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ANALYSIS OF THE QUARANTINE POLICY WITH SPECIAL
EMPHASIS UPON THE IMPLICATION FOR
DECISION-MAKING THEORY.

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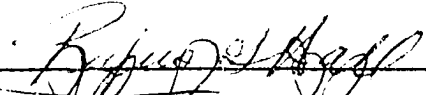
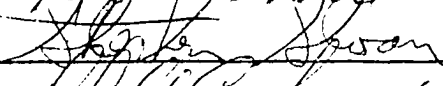
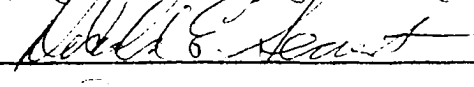
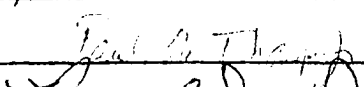
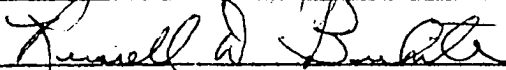
THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS : A DECISION-MAKING ANALYSIS
OF THE QUARANTINE POLICY WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS UPON
THE IMPLICATION FOR DECISION-MAKING THEORY

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
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RAYMOND ALSTON RIMKUS
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I would like to acknowledge the direction, encouragement, and aid which my family and professors have given me throughout my college career. Special acknowledgment, however, is due my wife and my committee for their help in the preparation of this study.

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CHAPTER I: AN INTRODUCTION

In 1954, Richard C. Snyder circulated a paper among his fellow political scientists. His purpose was to present a new approach to the study of international relations, and the paper contained the essential elements of this novel conceptual framework. The importance of this paper was great: it not only put forth a new way of studying international relations, but it also challenged the heart of the older, more traditional approaches.

In the period between the two world wars, most of the political scientists concerned with the study of international relations fell into one or the other of two schools. These schools have been referred to as the "utopians" and the "realists."¹ The utopians were those who approached international politics with the view that reason and order

¹These terms, and the nature of the approaches for which they stand, are discussed in James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., Contending Theories of International Relations (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1971).

were one; if states acted with reason there would be peace and order in the world. Their approach was legalistic or formalistic in that reason and order were tied to international law and organization. With respect for and adherence to the system of international law, and with support for world government, they believed that the world would be ordered and peaceful. They were idealistic in that they believed that an ordered world was the natural state of the international environment; it devolved from the natural harmony of interests which all nations had in peace and order. The utopians were more concerned with how nations ought to behave than with how nations actually did behave, and they actively sought to create the world order which they desired by promoting international understanding and the human attitudes necessary for the foundation of such an order.²

The realists rejected the idealism and legalistic formalism of the utopians. They regarded such idealism and formalism as representative of normative biases which precluded the systematic analysis and understanding of international politics. They believed that power and interest were the driving forces in international politics, and that a nation's interests could be expected to be supported only insofar as that nation had the power upon which to base such

²Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories of International Relations, pp. 6-7.

support. The realist sought to determine how and why nations behaved as they did; in doing so, he regarded the state as the primary actor in international affairs, and he looked for the sources of its behavior in the "objective realities" of its position in the international community. Such objective realities as circumstances of geography, politics, and technology, as well as many others, were tied to the power of a nation to serve itself and its interests, and the study of international politics was predicated upon the examination of the efforts of nations to use their capabilities in pursuit of their interests. The state was regarded as an ambitious and selfish one. The realists were drawing upon the power politics of first one, and then two world wars in order to describe the nature or the patterns of international relations.³ Hans J. Morgenthau, perhaps the "dean" of post-World War II realists, came to define international politics as the international struggle for power by the various nations of the world. International politics was, in his mind, nothing more than the scramble by the various nations of the world for influence over the actions of the other nations.⁴ By the post-World War II period, the realists

³Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories of International Relations, pp. 7-13. See also James N. Rosenau, "The Premises and Promises of Decision-Making Analysis," Contemporary Political Analysis, ed. by James C. Charlesworth (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 194-198.

⁴Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1948).

had almost completely displaced the utopians in the ranks of those who studied the relations of nations.⁵

It was clear that the idealism and formalism of the utopians did not explain international relations, but there were problems associated with the realist approach as well. Not all international relations were explainable in terms of power or its pursuit, and not all international relations were explainable in terms of a selfish national drive for interest satisfaction. Humanitarian foreign aid, for instance, was an aspect of international relations, but it could not be fitted into the struggle for power or the pursuit of national interests. The realists had reified the state; they had given it an existence and a personality in international affairs which ignored the human aspect. Snyder recognized that this human aspect was being ignored, and the decision-making approach was the result of his efforts to build a new conceptual framework which took this into account. He believed that concentrating on the human aspect would lead to a clearer understanding of international relations; all aspects of international relations, including such aspects as the extension of humanitarian foreign aid, could be understood and studied if it were realized that state action was nothing more than the result of the decisions of those empowered to act in the name of the state.

⁵Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, Contending Theories of International Relations, p. 10.

The state had no international personality except as such a personality was manifested in the decisions and actions of those who were empowered to decide and act in its name. If considerations of power and interest formed the basis for the actions of a nation's decision-makers, then the power approach of the realists was applicable in explaining that nation's actions, but if considerations of humanitarianism, morality, or idealism formed the basis for the actions of a nation's decision-makers, then the power approach was not applicable in explaining that nation's actions. As James Rosenau has noted, the heart of Snyder's original approach was based upon the concept that political action was the product of the acts of human beings; to understand political action, one had to understand the reasons for these human acts.⁶ The environment of the decision-makers had to be comprehended in order to understand the pressures which prompted them to make the decisions and take the actions which they did make and take; when these pressures were understood, and when their impact was understood, then international relations could be understood. This was the nature of the approach which challenged the dominance of Morgenthau and others.

In addition to the specially circulated paper by Snyder, the first published paper on this new approach was

⁶James N. Rosenau, "The Premises and Promises of Decision-Making Analysis," p. 194.

made available in 1954. Snyder was joined by H. W. Bruck and Burton Sapin, and their product was the refined and elaborated concepts found in Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics.⁷

The first in-depth application of the approach was published in 1958. Glenn D. Paige joined Snyder in a decision-making analysis of the American decision to intervene in the war caused by the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950, and they produced an article entitled "The United States Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea: The Application of an Analytical Scheme."⁸

Later, Paige developed this work into a much more elaborate study. This study was published in 1968 as The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950.⁹ This book was much longer and much more complete than the original effort of Paige and Snyder. In addition to attempting an explanation of the decision to intervene, Paige developed some action

⁷Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics, Foreign Policy Analysis Series, No. 3 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1954). (Future references to this work will refer to an edition published in 1962 and cited later in the footnotes.)

⁸Richard C. Snyder and Glenn D. Paige, "The United States Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea: The Application of an Analytical Scheme," Administrative Science Quarterly, III (December, 1958), 341-378. (Future references to this work will refer to an edition published in 1961 and cited later in the footnotes.)

⁹Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950 (New York: Free Press, 1968).

implications or empirical hypotheses which he felt would be applicable to all similar situations. It was not only an attempt to apply the decision-making analysis, but it also sought to add to the basic theory with hypotheses based on observations made in the study.

These three items constitute the major published work which is to be found in this particular area of decision-making theory. The concepts and methods contained in them serve as the theoretical and methodological bases for this study.

The Decision-Making Approach

Snyder¹⁰ began his approach with the assumption that the state would be the significant unit of international political action and authority for the foreseeable future. Through this assumption, Snyder maintained that international politics were the product of actions that were taken in the name of states and that were directed at other states. It was at the level of the state that the decision to follow one policy or course of action rather than others would be made, and it was at the level of the state that the study of international politics would be rendered meaningful. This concept was not a reification of the state; Snyder intended

¹⁰Since Snyder originated this approach, and since he collaborated on most of its refinement, this study uses his name to designate not only his efforts, but also the efforts of Bruck, Sapin, and Paige when the paper refers to the works which Snyder co-authored with the others.

to use the concept only as a shorthand device in referring to a collectivity normally designated as a "state."¹¹

This collectivity acted through its decision-makers, or those given the higher positions of political authority within its society. By choosing one policy over others, these decision-makers set the policy of the state; through their authoritative acts, the state acted. It followed from this that one had to study the actions of the decision-makers if one were to understand the actions of states. Since states were the primary political units at the international level, the study of international politics had to be based upon the study of the actions of the decision-makers comprising the states.¹²

Implicit in this approach was the idea that it would transcend formal or legalistic lines. The concept of the decisional unit was important here. This unit was composed of all who were responsible for making a decision, or whose activities led to the choice of a particular course of action. Formal lines of authority were to be ignored; only those who participated in rendering a particular decision were to be included, regardless of their official position.¹³ This

¹¹Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, "Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics," Foreign Policy Decision-Making, ed. by Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), pp. 62-64.

¹²Ibid., p. 65.

¹³Ibid., pp. 92-94.

enabled a decisional unit to encompass such figures as the Attorney General or the President's speech writers, even when the decision rendered dealt with American foreign policy. The only requirement was that the individuals play a major role in rendering an authoritative decision.

There were two types of decisions which were rendered by these decision-makers. The first was an intellectual decision; this was the substantive choice. It dealt with issues, or the desirable course of action which a state might take in a given situation. The second type of decision was that of an organizational, or procedural, nature. This decision had to do with who would participate in a given decision-making process, or how the process would progress.¹⁴

Both types of decisions were important in regard to the foreign policy of a state. In any event, it was this decision-making process which would determine foreign policy (and international politics), and Snyder felt that it was this process which should be used as the focal point for the study of the decision-makers, their actions, and international relations.

Snyder hypothesized that decision-makers did not act upon the basis of purely random response. Neither was there

¹⁴Richard C. Snyder and Glenn D. Paige, "The United States' Decision to Resist Aggression in Korea: The Application of an Analytical Scheme," International Politics and Foreign Policy, ed. by James N. Rosenau (New York: Free Press, 1961, p. 195.

an assumption of rationality, nor was unconscious motivation ruled out. Snyder simply believed that decisions were the product of actions structured by some calculations. These calculations could be rational, or they could be irrational; they were made, however, and they had to be studied in order to determine why a particular decision was rendered.¹⁵

Another assumption made by Snyder was that official decision-makers did not behave as discrete individuals. They were part of an organizational system, and they behaved as role players or participants within it. The decisional unit was a decision-making system in that it had parts which functioned to accomplish the tasks of the system. These parts were the individuals who made up the decisional unit. Each part (or individual) had a role to play, and when these roles were fulfilled, the system produced decisions.¹⁶

Finally, Snyder assumed that the decisions which were made, and the actions or policies of the state in the international system, were the product of the way in which the decision-makers perceived the situation. In order to be compelled to act, the decision-makers had to believe that the situation called for action. The action which was then taken also depended on the perception of the situation,

¹⁵Ibid., p. 195.

¹⁶Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "Decision-Making," pp. 87-100.

because the action was a response designed to achieve a more desirable setting or environment, and the perceptions of the decision-makers would determine what course of action would best serve this end.¹⁷

From the body of theory presented, Snyder drew four sets of factors which affected how a decision-maker would act: organizational-individual factors, internal setting factors, external setting factors, and situational factors. These factors were interrelated, and they would vary in presence from situation to situation; there would, however, always be some subfactor (part of one of the four major sets of factors) present.¹⁸

Organizational-individual factors referred to "the total relevant institutional environment." This total environment included the individuals, agencies, roles, rules, functions, and interpersonal and interagency relationships which were found in a particular decisional unit and under which a particular decisional unit operated.¹⁹ (The importance of these factors is evident; the composition of the decisional unit and the way in which the decisional unit operates are major determinants of what decisions will be made.)

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 65-66.

¹⁸Snyder and Paige, "Application of an Analytical Scheme," p. 195.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 195.

Internal setting factors were the societal and cultural factors or pressures, and the physical habitat. Snyder felt that this formulation provided two things. First, it provided for a wider range of potentially relevant factors than the more usual listing of terms like "morale," "attitudes," "national power," "party politics," et cetera. Second, it provided for an approach which could go beyond these derived conditions listed above; it was important that this be done if one were interested in accurately determining why states behaved as they did.²⁰

The external setting factors comprised those conditions foreign to the internal environment. Allies, enemies, neutrals, international organizations, international law, treaties, relevant internal factors of other states, foreign policies of other states, and physical characteristics were all part of the external environment. Snyder believed that the external setting was always changing and that it would be composed, in the minds of the decision-makers, of what they considered to be important. The impact of external factors, and their peculiar nature of relative importance, was shown by Snyder through the use of the example of the Soviet Union and its impact on American foreign policy. Prior to 1933, Soviet foreign policy was not important to American decision-makers, and it was not a part

²⁰Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "Decision-Making," pp. 67-68.

of the external setting of the American foreign policy decision-making process. Today, it is important to American decision-makers, and it is an extremely important part of the external setting of American foreign policy formulation. The key to this change lies in the different way the United States now views the Soviet Union.²¹

Situational properties were those factors which were comprised of "the occasion for decision plus its 'core context' consisting of perceived variables abstracted from the total internal, external, and organizational setting."²² Snyder said that the key to the explanation of why a state behaved as it did lay in the manner in which the decision-makers defined (or perceived) their situation. This definition was based upon the projected action as well as the reasons for the action. The definition of the situation was an orientation to the situation by the decision-maker, and three features emerged: perception, choice, and expectation. Situational properties were, then, those properties which were viewed by the decision-maker as the relevant factors causing him to act in a decision-making situation and affecting these actions and their product once the process had begun.²³

²¹Ibid., p. 67.

²²Snyder and Paige, "Application of an Analytical Scheme," p. 195.

²³Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "Decision-Making," pp. 65-66.

These were the four sets of factors operating upon a decision-maker. The decision-maker identified and examined the relevant subfactors of each category in making his decision. The manner in which this was accomplished, and the results of these efforts, had to be recreated in order for the scholar to understand why a decision-maker made a particular decision. In order to do this, Snyder proposed three sets of variables which the scholar should use: organizational roles and relations, communication and information, and motivation.²⁴ These three variables were the determinants of the action of a decision-maker; when examined, they enabled the scholar to recreate the subjective perception or definition of the situation by the decision-maker. The four factors which operated upon the decision-maker in a decision-making process, and the interrelationships of these factors, were incorporated into these three determinants. In short, Snyder proposed that with the application of these three variables, the decision-making process could be more easily studied and more thoroughly understood; all factors, whether intra-personal or extra-personal, could be meaningfully examined.

Organizational roles and relations were variables which corresponded to the organizational-individual factors present in the decision-maker's calculations. They represented the relationships and roles operative in a

²⁴Ibid., p. 105.

decisional unit and the manner in which they affected the product of that unit.

Communication and information were terms used to describe the factors which were the product of the internal and external settings. What these settings were to the decision-maker depended on the information which he received and the manner or structure of the communications system which transmitted this information.

Motivation referred to the factors which formed the body of personal preferences or predispositions of the decision-maker: these factors included values, attitudes, cognition, and perception. Snyder was not concerned with all the motives of the decision-makers, however; he was interested only in those motivational factors which might help to account for the behavior of decision-makers in a given decision-making situation.²⁵

Motives were important in two ways. There were preparatory or promotional motives which prompted action, and there were also motives which might be called drive or orientation, which sustained activity toward a particular end. These two types of motives were acquired through acculturation or learning processes in the society, the bureaucratic organization, the decisional unit, or the political process (some motivations had as their ends the

²⁵Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "Decision-Making," pp. 138-139.

satisfaction of particular interest groups to which the decision-maker might necessarily belong).²⁶

While the body of motivations operating in an individual was large, Snyder, it should be stressed, felt that only those motivations relevant to the decision-making situation were important to the analysis of a decision. Participants were not viewed as discrete, real individuals, but as actors (used in an analytical sense) in a particular type of process. Because of this view, Snyder was able to hypothesize that only the properties relevant to the particular process were relevant to the construction of the decision-maker as a participant in a decision-making process.²⁷

These three variables, then, were collectively the determinants of action in a decision-making process, and it was toward these three variables that the scholar had to direct his inquiry and analysis.

Paige's Evaluation of the Decision
to Intervene in Korea

In the introductory chapter of The Korean Decision, Paige wrote of the very general nature of the body of theory put forth by Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin. This theory was not based upon a systematic empirical foundation, and it also

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 138-161.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 138-139.

lacked proof of its applicability. It had not been the goal of the three men to put forth a fully developed framework, however; they had sought to present a broad approach which would order the study of international relations in the manner in which they thought it should be ordered. They had put forth the decision-making framework in order to provide scholars with a better tool to use in analyzing and explaining international relations, and they had left the ultimate verification and refinement of this approach to those who would use it.²⁸

Paige's work, The Korean Decision, was an application of the decision-making approach. He sought to prove its applicability as well as to aid in developing it into a usable body of operational theoretical statements. In order to accomplish these two things, Paige reconstructed a decisional event and then analyzed this event in terms of the decision-making variables presented in the Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin framework. The event which he chose was that of the American decision to intervene on behalf of South Korea in 1950.

Paige's method of recreating this decisional event was that of "guided reconstruction." He presented a narrative history which was based upon the decision-making approach. The variables were not mentioned nor noted;

²⁸Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 6-7.

they simply served as a basis for the reconstruction of the event. The historical points or facts were set against the approach in a manner designed to emphasize data which were related to the decision-making variables. In short, Paige took the decision-making approach and sought the facts which would satisfy the variables; he then wrote his history upon the framework which this approach provided.²⁹

This narrative history served as the basis for the hypotheses which Paige drew from the study. He was engaged in the process of theory-building in the sense that he was generalizing relationships which he hypothesized would be present in any decisional event similar to that of the Korean decision. He was putting forth propositions based upon the relationships which he found in a particular type of decisional event, and these propositions were empirical additions to the body of decision-making theory. It should be noted that Paige realized the dangers inherent in generalizing from a discrete event, and he prefaced his generalizations with this realization. He felt that the propositions which he put forth could be checked and rechecked through further applications of the decision-making approach.³⁰

Paige qualified his hypotheses by stating that they were the product of the study of a crisis decision. There

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 273-275.

was no specified typology of decisions in the original decision-making approach, but Paige introduced this concept with his qualification. The hypotheses which he presented might be applicable to any decision-making process, but to be valid they had only to be applicable to the process which produced the crisis decision. In this manner, Paige prepared the theory-building process for the possible need for different kinds of hypotheses based upon different types of decisional processes which produced different kinds of decisions.³¹

Paige defined a crisis decision as a "response to a high threat to values, either immediate or long range, where there is little time for decision under conditions of surprise." A crisis decision was, then, the product of a situation in which a major decision had to be made as to what response should be directed against a perceived threat. This decision had to be made quickly under conditions of stress caused by the product of surprise, the need for speed and the nature of the threat.³²

Paige further qualified the hypotheses which he drew from his study by classifying the Korean decision as a crisis decision with certain "empirical characteristics." First, the occasion for the decision was thrust upon the

³¹Ibid., pp. 275-276.

