valuable forecasts must detail the linkages between present and future trends in terms of possible significant events occurring in the intermediate periods. Given this information, planners can, when confronted by one of these events, select strategies that maximize the benefits from the outcomes of the event.
- The best forecast sometimes predicts a future that never occurs; planners are alerted to trends and events that can damage strategic interests and to policies that can offset these dangers. The best forecasts, then, point to critical junctures where policy makers can take precautionary actions.

Forecasts must be considered more in terms of their assistance to policy making rather than their point in time accuracy about distant future events. The analyst, as a forecaster in the foreign service, works for a client in the organizational hierarchy of the production of policy decisions. Answers to questions for his "client" drive all of the analyses that he contemplates. Thus the need is for an eventual restructuring of questions asked of forecasts. Analyses and forecasts performed in a vacuum, while perhaps interesting, are usually useless. Unstructured "tell me what will happen" requests are likely to be equally useless. These comments emphasize purpose in estimating the value of a specific forecast. While the criterion of utility, given a specified purpose, is certainly the final arbiter in the use of a specific technique, several questions must be asked of any potential forecast model.

In a widely respected review, Brewer and Hall (1972: 18–19) suggest that several criteria are now available for evaluating forecasts.

A. Face Validity—Can a decision maker with little or no technical expertise understand the forecast? Is the forecast being presented in a way which makes the results applicable to the policy makers' problems? Does it offend his "common sense" without sufficient explanation of the assumptions and processes involved to justify counter-intuitive findings?

B. Concept Validity—Has the forecaster allowed his wish for a "neat" or "formal" model to override the need for an accurate picture of reality? For example, are key, but difficult to quantify, variables ignored? Is a static model used for a dynamic process? Is the forecast built so as to make subsequent revision difficult or expensive even though the processes being studied are highly volatile?

C. Empirical Validity—Can the model predict the time series from which it was built? Has it been able to predict the time series occurring since its formulation?

D. Flexibility—Can the forecasting model be altered to handle changing structures, particularly changed number of actors, parameters or discontinuities?

E. Ethical Validity—Are the policies suggested

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by the forecast consistent with the ethical, moral, and professional standards of policy makers and of the affected population?

These general criteria for evaluating forecasts are, in themselves, insufficient to suggest the potential uses of forecasts in foreign policy decision making. Forecasts, like other tools, must be designed for specific functions. There appear to be four types of tasks important to the foreign policy decision process where social science forecasts should be of great use.

a. Agenda Building
b. Opportunity/Threat Projections
c. Option Selection
d. Future Implications

A. AGENDA BUILDING

In problem A, agenda building, the questions to be answered by the analyst are: Which of an infinite number of unknowns could be addressed with current resources? Which of these would have the greatest payoff? This problem is one of the most difficult to resolve and requires the strongest concentration of experts. It is in this area that consensus forming techniques such as Delphi are likely to be of largest success.[2] In agenda setting issues, the time horizon is normally relatively long. Self-organization of this nature usually begins at the top and takes the form of requests from the National Security Council or the Secretary of State for position papers on new issues that should be addressed. As such, principal participants in this planning are higher level decision groups. Agenda setting procedures like these are also addressed within lower echelons in the Department of State each year, for instance, in allocating funds to research projects in INR.

The best use of forecasting in this area is the coordination of strategies to address a mixture of agenda items at one time. For instance, the question might involve which research techniques INR might invest in over the next 10 years to meet the needs of the Department. One approach might be to consider the costs—intellectual, resource, organizational and communications costs—which would have to be incurred to develop specific areas of foreign affairs analyses. In a review of quantitative techniques of estimation and forecasting in foreign policy for INR, Coplin and O'Leary use this type of device in a simple, non-quantitative analysis (Table 1). The purpose of these estimates or forecasts of costs is to assist in making decisions about future allocations of efforts.

The Coplin-O'Leary application is a simple one.

[2]For a discussion of subjective techniques, see Pyke (1970), Ament (1970), Enzer (1970, 1971), Schmidt (1971), Martino (1972), Morgenstern (1959), Helmer and Rescher (1960), Lindley (1971), and Edwards (1972).

TABLE 1.—THE COSTS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ANALYSIS

	Type of Costs			
Type of Analysis	*Intellectual Analytical*	*Resource*	*Organi-zational*	*Communi-cations*
Information-Gathering	Low	High	Low	Low
Testing Assumptions	High	Low	High	High
Forecasting	High	Low	High	High

Source: Coplin and O'Leary, 1974, p. 244.

More complex questions, requiring more precise answers, can also be handled in a straightforward manner. One such application is illustrated by Tables 2 and 3. Table 2 assumes that a number of situations in which INR might be asked to supply support to Department policy making have been identified. From this analysis research requirements have been delineated. The problem is to determine the optimum investment strategy in terms of time and dollars. Table 2 lays out a matrix of alternative solutions to four research needs. The utility of each research option across a variety of anticipated problem areas could be placed in the matrix by any of a variety of subjective estimation techniques. These data would be gathered explicitly from potential users of the system. The expected utility (U) of ADP Data Base Updating (I), Near Real Time Capability to Update (A) in the event of a Mideast war (Situation 1) would be placed in cell $U_{I,A,1}$. When the matrix was complete, it would form part of the data used in Table 3 for option selection. Table 3 develops a cost per unit utility strategy for addressing the optimum solution given differing budget constraints. The first column shows the same list of options used in Table 2. The second column shows the best available information on the cost of developing and implementing each option. The third column shows the relative utility of each option, based on the information collected in Table 2. Column 4 shows the calculation of "value expected" or utiles per dollar to be spent on each item. Columns 5–8 show the budget options considered and allow the calculation of total utility and "value expected" for each of these budget levels. This approach is much more viable for delineating agenda items and choosing solutions than is available in previous Department attempts to look at individual techniques in an academically contrived experiment because it looks at a number of alternative approaches across a number of potentially applicable situations.[3]

Subjective techniques such as those suggested here, whether of consensus forming style such as

[3]For a critique of one such contrived "experiment," see Phillips (1972).

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TABLE 2.—RESEARCH UTILITY BY SUBJECT

Research Options	*Mideast War*	*Utility of New Panama Canal Treaty*	*Position on Arms Treaty in Mideast*	*Support on MBFR, Operation*	*CASP Cycle*	*Inter-Agency Cooperation in an Indications Monitoring Plan*	*Economic Input of New Trade Restrictions on Japan*	
I. ADP Data Base Updating								
A. Near Real Time Capability to Update	$U_{I,A,1}$	$U_{I,A,2}$	$U_{I,A,3}$	$U_{I,A,4}$	$U_{I,A,5}$	$U_{I,A,6}$	$U_{I,A,7}$	$U_{I,A,N}$
B. 100–200 Queries Per Day (24-Hour Updating)	$U_{I,B,1}$							
C. 5–10 Queries Per Day; Irregular Updating	$U_{I,C,1}$							
II. Preprogrammed SOP's								
A. ADP Based Updatable Daily; Activated in 10 Minutes	$U_{II,A,1}$							
B. ADP Based Updatable Weekly; Activated in 10 Minutes	$U_{II,B,1}$							
C. Paper Files at Each Location; Updatable Monthly	$U_{II,C,1}$							
III. Capability to Conference								
A. Computer Linkage Between OP and Local Reps	$U_{III,A,1}$							
B. Emergency Dedicated Telephones	$U_{III,B,1}$							
C. Commercial Conferencing Capability	$U_{III,C,1}$							
IV. Net Assessment Capability								
A. Computer Capability to Use in Pre/Inter/Post Situation Mode	$U_{IV,A,1}$							
B. Computer Use in Pre-Event and Post-Event Reprogramming (week) Inter-Situation Capability Verbal Only	$U_{IV,B,1}$							
C. Pre-Strike Analysis on I/O Only	$U_{IV,C,1}$	$U_{IV,C,2}$	$U_{IV,C,3}$	$U_{IV,C,4}$	$U_{IV,C,5}$	$U_{IV,C,6}$	$U_{IV,C,7}$	$U_{IV,C,N}$

Delphi or of probabilistic decision theory, offer excellent decision aids when there is expertise available to make decisions, but little time or expected value in resorting to more empirical efforts. The advantage of these techniques over current procedures is in the explicitness of the assertions (usually probabilities or utilities) and in the ability to change assertions quickly and analyze the impact of the changes. Adoption of these procedures is relatively costless in finance, but does entail some personnel training and communication cost. These can be met in two ways. The first would be to introduce a decision methods course in FSI. Such a course should be tailored to mid-level FSO's experienced in agenda setting efforts currently underway. The

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result of the course could be a specific set of recommendations for phasing research methods into the INR analysis process. The second and follow-on strategy is to bring into the Department consultants who are well versed in these methods and who can advise in their application.