³²Ibid., p. 276.

decision-makers from outside their sphere of control. Second, the decision-making organization was composed of an executive headquarters plus subordinate departments whose heads participated in the decision-making process at the request of the President. Third, the internal setting was one in which the decision-makers could be challenged and even replaced if there were dissatisfaction with the decisions rendered. Fourth, and finally, the external setting was characterized by the existence of other nations, friendly and unfriendly, over whom the decision-makers could exercise little control.³³

If one were to attempt to verify the hypotheses put forth by Paige, one would have to base one's work upon a crisis decision similar to that of the Korean decision. In addition, the empirical characteristics of the two decisions should be similar. While these empirical characteristics are not central to the consideration of the hypotheses put forth by Paige, they are important to any attempt at verification. For instance, if a particular hypothesis were disproved in a study of a decision, it could be argued that, rather than invalidating the hypothesis, this disproving represented a need to develop a more complete typology of decisions in which there were sub-categories based upon empirical characteristics.

³³Ibid., pp. 275-276.

It may be true that this typology must be ultimately developed, and it may also be true that the hypotheses put forth by Paige apply to any decision-making process. This dissertation, however, is not concerned with either of these possibilities. It seeks simply to validate or reject Paige's propositions by studying a decision as similar as possible to the one upon which Paige based his hypotheses. If the hypotheses are rejected under these circumstances, they cannot be generally applicable hypotheses adding to the body of the decision-making theory. If they are validated, then a step has been taken toward the creation of the body of empirically generated theoretical propositions which Paige thought would aid in the ordering and control of international relations.

The decision chosen to serve as the basis for the observations which are to be used in validating or rejecting Paige's propositions was that of the American decision to blockade Cuba in the face of the Soviet missile build-up there in 1962.³⁴ This decision satisfied the characteristics which served as Paige's definition of a crisis decision in that it represented a response to a high threat to values, under conditions of surprise, and in which there were limitations of time imposed on the decision-making process. The threat was manifest in the challenge to American supremacy

³⁴Hereinafter, this decision will be referred to as the "quarantine" decision.

in the Western Hemisphere and in the challenge to the relative nuclear balance of power. With the successful installation of nuclear missiles in Cuba, the effective nuclear strength of the Soviet Union would have been increased, thus undermining American nuclear superiority. The fact that the missiles could have threatened many Latin American cities would have undermined the influence of the United States in this area. In addition, time was a most pressing matter in that possible American reactions might have been inhibited because of the increased Soviet power if the missiles became operable.

In addition, the "quarantine" decision also satisfied the conditions imposed by the empirical characteristics which Paige said were present in the Korean decision. First, the quarantine decision was the result of actions over which the American decision-makers had no direct control. The actions were those of the Soviets and the Cubans, and these actions were external to the American political system. Second, the decision-making organization which rendered the quarantine decision was composed of subordinate departments whose heads participated in an executive headquarters at the request of the President. Kennedy asked that certain men attend meetings in which a response would be drafted, and these men served as part of the decisional unit. This group was composed of individuals whose knowledge and advice the President respected, and

also of individuals who represented certain strategic parts of the bureaucracy which the President thought were closely related to the problem. Third, the decision-makers could certainly have been challenged, or even replaced, if the decisions which they made had not been effective as well as popular. The Republican Party had already made Cuba the central campaign issue for the fall elections, and there were also others who would not have hesitated to criticize any decisions which they considered suspect. Fourth, and last, the external setting was one occupied by other nations over whom the decision-makers could exercise little control. The Soviet Union might have reacted strongly against any move to dislodge them from Cuba; it was believed that the United States had to act, but its actions had to be the product of careful consideration so that it might accomplish its aim without provoking war.

The similarity between the Korean decision and the quarantine decision has been shown, at least in terms of the characteristics which Paige put forth as relevant to his typology. The quarantine decision has been demonstrated to be a crisis decision according to Paige's definition, and Paige's contention that the Korean decision belonged to this variety of decision has been accepted as valid. It is now necessary to demonstrate that the hypotheses put

forth by Paige are either applicable or not applicable in the case of the quarantine decision.

The method of accomplishing this demonstration, as stated earlier, will be to present a narrative history of the American decision to quarantine Cuba. From this narrative history will be drawn the observations which will serve to verify or reject Paige's proposals. The following chapter contains the narrative history, and the third chapter will contain the observations and the analysis of Paige's hypotheses.

CHAPTER II: A NARRATIVE HISTORY

On December 31, 1958, Fulgencio Batista left Cuba for exile. At the time of his departure he was the military dictator of this Caribbean nation, as he had been for most of the previous twenty-five years. Resentment toward his rule had been building for a number of years, however, and an active rebellion had been transpiring in parts of the country. Fidel Castro, with the help of his revolutionary forces, was able to step into the void created by Batista's departure. It is important to note that Castro did not defeat Batista, nor was Batista defeated at all in the traditional sense; he simply had tired of the battle or saw no hope for the future. Whatever his reasons, Batista had gone, and Castro was now Cuba's political head by default.

As Castro's control over Cuba was consolidated in the months after his initial seizure of power, a coolness toward the United States began progressively to manifest itself in Cuban foreign policy. What was first excused as "social reform" and "nationalism" soon began to be viewed in the United States as "illegal expropriation" and "anti-Americanism". In addition to the verbal attacks on the United States and the confiscation of private American

economic interests on the island, the Cubans began the development of a close relationship with the Communist bloc.

The American response to these Cuban actions was to try to isolate Cuba; through economic and political sanctions, the United States sought to force Cuban policy into a more amenable mold. These efforts by the United States, coupled with such things as the economic needs of the island and the self-avowed Marxist leanings of Castro, made Castro dependent upon the Communist bloc for his survival. As American pressure threatened Castro, the Soviet Union and other members of the Communist bloc were there to aid and strengthen him. Initially this aid took the form of trade agreements, but later there were military agreements as well. By mid-July of 1960, the tie between Cuba and the Soviet Union had become so strong that the Soviet Union promised to help defend Cuba against a rumored American invasion, even if it meant that the Russians had to use nuclear missiles to do so.¹

As the ties between Cuba and the Communist bloc were strengthening, American-Cuban relations were worsening. Cuba was being armed by the Soviets, and she was using her new power in attempts to subvert other nations in the Caribbean area. These attempts troubled the United States, and it sought to gain some kind of cooperative venture within

¹J. Lloyd Meham, A Study of United States-Latin American Relations (Dallas: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), pp. 221-224.

the inter-American system which would unite the hemisphere against Cuba and force her to follow a more acceptable course. Failing in this venture, the United States turned toward unilateral action.²

When John Kennedy was sworn in as President, Dwight Eisenhower had already terminated diplomatic relations with Cuba. In addition, Eisenhower had authorized the equipping and training of a force of Cuban refugees, with the express purpose of allowing these men to launch an attack upon Castro and Cuba. This project was continued under Kennedy. In April of 1961, these refugee forces attacked the Cuban coast. A planned simultaneous uprising in the cities and countryside by anti-Castro forces failed to take place, primarily because Castro had jailed all those whom he suspected. Without this simultaneous uprising, and without American air cover (which the refugee leaders later said they had been promised), the invasion attempt failed completely.

The American role in the invasion attempt was so obvious that Kennedy was forced to publicly acknowledge it. For its part in this debacle, the United States reaped a world-wide harvest of ill will, and American interests suffered. In the first place, it made America appear to be a scheming and imperialistic power bent on the control of those who would defy her. It raised the spectre of

²Ibid., p. 226.

interventionism in the minds of the Latin Americans, and in the minds of others as well; this image was not one which endeared the United States to the developing countries, in Latin America or elsewhere. In the second place, the failure made the United States look irresolute. Embarking upon a policy which called for an action such as the Bay of Pigs invasion without committing the resources necessary to successfully complete the action seemed to demonstrate an unwillingness or inability to use the power that America had. In either event, the prestige of the United States suffered. Third, and last, the Bay of Pigs incident weakened the legitimate case which the United States had against Cuba and her actions. Through the invasion attempt the United States had made Cuba a martyr in the eyes of the world, and it had done so by making itself the evil, martyr-producing agent.

With the failure of the Bay of Pigs operation, the United States was forced to reevaluate its position and its policies regarding Cuba. One result of this reevaluation was a return to "multilateralism." Once again the United States used such vehicles as the Organization of American States to attempt to exclude Cuba from the hemispheric community; it sought to isolate Cuba by creating an environment in which the Cuban neighbors would ignore their sister republic. In addition, the United States sought to implement the Alliance for Progress, its plan for hemispheric

development. It was thought that by "democratizing" Latin American politics and society, and by providing for the region's economic development and reform, a bulwark could be created against the possibility of anti-Yankee governments in the area. Finally, there was a resumption of American attempts to insulate itself from contact with Cuba. The restrictions on Cuban trade and travel and the absence of direct diplomatic relations were some of the ways in which the United States sought to limit relations with Castro's island. This policy of avoiding contact was in contraposition to that which had bred the interventionist Bay of Pigs invasion.³

While the United States sought to avoid contact with Cuba, especially military contact, there did exist certain contingency plans of a military nature which were related to the island.⁴ The arms which were being sent to Cuba and the Cuban attempts to subvert certain Caribbean governments had an unsettling effect upon the area that was judged contrary to American interests. The United States sought to avoid conflict, but in the event that American interests were threatened, the United States reserved the right to act. In an August, 1962, interview, Kennedy ruled out an invasion of Cuba as an American action based upon then

³Theodore Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 669.

⁴Ibid.

present conditions. If these conditions changed, it was obvious that the United States reserved the right to do whatever it deemed necessary to secure its interests.⁵

President Kennedy made the remarks reported above on the twenty-ninth of August. Also on that day information was being gathered which would affect Kennedy's appraisal of "present conditions." High altitude flights over Cuba by American U-2 surveillance planes verified the presence of Russian SA-2 anti-aircraft missiles. The pictures which the plane took revealed eight sites in which this weapon was being emplaced.⁶

John A. McCone, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, evaluated this information as indicating something more sinister than simply the installation of anti-aircraft missiles to protect Cuba from foreign invasion. There were two reasons why McCone felt that way. First, the missiles were expensive. They had to be intended for the protection of something with intrinsic value to the Russians before the Russians would have decided to install them. They would not protect Cuba from a low-level attack because American planes could fly in under their effective range, so they had to be aimed at protecting something which would involve

⁵Tad Szulc, "Kennedy Rules Out Invasion," The New York Times, August 30, 1962, p. 8.

⁶U. S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Investigation of the Preparedness Program: Interim Report, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, p. 6.

high-level flights. There were high-level reconnaissance flights over the island by American planes, and McCone surmised that these flights were what the Soviets sought to prevent. Second, McCone believed that Cuba was the logical spot for the Soviets to install medium-range missiles with nuclear warheads. The Soviets had never before been in a position where such missiles could not be turned on and used against the Soviet Union itself; in Cuba, the Soviets were given a launching pad within easy reach of much of the United States, but there was no possible way that their missiles could be turned and fired back at them. McCone had suspected since the spring of 1962 that the Russians might try to install these weapons. When the SA-2 presence was verified, McCone drew the conclusion that the Soviets were planning to place offensive nuclear missiles in Cuba which could be used against the United States. When the missile sites were completed, the United States would be presented with a fait accompli.⁷

McCone advised President Kennedy of his appraisal of the situation. Kennedy was also counseled by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk;

⁷Edward A. Weintal and Charles Bartlett, Facing the Brink: An Intimate Study of Crisis Diplomacy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 61. See also Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1966), pp. 7-8, and Henry M. Pachter, Collision Course: The Cuban Missile Crisis and Coexistence (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1963), p. 8.

both these men disagreed with the prognosis which McCone delivered, and their evaluations were accepted by the President.⁸ Nevertheless, there was an order issued for weekly air surveillance of Cuba during September.⁹

On September 4, 1962, President Kennedy released a press statement in which he stated that there was no evidence of any organized Soviet combat force in Cuba. He also specifically noted that there were no offensive, surface-to-surface missiles there. Included in this press release was a statement similar to the one which he had made on August 29. After noting that the Soviet military presence in Cuba was not one of an offensive nature, he said, "Were it to be otherwise, the gravest issues would arise."¹⁰ Once again he was warning the Soviets that the United States would consider any move to make Cuba an offensive base as a serious matter, a matter in which the United States reserved the right to choose its response.

The Soviet response was to assure the President, through his subordinates, that there would be no moves that could possibly embarrass him before the November congressional elections. The Soviet military build-up and presence in Cuba was extremely alarming to the American

⁸Arthur Krock, Memoirs: Sixty Years on the Firing Line (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1968), pp. 378-379.

⁹Pachter, Collision Course, p. 8.

¹⁰U. S., Department of State, Bulletin, September 24, 1962, p. 450.

people, and it was a volatile political issue. The Soviet message was conveyed to Robert Kennedy, the Attorney General, on September 4, and again to Theodore Sorenson, the President's assistant and speech writer, on September 6. The content of the message stressed that the Soviet Union had no wish to cause the President trouble and that there were no offensive missiles being placed in Cuba. The military build-up on the island was explained simply as a defensive one. Dobrynin said that he had been empowered to deliver this message to the President via the two subordinates by Premier Nikita Krushchev, the Soviet Chief of State.¹¹ Aware of the ticklish nature of the Cuban problem in American domestic politics, the Soviet Union, it seemed, was honestly trying to prevent its actions from pushing the American President into a position which could lead to more troubled relations between the two great powers.

The depth of American feeling on the Cuban issue was mirrored in the stands taken by key Congressmen. Everett Dirksen, Senate Minority Leader, and Charles Halleck, House Minority Leader, proposed on September 8 that Congress authorize the use of troops to defeat "Communism" in Cuba. This proposition coincided with a request by Kennedy for

¹¹For a discussion of the message conveyed to the President through these two close confidants, see Robert F. Kennedy, Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 24-26, and Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 667.

authorization to call up army reserve units, but it was not related to this Presidential move. The President intended to use the troop call-up as an indication that the United States would not "back-down" vis-à-vis Berlin, while the two Republican leaders sought to embarrass the President on the issue of Cuba, Castro, and Communism.¹² The pressure on the President was bi-partisan, however, because he was also under attack from such Democratic Congressmen as Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut.¹³

These actions by Congressmen and the feeling of the American people led Premier Khrushchev to give warning that any attack on Cuba would mean war, and the inference was that this war would be nuclear. The Soviet Union also reacted to Kennedy's call-up of reserves by characterizing it as an aggressive and threatening step.¹⁴

Given the environment of domestic politics, and the prevailing feeling that the United States ought to get the Communists out of Cuba, this message was a challenge which the President had to answer. On September 13, in a Presidential news conference, Kennedy said:

¹²The New York Times, September 8, 1962, p. 2. See also Arthur Krock, "Cuba and Politics," The New York Times, September 9, 1962, Sec. 4, p. 13.

¹³The New York Times, September 11, 1962, p. 16

¹⁴The New York Times, September 12, 1962, pp. 1 and 16.

If at any time the communist build-up in Cuba were to endanger or interfere in any way, including our base at Guantanamo, our passage to the Panama Canal, our missile and space activities at Cape Canaveral, or the lives of American citizens in this country, or if Cuba should ever attempt to export its aggressive purposes by force or the threat of force against any nation in this hemisphere, or become an offensive military base of significant capacity for the Soviet Union, then this country will do whatever must be done to protect its own security and that of its allies.¹⁵

The message was as clear as it was possible to make it: if the military build-up in Cuba reached a level which could present a serious threat to American interests, the United States would act to remove this threat.

Even this stand did not quiet criticism of the American failure to rid the hemisphere of Castro and the problems which he caused. On September 18, former Vice-President Nixon called for a blockade of Cuba, saying that there was "danger of war in intervening, but certainty of war in delaying."¹⁶ In addition, a Democratic Senate passed a resolution on September 20 which endorsed the use of force to protect American interests in regard to Cuba.¹⁷ While

¹⁵U. S., President, Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States (Washington, D. C.: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Record Service, 1953-), John F. Kennedy, 1962, p. 674.

¹⁶Bill Becker, "Cuba Quarantine is Urged by Nixon," The New York Times, September 19, 1962, p. 1.

¹⁷Max Frankel, "Resolution to Curb Cuba Adopted by Senate, 86-1," The New York Times, September 21, 1962, p. 1.

this resolution supported the President's past pledges to the American people, it was not requested by the President, and it was symbolic of the feeling of the country: do something to rid the United States of Castro.

Around September 20, American intelligence began to get reports that offensive ballistic missiles were being emplaced in Cuba. Long trailers covered with canvas were seen late at night on Cuban roads. Castro's chauffeur was reported to have boasted that Cuba now had missiles. Other reports and sightings also were being examined by the United States.¹⁸

Lieutenant General Joseph Carroll, of the Defense Intelligence Agency, testified in 1963 before Congress that the reports which American intelligence had received of the missile sightings were no different from thousands which had deluged the United States since 1959.¹⁹ According to Roger Hilsman, the file for 1959 alone was over five inches

¹⁸ Roger Hilsman, To Move A Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 174-176. See also U. S., Congress, House, Committee on Armed Services, Military Posture and Appropriations During Fiscal Year 1964 for Procurement, Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation of Aircraft, Missiles and Naval Vessels for the Armed Forces and for Other Purposes, Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives, on H. R. 2440, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, p. 235.

¹⁹ U. S. Congress, House, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Castro-Communist Subversion in the Western Hemisphere, Hearings, before a subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, p. 168.

thick and was full of "persuasive detail."²⁰ Reports of missiles were a regular product of the interrogation of exiles and others, but most of these were mistaken. When the reports were based on fact, the observers tended to confuse anti-aircraft SA-2 rockets with what they thought were surface-to-surface ballistic missiles.²¹

In addition to the unreliability of "eye-witnesses," the "September Estimate," the evaluation of probable strategic actions or developments by the American intelligence community for the fall of 1962, ruled out the possibility that the Soviet Union would place offensive missiles in Cuba. This evaluation was delivered on September 19 and was based upon all available data. It was thought that the knowledge that a strong and negative American reaction awaited any introduction of offensive ballistic missiles into Cuba would deter the Soviets from this course. In addition, it was thought that such things as Castro's volatile nature and the logistical and command problems which distance produced would aid in deterring the Soviets from this path. Even though it believed the danger remote, the United States Intelligence Board counseled security and surveillance in the event that it was proved wrong.²²

²⁰Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 169.

²¹Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 28-29.

²²Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 172-173.

According to McNamara, the continued reports of large missiles were suggestive enough to arouse the suspicions of the intelligence establishment.²³ Some kind of activity was suspected in the western portion of the island; it was here that many of the missile sightings had taken place, and it was also here that American intelligence noted a "rhomboid-shaped area" protected by SA-2 missiles. The intelligence community (with the exception of McCone of the CIA) believed that it was unlikely that the Soviets would place offensive missiles in Cuba, but the reports of missile sightings and the protective placement of anti-aircraft missiles near Guanajay and San Cristobal prompted the issuance of orders on October 4 which provided for a special flight over the region by an American U-2, or high-level reconnaissance plane. The overflight was to be carried out as soon as practicable.²⁴

If the reconnaissance flight over Cuba were to produce evidence of offensive missiles in Cuba, President Kennedy would be placed in a ticklish position. American security and international prestige were seen as demanding action, but if this action led to nuclear war, it was not unfair to ask if American interests would be served by such a

²³U. S., Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Department of Defense Appropriations for 1964, Hearings, before a subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, p. 4.