B. OPPORTUNITY/THREAT PROJECTIONS

The problem usually encountered in forecasts of this topic is: In which particular areas of the world can changes be expected to occur which signal an opportunity or a threat to U.S. involvement or inter-

TABLE 3.—COST VERSUS UTILITY FOR RESEARCH OPTIONS

Research Options	*Cost*[a]	*Utility*[b]	*Utility Cost*	*Budget Alternatives* 400K	550K	1300K	1700K	9600K
I. ADP Data Base Updating								
A. Near Real Time Capability to Update	1000K	a	a/1000					x
B. 100–200 Queries Per Day (24-Hour Updating)	400K	b	b/400			x	x	
C. 5–10 Queries Per Day; Irregular Updating	100K	c	c/100	x	x			
II. Preprogrammed SOP's								
A. ADP Based Updatable Daily; Activated in 10 Minutes	3000K	d	d/3000					x
B. ADP Based Updatable Weekly; Activated in 10 Minutes	200K	e	e/200			x	x	
C. Paper Files At Each Location; Updatable Monthly	150K	f	f/150	x	x			
III. Capability to Conference								
A. Computer Linkage Between OP and Local Reps	5000K	g	g/5000					x
B. Emergency Dedicated Telephones	500K	h	h/500			x	x	
C. Commercial Conferencing Capability	200K	i	i/200	x	x			
IV. Net Assessment Capability								
A. Computer Capability to Use in Pre/Inter/Post Situation Mode	600K	j	j/600				x	x
B. Computer Use in Pre-Event and Post-Event Reprogramming (week) Inter-Situation Capability Verbal Only	200K	k	k/200		x	x		
C. Pre-Strike Analysis on I/O Only	50K	l	l/50	x				
			Total Utility =	c+f+i+l	b+e+h+k	c+f+i+k	b+e+h+j	a+d+g+j
			Utility/Cost =	(c+f+i+l)/400	(b+e+h+k)/550	(c+f+i+k)/1300	(b+e+h+j)/1700	(a+d+g+j)/9600

[a] "Guesstimation"

[b] Aggregate utilities for each research option can be measured a number of ways. One is to sum the utilities for each option across all targets. Thus, for example,

$$a = \sum_{i=i}^{N} U_{I,A,i}$$

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ests? For this problem area, a mix of three types of analyses seems potentially relevant. Certainly consensus forming techniques are still quite applicable. Trend analysis may demonstrate that recent shifts indicate drastic changes in activity or development.[4] Regression models may specify which variables to manipulate in order to achieve the greatest success.[5] The major objective is to anticipate those events that hold the greatest opportunity or threat to U.S. interests. In the latter case, the possibility for changing U.S. goals must be entertained.

In forecasting the areas of opportunity or of threat to U.S. goals, the decision time may either be short or long. In those issues in which the recognition of an influence situation breaks quickly, an action must be taken immediately. Only a few people are involved in the decision process. These are the circumstances in which policy is frequently "made in the cables." Forecasting techniques applicable here are often subjective or consensus forming. On the other hand, where adequate indicator systems are available, early warning mechanisms based on trend forecasts could be an enormous benefit to working level bureaucrats. When decision time permits, managerial level bureaucrats become involved in these issues. Regression models specified by the potential impact of new shifts in policy or other significant changes might be of considerable assistance when new approaches are being sought or the relative utility of old ones are being assessed.

One of the basic issues here is the need to develop indicators that depict the type of trends analysts wish to forecast. Once the trends are identified, specific operational variables can be developed to forecast the interaction effect that the trends have upon each other. In supporting long-range forecasting at the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Policy and Plans Division (J5) econometric models are being developed to forecast the nature of regional trends over the next 15 years (CACI, 1973).[6] Such procedures produce estimates of what is likely to happen assuming a fairly stable environment. Unfortunately they are of questionable value when the environment is susceptible to successive shocks or disturbance. Such catalytic events are likely to seriously affect trend forecasts. Procedures are now being developed to deal with such problems (Phillips and Thorson, 1975 and Alker, *et al.*, 1974). One interesting approach is the use of network theory.

Decision networks are often used in the policy-planning context as a means of systematically integrating forecasts into plans of action. This is accomplished by the application of decision rules or strategies to choose or demarcate desired outcomes. Among the simplest kinds of decision rules that can be used in conjunction with networks are those that compare sets of alternative strategies in terms of (1) mean desirability of their possible outcomes, (2) maximum possible outcomes, or (3) minimum outcome. Usually, a more complex decision rule combining two or more of these criteria is used. In the planning context, then, a particular policy is selected on the basis of the expected desirability of the outcomes of various policies included within the network and some mechanism for systematically evaluating those outcomes.

The use of decision networks within the environmental forecasting context itself, however, is based upon consideration of a set of trends considered important to U.S. interests and a set of plausible catalytic events that could alter the direction or rate of change in those trends during the time period under examination. Environmental forecasting typically assumes the absence of such catalytical events. In such an effort, important trends are identified, the relationships among them which determine their future directions and rate of change are described, and forecasts of those trends are produced which are assumed valid given the absence of important events or event sequences which may alter the relationships.[7]

Environmental forecasts of this sort are important starting points for planning within the national security community. But they do not provide the kind of information necessary for well-grounded contingency planning; that is, they do not provide the policy planner with an indication of precisely how important relationships among environmental variables can be altered by significant catalytic events. Combining traditional environmental forecasting methodologies with the analytic use of decision networks, however, can permit analysts and planners to forecast important trends on the basis of causal networks within the context of a broad range of contingencies.

Thus, the contingency planning effort consists of analyzing important political, economic, military, socio-psychological, and technological trends in the near to long-range future contingent upon the impacts of various event sequences. The present world is conceptualized in terms of significant trends in each of these five categories. Detente, or the level of cooperative activity among the major world powers, is one political trend of importance. Detente, as such, may be good or bad for the United States, but it is one vital dimension which U.S. deci-

[4]For a discussion of trend analysis, see Young (1970) and Martino (1972).

[5]For discussion of regression analysis, see Ezekial and Fox (1959) and Draper and Smith (1966). For an application of regression techniques and modeling, see CACI (1974).

[6]Similar methods were employed to forecast power for Office of Naval Research (ONR) by Heiss, *et al.* (1973).

[7]An example of this approach to environmental forecasting, utilizing econometric and simulation methodologies, can be found in CACI (1974). A short-range forecast using essentially the same methods is reported in Milstein and Mitchell (1968).

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sion makers must consider when choosing among policy alternatives.

Identifying plausible catalytic events, such as an outbreak of hostilities between Greece and Turkey, is the second step in developing the respective decision networks. Scenario methodology can be used in the actual construction of the networks to trace the second and third order effects of these catalytic events through time. Thus, one possible reaction to an outbreak of hostilities between Greece and Turkey might be military intervention by the United States, placing large numbers of U.S. troops near the Soviet border. One Soviet response to this move might be an increase in military activity in such nearby Socialist states as Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The outcome of this event sequence, then, is expressed in terms of the trend under examination, detente. The outcomes of various possible event sequences are evaluated with respect to their expected impact on the trend under analysis (see Figure 2 below). Diagrammatically, this process is depicted in Figure 3:

FIGURE 3:

Within the planning context, there are a number of real advantages to using a decision network for environmental forecasting. It allows decision makers to analyze the important trends in terms of their sensitivity to various catalytic events, and to examine sets of event sequences in terms of the conditions they might generate and the relationship of those conditions to U.S. strategic interests. Moreover, use of a decision network permits decision makers to evaluate in advance various responses to catalytic events in terms of U.S. goals and objectives.

Thus, faced with the necessity to respond to an outbreak of hostilities between the Greeks and the Turks, the U.S. defense decision maker could evaluate a set of possible responses specifically with the respect to one or more U.S. goals, such as encouraging a mutual and balanced force reduction within Europe (See CACI, 1975).

Several academic research projects have emphasized the forecasts of Conflict of War.[8] Coplin and O'Leary currently assess the potential of these academic studies for policy makers.

Unfortunately, academic research in the international relations and comparative politics fields has not been much help in providing guidelines for the analyst. As indicated in the first stage report, scholars have not been concerned with producing analyses that lead to concrete predictions, but rather with building theoretical structures that are designed to explain cause-and-effect relationships. This type of activity is relevant to the analysts' need to test their assumptions. But it provides little in the way of direct applications for forecasting. While there are some works that aim at generating a predictive indicator through regression analysis, there are almost none dealing with trend analysis and computer simulation models (Coplin and O'Leary, 1974: 242–243).

While the point is quite reasonable, it evaluates what social scientists have done, not what social scientists can do. The utility of current efforts has been hampered because personnel in the Department of State are not trained in accessing the potential of various methods (Rothstein, 1972). Additionally, academic scholars are not well versed in policy making. But the real fault lies in inappropriate research management strategies which should be aimed at supporting technology transfers into the Department of State. The current decision process for allocating research funds is too slow and cumbersome. The procedures of evaluating research support overemphasize historical background characteristics, subjects for which FSO's tend to be better prepared than the contracted parties.