²⁴Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 175-176.

holocaust. Domestic politics were such that the problem would be made even more complex because of the pressures of public opinion. A straw poll by The New York Times indicated that Americans were concerned with Cuba and the American inability to rid itself of Castro.²⁵ The American people were dissatisfied with the state of relations with Cuba, and they viewed Kennedy as "soft" and "vacillating" in regard to the island republic.²⁶

These public feelings were fanned by such things as the actions and statements of the Southern Governors' Conference, the Republican Senatorial and Congressional Campaign Committees, and individuals like Senator Kenneth Keating of New York. The Southern Governors' Conference followed the lead of the United States Senate in adopting a resolution calling for American action in removing the Castro threat from the hemisphere. In effect, they were pressuring the President to act.²⁷ The Republican campaign committees made Cuba the dominant issue for the 1962 Congressional elections; it was their plan to use American disappointment and frustration over Cuba as a tool with

²⁵Wallace Turner, Donald Johnson, and Joseph Lofters, "Citizens in Three Areas Talk About Cuba," The New York Times, October 5, 1962, p. 14.

²⁶Edgar Robinson, Powers of the President in Foreign Affairs (San Francisco: The Commonwealth Club of California, 1966), p. 166.

²⁷The New York Times, October 4, 1962, p. 21.

which to help elect Republican Senators and Representatives.²⁸ Senator Keating's speeches to the Senate during the early days of October were attacks upon the President and his handling of the Cuban situation. Keating even charged that there were offensive missiles in Cuba, declaring that the island was undergoing a massive Soviet military build-up.²⁹ While these attacks upon the President and his handling of the Cuban question were by no means the only ones being made, they were characteristic or representative of what was happening. If missiles were discovered in Cuba, or if there were any significant offensive military capacity introduced onto the island, the President would not be able to avoid action. The "public would not have tolerated acquiescence."³⁰

The Administration, aware of its political problems, was taking steps to meet all possibilities; it had ordered surveillance of Cuba. There was a slow but steady American military build-up of forces in the southeastern United States. This build-up was a reaction to the increase in Cuban military power, but it also had an air of contingency planning about it. If missiles or some other offensive capacity were to be discovered in Cuba, the United States

²⁸Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 670.

²⁹Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 177-179.

³⁰H. A. Kissinger, "Reflections of Cuba," The Reporter, November 22, 1962, p. 22.

would have a force in the states near the island to at least counterbalance the threat which Cuba might present.³¹ In addition, the Administration ordered special security arrangements in the event that knowledge of offensive weapons was gained; only those who needed to know would be told. The code word for this operation was "Psalm," and its purpose was to give the United States the time necessary for drafting a proper response, should the need arise.³²

The Strategic Air Command was given control of flights over Cuba on October 12. This was an intelligence matter, and the CIA had handled it before, but it was decided that in the face of the SA-2 defenses in Cuba, it would be better to place the surveillance in the hands of the Air Force. If a plane were shot down, it was thought that it would be better if the pilot were military rather than a civilian.³³

The projected flight over the western end of Cuba did not occur until the 14th of October. Weather conditions were part of the reason for this delay, but perhaps more important was the fact that the United States had more or less current reconnaissance pictures of western Cuba. Flights on September 5 had provided intelligence with

³¹U. S. House Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, p. 1273.

³²Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 187.

³³U. S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Interim Report, pp. 8-9.

pictures showing no military build-up of offensive weapons in the Guanajay-San Cristobal area; there were, however, other areas which needed coverage. In addition, there were a large number of SA-2 anti-aircraft missiles in the western part of the island, making high-level flights dangerous. As a result of all these factors, the intelligence flights were sent elsewhere until October 14.³⁴

The processing and the analysis of the films taken with the cameras of the U-2 planes usually took twenty-four hours, and in the late afternoon of October 15, the United States intelligence establishment was beginning to form a picture of the results of the flight. This picture was one which would produce no joy for the administration, for some of the thousands of intelligence photos taken by the U-2 indicated evidence of two medium-range ballistic missile sites in the area around San Cristobal.³⁵

Two deputy directors of the Central Intelligence Agency were the first high governmental officials to be told; Ray Cline and Lieutenant General Marshall S. Carter then began to alert key figures with the information which they had just received. Lieutenant General Joseph F. Carroll, of the Defense Intelligence Agency, was notified, and he began to alert key figures in the Department of

³⁴U. S. House Committee on Appropriations, Hearings, pp. 67-71.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 7-8.

Defense. Many of those who were told of the missiles were attending parties, receptions, and dinners of a social or official nature; care had to be taken to avoid alarming Washington society and perhaps showing the American hand before the Administration was ready for it to be shown. Many of the key figures were told in halls outside banquet or reception rooms, and others were told in clandestine phone conversations. Before the evening was over, those notified would include Deputy Secretary of Defense Roswell Gilpatric, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Maxwell Taylor, State Department Director of Intelligence and Research Roger Hilsman, Deputy Undersecretary of State U. Alexis Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary of State for Latin American Affairs Edwin M. Martin, Undersecretary of State George Ball, and Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Paul Nitze. McGeorge Bundy, the President's special assistant for national security affairs, was also told of the discovery.³⁶

Two key figures were not told on the 15th of October. McCone, Director of the CIA, was out of Washington, and was not informed. The President was not informed either. It was Bundy's job to alert the President, but he chose to wait until the morning of the 16th. Kennedy had attended a dinner on Monday evening, and he had been unavailable for

³⁶Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 193. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 18-22.

consultation when Bundy had learned of the missiles. In addition, the President had been up very late the night before, and Bundy simply thought that he would benefit more from a sound night's sleep than he would from the knowledge which would be given him early the next morning. Bundy, in short, was shielding the President from the knowledge of the missiles so as to enable the President to rest and regain his strength. Bundy reasoned that there was nothing which the President could do Monday night, and that the crisis which was looming ahead would require a refreshed and rested national leader.³⁷

The presence of other offensive weapons in Cuba was also verified on October 15. Intelligence had suspected the presence of Soviet IL-28 light bombers in Cuba, and on the fifteenth there was photographic proof that they were there. This knowledge was important, but it was greatly overshadowed by the photographs of the missiles. Events of the next few days would be predicated on the missile presence more than anything else.³⁸

October 16

At 7:30 a.m. on October 16th, McNamara was shown the photographic evidence of the missile sites. After noting

³⁷Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 673.

³⁸U. S. House Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, p. 249.

that there were no pictures of the missiles themselves, he said that he felt that the information was not "hard enough" to warrant presenting it to the President. He felt that the information raised strong suspicions, but that it simply was not definitive.³⁹

Bundy saw the information at 8:00 a.m., and he thought that it was rather definitive. Although there were no missiles visible, the analysts could point out the tell-tale characteristics of Soviet medium-range ballistic missile bases. Shortly before 9:00 a.m., Bundy went to the President's bedroom to show him the pictures and explain what they meant.⁴⁰

The President's initial reaction was one of surprise and anger. He felt that he had been deceived by Khrushchev's promises that Cuba would not be turned into an offensive base for the Soviets. The President believed that the United States had to secure the removal of the missiles. He did not feel that the United States could allow these weapons to remain in Cuba, and he did not feel that they were negotiable in a diplomatic way. After ensuring that there was no mistake in the interpretation of the data,

³⁹"Red Missiles in Cuba: Inside Story from Secretary McNamara," U. S. News and World Report, November 5, 1962, p. 47.

⁴⁰Robinson, Powers of the President in Foreign Affairs, p. 165. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 31.

Kennedy ordered Bundy to call a meeting of certain key advisors for 11:45 a.m.⁴¹

Shortly after his meeting with Bundy, the President went to his White House office. There he telephoned his brother, Robert, and asked him to come to the White House. He also called in Ted Sorenson, his speech writer and aide. In separate meetings with the President, each of these men was told of the photographic evidence of a missile build-up in Cuba. Upon finishing Sorenson's briefing, Kennedy sent him off to review the past public statements of the President on Cuba and on offensive missiles. Robert Kennedy also left after talking with the President, but the two talked by phone several more times before the 11:45 a.m. meeting.⁴²

In order to avoid alerting anyone that there was a crisis facing American decision-makers, the President kept his scheduled appointments for Tuesday morning. This schedule had been prepared well in advance of October 16, and to depart from it would have caused suspicion. Even though he was very much concerned with the new matter before him, Kennedy made such guests as Astronaut Wally Schirra and

⁴¹Arthur M. Schlesinger, A Thousand Days: JFK in the White House (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), pp. 801-802. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 31-32, Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 673-674, and Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," The American Political Science Review, LXIII (September, 1969), 713.

⁴²Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 23. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 674 and Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 33.

his family feel welcome, even when this involved showing Schirra's children the ponies in the White House back yard.⁴³

In between his scheduled appointments and calls to his brother, the President contacted John J. McCloy, a New York Republican lawyer whose judgment the President trusted. McCloy's counsel was for the United States to take drastic action so as to remove the missiles from Cuba as soon as possible. Rusk was being told the same thing by former Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Acheson said that the missiles could not be allowed to stay in Cuba; the United States had to remove them in the quickest and surest way.⁴⁴ At 11:45 a.m., others would also appraise the situation and advise the President on the proper reaction for the United States.

The men who were being contacted for the 11:45 meeting represented much of the membership of the National Security Council. There were others invited to the meeting, however, who were not members of this council but who were simply people whom the President trusted and relied upon for advice. The Vice-President, Lyndon Johnson, would be there. From the State Department would come Rusk, Ball, U. Alexis Johnson, Martin, and the two Soviet experts, Llewellyn Thompson and Charles Bohlen. (Bohlen would leave

⁴³Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 674. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 32.

⁴⁴Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 33.

the next night for his new post as Ambassador to France). From the Department of Defense would come McNamara, Gilpatric, Nitze, and General Taylor. Carter, the Deputy Director of the CIA, would be there, but he would later be replaced when his superior, McCone, returned to Washington. Others in attendance would include Attorney General Robert Kennedy, Secretary of the Treasury Douglas Dillon, and the President's aides, Bundy, Sorenson, and Kenneth O'Donnell. This group would later be called the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, or Ex Comm for short. These were the men whom the President sought to bring together to help him decide what reaction to the missile bases the United States should make.⁴⁵

At 11:45, the group that Kennedy had called together met in the Cabinet Room. General Carter of the CIA briefed these people on what air reconnaissance had indicated existed in Cuba. They were told that there were bases being readied for an undetermined number of medium-range ballistic missiles. These missiles were capable of carrying a nuclear warhead over a range of approximately eleven hundred nautical miles, thus making potential targets of such American cities as Saint Louis, Dallas, Washington, D. C., and many more. These missiles could be operational in two weeks, and while there was no sign

⁴⁵Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 674-675. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 33-34, and Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 30.

of the missiles or warheads, the intelligence establishment was certain that they were there or were enroute.⁴⁶ Many of those at the meeting knew of the information which the U-2 had provided, but the reaction of the others was one of "stunned surprise." No one had anticipated that the Soviets would actually place offensive missiles in Cuba.⁴⁷

President Kennedy's first directive following the intelligence briefing was to order more photographic coverage of the island. He said that the United States needed as much evidence as was possible if it were to prove cause for whatever course of action it took. Second, the President enjoined all those present to the tightest security possible. The knowledge of the missiles and the response to their presence would be kept secret until the United States was ready to act. In this way, Kennedy thought, the United States could guard its options and maximize the impact of whatever course of action it would take. Finally, the President ordered those present to put aside whatever else they had before them; their primary job now was to make a prompt and intensive survey of the problem and its possible solutions.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 675. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 17.

⁴⁷Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 23-24.

⁴⁸Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 194-198. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 675-676.

Kennedy rejected a "do-nothing" policy from the outset. The projected global political impact of the missiles was seen by the President as one in which the United States would most certainly lose. The military value of the missiles was important, but even if it were not, Kennedy felt that the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba would seriously damage the credibility of American might and determination. The Soviet Union had secretly introduced the missiles into Cuba; if this move were allowed to go unchecked the Soviets would accept this as an invitation to other provocative and dangerous moves. Miscalculations of this nature could lead to nuclear war. In addition, the other nations of the world would question American strength and commitment; with missiles aimed at the heart of the United States from only ninety miles away, American allies would question whether the United States would endanger itself to provide for their sovereignty and freedom.⁴⁹ finally, even though it was not openly mentioned, Kennedy had placed himself in a domestic position from which he had no exit; the American people had heard his dichotomization of weapons into those that were "offensive" and those that were "defensive," and they had accepted his word that he would act if the military build-up in Cuba became an offensive one with danger for American interests. If the President failed to act in the face of the missiles,

⁴⁹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 683.

the Republicans would be able to seriously attack him politically.⁵⁰

The United States could have tolerated a gradual shifting of the nuclear balance, but Kennedy felt that such a sudden and provocative move as the installation of missiles in Cuba was completely unacceptable. Kennedy had been humiliated in Cuba in 1961; if he suffered a second humiliation in Cuba, he thought that he would lose all hope for a stable world peace.⁵¹

Secretary of Defense McNamara had a different reaction to the missile presence. He favored taking no action because of the danger of a nuclear holocaust if war developed over the issue. The missile presence was evaluated by him as of negligible importance; the Soviets could already reach the United States with their missiles based in the Soviet Union. McNamara felt that it did not matter from which base a missile was launched. Since the Soviet Union was evaluated as already possessing the power necessary to destroy the United States, what missiles they placed in Cuba would only represent a redundancy in their capability.⁵²

⁵⁰Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 196-198.

⁵¹Pachter, Collision Course, p. 13. See also Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 202.

⁵²Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 195. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 38, and Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 682-683.

Paul Nitze, McNamara's Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, differed from McNamara in his evaluation. He viewed the missiles as endangering the Strategic Air Command; much of this nuclear force was based in the southeastern portion of the United States, and it would be rendered extremely vulnerable to a sneak attack from the Cuban-based missiles. Warning times would be reduced from fifteen minutes to less than three minutes.⁵³

Others also attacked McNamara on the grounds that the political implications were important, even if the military ramifications were not. McNamara came to concede that the political effect would be important, even if the strategic balance were not upset.⁵⁴

Kennedy had come to the meeting convinced that the United States had to do something about the missiles. He had developed only two alternatives other than simply accepting the missiles; the United States could destroy the missiles with an air strike, or it could appeal directly to Khrushchev for their removal.⁵⁵ Other alternatives would have to be developed and analyzed, and he charged Ex Comm with helping him choose the proper course of action

⁵³Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 195. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 40.

⁵⁴Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 38.

⁵⁵Robinson, Powers of the President in Foreign Affairs, p. 166.

through the discussion of alternatives and the presentation of recommendations.⁵⁶

The rest of the meeting was dominated by speculation as to what the move meant. Did it represent a feint in the struggle over Berlin? Was it a calculated move or was it one of Premier Khrushchev's impetuous acts? Did Khrushchev make the decision, or was it the result of some reversal of power in which Khrushchev and his "peaceful co-existence" had been deposed? Did this represent a military take-over of the Soviet Union? Was it the preparation for an attack upon the United States? All of these questions were asked.⁵⁷

If the move were one that was not based on calculated thought, the group felt that it would be impossible to determine exactly what the move meant. While not ruling out irrational or impetuous behavior, the group concentrated on the discussion of rational or calculated goals which the Soviets might have had in placing missiles in Cuba. Five possible goals were developed in the discussions of the group.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 33.

⁵⁷Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 194.

⁵⁸For the best presentation of these deliberations, see Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 676-678. The discussion of the five possible reasons for the Soviet action are based on Sorenson's text.

First, Ex Comm discussed the Soviet move as a possible adjunct to "cold war" politics. Khrushchev, it was believed, thought the United States too "liberal" to fight; it was possible that he expected the United States to concern itself with "legalisms" over the similarity between American overseas bases and Cuba. This would force the United States to appear weak and irresolute; American allies would doubt American commitments. Out of self-preservation, they would be forced to seek accommodations with the Soviets. In addition, if the move were successful, the United States could expect more such moves in other areas. Unchecked, these moves would ultimately isolate and weaken the United States.⁵⁹

Second, the possibility of a "diverting trap" was discussed. If the United States reacted by striking Cuba, American prestige would suffer tremendously. The underdeveloped world would be more alienated than it already was by the American part in the Bay of Pigs action, and American allies would be split. In the problems and confusion that would follow, the Soviets could move, possibly into Berlin, with some impunity.⁶⁰

The idea that Khrushchev considered Cuba such an important satellite as to place the missiles there for its defense was also discussed. Soviet missiles would not only

⁵⁹Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 676-677.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 677.

"arm" Cuba, but would represent enough of a solid Soviet commitment as to intimidate any American invasion plans.⁶¹

That the bases were designed to serve as some kind of barter was the fourth possibility discussed. Knowing that missiles in Cuba would be an extremely sensitive matter to the United States, the Soviets might have placed them there with every intention of taking them out, but with a major concession by the United States. American missile bases in Turkey and Italy were possible concessions, as was Berlin.⁶²

Finally, the group discussed the missiles as a Soviet attempt to increase its strategic power. The Soviets were "behind" in the missile or nuclear arms race, and the economic costs involved in reaching parity with the United States would be enormous. Inter-continental ballistic missiles were very expensive to manufacture, as were submarine-based ballistic missiles. Relatively cheap medium-range missiles could be placed in Cuba; there they could easily reach the United States. In addition, the missiles would tend to neutralize much of the power of the Strategic Air Command because of the relatively quick strike capacity their proximity to the United States engendered. Many more missiles would be needed, however, before the

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

Soviets reached parity with the United States, but the "appearance" of the balance of weapons would be altered. It was noted that the appearance was extremely important because others acted upon the basis of what they thought reality to be. Even though the United States was far in front of the Soviet Union in terms of strategic power, American allies and neutral nations alike might re-evaluate their relationships with the United States and the Soviet Union if their image of the strategic arms balance was changed by the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba.⁶³

The action of the Soviets seemed to provide possible answers for several of their problems, and for this reason it was thought that their goal was broad and general. If there was an improvement in the strategic stance of the Soviet Union, then it was thought that the Soviets would reap the benefits of the increase in influence and prestige which this improvement would offer. An increase in the missile strike capacity of the Soviet Union would accomplish this improvement, and if it were accomplished by placing relatively inexpensive medium-range missiles in Cuba, the disruption or cost to the Soviet economy would be minimized.⁶⁴

The meeting was terminated before 1:00 p.m., and another meeting was set for 6:30 that evening. The President

⁶³Ibid., pp. 677-678.

⁶⁴Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 201-202.

would continue to keep his scheduled appointments, but the others were to meet in two smaller groups during the afternoon. One of these would concern itself with diplomatic problems, and it would meet at the State Department; the other group would concern itself with the military ramifications of the problem, and it would meet at the Defense Department. The results of these meetings would be discussed at the 6:30 gathering.⁶⁵

Shortly after the 11:45 meeting was over, Kennedy told Pierre Salinger, his press secretary, "I expect a lot of traffic through here this week -- Rusk, McNamara, Stevenson, the Chiefs of Staff. If the press tries to read something significant into it, you're to deny that anything special is going on." Kennedy was protecting himself against a premature public knowledge of the crisis.⁶⁶

At 1:00 p.m. Adlai Stevenson, the American Ambassador to the United Nations, was told of the impending crisis by President Kennedy. Kennedy characterized the acceptable alternatives as an air strike or some other action to render the missiles inoperable. Stevenson counseled against the air strike until other possibilities had been developed and

⁶⁵Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 675.