Corrective procedures would include surveys of the availability of analytic methods to department problems, research contracts aimed at forecasting specific problem sets, and new hiring procedures/requirements for young FSO's. The need is for both R&D type efforts such as those in the ARPA format and for the addition of two other strategies. Serendipity can be a program stimulus if personnel that are trained to evaluate methods are currently employed in academia. If personnel do not exist, then, such committees as the Analytical Methods Groups in INR are doomed to failure. Problem solving strategies in which outsiders are brought in-house to develop a method to attack a particular problem have proven highly successful in translating methods into educational systems in the part (Havelock, 1971).

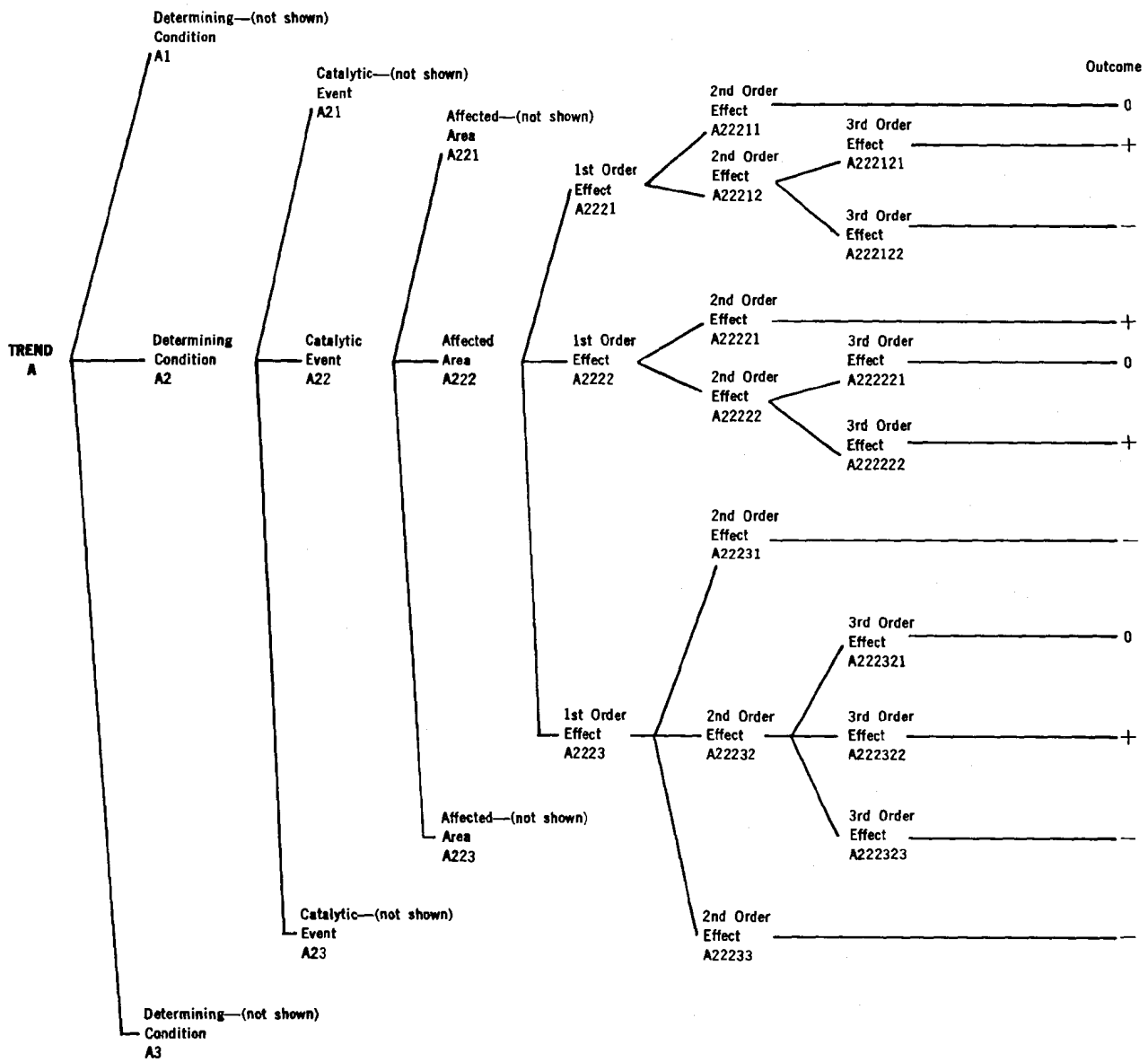
This area of forecasting holds the greatest potential payoffs today. To take advantage of it, however, considerable change will have to be instituted in INR/EX and in the personnel requirements for analysis in the Political Cone.

C. OPTION SELECTION

It is here that the analyst must bring together relatively independent streams of events and a vi-

[8]See Havelock (1971) for alternative strategies.

FIGURE 2.—DECISION NETWORK OUTLINE



sion of the possible strategy of actions to achieve some objectives. It should be apparent that analyses prepared on this problem require models that have a greater number of concepts and relations than those required in either A or B. Thus they are of a unique caliber. It is here that complex regression techniques, nonlinear analysis, and simulations can be introduced for forecasts.[9]

Option selection requires a model of the structure of the process being considered. It also requires the ability to anticipate the consequences of actions under specified routines for deciding which outcome is preferred. When decision time is short, the solutions are based upon SOP's or subjective estimations of each step by working level bureaucrats. But when the time horizon is extended, the full power of the social scientist's analytic and methodological tools is applicable. This entails the use of theories of the process under concern which may be represented by regression or dynamic simulation depending upon the complexity of the issues or the level of understanding of the process.[10]

When complex and far-reaching decisions are contemplated, increasing numbers of businesses and government agencies turn to simulations as a way of projecting the results of different options

[9]For discussion of simulation techniques, see Forrester (1971), Hughes (1973), Bossel and Hughes (1973), and Mesarovic and Pestel (1972).

[10]For further discussion of this point see Kanter and Thorson (1972) or Phillips and Thorson (1975).

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before becoming committed to one. Major economic decisions, such as alterations in the federal tax structure or changes in tariff rates, are often tested in this way.

Where a clear set of policy options can be identified and where it is possible to construct a believable model of the processes that are influenced by that policy choice, and where the decision maker can specify the dimensions along which he wishes results, computer simulations or other formal models can be of great use in policy selection. All three of these criteria are usually met by mental models of decision makers in the policy selection process. A decision to expand the Food for Peace program, for example, may involve the choice of a range of funding levels for the program from reducing its budget by 10 percent to increasing it by 25 percent. Decision makers are interested in specific results of this program—feeding people, obtaining international recognition for the effort expended to feed people, and increased friendship from recipient states. The linkage from food flows to fed people, to international recognition, or to increased friendly behavior by recipient countries is straightforward and can be empirically examined on the basis of past experience. If the distribution system for a particular country is unable to get the food to those who need it, the model can be built to incorporate this fact.

Reflecting these dynamic (that is, over time) behaviors of a system accurately is not, of course, a sufficient condition for applying them to policy planning. There must be a set of independent reasons for thinking that the specified forecasting models are useful. Here lessons should deal with the need to anticipate the outcomes of U.S. actions. All planners and policy makers routinely make estimates of the consequences of alternative policy actions. It has been argued that these estimates (or mental images) can be abstracted and become the basis of an explicit and consistent theory of how various options are related to conditions and responses abroad (Phillips and Thorson, 1974).

If such heuristic models are to be useful for evaluating policy impacts, they must be validated both for empirical (Hermann, *et al.*, 1975) and substantive validity (Newell and Simmon, 1972; Milburn, 1975). They must also be purposely directed at providing observers with suggestions which alternative policy options are likely to avoid unwanted consequences. To this end there must be a set of performance measures or preferences identified for each outcome so that alternative policies can be evaluated. The performance measures can be developed by independent rating of the importance of different U.S. objectives with regard to relations with other nations. The performance measures must be defined such that they rank strategies according to their outcomes as anticipated in forecast simulations. The question then becomes: given a set of objectives with regard to a specific nation, say Brazil, what set of policy actions would best realize stated objectives given the assumed relationships between manipulable variables (such as U.S. aid assistance options) for that country and the set of assumptions about both exogenous variables (such as the impact of Soviet or Chinese initiatives toward that country) and within country or endogenous variables (such as the impact of economic development upon internal stability in Brazil)?