⁶⁶Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 249-250.

explored. The President then asked Stevenson to stay in Washington and participate in the meetings of his advisors.⁶⁷

Two developments on the afternoon of October 16 affected the environment in which a response to the Soviet move would be made. In regard to the domestic setting, the Republicans formally announced that Cuba was to be the main issue in the remaining campaign time before the November elections. This was done through a press release by the Republican National Chairman, William E. Miller. Cuba was referred to as the "symbol" of the President's "tragic irresolution."⁶⁸ The international setting was affected by a statement which Khrushchev made to Ambassador Kohler, the American ambassador in Moscow. Khrushchev summoned Kohler and then told him, among other things, that the Soviet purpose in Cuba was entirely peaceful, and that there would be no offensive weapons installed on the island.⁶⁹ The President was confronted with a situation caused by a man who was currently pledging that he would never do what he had already done; he was also under serious domestic political attack for not acting to prevent far less obnoxious developments in Cuba than now existed.

⁶⁷ Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 36-37.

⁶⁸ Cabel Phillips, "G.O.P. Keys Race to Foreign Policy," The New York Times, October 17, 1962, pp. 1 and 24.

⁶⁹ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 37.

In the two afternoon meetings, and later at the 6:30 p.m. White House meeting, Ex Comm proceeded to "box the compass" of possible American responses. All possible reactions to the missiles were reviewed and re-reviewed. The meetings at the State Department, the Defense Department, and later at the White House merged together so that Tuesday afternoon and evening were characterized by one continuous discussion.⁷⁰

During the course of this discussion, six possible responses were developed. First, the United States could accept the presence of the missiles and do nothing to bring about their removal. Second, the United States could exert diplomatic pressure through formal protests and appeals to the United Nations. Third, the United States could approach Castro in order to attempt to convince him that the missiles were not in the best interests of his island republic and that the Soviets were only using him to gain ground in the strategic arms balance. Fourth, Kennedy could order the Strategic Air Command to effect a "surgical" strike in which the missiles would be destroyed with pin-point bombing. Fifth, he could order American invasion forces onto the island to ensure the destruction of the missiles through their physical capture. Sixth, and finally, the United States could undertake indirect military action, such as the action characterized by the blockade of the island. In addition,

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 38.

there could be various combinations of these six basic moves.⁷¹

Possible Soviet reactions to American moves were also discussed. The Soviet Union had said that American action against Cuba would mean the unleashing of Soviet rocket power . . . in the face of American action to remove the missiles in Cuba, would this threat be backed by action? Would there be a reaction against American bases surrounding the Soviet Union, or would there be a move on Berlin? Would Castro act in a rational way; he was known to be volatile, so how would he react to American actions to remove the missiles? Would the Soviet Union feel that war was inevitable and act accordingly? Finally, would the Kremlin make another major miscalculation of American determination? These were questions which had to be asked in relation to almost any one of the basic courses of action discussed.⁷²

Most of those in attendance at the Ex Comm meetings of the first day were in favor of a military response to the missile presence. Dillon was representative of this majority. He thought that "the fat was in the fire" and that the United States had no other course open to it but to use an air strike to remove the missiles.⁷³ The

⁷¹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 682. See also Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 195.

⁷²Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 680-681.

⁷³Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 40.

invasion course of action had only one supporter; General Maxwell Taylor represented the point of view of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the meetings, and he felt that the United States had to go into Cuba and dislodge not only the missiles, but also Castro and the Soviets. This expulsion could only be accomplished by an invasion. The rest agreed with the President that the invasion course should be a last step; this feeling was based upon the danger of a third world war which might arise out of an invasion and the direct confrontation of American and Soviet troops.⁷⁴

Those who actively opposed armed and direct military action included McNamara, Ball, Gilpatric, Bundy, Sorenson, Thompson, and Robert Kennedy. Even though it was obvious that the President favored the course of action based upon an air strike, these men sought to develop a response which did not involve the use of force; by so avoiding open armed conflict, they hoped that there would not be war over the issue. In relation to this search for a response at least initially free from armed conflict, the blockade was put forth as a possible course of action. Most of these men thought that the United States had to respond to the missiles; they simply were trying to avoid the chance of nuclear war over the matter.⁷⁵

⁷⁴Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 683-684. See also Allison, "Conceptual Models," p. 714.

⁷⁵Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 40. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 683-685, and Allison, "Conceptual Models," p. 714.

The day ended without any decision as to what course of action would best serve American interests. There was a majority in favor of the air strike, but the minority that opposed this action was composed of influential people, including the President's brother and his Secretary of Defense. In addition, the Secretary of State was noncommittal as to which policy he favored; Rusk hid his feelings and thoughts on the first day of the crisis.⁷⁶ With his advisors so split, the President chose not to pick a course of action on October 16; instead, he directed them to continue their meetings until they had been able to explore all reasonable possibilities.

October 17

On Wednesday, October 17, the President campaigned for Abraham Ribicoff, the Democratic candidate for the United States Senate in Connecticut. This campaign involved personal appearances in the state, and Kennedy was gone from Washington for the entire day. Again, as on October 16, the President was acting to fulfill previous commitments so as to avoid arousing suspicion of a crisis. In his absence, Ex Comm met in George Ball's conference room at the Department of State for most of day and well into the night.⁷⁷

⁷⁶Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 40.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 43.

With the President elsewhere, the "host" as well as the senior official present was Secretary of State Rusk. He refused to chair the meeting, however.⁷⁸ In the absence of the President, Ex Comm experienced a freedom of discussion unmatched on the previous day. There was no rank recognized, nor did anyone act as chairman.⁷⁹ The urgency of the Soviet threat and the inter-departmental nature of possible American responses tended to produce an environment of equality within the meeting. All members of Ex Comm were advisors to the President; they no longer represented narrow departmental jurisdictions, nor did they have masters other than the President. Secretaries and assistant secretaries within the same department differed drastically in their interpretation of the situation and in their proposed courses of action. The group was composed of individuals who were free to say whatever they thought should be said.⁸⁰

The manner in which the meeting progressed was greatly affected by the Attorney General. He assumed the role of the "devil's advocate."⁸¹ He took it upon himself to question and challenge the other members of the Ex Comm so as to help them clarify, in their own minds, the nature of

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 44-45.

⁷⁹ Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 46.

⁸⁰ Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 679.

⁸¹ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 45.

the problem and the possible solutions to it. He also sought to ensure that the discussions proceeded smoothly, but this goal was difficult to achieve because of the fluid nature of Ex Comm and its meetings. Two new people -- McCone and Acheson -- joined the group on Wednesday, and other members came and went while the meetings were in progress. Under these conditions, constant attention had to be directed toward ensuring that the discussions did not degenerate into repetitiousness. Robert Kennedy, without acting as chairman, was able to provide the direction needed to maintain momentum and progress.⁸²

There was some resentment directed at the actions of the Attorney General. Stevenson disliked the "brainstorming" tactics of Robert Kennedy, as did others. Some members also felt that his presence represented "little brother," ready to carry tales to the President. In general, however, most felt that the Attorney General was serving a useful function; he was providing direction and force to a somewhat unstructured meeting.⁸³

A more meaningful personal clash between members was represented by the conflict between Acheson and Stevenson. Each of these men despised the other, and their conflict was a long-standing one. In the October 17 meeting, and in the others that would follow, the two men were never in

⁸²Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 679.

⁸³Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 45-46.

the room at the same time; both were important and influential members of Ex Comm, and both were officially present in the record, but each sought to avoid the other, even at the cost of missing important information or discussion.⁸⁴

Beginning on October 16, and then at 8:30 every morning thereafter, the United States Intelligence Board met at the old Office of Strategic Services in Washington. Here all the latest intelligence was studied and evaluated. McCone was the chairman of this board, and upon his return to Washington, on October 17, he resumed his post. After chairing a meeting of the Intelligence Board, McCone would attend Ex Comm where he would brief the members on the latest information.⁸⁵

The raw intelligence data which the Intelligence Board evaluated was based, for the most part, on the photographic reconnaissance of the U-2's. In keeping with the order of the President in the Ex Comm meetings on October 16, there was a sharp increase in intelligence flights over Cuba. There were approximately three over-flights made per day, and in addition, there were large numbers of flights made around the periphery of the island which did not involve flying through Cuban air space. Massive efforts were made to drain refugees of any information which they

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 45.

⁸⁵Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, Jr., The Real CIA (New York: Macmillan Company, 1968), pp. 261-263. See also Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 200, and Abel, The Missile Crisis, p.46.

might have had, but the major source of intelligence remained the air surveillance.⁸⁶

The Wednesday meeting of Ex Comm began with an intelligence briefing by McCone. He told the members that more missile sites had been discovered; there was now photographic proof that the Soviets were constructing at least six medium-range ballistic missile sites in Cuba. These bases were located around the towns of Guanajay, San Cristobal, and Sagua la Grande, and each had four launchers. In addition, there were now actual photos of the missiles themselves. The films did not reveal pictures of warheads, but there were some oddly-shaped buildings with reinforced roofs which were regarded as storage rooms for the warheads.⁸⁷

McCone also told the members of Ex Comm that intermediate-range ballistic missile sites had been discovered. There were two of these sites in the Guanajay region, and there was one site near Remedios. These missiles had a range of approximately twenty-two hundred nautical miles. With the exception of Alaska, Hawaii, and extreme northwestern Washington state, the entire United States would be vulnerable to a missile attack from Cuba. The countries

⁸⁶U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Interim Report, pp. 9-10. See also U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, Hearings, pp. 4-5.

⁸⁷U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, Hearings, p. 8. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 46-47.

in the northeastern portion of South America would also be vulnerable to attack.⁸⁸

The military threat which the Soviet missiles in Cuba represented had greatly increased. With both types of missiles operable, the Soviet Union would be able to deliver around forty nuclear warheads to almost all parts of the United States. This would increase their nuclear megatonnage delivery ability by approximately fifty per cent.⁸⁹

McNamara still maintained that the Soviet missiles represented no real strategic threat. A "missile was a missile," and it did not really matter from where it was fired. The Soviets had more than enough missiles in the Soviet Union to destroy the United States; the missiles in Cuba only represented needless Soviet military expenditures. McNamara could not dispute the challenge to American prestige which the missiles represented, however.⁹⁰

The other members of Ex Comm were split on the issue of the strategic threat of the missiles. Some felt, as did McNamara, that the missiles did not threaten American interests militarily any more than did presently operable Soviet missiles in the Soviet Union itself. The Cuban

⁸⁸U.S. House Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, pp. 241-242. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 46-47. and U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, Hearings, p. 8.

⁸⁹Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 201. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 46-47.

⁹⁰Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 47.

missiles were closer, and there was less warning time, but these members felt that the over-all strategic balance was of such a nature as to make the use of the Cuban-based missiles as remote a possibility as the use of the missiles in the Soviet Union. Any Soviet attack would initiate an American counter-attack of such magnitude as to destroy the Soviet Union. If there were an attack, many accepted McNamara's argument that it did not matter from what launching pads the missiles came . . . they would come, and they would do so in sufficient numbers to destroy the United States. Other members disagreed with the Secretary of Defense; they felt that the Cuban missiles presented a very real strategic threat. Most of the United States would be subject to attack with an extremely short warning time; in this area would be included most American military, civilian, and industrial targets. Both sides were able to agree that the political implications of the missiles were important enough to force the United States to respond.⁹¹

Whatever response the United States made was going to hurt American interests. The President had asked Rusk to evaluate the probable reactions by American allies to possible responses which the United States might make. Rusk gave his report on Wednesday, and it was his evaluation that the United States had been placed in an untenable

⁹¹Ibid., p. 48.

position. If the United States failed to react vigorously to the Soviet move, it would cost America the faith of many of its allies. If, on the other hand, the United States did react forcefully, many other American allies would turn away from it. Rusk felt that the United States had to react because of the over-all aspects of the situation, but he counseled that the American response should not force Khrushchev into a political "blind alley"; he should be given room in which to maneuver.⁹²

The discussion on October 17 was based on the six possible courses of action which had been presented in the previous day's meetings. Of these six, most of Ex Comm's attention was directed at the air strike and at the blockade.

An invasion of Cuba to remove the missile threat was not seriously considered: it had been effectively killed in the meetings on October 16 because it was an irreversible step and because its necessary preparations would alarm those whom Washington wished to surprise.⁹³ Direct talks with Castro were set aside in the October 17 discussions; it was felt that this was a super-power conflict and that the missiles would have to be removed by Soviets in response to a direct American action.⁹⁴

⁹²Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 681-682.

⁹³Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 50-51.

⁹⁴Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 683.

Diplomatic action was discussed by the group as a possible reaction to the missiles, but it was decided that it would not serve American interests. Zorin, the Russian delegate, was Chairman of the United Nations Security Council for October. Zorin's position, coupled with the Soviet veto power, was seen as negating the United Nations as a possible avenue for solution; the Soviets would be able to block any meaningful action. Protesting directly to Khrushchev was perceived to endanger American interests; the Soviets would be able to seize the initiative if, through American discussions with their Premier, they learned that the United States knew of the missile presence. They would be able to prepare themselves for the American response and they would even be able to preempt such a response through moves undertaken before the United States was ready to act. In addition, it was thought that a protest delivered to the Soviets would only lead to a conference in which the United States would be pressured to surrender its bases in lands near the Soviet Union in exchange for the removal of the Cuban missiles. Ex Comm felt that the result of these types of diplomatic action would not achieve the removal of the missiles without disastrous consequences to American prestige and strategic strength; in addition, these actions would allow the Russians to seize the initiative from the United States.⁹⁵

⁹⁵Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 48.

There was discussion of confronting Andrei Gromyko with the evidence in his scheduled meeting with the President on Thursday, October 18, but this confrontation was rejected on virtually the same grounds that other forms of diplomatic action were rejected. A policy which asked that the missiles be removed without backing such a request with force was simply handing the initiative to the Soviets; it would enable them to prepare for any other action which the United States might take.⁹⁶

One of the two courses which did receive a great amount of attention in the Wednesday meeting was that of the "surgical" air strike. In this response, the United States would "cut away the diseased tissues" like a surgeon; through the use of pin-point bombing, the United States would destroy the missiles and their launching sites. This action was justified by its supporters on the grounds that the United States had to remove the missile threat before it became operative; the weapons were being installed to intimidate the United States, and they had to be removed before this intimidation could be accomplished. Since there was no other course of action which would effectively and immediately remove the missiles (with the exception of the discarded invasion proposal), many members of Ex Comm

⁹⁶Ibid.

felt that the United States should strike with its air power as soon as was possible.⁹⁷

As Ex Comm discussed the surgical air strike, some dangers inherent in this approach were brought forth. In the first place, no air strike could ensure that it would be one hundred per cent effective; there could be significant numbers of weapons left untouched. These weapons would have to be destroyed, and it was thought that an invasion might prove necessary, after all.⁹⁸ In the second place, Khrushchev might react with an attack upon the United States, or some of its bases or allies. Russians would be killed in the strike, and it was doubtful that Khrushchev could avoid a response to these deaths. If his response were directed at American bases or at American allies, there was the chance that a nuclear war might result. If he reacted with a strike on the United States itself, nuclear war was almost a certainty. In the third place, even if Khrushchev did not order an attack upon the United States, there was the danger that this would be done by a field commander in charge of the missiles or planes in Cuba; since the American

⁹⁷Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 34-35. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 50.

⁹⁸U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, Military Procurement Authorization, Fiscal Year 1964, Hearings, before the Committee on Armed Services, Senate, on H.R. 2440 (S. 843), 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, p. 580. See also Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 34, and Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 203.

air strike could not guarantee complete success, one of the Soviet field commanders could be able to fire his remaining weapons at American targets in a kind of independent reaction.⁹⁹ Even if there were no independent launchings of missiles by a Soviet field commander, the American attack would most assuredly encounter resistance; Soviet and Cuban forces would try to repel the American planes, and an attack upon the American base at Guantanamo Bay might result.¹⁰⁰

George Ball was the first member of Ex Comm to argue against the air strike. He based his argument not on the dangers inherent in an air strike, but in the irreversibility of the move and in its negation of basic American values. He pointed out that if the United States acted to destroy the missile sites with an air strike, it would have made less drastic action impossible. Once an air strike was launched, the United States would face the possibility of war with the Soviet Union; it would have by-passed the opportunity to solve the problem which the missiles presented in a less dangerous way. In addition, a sneak attack, such as was called for by those who supported the air strike, would violate American traditions and values.

⁹⁹Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 684-685. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 50, and Hillsman, To Move A Nation, p. 205.

¹⁰⁰Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 684.

If the United States responded with a clandestine air strike, it would have to undergo grave risks; if it were successful in removing the missiles, and if no nuclear exchange resulted, it would still bear a moral stigma which would cost it its own self-respect as well as international respect and prestige.¹⁰¹

Ball was joined in his position by Robert Kennedy. The Attorney General felt that the loss in Cuban lives would make the air strike into a massacre; those who lived in areas adjacent to the bases would be subject to stray bombs, and many would be killed. This would not represent a decent regard for humanity, according to the President's brother. If the United States could not forewarn the targets, which it could not do if it were to best achieve the neutralization of the missiles, then it could not morally place innocent Cubans in danger.¹⁰²

The arguments which Robert Kennedy and George Ball put forth stressed the importance of acting in a fashion consistent with one's values and with the values of others. A surprise attack might remove the threat to the United States, but it might destroy American prestige; national

¹⁰¹Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 51. See also Seyom Brown, The Faces of Power: Constancy and Change in United States Foreign Policy from Truman to Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 261.

¹⁰²Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 51. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 684-685.

influence was viewed by both Ball and Kennedy as being a product of moral action and restraint as well as of other things. A surprise attack would ultimately work against the best interests of the United States, because it would undermine American influence in the rest of the world, and it would make the Soviets and the Cubans into martyrs. Robert Kennedy was determined not to let his brother become the "Tojo of the 1960's."¹⁰³

Acheson struck out at the "morality" argument being presented by Ball and the Attorney General. According to the ex-Secretary of State, there had been warning given; this warning was represented in the Monroe Doctrine, inter-American treaties, and in the many public statements of President Kennedy. The Soviet move was clearly unfriendly, and it represented a direct threat to American interests.¹⁰⁴ The President was charged with protecting the interests of the American people; to Acheson, there was no path open to the President other than that of the rapid destruction of the missiles.¹⁰⁵

Acheson was respected by Robert Kennedy, and the attack which Acheson made on Kennedy's position made him unsure of it. He still continued to oppose the air strike,

¹⁰³Brown, The Faces of Power, pp. 261-262.

¹⁰⁴Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 51-52.

¹⁰⁵Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 37-38.

however. The President's brother argued that no matter what military and political reasons could be put forth, the air strike still represented "a surprise attack by a very large power against a very small one. This . . . could not be undertaken by the United States if . . . [it] were to maintain . . . [its] moral position at home and around the globe."¹⁰⁶

Sorenson supported Ball and Kennedy. He believed, however, that the moral opprobrium might be shifted to the Soviets if the United States were to forewarn Khrushchev that it would strike if the missiles were not withdrawn. Sorenson envisaged this warning as being done in such a way as to prevent the Premier from using the warning so as to prepare for the attack or seize the offensive. Ex Comm immediately pointed out that if Khrushchev refused to cooperate, the United States would still face many of the same moral problems which Kennedy and Ball had outlined earlier. Sorenson then began to favor the blockade. The discussion on advanced warnings and their benefits and dangers also began to turn others toward the blockade response.¹⁰⁷

The blockade response, later called the "quarantine," was to be an embargo on all offensive weapons being shipped to Cuba, and it was to be enforced by the United States

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 38-39.

¹⁰⁷ Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 685-686.

Navy. One of its advantages over the air strike was that it could be graduated in severity; it could include only weapons, or it could also be extended to other items as well. Another advantage lay in the fact that it involved a confrontation with the Soviet Union in an area where the United States had a preponderance of power. In addition, the blockade response was less provocative; it allowed time for second thoughts on the part of the Soviets because it was not an overt, physical attack, such as the air strike would be. It involved military confrontation which could graduate into conflict, but it avoided conflict initially.¹⁰⁸

There were problems with this approach, however, just as there were problems with all the possible responses which Ex Comm had discussed. This type of move would be repugnant to those nations interested in "freedom of the seas," some of which were close American allies. This type of action was also commonly regarded as an act of war; the initial step might avoid the use of force simply to invite an immediate belligerent response on the part of the Soviets.¹⁰⁹ Even if there were no immediate Soviet strike at the United States, the Soviets might impose a blockade on Berlin; if this were the case, the United States

¹⁰⁸Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 49.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 50.

might be faced with a choice between war and the cessation of the Cuban blockade. If the Soviets chose to ignore the blockade, the United States might be forced to fire on their ships, thereby provoking war. Perhaps the greatest drawback to the blockade response was that of time; there could be a painful and prolonged confrontation, and it was most uncertain that the blockade could achieve the goal of the removal of the missiles. If the confrontation were to last for several weeks, it was thought that the missiles would become operative, and this was something which the United States wanted to avoid.¹¹⁰

There were many uncertainties in the blockade response, but McNamara chose to champion it. He argued that it was a limited form of pressure which could be increased, or escalated. It was "dramatic" and "forceful," but it allowed the United States to retain more control over events than did the air strike. A strike might ultimately be necessary, but McNamara thought it best to begin with the least provocative, yet forceful, response.¹¹¹

Robert Kennedy supported McNamara and the blockade. He felt that "it had more flexibility and fewer liabilities than a military attack." Kennedy could not accept the idea that the United States would "rain bombs on Cuba . . .

¹¹⁰Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 687.

¹¹¹Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 34.

in a surprise attack." He was not sure that the blockade would work, but it seemed to be the most desirable alternative to the air strike.¹¹²

The majority of the members of Ex Comm still supported an air strike, as they had on Tuesday, but the minority opposing this action was increasing. Robert Kennedy, McNamara, Sorenson, Thompson, Bundy, Ball, and Stevenson favored a more cautious response. The rest of the members either favored the air strike or were keeping their choices to themselves. It should be noted that not all who opposed the air strike supported the blockade; the blockade's three strongest supporters were McNamara, Robert Kennedy, and Sorenson.¹¹³

The meeting ended late Wednesday evening; Ex Comm was no nearer a solution to the problem which faced the President than it had been the day before. Again discussion had to be postponed in order to allow the members to rest and collect their thoughts.

Following the Ex Comm meeting, Sorenson and Robert Kennedy went to the airport to greet the President's plane as he returned from his day of campaigning in Connecticut.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹³James Daniel and John G. Hubbell, Strike in the West: The Complete Story of the Cuban Crisis (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 65. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 49, and Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 206.

Robert briefed his brother on the discussions and events of the day; Sorenson told the President of the loose but productive nature of the meeting in his absence, and he advised the President to purposefully absent himself from some of the future meetings so that discussion would be as uninhibited as possible. After dropping off the President at the White House, both Sorenson and Robert Kennedy went back to the State Department to devote some more time and effort to the problem before them.¹¹⁴

October 18

Acheson was asked to come to the White House for a private conference with the President on Thursday morning. There the two had a forty-five-minute discussion on the options which were open to the United States. Kennedy mentioned the Pearl Harbor analogy that the Attorney General had made the previous day. In pointing out that he did not want his brother to be the "Tojo of the 1960's," Robert Kennedy had referred to the Japanese sneak attack at Pearl Harbor; to the Attorney General, the air strike was an American "Pearl Harbor." Acheson presented his side of the issue, and then the two men discussed what lay ahead after an American response was chosen.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 679 and 686.

¹¹⁵Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 54.

At 11:00 a.m., the members of Ex Comm met with the President in Rusk's conference room at the Department of State. There McCone briefed them with the latest intelligence on the missile build-up. He reported that the missiles were being installed at a rate which could render some of them operable within eighteen hours. It was estimated that they could all be operable within a week. This report produced a new sense of urgency within Ex Comm.¹¹⁶

Following the intelligence briefing, Ex Comm turned to a short discussion of goals. Some felt that the United States should seek not only the removal of the missiles but also the removal of Castro. It was noted that Castro's removal could not be accomplished unless the United States launched an invasion of the island. This course of action, as an initial response, had been rejected in the earlier meetings. If the United States sought only the removal of the missiles, however, it was possible that the air strike, or perhaps even the blockade, could accomplish this end; both courses of action were less provocative than the invasion response.¹¹⁷

Rusk opened the day's battle between the supporters of the blockade and the supporters of the air strike with an attack upon the air strike response. The Secretary of

¹¹⁶Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 35-36. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 58.

¹¹⁷Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 58-59.

State felt that this course of action was too risky; there was too great a chance that the Soviets would react in an emotional and spasmodic fashion. In addition, Rusk felt that the political costs would be prohibitive; if the United States responded to the missiles with an air strike, it would forfeit world opinion as well as the support of the Organization of American States and the United Nations. Rusk evaluated the long-term losses of an immediate removal of the missiles as outweighing the short-term gains that could be made with the air strike.¹¹⁸

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were now attending the Ex Comm meetings, opposed Rusk's stand. They argued that to stall would mean that the missiles would become operational; when this happened, the Joint Chiefs felt that it would be extremely difficult to safely and prudently force their removal. They argued that the blockade would not be effective; it would simply enable the Soviets to complete the installation of the missiles. General Curtis LeMay, the Joint Chief of Staff for the Air Force, argued that an immediate attack was necessary; as far as a Soviet response was concerned, General LeMay counseled that the Soviets would not react.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 59.

¹¹⁹Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 36.

The President appreciated the argument which the Joint Chiefs were putting forth; he realized that the more time that the Soviets had, the more missiles they could make operable. He did not believe, however, that they would sustain an American air strike without responding to it. He felt that they could not allow such an action to go unchallenged any more than the United States could afford not to respond to the missiles. They had pledged support to Cuba, and an attack upon Soviet personnel, as well as upon Cuba, would be an occurrence which demanded retribution of some sort.¹²⁰

Others pointed out that it had been estimated that an invasion would be required if the missiles were to be completely destroyed; the air strike could not guarantee one hundred per cent effectiveness. An invasion would surely force the Soviets to respond militarily. The air strike, or the invasion for that matter, could not guarantee success, and either could set in motion a progressive escalation that would lead to nuclear war between the two super-powers.¹²¹

The legality of the air strike was also discussed in the 11:00 a.m. meeting. Acheson argued that legalities should be the least of the concerns before Ex Comm; he felt that the legal question was irrelevant. What was relevant

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 204.

was the security of the United States, and whatever the protection of that security demanded. He called for the air strike, saying that this would not automatically mean war between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹²²

Ball disagreed with Acheson on the question of legality. He felt that the United States did have an interest in attempting to act as international law dictated. While the blockade response was based on a type of action traditionally regarded as an act of war, it was thought that it had more "legality" than did the air strike. Leonard C. Meeker, Deputy Legal Advisor to the Secretary of State, supported Ball. Meeker, in addition, said that if the United States did act to blockade Cuba, perhaps it should call its action a "defensive quarantine." He thought that the United States might be able to create a better legal case for its action if there were no traditional ties between its response and what was generally considered to be an act of war.¹²³

The supporters of the blockade were growing in number. This fact had little to do with the legal argument that Ball and Meeker were presenting; it was based upon the practical argument that the blockade would avoid killing Russians as well as give the Soviets an opportunity to step back.¹²⁴

¹²²Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 59.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid.

The meeting was drawing to a close; the President had to receive Eifaku Sato, the Japanese Finance Minister at noon. Another Ex Comm meeting was requested for that evening. As the members began to leave, the President remarked that "time was running out." This feeling was shared by the members of Ex Comm; the pressure caused by the Soviet speed in installing the missiles was beginning to be felt.¹²⁵

Ex Comm met without the President on Thursday afternoon; Kennedy had a scheduled meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, and would be detained until evening. In addition, Robert Kennedy had asked that the President absent himself in order that the group could have a session in which the presence of the President would not hinder free discussion.¹²⁶ It was decided that the group would split into two parts, each of which would concern itself with one of the two responses currently being seriously considered. Each sub-group would be charged with analyzing its response as carefully and as fully as was possible. At 6:30 p.m., the two sub-groups would present their findings to an Ex Comm meeting at the Department of State.¹²⁷

¹²⁵Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 691.

¹²⁶Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 60.

¹²⁷Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 688.

President Kennedy's talks with Gromyko covered a wide range of topics, but the President was most interested in the comments which the Soviet Foreign Minister had to make in regard to Cuba. He told the President that the Soviet intentions in Cuba were peaceful and that the Soviet Union sought only to enable Cuba to protect herself; he pledged that the Soviet Union would not place offensive weapons in Cuba. Kennedy had his September statements brought to him, and he repeated his warnings that the United States would not tolerate Soviet action aimed at turning Cuba into an offensive base. The President was extending an opportunity to Gromyko to explain the new missiles in Cuba, but the Foreign Minister simply repeated the past pledges that the Soviet Union would install no offensive weapons in Cuba.¹²⁸

Robert Kennedy spoke with his brother shortly after Gromyko's exit, and the President was angry at what he considered as deception and duplicity on the part of the Soviet Union and its Foreign Minister.¹²⁹ Kennedy was not quite sure that he had acted wisely in not confronting Gromyko with the knowledge of the missiles, but he was later reassured by both Rusk and Thompson. They believed that such knowledge would have given the initiative to the

¹²⁸Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 61-63. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 690.

¹²⁹Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 40-42. (This is inferred rather than explicitly stated.)

Soviets, an occurrence that Ex Comm was determined should not happen.¹³⁰

While he was meeting with Gromyko, Kennedy had Robert A. Lovett, a former Secretary of Defense under Truman, brought to the White House. There Lovett was briefed by Bundy. After Gromyko had gone, the President and Lovett talked for a while, and the President asked Lovett to attend the remaining Ex Comm sessions. President Kennedy also had former Presidents Truman and Eisenhower notified of the crisis and of the possible American responses to it.¹³¹

The newspapers on Thursday carried a story of a military build-up in the southeastern part of the United States. Navy planes were reported to have been reassigned to Florida. The Pentagon announced that there was no reason for excitement; the build-up was an ordinary thing to do in the face of Cuba's new Soviet fighter planes.¹³² While the Pentagon was officially saying that there was no reason to be excited over the transfer of military equipment from one part of the country to another, McNamara was informing the President that the initial steps for a strike on Cuba had been taken, if that were to be the President's choice. The plans called

¹³⁰Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 63-64.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 64.

¹³²The New York Times, October 18, 1962, p. 1.

for an initial attack of five hundred air sorties against all Cuban military targets.¹³³

Rusk did not attend the early evening meeting of Ex Comm; he was host at a dinner for Gromyko on the eighth floor of the State Department Building. One floor below, in Ball's conference room, the other members of the group, with the exception of the President, were discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both the air strike and the blockade.

Bundy, who now favored the air strike, headed those who supported this response. They included McCone, Dillon, Taylor, Acheson, and Nitze. Ball headed those who favored the blockade. Included in this group were Robert Kennedy, McNamara, Gilpatric, Thompson, and Lovett (who had just been added to Ex Comm). Many members, supporting both the blockade and the air strike, were not in attendance because of other commitments. Each side did its best to present its case forcefully, but the arguments also tended to point out the perils and pitfalls which each response encompassed. Ex Comm was made more aware of the difficulties involved in either course than it had been earlier; before, the difficulties had been discussed, but now they were understood.¹³⁴

¹³³Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 37.

¹³⁴Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 65-66.

It was in this meeting that Robert McNamara made his plea for "maintaining the options." In this speech, the Secretary of Defense argued that the decision which the President would have to make was not an "either/or" type. The President could and should initially act to blockade Cuba; offensive weapons would not be allowed onto the island, and the American Navy would enforce this decision. If the blockade failed, the President could escalate the American response to an air strike or invasion; further military action was not ruled out, but was simply postponed until it was proved to be necessary. In effect, the United States was protecting its options; it could react with a military strike if this proved necessary, but if it began with a military strike, the possibility of solving the problem more peacefully would be lost.¹³⁵

Dillon was struck by the logic of McNamara's proposal, and he was also affected by the comparison which Robert Kennedy had earlier made between the air strike and Pearl Harbor. That evening, in the 8:00 p.m. meeting, he decided to support the blockade as a course of action.¹³⁶

Bundy was also drawn over to the side favoring the blockade. He was impressed with the argument that the blockade could be a first step followed by more severe

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 66.

actions when and if they were needed. Bundy credited Dillon with the reasons for his switch to the blockade side; Dillon's switch, plus his discussion with McNamara on "maintaining the options," convinced Bundy that the blockade was the proper response.¹³⁷

The blockade was gaining support; the fact that other action could be taken as needed convinced many that it was a more desirable response than the air strike. This argument had been presented on Tuesday and on Wednesday, but it was not appreciated until the exercises on Thursday afternoon indicated how many pitfalls and problems the air strike had. There were problems involved with the blockade, too, but these problems were modified by the fact that the Soviet Union would not be put into a position in which it would have to decide, in a very short time, whether or not to respond to an American attack upon Soviet bases in Cuba. With a course of action based upon a blockade, the United States retained more control over events than otherwise would have been the case; it would also avoid the stigma of a sneak attack upon a small nation.¹³⁸

Between 9:00 and 10:00 p.m. on Thursday, Ex Comm moved its meeting from Ball's conference room to the White

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 67.

¹³⁸Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 688. See also Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 204.

House. The majority were now in favor of the blockade, and they so informed the President.¹³⁹

The President maintained complete control of the Ex Comm meetings which he attended. Feeling that subordinates might be silenced by the presence of their department heads, he used his power and prestige to enable them to speak freely; he shielded them so that they were responsible to him and to no one else.¹⁴⁰ His manner and attitude were calm, and his emotions were kept well hidden from all but the most intimate of his associates.¹⁴¹ He would have to decide ultimately what response the United States would make to the missile presence; he was forcing the others to work to help him make that decision. He sought candid and personal exchanges between the participants so that all facets of the problem would be brought forth. He was guarding his position and his feelings so as to ensure that Ex Comm could most effectively aid him.¹⁴²

The majority opinion which was presented to Kennedy by the members of Ex Comm was immediately challenged. The President began to ask pin-point questions which "shot holes" in the agreement of the members. Some people began

¹³⁹Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 43.

¹⁴⁰Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 679.

¹⁴¹Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 58.

¹⁴²Weintal and Bartlett, Facing the Brink, p. 65.

to switch sides.¹⁴³ The Secretary of State altered the stand which he had taken earlier in the day. He had spoken against an air strike in the 11:00 a.m. meeting on Thursday, but at 10:00 p.m. he said that the United States could not tolerate the missiles, and that if they were not withdrawn, the United States should respond with an air attack. He characterized his feelings by saying that it was better "to go down with a bang" than "with a whimper." Whether he favored the air strike is unclear, but his position was more belligerent than it had earlier been.¹⁴⁴ Rusk's change of mind was representative of what everyone was going through; people changed their minds many times during the week that Ex Comm was in session. The nature of the threat and the immediate need for the proper response placed a great amount of pressure on all the participants; when President Kennedy's questions began to pressure the participants even more, many of them switched sides or became unsure.¹⁴⁵

After questioning his subordinates in a severe, relentless way, Kennedy announced that he tentatively favored the blockade plan.¹⁴⁶ He had been pressing Ex

¹⁴³Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 43.

¹⁴⁴Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 56.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁴⁶Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 204.

Comm's members in order to help himself see the problems and pitfalls as completely as he could.

The President favored the blockade over the air strike because it left the other side with a path for withdrawal. It began at the lowest level of the use of force, and it could be escalated if the need arose. It avoided, however, the initial use of force. It would help to prevent the so-called "independent" reaction,¹⁴⁷ and it would also work to prevent pushing Khrushchev into a political corner. Kennedy was convinced that Khrushchev would not flinch from the use of nuclear weapons if he were placed in a position where his back was to a wall. Kennedy felt that the air strike just might place Khrushchev against that wall.¹⁴⁸ The President was not in favor of the blockade because of moral considerations; he was unwilling to discard the air attack simply because it was "wrong." His position was one in which he felt that the blockade response would be the least costly alternative.¹⁴⁹

Orders were issued to begin preparations for a possible blockade of Cuba as soon as was practicable.¹⁵⁰ The State Department and the Justice Department immediately began to

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 205.

¹⁴⁸ Salinger, With Kennedy, pp. 175-176.

¹⁴⁹ Brown, The Faces of Power, p. 262.

¹⁵⁰ Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 807.

work upon a legal and political basis for the action which would appeal to the rest of the world. The Defense Department immediately began to issue the orders which would bring the necessary ships to the area; it also began to prepare a list of items which should be prohibited as "offensive weapons." All American ambassadors were ordered back to their posts, and the armed forces in the areas of the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico were alerted.¹⁵¹

The President also asked Sorenson to begin drafting the speech which would announce the blockade to the world, if this were ultimately the response which the United States would choose.¹⁵²

October 19

On Friday morning, October 19, Salinger confronted the President with the questions that reporters were asking about rumored troop movements in Florida. Kennedy instructed his press secretary to say that there was nothing to these rumors. The Pentagon also denied that there was anything underway which was militarily important to the United States; in a statement which was released to the press, the Pentagon said that there were no offensive missiles in Cuba, and that no alert of American forces in the Caribbean existed. Washington was asking questions, and

¹⁵¹Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 691-692.

¹⁵²Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 67.

Ex Comm was moving to prevent knowledge of its deliberations and its actions. Suspicion of the denials issued by the Pentagon and the President's press secretary existed in the minds of the Washington press corps, however.¹⁵³

Also on Friday morning, Ed Wilson, Deputy Director of the United States Information Agency, was told of the nature of the forthcoming crisis. He was instructed to ensure that the President's speech, which would announce whatever course of action the United States would take, would be heard in Latin America, particularly in Cuba. He immediately began to make arrangements for this speech.¹⁵⁴

In an early morning meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President impressed upon them that the blockade response was only tentatively approved. The "quarantine," as the President now termed the action, was favored by him, but he was not certain that this would be the response ultimately chosen and put into effect. The Joint Chiefs had requested the meeting in order to impress upon the President their distaste for the blockade. They believed that the United States had to make a strong and forceful response to the missile threat; the air strike was their choice because it not only answered the Soviet challenge, but it also removed the threat which the missiles posed. Their evaluation of a subsequent Soviet response was that the

¹⁵³Ibid., pp. 69-70.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 71-72.