Oftentimes, it is extremely difficult to quantify the various references that lead to a choice of strategy. For example, suppose the elements include preference about political stability, economic development, and attitudes toward the U.S. Government. From a policy-making perspective, the temptation here is to take the element most easily quantified (in this case probably economic development) and attempt to maximize (minimize) it with the hope the others will follow along. Thus the motto "hard data drive out soft." Yielding to this temptation can, however, have disastrous long-term consequences. In the case where, over some interval, increases in economic development lead to a decrease in stability which in turn encourages hostility toward the United States, a policy maker who simply optimized on economic development might soon be confronted with a rapidly deteriorating situation.

It is easy to write that variables difficult to quantify must not be excluded; it is much more difficult to recommend how to include them. The Department of State has had experience in specifying goals and objectives in the CASP and PARA programs. These experiences ought to provide an important base from which to construct utilities or preferences.

In many political applications of decision or control theory there does not seem to be a single dimension into which the preferences can be mapped. For example, there is no clear way to add dollars and political prestige. Therefore, instead of facing a scalar optimization problem, the political policy maker often faces what has been termed a vector maximization problem (Gershinowitz, 1972). In simpler terms, we all want food daily, but we normally choose "enough" food and some other goods. Hence we are used to thinking in multiple value dimensions and should not be surprised when social science suggests a need for this in a complex arena like foreign affairs.

At this stage social science has only begun to look at the problem of identifying the impact of various policy options upon a particular problem. Recent conferences on the use of control theory in international relations point out the possibilities.[11] What is

[11]See the NSF-sponsored conference on Control Theory in International Relations held at the University of Indiana (Zinnes and Gillespie, forthcoming).

necessary at this stage is the development of estimating procedures within the Department of State for applying heuristic models to option selection questions. This is an area to which simulation may be employed to evaluate alternative responses to particular threats or opportunities. It is probably too early yet to attempt to specify formal decision rules for direct application to policy choices. Extensions of the procedures in area B, to cover the subjective evaluation of strategies, would be quite beneficial and easily attained were those previous recommendations accepted.

D. FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

The final problem area, future implications, includes the others but is also unique. In this area attempts are made to describe all or a significant aspect of the world of the future, that is, 10 or more years hence. Of particular interest are the unanticipated consequences of decisions. Therefore we need to deal with problem D to resolve the combined impact of other problem areas. This may require reducing the relative significance of problems in A, B, or C; providing more qualitative predictions; and reducing the reliance upon point predictions. The techniques of non-linear feedback approaches have been developed for this problem and are most likely to have the greatest payoffs.

Policy planning requires an appreciation of the complex linkages among available technology, economic costs and compatibility, and managerial decisions. Ultimately, a policymaker's comprehension of this complex of relationships is contingent on his "image" of the outer environment, images generated by abstraction from his experiences. While frequently the cornerstone of the policy-making process, a purely mental image would have several important drawbacks when complex and interactive relationships among environmental factors must be identified and understood. The sheer complexity of the environmental relationships often hinders the effective use of mental models without the assistance of analytic tools that can provide systematized information. Explicit models, such as econometric models or dynamic models, are a valuable adjunct to mental models because they permit systematic differentiation of the various relationships involved in a given set of observed linkages and simultaneous consideration of a complex of interactive relationships.[12]

Econometric and dynamic forecasting models need continued development, however. Both have difficulties. The former suffer from an inability to deal with large-scale, long-range forecasting and decision-oriented problems. The latter suffer from an inability to provide significant validation checks on the empirical validity of subrelations within the model. The solution is to move to partial answers based upon the notion that the structure of our forecasts undergoes shifts given both the current state of the system and the particular shocks in the form of input variables that the system is experiencing.[13]

Another level of concern here is that attempts to forecast such wholistic views of the future become trapped in exercises which exceed even the limits of potential capability for forecast technologies or scientific method. In a real sense the long-term future is a low probability event and contingency plans are not likely to have off-the-shelf relevance. The solution to these problems does not lie in better forecasting but in other capabilities. These lie in the realm of assistance in *ad hoc* planning. Here we have suggested procedures for better information handling, indications monitoring, interagency communications and decision aids.

In a general set of recommendations in the forecasting and option selection area, we believe there is need for the development of an analytical methods laboratory in INR to tailor available techniques to specific projects. Such an analytic support center can focus personnel training, applications testing, and agenda setting efforts to enhance State Department's capabilities in forecasting and policy making.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The preceding sections suggest that computer technology and formal social science have a variety of potential applications within the field of foreign policy decision making. Four specific areas of potential application were discussed in detail—information handling, communications, forecasting and alternative evaluation, and decision aids. Three of these areas are already being influenced by computer technology and formal social science, though their introduction has been slowed by resource availability. There are a number of areas where "state of the art" hardware and software could be of considerable utility to foreign policy development and implementation but little or no specific adoption has yet occurred.[14] The following recom-

[12]See Christ (1967) for an excellent development of econometric models in International Relations. For a development of more complex approaches, See Forrester, 1971; Meadows, *et al.*, 1972; Mesarovic and Pestel, 1972.