Soviet Union would do nothing when faced with a resolute United States.¹⁵⁵

The opposition of the Joint Chiefs of Staff represented a major obstacle to the final choice of the blockade as the American response. Kennedy was waiting to make this decision until he had their support. If he were to choose the blockade approach, and it failed, he would then face serious political problems. Position papers of the Joint Chiefs would "leak" to the press, and the President would be placed in the untenable position of having "overruled his military advisors on a military issue."¹⁵⁶

Others in addition to the Joint Chiefs opposed the blockade; such men as Acheson and McCone were important enough to force the President to also seek their support. It was a situation in which the President was faced with choices or options that were initially mutually exclusive; in addition, no one of these options could guarantee the removal of the missiles without the grave risk of a nuclear war. The President was faced with a choice that had to be based upon calculated risks with extremely high stakes; The response that he chose could prove successful, or it could fail miserably. If the response failed to achieve

¹⁵⁵Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 205. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 69, U.S. House Committee on Appropriations, Hearings, p. 445, and U.S. House Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, p. 733.

¹⁵⁶Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 205.

the removal of the missiles, the President would face the possibility of great domestic political losses through attacks which disgruntled advisors might make upon him. While the fact that he had overruled his military advisors on a military matter might weaken his position if his response failed, so might the fact that he had overruled civilian advisors, including the head of the American intelligence establishment. Kennedy had to develop a consensus behind the response which he ultimately would choose; only in this way could he prevent his advisors from attacking his actions if the response which he chose failed.¹⁵⁷

After his meeting with the Joint Chiefs, Kennedy told Sorenson of their position. Others were also expressing doubts, and the President told Sorenson that he needed a consensus behind the blockade if that were to be his choice. The President had to leave Washington for several days on a scheduled campaign trip; he would depart later Friday morning. In his absence, Kennedy wanted Sorenson to work with Robert Kennedy in "pulling things together." The President was charging the two with the task of engineering a consensus; when this was done, Robert Kennedy would call the President back to Washington for the final action.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 692.

Ex Comm met in Ball's conference room on Friday morning. It was soon discovered that the near unanimity of the previous night had begun to fall apart. Acheson still maintained that the air strike was the only course open to the United States, and he was persuasive enough and prestigious enough to cause others to have doubts about the blockade.¹⁵⁹ Over Sorenson's protests the arguments that had filled earlier meetings were reopened.¹⁶⁰

Those who favored the air strike once more put forth the argument that the missiles had to be removed before they could be made operational. This course might lead to war between the United States and the Soviet Union, but there was no guarantee that the quarantine would remove the missiles without war. The blockade response gave the Soviets the time necessary to complete the installation of the missiles, and it also warned them of possible American action to forcibly remove these weapons. The Soviets would be allowed to strengthen their strategic position by increasing their nuclear might and alerting their armed forces for possible war. The crisis, according to the supporters of the air strike, represented a test of wills; there would be a "showdown," and it was better that this confrontation take place in an environment in which the

¹⁵⁹Hilsman, To Move A Nation, p. 206.

¹⁶⁰Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 806.

the United States had every advantage possible. If there were to be war over the missiles, then this war would come with the initial American air strike, or it would come with the air strike that was required when the blockade failed. American political and strategic interests demanded that the missiles be removed, and the most feasible course to follow in removing them was the one which denied strength to the Soviet position. The argument that the blockade would prevent possible war was viewed as unsound. If there were to be war, the blockade would permit the Soviets to strengthen themselves for it; if there were to be no war, then a surgical air strike would not provoke one.¹⁶¹

Instead of developing a consensus behind the blockade, Ex Comm was splitting itself into factions favoring different courses of action. The arguments that were being presented were based on those that had been rejected in earlier meetings, but the support which had developed on the previous day for the blockade was disintegrating on Friday morning.¹⁶²

Much of the conflict in the meeting was traceable to the strain of the crisis. The members of Ex Comm were beginning to feel the toll of working long hours under

¹⁶¹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 692. See also Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 806.

¹⁶²Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 44. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 692.

conditions in which they were asked to choose a course of action that might lead to nuclear devastation. There was no simple answer to the problem posed by the missiles; there were inherent weaknesses in every possible response, and opponents were quick to point them out. The participants were physically and mentally tired, and this fatigue was manifesting itself in anger and impatience.¹⁶³

Even after several days of discussion, the air strike and the blockade were still rather nebulous generalities; little had been done to crystallize them into the form which they would have to take if they were to be implemented. Sorenson thought that if he were to draft two speeches, each announcing to the world one of the two currently considered responses, the policies might be made more specific. This drafting, he thought, might provide Ex Comm with a better basis for its deliberations than the loose and general phrases which were presently being put forth as answers to the problem of the missiles. He returned to his office to draft these speeches.¹⁶⁴

Perhaps taking a cue from Sorenson, Ex Comm again split into two groups. Each of these groups was to carefully evaluate every facet of one of the responses; when

¹⁶³Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 44. See also Theodore Sorenson, Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch or the Arrows (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 30.

¹⁶⁴Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 692.

discussion was completed, each group would present specific proposals for implementation of that response to the other for comments and questions. Bundy headed those who initially worked on the air strike, and U. Alexis Johnson and Paul Nitze headed those who worked on the blockade. During the afternoon, the groups exchanged papers, and each one dissected and criticized the other's work. The papers were then returned for the development of answers to the criticisms. Through this procedure, both groups were developing definitive plans for the implementation of either course of action.¹⁶⁵

The results of these efforts, however, did not solve the deadlock that existed between the two groups. In an afternoon meeting, Acheson again led those who supported the air strike against the proponents of the blockade; he maintained that the United States had to remove the missiles in order to satisfy its strategic interests. Robert Kennedy answered Acheson's attack with much the same argument that he had been presenting since Tuesday; the United States could not afford to launch a sneak attack against Cuba. American ideals and political reality made this impossible; a strike against Cuba represented a Pearl Harbor in reverse,

¹⁶⁵Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 44. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 72, and Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 807.

and the United States would pay too dearly for such an action, both internally and externally.¹⁶⁶

Maxwell Taylor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, listened to the debate between Robert Kennedy and Acheson on Friday; he decided that Robert Kennedy was right, at least in relation to his comments on the impossibility of a sneak attack. Taylor put forth a compromise which called for a warning that would precede an attack upon the missiles by twenty-four hours.¹⁶⁷ This course of action was not a sneak attack, but it had all the other drawbacks of the air strike.

The threat posed by the missiles had to be removed from the hemisphere, but it had to be done in such a way as to prevent damaging other American interests. It was not in the interest of the United States to see her allies or overseas bases intimidated or attacked by the Soviets, nor was it in her interest to engage in a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. The United States had to remove the missiles, but it had to do so with a minimal risk to international peace.¹⁶⁸ The air strike would remove most, if not all, of the missiles, but there was a high degree of risk involved. The Soviets might react, emotionally or

¹⁶⁶Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 73-74.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸U.S., Department of State, Bulletin, December 31, 1962, p. 989.

rationally, with an attack upon American bases, allies, or even the continental United States. The blockade would not remove the missiles directly, and it might not be successful at all; this route was judged to have fewer risks of war than did the air strike, however. There was no simple response that would nullify the missile threat in an absolute way without risking war between the two super-powers.

Sorenson returned to Ex Comm late Friday afternoon. He had been unable to prepare the two speeches that he had left the earlier session to write. Most of his time had been spent in trying to answer several questions about the blockade which plagued him. He presented these questions to Ex Comm in order that the members might help him answer them.¹⁶⁹

Ex Comm was able to readily answer some of these questions; they dealt with the mechanics of applying the blockade, and Friday's sub-group sessions had developed elaborate and definitive plans for the implementation of either response. Two of the questions which Sorenson put before Ex Comm did not deal with mechanical applications, however; they were connected with substantive policy matters. First, how would the quarantine work to secure the removal of the missiles? Second, what could and would the United States do if the missiles became operable? In

¹⁶⁹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 692.

attempting to answer these two questions, Ex Comm was able to develop a response which most members would support.¹⁷⁰

A consensus began to grow behind an amalgam of the blockade and the air strike approaches. The blockade was to be the first step; if it worked, then the matter would be settled without the great danger of war which the air strike entailed. If, however, the blockade did not work within a reasonable time, the United States would resort to an air strike upon the missiles. This response differed from the one that had been supported on Thursday night in that the two responses were now combined into the same policy. If the blockade did not work, the United States would mount an air strike; it was not a question of simply allowing the United States the opportunity to choose the air strike if it so desired. The air strike was an integral part of the proposed American reaction to the missiles.¹⁷¹ Acheson knew that in continuing to support the air strike as an initial move, he was supporting a response that would not be chosen, and he felt that his usefulness had ended; the

¹⁷⁰Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 75. See also Patrick Anderson, The President's Men: White House Assistants of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 295, and Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 692.

¹⁷¹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 692. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 75.

former Secretary of State left on Friday evening for his farm in Maryland.¹⁷²

A majority of the Ex Comm members were in support of the amalgam approach. According to this response, the United States would act to blockade Cuba as soon as was possible; if this action achieved the removal of the missiles, then the more belligerent second part of the amalgam response, the air strike, would not be used. The rest of Friday evening was filled with preparations for the implementation of the quarantine.

Earlier, Thompson had said that the Russian mind had a great respect for law; while they did not always adhere to the strict interpretation of law, they usually did attempt to prove the "legality" of their actions with a somewhat "twisted" logic. He felt that if the United States could gain the support of the Organization of American States, the American position would be improved. Nicholas Katzenbach of the Department of Justice, who had just joined Ex Comm at the behest of Robert Kennedy, agreed with this idea, as did Meeker of the State Department. The three men were able to convince the others of their position, and the preparations for assembling the inter-American body were made on Friday evening.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 75.

¹⁷³ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 73. See also Robert D. Crane, "The Cuban Crisis: A Strategic Analysis of

With his questions answered, Sorenson retired to write the speech with which the President would announce the American quarantine of Cuba. It was after 5:00 a.m. before he stopped writing.¹⁷⁴

October 20

Ex Comm met at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday. In this meeting Sorenson presented the speech draft which he had prepared. This draft, with minor amendments, was approved by the members. Following this approval, the Attorney General called his brother and asked that he return to Washington; the move toward consensus was gathering momentum, and Robert Kennedy thought that the President would be able to soon make a decision with the full support of Ex Comm.¹⁷⁵

The President was in Chicago when he received the call from the Attorney General. Salinger was then called in to see the President, and he was told to issue a press release which stated that Kennedy had developed "a slight upper respiratory infection." Because of this infection and a slight fever which accompanied it, Salinger was also

American and Soviet Policy," Orbis, VI (Winter, 1963), 542-543, and William P. Gerberding, "International Law and the Cuban Missile Crisis," International Law and Political Crisis: An Analytical Casebook, ed. by Lawrence Sheinman and David Wilkinson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 182.

¹⁷⁴Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 693.

¹⁷⁵Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 77.

told to say, the President was canceling his campaign trip and returning to Washington.¹⁷⁶

Upon leaving the 9:00 a.m. meeting, McNamara stopped and called the Pentagon. He ordered four tactical squadrons prepared for a possible air strike against the missiles. He justified this order by saying that if the President did not accept the recommendation of Ex Comm, there would be no time left in which to order this preparation.¹⁷⁷

Other military preparations were also under way on Saturday. The American naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, received reinforcements from the First Marine Division. The First Armored Division began to move from its base at Fort Hood, Texas, into the southeastern part of the United States. At 8:12 a.m., a message alerting American bases for unspecified trouble with Cuba was sent by the Joint Chiefs of Staff; all major American military bases received this message. Whatever action the President chose to take, the military wanted to be ready.¹⁷⁸

The President arrived back in Washington at 1:40 p.m. He immediately went for a swim in the White House pool in order to relax. His brother joined him there, and the two

¹⁷⁶Salinger, With Kennedy, p. 252.

¹⁷⁷Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 77.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 77 and 81-82.

talked until they left for the scheduled Ex Comm meeting at 2:30 p.m.¹⁷⁹

The Saturday afternoon meeting of the Ex Comm was composed of the entire National Security Council. Those who had participated in the Ex Comm deliberations but who were not members of the National Security Council were also present. The participants arrived by different doors at the White House; care was still being exercised to prevent outside knowledge of the Ex Comm deliberations.¹⁸⁰

The two initial responses with which the United States had been concerned through most of the deliberations of Ex Comm were once more put before the President, McNamara presented the case for the blockade, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff presented the case for the air strike.¹⁸¹

The supporters of the air strike, who still encompassed some civilians in their ranks, presented the President with the arguments which they had been presenting for several days. In addition, one of the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff now advocated the use of nuclear weapons in the proposed air strike; the justification which he offered was that the Soviet Union would use their nuclear weapons against the United States if the conditions were reversed.

¹⁷⁹Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 47.

¹⁸⁰Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 693. See also Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 48.

¹⁸¹Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 808.

Robert Kennedy felt that the proposal was of questionable validity.¹⁸²

McNamara, in presenting his response, stressed once more that the United States should maintain its options. Either course of action had risks for the United States, but McNamara felt that the blockade response had fewer risks than did the air strike.¹⁸³ He believed that the greatest danger lay in the fact that the situation might escalate uncontrollably; there was a danger that Khrushchev would strike at the United States, but there was an even greater danger that the matter would mushroom into something which neither the United States nor the Soviet Union could manage.¹⁸⁴ If the United States began with the blockade, it would not preclude an eventual air strike, or even invasion. The United States had to choose the blockade response because it might remove the missiles and because there was far less danger of war inherent in it than in the air strike. If it did not remove the missiles, the United States would escalate its military response to the level of the air strike. The consensus that had been developing behind the amalgam of the blockade and the air

¹⁸²Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 48. See also Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 808.

¹⁸³Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 78.

¹⁸⁴U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Hearings, p. 85.

strike was moving toward unanimity; McNamara's case for maintaining options was continuing to draw away support from the air strike as an initial response.¹⁸⁵

Rusk presented a summary of his stand at the Saturday meeting, also. He called for the blockade as the initial response to the missiles. The most important consideration to him was the fact that the air strike would be irreversible. This presentation represented a change in his stance from Thursday evening, but many of the members of Ex Comm were now shifting their support to the blockade.¹⁸⁶

Gilpatric summarized the choice facing the President. He said that the President could choose between limited or unlimited action. The blockade represented a course based on limited action, and Gilpatric noted that most of the Ex Comm members thought that it was the most desirable response.¹⁸⁷ The members did not have any faith in the "balance of terror."¹⁸⁸ The fact that the United States and the Soviet Union could bring about mutual destruction was not seen as a deterrent to serious armed conflict between the two super-powers; there could be a nuclear conflagration,

¹⁸⁵ Stewart Alsop and Charles Bartlett, "In Time of Crisis," The Saturday Evening Post, December 8, 1962, p. 20.

¹⁸⁶ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 78.

¹⁸⁷ Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 693.

¹⁸⁸ George W. Ball, The Discipline of Power (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), p. 268.

and any actions which could make this possibility more remote were welcomed.

After the members of Ex Comm had presented their stands, the President indicated that he would begin with the limited response; the United States would impose a blockade upon offensive weapons being shipped to Cuba. This blockade would be called a "quarantine" in order to marshal as much international support for it as was possible.¹⁸⁹

The President chose the blockade because it represented a strong register of American protest and indignation at the missile presence in Cuba. The Soviets would see that the United States regarded the missiles as a serious threat to its strategic interests and that the United States intended to see the missiles removed. While it represented a relatively strong international action, it still left the Soviet Premier with a path for retreat. The Soviet Union would not be placed in a corner; if there were war, then it would be because the Soviets did not remove the threat which they had thrust into the hemisphere.¹⁹⁰ The President and the other members of Ex Comm all felt that if the Russians were ready for nuclear war over Cuba, no course or response would avoid this most serious of all conflicts. It was thought that a war might

¹⁸⁹ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 78.

¹⁹⁰ Salinger, With Kennedy, p. 255.

as well come then as at some time in the future.¹⁹¹ If the Soviets were not ready for war, then the American quarantine would not push them toward that eventuality as much as would an air strike.

Kennedy made it clear that the air strike was not ruled out. If the blockade did not work, then the United States would go to the air strike. The President also said that he wanted to talk to the "air specialists" before he finalized his decision; Ex Comm was to proceed, however, as if the President had already designated the quarantine as the official American response.¹⁹²

When Kennedy had finished speaking, those who had come to the meeting supporting the air strike were convinced that the response which the President had outlined was essentially the most desirable.¹⁹³ The consensus that Kennedy sought had been achieved.

A bitter controversy developed in the meeting after the President had indicated what course of action the United States would take. It involved the question of what diplomatic moves the United States would make while it implemented the quarantine. Stevenson, the United

¹⁹¹ Alsop and Bartlett, "In Time of Crisis," p. 16.

¹⁹² Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 78.

¹⁹³ Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 694. See also U.S. President, Public Papers, p. 867.

Nations Delegate from the United States, began to propose that the President offer to withdraw from the American naval base at Guantanamo Bay in exchange for the removal of the missiles. He also proposed that the United States might trade the American missile bases in Turkey and Italy for the Soviet weapons in Cuba.¹⁹⁴ Stevenson was proposing that the United States negotiate on the missiles in order to lessen the danger of nuclear war.¹⁹⁵

Stevenson was immediately attacked for this proposal. Dillon, McCone, and Lovett sharply criticized negotiating for the removal of the Soviet missiles.¹⁹⁶ The President rejected Stevenson's proposals; he said that the time was completely wrong for an American action of this nature. A major reason for any American response was to convince American allies that the United States was not irresolute and undependable. If the United States now acted to bargain with the missile bases in Turkey and Italy, or with the naval base at Guantanamo Bay, it would make the United States appear as if it would sacrifice the interests of its allies for its own security. Such a course of action was unthinkable.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 49-50. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 695, and Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 79-80.

¹⁹⁵ Stewart Alsop, "Footnote to Historians," The Saturday Evening Post, January 26, 1963, p. 76.

¹⁹⁶ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 80.

¹⁹⁷ Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 696. See also Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 49-50.

The last few minutes of the meeting were spent in a discussion of the time at which the speech would be delivered. It was scheduled for Monday evening at 7:00. If it appeared that the news of the missiles were going to be made public, the President said that the speech might be delivered on Sunday. The United States wanted to ensure that it announced the presence of the missiles in the speech announcing the American quarantine.¹⁹⁸

After the meeting, all the participants returned to their offices to ensure that their preparations for the blockade of Cuba were complete.¹⁹⁹

October 21 and 22

Sunday morning at 9:00, Salinger was briefed by Bundy. He was told of the missiles, the deliberations of Ex Comm, and of the quarantine approach. Bundy explained that the President would want to make a television announcement of the blockade and that it probably would come on Monday evening.²⁰⁰

While Salinger was being briefed, orders were being prepared for the evacuation of Washington, if the need presented itself. White House personnel, as well as other

¹⁹⁸ Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 696-697.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 697.

²⁰⁰ Salinger, With Kennedy, p. 254.

high-ranking government personnel, were to be told to pack large bags of clothing and food; they were then to stand by for the order to evacuate. In the event of an attack, the government would provide a continuation of operations through these and other emergency plans that were also being developed.²⁰¹

The military had accepted the blockade, or quarantine, because the amalgam approach represented a compromise. They still desired an initial air strike, but they supported the blockade because it did not rule out this action for the future. If the blockade failed, then the United States was committed to the removal of the missiles, no matter what this removal required.²⁰²

In order to dispel the doubts of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who still preferred the air strike as an initial response, Kennedy scheduled a Sunday morning meeting with the Tactical Air Command chief, General Walter C. Sweeney. Sweeney, several other Air Force officers, General Taylor, McNamara, and Robert Kennedy met with the President before church on October 21. The President asked Sweeney if he could remove all the missiles with a surgical air strike. Sweeney replied that he could not guarantee a one hundred per cent removal of the missiles; the best which could be

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 256.

²⁰²Schlesinger, A Thousand Days, p. 807.

guaranteed, he said, was a ninety per cent removal. A clean surgical removal was a military impossibility, according to the head of the Tactical Air Command.²⁰³

Kennedy said that if even ten per cent of the missiles remained following the air strike, they would be enough to seriously endanger American interests. The Soviet field commanders who had suffered from the air strike might launch their missiles independently of orders from the Soviet Union. In addition, the air strike included the targeting of air fields and other military sites besides the missiles. The bombing of these targets would cause the death of many Cuban civilians. Under these conditions, President Kennedy rendered a final decision that the quarantine choice was the correct one.²⁰⁴ The initial American action would be based upon the blockade response.

An Ex Comm meeting was held at 10:00 a.m. in the White House. The group went over the third draft of the speech which the President was going to use in announcing the blockade to the world. A suggestion was made to include an indictment of Castro in the speech, but this suggestion was overruled; the members did not want to allow Khrushchev a "scapegoat." McNamara argued for a simplicity and clarity in the speech; he said that the purpose

²⁰³Kennedy, Thirteen Days, pp. 48-49. See also Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 697, and Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 84.

²⁰⁴Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 84-85.

of the quarantine was to remove the missiles and that the speech should concentrate on presenting that message. In addition, Stevenson made a point about ensuring that the phrasing of the speech left the Soviets with no loopholes which they might use to provide themselves with diplomatic delay. The meeting then ended, and preparations for the quarantine were continued.²⁰⁵

Kennedy met with David Ormsby-Gore, the British Ambassador, a little after noon on Sunday. He explained the nature of the crisis to the diplomat, and without telling which response the United States had chosen he asked the Briton what course of action he thought was best. The ambassador pleased the President by picking the blockade as the proper response under the circumstances.²⁰⁶

The secret of the crisis was beginning to break on Sunday. Washington was beginning to suspect that something was happening. In order to ensure as much secrecy as was still possible, the President had three of his top aides come to the White House where they were to make themselves conspicuous. Averill Harriman, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Martin Hillenbrand, of the German Affairs Office, and Philips Talbot, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, sat in the White House for

²⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 87-89.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

several hours on Sunday. The result of this action was to initiate rumors that the impending crisis involved Berlin or the Chinese-Indian dispute. Meanwhile Ex Comm assembled by entering the White House through a tunnel which led from the Treasury Department.²⁰⁷

Ex Comm's second Sunday meeting was held at 2:30 p.m. Kennedy reviewed the preparations for the implementation of the quarantine. The instructions to American diplomats, Presidential letters to American allies, and the approaches to the United Nations and the Organization of American States were carefully studied. A decision was made to agree to United Nations inspection of the missile sites to ensure that they had been removed, if occasion for this inspection arose. When Ex Comm had examined the diplomatic preparations, Admiral George Anderson, the Chief of Staff for the Navy, was asked to present the plans and procedures for the implementation of the quarantine. Ex Comm was told that the Navy would request that all ships headed for Cuban ports stop for boarding and inspection. If a ship failed to comply with this request the naval vessel issuing the request would fire a warning shot across the bow of the uncooperative ship. If this action failed to stop the Cuban-bound ship, then the American naval vessel would fire into the ship's rudder assembly, thus crippling it.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 85-86.

²⁰⁸ Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 698.

Most of the 2:30 meeting, however, was concerned with a detailed review of the speech which would announce the blockade to the world. Steps were taken to ensure that the speech did not alarm the American people to the extent that there was a national panic; certain words and phrases were deleted or replaced to achieve this end. Any part of the speech which dealt with multi-lateral actions or deliberations was carefully worded so as to prevent any interpretation which would limit the United States in exercising whatever options it chose in seeking to provide for its own security. A decision was made to admit U-2 surveillance; it was to be justified as necessary, and it was to find virtue in this "necessity." Finally, the members of Ex Comm attempted to ensure that the wording of the speech anticipated and forestalled any Soviet response elsewhere in the world; this effort was directed at carefully delineating the crisis so as to include only Cuba, the missiles, and the Soviets.²⁰⁹

Many other changes in the speech were made during the remainder of the day. As these changes were made, they were rushed to the State Department and to the United States Information Agency.²¹⁰ These deletions, additions, or substitutions covered a wide variety of subjects, but their

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 698-700.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 700.

impact upon the quarantine policy was negligible. The major decision had been made on the previous day, and it had been verified in the morning meeting with General Sweeney; the United States would respond to the presence and the threat of the Soviet missiles with a military blockade of Cuba. If this course of action did not achieve the removal of the missiles, then the United States would take further military action to achieve this end.

At 11:30 on Monday morning, the President again met with Ex Comm. The purpose of the meeting was to approve the final draft of the President's quarantine speech.²¹¹ The rest of the day was filled with the hurried preparations for the President's address and the application of the response which it would outline.

Many officials, both American and foreign, learned of the missiles and the American decision to quarantine Cuba on Monday. Those members of the President's Cabinet who did not already know were told of the impending crisis in a 4:00 p.m. Cabinet meeting. American legislative leaders learned of the missiles and the quarantine in a 5:00 p.m. meeting with the President; the meeting was disappointing to Kennedy because the Congressmen were not pleased with the President's proposed response, with some of the bitterest opposition coming from his own party's leaders. The foreign diplomats in Washington were briefed in a series

²¹¹Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 98-99.

of meetings which were held shortly before the address; most of these people were told in groups, but the Soviet Ambassador was told privately in a meeting with Rusk.

In addition to those who were briefed in Washington on Monday, other important officials were told of the content of the President's speech prior to its delivery. Special envoys briefed the leaders of the major American allies on Monday morning. These leaders included the British Prime Minister, Harold MacMillan, the French President, Charles de Gaulle, the German Chancellor, Conrad Adenauer, and the Canadian Prime Minister, John Diefenbaker. These men offered their support to the President and to the United States.²¹²

At 7:00 p.m., the President went before the television cameras and the radio microphones; there he made public the causes, the nature, and the purpose of the American quarantine of Cuba. The deliberations of Ex Comm thus had led to the application of the response which its members had deemed most desirable.

²¹²Ibid., pp. 96-104.

CHAPTER III: AN ANALYSIS

The preceding chapter has presented a history of the American decision to quarantine Cuba in 1962. Before analyzing this decision in terms of the hypotheses developed in Paige's study of the American decision to intervene in the Korean War in 1950, some attention must be directed to Paige's concept of sequential sub-decisions.

Paige spoke of the Korean decision as both a single decision and as a sequence of sub-decisions. He felt that there were several sub-decisions which were similar enough to be regarded as part of the process which produced the final American commitment. These sub-decisions represented a process of escalation; with the exception of the first, each led to a greater military commitment on the part of the United States. The first sub-decision, on June 24, was to call for a Security Council meeting in which the problem posed by the North Korean invasion would be discussed. The second was reached the following day. The United States, it was decided, would adopt a strong posture of opposition and would endeavor to supply the Republic of Korea with needed military equipment. On June 26, the commitment of American air-sea forces was accepted by the decision-makers;

in addition, the United States acted to neutralize the Straits of Formosa to prevent difficulties from developing through some kind of confrontation between the two China's. On June 29, the United States decided that it should extend its air-sea military action to North Korean territorial areas; it was also decided to use American ground troops to help protect the Americans who were being evacuated from Korea. On June 30, two sub-decisions were reached. Early on that day a decision was made to commit one regimental combat team in support of the South Koreans; later that day this commitment of ground troops was expanded to include the discretionary use of all ground troops under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, the American commander in the Far East. The United States, through the decision to commit ground troops to the defense of the South Koreans, had fully intervened in the Korean War.¹

It is difficult to accept the view that the decision to commit ground troops to the defense of the South Koreans was the result of a sequence of sub-decisions leading to this final commitment; it is more realistic to view the nature and the extent of the American intervention as the product of a series of related but discrete decisional processes, each of which produced a separate and discrete decision. The first decisional process might be said to

¹Glenn D. Paige, The Korean Decision: June 24-30, 1950 (New York: Free Press, 1968), pp. 278-280.

have begun with the American notice of the North Korean attack and ended with the decision to commit air and sea forces to the defense of South Korea. The following decisions were expansions of this initial response. When the American commitment of air-sea forces was not sufficient to enable the South Koreans to ward off the North Korean attack, the United States decided to extend its commitment of these forces to include their use in North Korea itself. When this expansion of the American commitment proved ineffective in stemming the Communist invasion, the United States decided to commit one regimental combat team to the battle. Later, this commitment was expanded to include the possible use of all ground troops under MacArthur's command. The final commitment of large numbers of ground troops was the product of an environment which included all previous decisions, but each of these previous decisions had been made with the hope that the actions which they entailed would halt the North Korean invasion. Each of these previous decisions would probably have been terminal had this goal been achieved. Each was the product of a new set of stimuli which included the failure of the previous responses, and each was set apart from the other decisions because the differing sets of stimuli produced differing decisional environments. Even though the core of the decisional unit remained the same, the decisional processes differed because of these alterations to their environments. The essence of

the decision-making approach is to study separate decisions so as to understand why they were made;² Paige seemingly clouded his work by combining several decisions and studying them as if they were one.

Paige analyzed several separate decisions, but he chose to refer to his analysis as the study of a single decision, that of the American decision to intervene in Korea in June of 1950. This was particularly damaging in regard to his hypothesized stages of a crisis decisional process.³

According to Paige, a crisis decisional process proceeds through four distinct stages, each following the other in the manner in which they are presented below. First, there is a stage in which the crisis-producing stimulus is categorized and a general frame of reference for the crisis is established. Second, there is a stage in which a willingness to respond is established and the capabilities for response are inventoried. Third, there is a stage in which a specific positive response is chosen and a decision is made to commit resources. Fourth and finally, there is a stage in which the amount and kind of the resources so

²Cf. James N. Rosenau, "The Premises and Promises of Decision-Making Analysis," Contemporary Political Analysis, ed. by James C. Charlesworth (New York: Free Press, 1967), pp. 194-195.

³For a full discussion and presentation of Paige's hypothesized decisional process stages, see Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 276-278.

committed are progressively expanded or escalated. The first, second, and third stages represent the patterns of action which Paige observed in the initial decisional process, or the one which ended with the commitment of the United States to the defense of South Korea through the limited use of American air and sea forces in the area. The fourth stage represents the patterns observed when the following decisions to expand the military commitment were included as part of the American decision to intervene.

The expansion of the military commitment represented modifications of the initial commitment, and, as stated earlier, they were necessarily separate from it for that reason. Not only the reality of the Korean decision, however, but also the logic of the decision-making approach negates Paige's hypothesized fourth stage; the decision-making approach is based on the concept of discrete decisions and decision-making processes which produce discrete decisions.⁴ The conscious modification of a previous decision must entail a separate decisional process which includes knowledge of the previous decision in an altered decisional environment, altered if for no other reason than the fact that the previous decision now exists. Two decisional processes cannot be combined and studied as one, nor can

⁴Cf. Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin, "Decision-Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics," Foreign Policy Decision-Making, ed. by Richard C. Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), pp. 89-92.

their products be combined and studied as a single decision. It can also be argued that if a decision is to be modified, then it must exist, but if it exists, then according to the definition of a decision-making process,⁵ the process which produced it has ended. A modification or alteration then must represent a separate decision produced by a separate decisional process. Paige's fourth stage is invalid not only because he failed to differentiate between decisions that pertained to the American military commitment in Korea, but also because he ignored the boundaries which are imposed upon the decision-making approach by its very nature.

The first three stages would seem to be a statement of the obvious; they represent a logical progression of actions directed toward a rational policy choice, and they could easily be hypothesized on an a priori basis. They are not in conflict with the main body of decision-making theory, and the likelihood that they exist is supported not only by Paige's study, but also by the data obtained in the study of the quarantine decision.

The first stage consists of the categorization of the stimulus and the range of possible responses. The Ex

⁵Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin define decision-making as "a process which results in the selection from a socially defined, limited number of problematical, alternative projects of one project intended to bring about the particular future state of affairs envisaged by the decision-maker." (Project refers to a policy or course of action in the context of this definition.) Cf. Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "Decision-Making," p. 90.

Comm meetings on the first day were primarily concerned with evaluating the Soviet move and possible American responses. The concern with American responses would carry beyond this initial stage, but it was on the first day that the attempts to outline all possible responses were made. Ex Comm was attempting to bring forth all possibilities in order to give perspective to the more detailed discussions that would follow the initial meetings. The concern with possible Soviet motives would also enter the Ex Comm discussions at a later time, but it was in the first Ex Comm meeting that the Soviet move was accepted by all as an important threat to American interests. The experience of Ex Comm tends to substantiate this first of Paige's hypothesized stages.

The second stage, according to Paige, consists of the determination of a willingness to act and the in-depth study of the possible responses outlined in the previous stage. In the case of the quarantine decision, the President attended the first meeting determined to act; he charged Ex Comm with helping him decide what policy would best serve American interests, but he had already decided that some response would be made. Paige referred to this willingness to act as one that was shared by the members of a decisional unit. The development of this shared willingness to act encompassed almost all of the Ex Comm deliberations; the whole purpose of the Ex Comm meetings

on Friday, October 19, was to create unanimity in favor of the blockade choice. In addition, most of the week was spent in arguing for or against specific responses; Ex Comm was attempting to develop a shared willingness to either blockade Cuba or mount an air strike against her. During these arguments, it should be noted, in-depth studies of the possible responses were made. From the initial categorization of the threat and the possible responses, until the quarantine policy was adopted, Ex Comm was concerned with what policy would best serve American interests; this would seem to strengthen Paige's hypothesis that a second stage exists in a crisis decisional process in which the decisional unit determines a willingness to act and studies the possible actions open to it.

Paige's third stage was one which consists of the articulation (or choice) of a particular response. That this stage existed in the quarantine decisional process is attested to by the quarantine decision itself, or the product of the terminal act of this decisional unit in this particular decisional environment.

Perhaps the most realistic typology of stages within a crisis decisional process is one that hypothesizes the first stage as one in which is found the perception of a threat and a need for a response. The second stage could be termed the deliberative stage, or that stage in which all discussion or thought as to what response would best

serve a nation's interests is conducted. The third stage could be said to consist of the enunciation of a particular response. This represents a modification of Paige's hypothesized typology which would be applicable to both the process which produced the decision to intervene in Korea and the process which produced the decision to quarantine Cuba. It should be noted that this very simple typology may be all that can be said to be universally valid; one might be able to hypothesize that a function will occur, but it is much different to hypothesize when the function will occur. The nature of the decisional process which produced the quarantine decision was rather unstructured and sometimes repetitive, and it would be difficult to hypothesize a typology of crisis decisional stages that was more specific than the one presented above.

Much attention has been paid to Paige's stages of a crisis decisional process because they are important to his summarization of his other empirical findings; the crisis decisional stages serve as the framework for the summarization of his empirical work.⁶ Since his fourth stage does not exist in the case of the quarantine decision, and since this fourth stage is also open to serious question on theoretical grounds, a summarization based upon this typology is worthless, especially insofar as the comparative

⁶See Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 315-321, for a presentation of this summarization.

nature of this immediate study is concerned. By including the fourth stage in his hypothesized stages of a decisional process, Paige destroyed any claim to universality which this typology might have had, and he also made his summarization of his results suspect.

The main thrust of Paige's work lay, however, in his empirically grounded propositions which he put forth regarding the decision-making variables of organization, information, and values,⁷ as well as propositions concerning the internal and external settings of a crisis decisional event. These propositions were to serve as the basis for an explanation of a crisis decision; Paige's summarization was intended to provide this explanation. Even though their summarization is useless because of the nature of Paige's typology of decisional stages, the individual propositions remain.

Unlike the typology of decisional stages, the empirically grounded propositions regarding the decision-making variables and the settings of a crisis decision were based upon single decisional processes. Paige developed these propositions through an exhaustive analysis of the Korean decision as he had defined it, but the observations were

⁷These are simplified terms which Paige used in place of "organizational roles and relations," "communication and information," and "motivation," the terms originally used by Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin. Paige's terms are simpler terms with which to work, and this study will also adopt them, both for clarity and for simplicity.

based upon individual events, actions, relationships, problems, and other such properties. These propositions were based upon the integral parts of the processes producing individual and discrete decisions rather than the over-all aspects of a sequence of decisions. In many instances, the properties of more than one decisional process were used as the basis for a proposition, but each characteristic (or the observed property from each decisional process) stood alone; the results were not the sum of the parts, but rather were representative of what each individual observation indicated. While Paige proposed a typology of crisis decisional stages that was invalid because it was based on something other than a single crisis decisional process, his propositions regarding decision-making variables were saved by the nature of the observations upon which they were based.

Paige presented these propositions in groupings which were based upon the nature of the decision-making variable to which they pertained. In addition, some of the properties had corollaries which served to expand or clarify the parent concepts. These empirically generated propositions represented the effects of a crisis upon a decision-making process; they were the characteristics which Paige hypothesized would exist in a process producing a crisis decision, and which would serve to provide an understanding of such a process.

These propositions will be analyzed in the remaining portion of this chapter; each variable will be considered separately, and the propositions which pertain to it will be examined in light of the characteristics which the quarantine decisional process possessed. Other, new propositions will also be offered, but they will be based solely upon the nature of the quarantine decisional process; their general applicability will be in question until they too can be compared with the characteristics of other crisis decisional processes. The summarization of these results, together with an evaluation of the decision-making approach, will be presented in the following chapter.

Organizational Propositions

The first set of propositions that this study will analyze is that pertaining to the variable of organization within a crisis decisional unit.

Paige's first proposition was that the decisional unit producing a crisis decision tends to be ad hoc in nature.⁸ This proposition is supported by the nature of Ex Comm. The members were chosen by President Kennedy in order that they might counsel him; they were specially convened to help decide what course of action the United States would take in meeting the challenge of the Soviet offensive capability in Cuba. He did not use his Cabinet,

⁸Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 281.

although some of these members were participants in Ex Comm. The President brought together military men, diplomats, and others, both inside and outside the government, and in doing so, he created an ad hoc committee to deal with a special problem upon which he desired advice.⁹ The quarantine decision was the product of this ad hoc committee, or decisional unit, and this bolsters the general applicability of Paige's proposition.