[13]Arbib (1964) provides an excellent technical discussion. The notion is substantively developed by Rosenau (1970) and Thorson (1974).

[14]Note that these areas differ considerably from the suggestions of Professors Coplin and O'Leary in the Final Report of project QUEST, the most recent systematic effort to assess the utility of quantitative analytic techniques for foreign policy mak-

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mendations are covered in this report:

1. The development of a skills and expertise reference file for the entire foreign policy bureaucracy and the research personnel available outside.
2. The development of computer indexing systems for bibliographic material.
3. The development of country-specific data bases for quick recall and up-to-date intelligence.
4. The provision of visual displays of trends, patterns of occurrences, and cross plots of key pieces of information.
5. The systematic use of consensus techniques in the vital area of agenda setting, particularly in long-term perspective.
6. The application of event networks to estimate plausible ranges of occurrence and to identify alternative futures for analyses.
7. The use of formal decision network techniques to determine desirable courses of action and optimum choices and the use of game theoretic techniques to select optimal strategies. These two areas of work would be of help in contingency planning and selection of negotiating strategy.
8. The organization of an Analytic Support Center to transfer social science techniques and methods into the State Department.
9. The development of a computer conferencing capability at both the watch officer level of indications monitoring and at the highest levels of policy recommendations.
10. Adoption of procedures which regularly exercise computer support in a crisis problem-solving mode.

There is one area, the adoption of a cable coding system within the Department of State, in which the adaptation of computer methods to the needs of the foreign policy bureaucracy is well advanced and only more rapid expansion of facilities (terminals interfacing the system and capacity for coding and sorting a longer time period) seems necessary. In other areas, such deficiencies as the small number of computer-trained personnel in the professional ranks of the foreign service bureaucracy and the relatively small enrollment in the computer in quantitative analysis seminars at the Foreign Service Institute, seriously impede the adoption and use of computer technology in areas where it can be quickly, efficiently, and relatively inexpensively brought to bear.

Our recommendation would be to adopt a specific program, including an identified budget, that would allow for the orderly development of tools and decision aids of direct utility to the Department of State or other members of the foreign policy community. The program must, to succeed have several characteristics:

- It must create career incentives for personnel to learn and use advanced methods and techniques.
- It must utilize career personnel to adapt existing knowledge to real problems. For example, selection of the data to put in country files must be done with the guidance and direct involvement of experienced desk officers.
- It must include provision for implementation and training on a continuing basis.
- Compatibility of computer languages and hardware must be maintained to hold costs at a reasonable level.
- Emphasis should first be placed on relatively simple items like indexing systems, data bases, and visual displays.
- More complex techniques should be introduced first through senior seminars and other conferencing devices. Complex techniques, particularly mathematical ones, must be accepted by senior personnel before they will be adopted at lower levels.

It might also be wise to introduce a special section of the planning staff or the office of the Secretary of State with specific responsibility for applying consensus techniques for agenda setting and networks for contingency planning.

This sounds ambitious, though we trust not unrealistic. Two points should be borne in mind. First, the process of introducing computer technology and formal social science into the foreign policy bureaucracy is cumulative and has already begun. As these tools are understood and used they become a resource, like a good secretary or a typewriter. Second, resource investment can be minimized through the training and use of career personnel in designing and monitoring these innovations. Properly utilized, the tools can simplify the life of the bureaucrat and improve the quality of decision making. They represent a challenge and an opportunity.

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ing. This is due largely to the very different orientation of the current authors. Coplin and O'Leary are assessing the utility of scholarly research to obtain a better understanding of international relations. Our purpose is to deal with tools for the conduct of foreign policy. The two are not unrelated—a decision maker who understands foreign policy should be more effective than one who does not. On the other hand, it is possible to accomplish a great deal on the basis of an imperfect understanding of the processes at work (decision making under uncertainty), and the foreign policy bureaucrat must do just that every day. Some things, such as provision of accurate information, are needed in both processes. Others, such as decision-networks, are useful only when decisions are being made, and tend to mirror, rather than expand, the analyst's understanding of the problem.

ANNEX:
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☆ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1976 O—212-685

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