Paige's second proposition was that decisional units that produce crisis decisions tend to have narrow limits in terms of size and composition.¹⁰ Paige believed that such decisional units would vary in size from twelve to fifteen members,¹¹ but the decisional unit which produced the quarantine decision consisted of approximately twenty people.¹² Paige's numerical limits are not then valid for all crisis decisional units, yet his second proposition is not seriously weakened by this. While the numerical limits which he set are not acceptable, the idea that certain limits do exist is supported by the quarantine decision. Kennedy asked certain key advisors to aid him in choosing

⁹Supra, pp. 47-48.

¹⁰Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 285.

¹¹Ibid., p. 286.

¹²Robert F. Kennedy, Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 30. See also Theodore Sorenson, Kennedy (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), pp. 674-675.

a response to the missile presence in Cuba; the number of people who knew of the crisis was limited so as to ensure secrecy, yet the President sought to have adequate representation of both the Department of State and the Department of Defense, as well as representation of other interests or opinions which he valued. The need for secrecy set an upper limit upon the size of the group while the need for adequate representation of those whom the President sought for advice set a lower limit.¹³ Given a limited number of members and a desired combination of represented interests, President Kennedy could not allow any single department or set of interests to be either under or over represented if Ex Comm were to serve the purpose which he set before it.¹⁴ Thus, Paige's hypothesis that certain limits exist regarding the size and composition of a crisis decisional group is substantiated by the analysis of the quarantine decisional process.

¹³Paige indicated that this was also evident in the Korean decisional unit. Cf. Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 285.

¹⁴It should be noted that an evaluation of the quarantine decisional process does not give evidence that the composition of Ex Comm was carefully calculated so as to maximize the President's desires; it was an ad hoc unit that had members added to it as the President saw fit, and that had members leave it because of pressing business elsewhere. Its membership was fluid, but this does not negate the fact the President sought to include those who could best counsel him while ensuring that few people knew of the crisis, thus limiting both the size and composition of Ex Comm.

Paige also hypothesized three corollaries to his second organizational proposition. The first was that the more costly the anticipated response or policy, the greater is the size of the decisional unit up to a psychological and physical limit.¹⁵ This corollary introduced the concept of comparative magnitude, or the idea that the characteristics of different decisional processes can be compared in terms of intensity or degree. This was based upon Paige's analysis of the several decisions which composed what he designated as the Korean decision. In order to facilitate comparison between the Korean decision and the quarantine decision, this corollary must be reworded so as to remove the concept of comparative magnitude. The two decisions do not lend themselves to comparisons based upon comparative magnitude because of the difficulty in assigning to the properties of each some value or weight relative to the properties of the other; the decisions were the product of different decisional environments, and one would have to compare the totality of these environments to be able to validly assign such comparative values. This is certainly beyond the scope of this study if not impossible in any event.¹⁶

¹⁵Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 285.

¹⁶To say that the quarantine decision was "more" or "less costly" than the Korean decision, is to compare two different decisional environments. These decisional environments are the product of national and international political environments, human attitudes and values, technological abilities and achievements, national strengths

When Paige's first corollary to his second organizational proposition is altered so as to exclude the concept of comparative magnitude, the result is the proposition that an anticipated costly crisis commitment tends to be made by a large decisional unit limited in size by psychological and physical factors. The physical factor that Paige referred to was that of the capacity of the meeting rooms in which the Korean decisional unit convened.¹⁷

While knowledge of the seating capacity of all of the rooms in which Ex Comm met is not available, it is certain that there were finite limits. More important, the psychological limits of which Paige spoke were related to the desire for secrecy and the sense of adequate representation of all related interests. That such feelings set an upper limit

and capabilities, and many other such factors. In addition, much of the data would have to be based upon personal evaluations rather than upon something which was quantifiable. The two decisions are comparable in that they both are crisis decisions and that they both possess certain common characteristics or properties, but to go beyond this is unsound. To say that one decision is, in some way, of greater magnitude than the other is a value judgement. With the complexity of all of the factors that would comprise the two decisional environments, such a value judgement would at best be an "educated guess." Some of Paige's other propositions concerning organization and other variables also incorporate the concept of comparative magnitude, and these propositions have the same weaknesses described above. Some of these propositions can be reworded to remove the concept of magnitude, thus leaving a proposition which can be evaluated in terms of the analysis of the quarantine decision. This will be done where it is possible to do so. This rewording will be done in such a manner as to present the essence of the proposition in as unaltered a form as is possible.

¹⁷Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 286.

upon the size of Ex Comm has been demonstrated in the discussion related to the second organizational proposition. Given the nature of these psychological limits, one can say that Ex Comm was a relatively large group; it is conceivable that it could have included far fewer people than it ultimately entailed. From the analysis of the quarantine decision, the general applicability of a revised version of Paige's first corollary is strengthened.

The second corollary to Paige's second organizational proposition stated that the more immediate the sensed need for action, the smaller the decisional unit tends to be when any one of three other conditions is also present. These three other conditions are: one, when the commitment is not too costly; two, when the commitment is revocable; and three, when the commitment is anticipated as being widely acceptable.¹⁸ This corollary also has the concept of comparative magnitude present within it, but even if it were reworded, it cannot be substantiated by the quarantine decision. There was certainly an element of urgency in Ex Comm's deliberations, especially after the group was told of the introduction of intermediate range ballistic missiles and the speed with which both the intermediate and medium range missiles were being installed.¹⁹ There was,

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Supra, pp. 81, 85, and 92.

however, no one of the other three listed conditions present, in any degree, in the quarantine decisional process. Both the commitments which were seriously studied by Ex Comm were costly, and both were irrevocable.²⁰ In addition, it was not known how either response would be received in the United States or in the rest of the world. This corollary is not then supported by the analysis of the quarantine decisional process.

The third corollary to Paige's second organizational proposition should have been expressed as a separate proposition rather than as a corollary because it does not really pertain to limitations of size or composition. He stated that appropriate specialists play a greater role within a decisional unit as the problems of decision implementation become more technical.²¹ While this proposition also contains the concept of comparative magnitude, the comparison can be made in an intra-decisional analysis rather than an inter-decisional one.²² In the quarantine decisional

²⁰The air strike was irrevocable by its very nature, and the blockade was irrevocable because it was seen as an initial move that, if unsuccessful, would be escalated into a more forceful action.

²¹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 287.

²²The first corollary to the second organizational proposition was composed of a hypothesized relationship that existed between the degree of cost of a commitment and the size of the decisional unit rendering the decision. Since there was no meaningful variation in the size of Ex Comm, the only way that such a proposition could have been checked would have been to compare the cost of commitments put forth by the quarantine and Korean decisional units. If such a comparison could have been made, then it could

process, the problem of decision implementation became more technical as the majority of the members came to support the blockade response. From Thursday evening until Sunday morning, it was clear that the President and a majority of Ex Comm's membership favored the blockade response, but the President did not finalize this decision until after he talked with General Sweeney, head of the Tactical Air Command. President Kennedy sought the counsel of the man most qualified to comment upon the effectiveness of an air strike in order to dispel doubts about the desirability of the blockade policy.²³ Also during this period, many of the more specialized aspects of the blockade response were charged to people with an expertise in an area pertaining to one of these more specialized aspects. The development of a legal basis for such an action was delegated to legal

have been set against the differences in size of the two decisional units so as to prove or disprove Paige's hypothesized relationship. Such an inter-decisional endeavor would have required the comparison of the total decisional environments, an undertaking that has been explained as virtually impossible.

The third corollary to Paige's second organizational proposition lends itself to intra-decisional comparison, however. There is data in the study of the quarantine decisional process which enables one to check the proposition even though it deals with a relationship involving comparative magnitude. In such an instance, the type of relationship existing in each decisional situation can then be compared without the difficulty of assigning a greater or lesser degree of magnitude to a property in one decisional process relative to the same property in a second such process.

²³Supra, pp. 115-116.

experts in both the Department of Justice and the Department of State.²⁴ Sorenson, the President's speech writer, was charged with preparing the speech which would announce the blockade to the world. The Department of Defense was ordered to take the necessary steps to prepare for the implementation of the blockade and to develop an operational plan of procedures; it was also ordered to prepare a list of materials which should not be allowed onto the island.²⁵ The minutiae of detailed planning and implementation were being handled by specialists so as to ensure that the blockade, if it were chosen, would maximize the American strategic, legal, and political positions in the confrontation that would follow. In both the Korean and quarantine decisional processes, then, the more technical matters of decision implementation tended to be directed by appropriate specialists within the decisional units.

Paige's third organizational proposition was that the greater the crisis, the greater is the desire for "face-to-face proximity" among the members of the decisional unit.²⁶ Since the two crises cannot be compared in terms of degree, this proposition must be reworded; it then becomes the statement that crisis tends to elicit a desire for

²⁴Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 691-692. See also Elie Abel, The Missile Crisis (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1966), p. 68.

²⁵Supra, pp. 93-94 and 107.

²⁶Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 288.

face-to-face proximity among the members of a decisional unit. The nature of some of the President's self-imposed absences from Ex Comm would seem to challenge this proposition. Kennedy sought to ensure that there would be freedom of discussion within the meetings by absenting himself from them, and he was counseled in this by Sorenson and by his brother, the Attorney General. It could be argued that this was an extraordinary maneuver, but it still represented the feeling that at least the President's face-to-face proximity was not altogether desirable. In addition, the actions of Acheson and Stevenson in avoiding sessions in which the other was in attendance would tend to weaken Paige's proposal. Note should be made of Sorenson's absence from some of the Friday Ex Comm meetings. He was drafting two announcement speeches, and he may have been able to do this more effectively by himself. This would seem to be proof, however, that he did not feel a great need for face-to-face proximity. Finally, Ex Comm's tendency to split itself into groups should indicate that the members did not base their actions upon a desire for the physical propinquity of the members of their decisional unit. In the face of the observations made above,²⁷ it would seem that neither the original nor the revised version of Paige's third organizational proposition is generally applicable to crisis decisional processes.

²⁷Supra, pp. 64-65, 80, 85, and 100-101.

Paige's fourth proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the tendency to accentuate "positive affect relationships" among the members of the decisional unit. Paige was proposing that close, personal relationships among the members of a decisional unit tend to be related to a harmony of views under crisis conditions; the greater the crisis, the greater this tendency is.²⁸ Because the Korean and missile crises cannot be compared in terms of which represented a greater crisis setting, this proposition must be reworded; without the concept of comparative magnitude, the proposition becomes the statement that in a crisis, positive affect relationships among decision makers tend to be accentuated. Perhaps the closest relationships that existed between members of Ex Comm were those between the President and his speech writer, Ted Sorenson, and the President and his brother, Robert Kennedy. While the President initially seemed to favor the air strike, both of these key advisors were opposed to this action. The President later came to favor the blockade over the air strike, but there is no discernible link between this change and the President's relationships with these two men. Certainly their opposition to the air strike caused him to examine the possible choices more carefully, as did the opposition of other important advisors, such as Secretary of Defense McNamara and Under

²⁸Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 288-289.

Secretary of State Ball. To say that his relationships with these men caused him to choose the blockade over the air strike is to put forth an evaluation that cannot be supported with available data, however. Another close relationship within Ex Comm was that which existed between Rusk and his former chief, ex-Secretary of State Dean Acheson;²⁹ Rusk's respect for Acheson was evidenced by the fact that Rusk sought counsel from Acheson on the morning of the first day of Ex Comm's meetings. After Acheson joined Ex Comm, however, Rusk's stand, while unclear at times, was markedly different from the stand which Acheson took. Acheson was never converted to the blockade response; Rusk favored the blockade, and he even spoke rather forcefully for it in the final stages of the decisional process.³⁰

In discussing this fourth organizational proposition, Paige said that "negative affect relationships" did not seem to be accentuated in the same manner as positive affect relationships.³¹ In the quarantine decisional process, however, the relationship between Stevenson and Acheson kept them from attending meetings together, and they were unalterably on opposing sides. Stevenson sought to prevent

²⁹Cf. Michael J. O'Neill, "The Quiet Diplomat: Dean Rusk," in The Kennedy Circle, ed. by Lester Tanzier (Washington, D. C.: Robert B. Luce, Inc., 1961), pp. 111-112 and 131.

³⁰Supra, pp. 104-105 and 110-111.

³¹Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 288-289.

a belligerent action, such as the air strike, while Acheson promoted the air strike as the only course which the United States should take under the circumstances.³² It would seem that positive or negative affect relationships did not produce the same effects in the two crisis decisional groups. It is not clear just what effect Sorenson's or Robert Kennedy's opposition to the air strike had upon the President, but it is clear that there was no harmony of opinions between Rusk and Acheson. In addition, the negative relationship that existed between Acheson and Stevenson hampered the chances for any agreement between the two. Paige's fourth organizational proposition, and his related comments, indicate that there was a difference in the way prior relationships affected the participants in the two decisional groups. It would seem plausible that prior relationships would have some affect upon the participants in a decisional unit, but just what affect these relationships would have is unclear. It is likely that other aspects of a particular decisional unit and its setting affect the manner in which prior relationships will condition its activities; just what these other factors may be is not discernible in either the Korean or quarantine decisional processes. In any event, Paige's fourth organizational proposition is not generally applicable given the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process.

³²Supra, pp. 64-65, 79-80, 104-105, and 112-113.

Paige's fifth organizational proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the leader's acceptance of responsibility for action and the greater is the acceptance and expectation of such an assumption of responsibility by the other members of the decisional unit.³³ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, the proposition becomes the statement that in a crisis setting, the leader tends to accept responsibility for action, and the other members of the decisional unit tend to expect and accept such an assumption on the part of the leader. That there is a tendency in a crisis setting for the members of the decisional unit to accept and expect the assumption of responsibility by the leader is supported by the experience of Ex Comm; the members accepted their role as advisors to the President, and they expected him to make the final decision. They sought to give him advice and counsel, but they saw the constitutional and political responsibility for whatever action that the United States took as belonging to the President.³⁴ President Kennedy knew that the responsibility was his; he had charged the members of Ex Comm with helping him choose the course of action that would maximize American interests,

³³Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 289.

³⁴Robert Kennedy noted that after Ex Comm had completed its deliberations, "it was now up to one man [the President]," in Thirteen Days, p. 47.

but only he could make the choice.³⁵ Even so, the President sought to spread responsibility in such a way as to protect himself from future political attacks upon his choice of policy. The Ex Comm meetings on Friday, October 19, were designed to create a unanimity of support for the blockade policy; Kennedy was attempting to ensure that no advisor could later say that the President had acted unwisely or imprudently. The Sunday morning meeting with General Sweeney was also designed to protect the President's position; by recording General Sweeney's evaluation that the air strike could not be completely successful, the President was weakening any future argument that he should have chosen the air strike as the initial American response.³⁶ It would seem that the President was loathe to accept full responsibility for his choice of the quarantine response, even though he knew it was his decision to make. While the tendency for the other members of a crisis decisional unit to accept the leader's responsibility for action is supported by an analysis of Ex Comm and the quarantine decision, the leader's willingness to accept such responsibility appears to be affected by other factors in addition to the crisis setting; his acceptance would seem to be a function of his nature and personality as well as of the nature of a crisis decisional process.

³⁵Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 694.

³⁶Supra, pp. 96-97 and 115-116.

Paige proposed one corollary to his fifth organizational proposition. He said that the greater the crisis and the greater the leader's history of past action in the face of crisis, the greater is the tendency to make a positive response.³⁷ This proposition cannot be verified by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process because there was no past history of positive responses to international crises by President Kennedy, the political leader of Ex Comm.³⁸ In the wake of the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the erection of the Berlin Wall, Kennedy's actions were not aggressive or forceful; he assumed full responsibility for the Bay of Pigs failure, and he allowed the Berlin Wall to be constructed without serious challenge. Paige's "positive response" was one in which a forceful step was taken to enhance a nation's interest,³⁹ and neither of these responses were characteristic of such an action.

Paige's sixth organizational proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the tendency of the political leader to seek advice and counsel.⁴⁰ When the

³⁷Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 289.

³⁸Cf. Eleanor Lansing Dulles, American Foreign Policy in the Making (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968), pp. 183-201, and Paul Y. Hammond, The Cold War Years: American Foreign Policy Since 1945 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1969), pp. 139-164.

³⁹Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 289-290.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 290.

concept of comparative magnitude is removed from this hypothesis, it may be stated as the proposition that in a crisis decisional setting, the political leader tends to seek advice and counsel. President Kennedy's purpose in forming Ex Comm was to bring together a group of men who could provide him with the counsel and the advice that he felt that he needed before he could choose the policy that would maximize American interests. In the first Ex Comm meeting, the President charged his subordinates with this task. In addition, the President sought the advice and counsel of some who were not members of Ex Comm, such as John J. McCloy, the New York Republican lawyer. The President's solicitation of advice and counsel⁴¹ supports the validity of Paige's sixth organizational proposition.

Paige's seventh, and last, organizational proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the more interdepartmental collaboration there tends to be within a decisional unit.⁴² Ex Comm was composed of a number of men, many of whom came from either the Department of Defense or the Department of State. These men worked closely together as members of the decisional unit charged with examining all aspects of the problem before the United States, and they worked closely together in trying to formulate the policy choice that would best serve American interests. At least

⁴¹Supra, pp. 47-50.

⁴²Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 290.

at times, these men forgot departmental loyalties and superior-subordinate relationships in their efforts to serve the President as he had requested. Military and diplomatic problems were discussed and rediscussed, with each group providing its expertise. Later, as support for the blockade grew, the two departments began to specialize to some extent. The State Department was charged with preparing legal and political briefs supporting the quarantine; it was also charged with preparing for the release of the news to the leaders of other countries. The Defense Department was charged with preparing a set of operational plans for the implementation of the quarantine and ensuring that the men and equipment needed for any eventuality would be available and ready. Still, however, the efforts of these two departments were coordinated through Ex Comm, which contained many of the top officials of both. Throughout the early stages of the missile crisis, or the time in which Ex Comm was developing a response, there was a great amount of interdepartmental collaboration between the Departments of State and Defense.⁴³ Paige's seventh organizational proposition, when revised so as to exclude the concept of comparative magnitude, would state that in a crisis setting, there tends to be interdepartmental collaboration within the decisional unit; such a proposition

⁴³Supra, pp. 63, 91, 93-94, 107, 114 and 116-121.

is supported by the interdepartmental collaboration within Ex Comm.

Paige put forth a proposition in his discussion of the internal crisis setting which should have been put forth in the section on organizational crisis variables. His fourth internal crisis setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the acceptance of the leader's estimate of domestic feeling regarding a response by the members of the decisional unit.⁴⁴ This statement relates more to the organizational characteristics of a decisional unit than it does to the internal setting. While it concerns the acceptance, by the public, of a response, it proposes that the members of the decisional unit will accept the evaluation of the political leader on this matter, thus hypothesizing a certain relationship between the leader and the other decision-makers. When the concept of comparative magnitude is removed from this proposition, it can be put forth as the statement that in a crisis decisional unit, there is a tendency to accept the evaluation of the political leader regarding domestic reaction to a particular response. This proposition is supported by the characteristics of Ex Comm; when the President first met with Ex Comm on Tuesday morning, he ruled out acquiescence as a response to the missiles. It was his evaluation that the American people would not allow him to fail to respond

⁴⁴Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 304.

to the presence of such overtly offensive weapons in Cuba. There were other considerations that entered into his rejection of a "do-nothing" policy, but his evaluation of the American people was that such a response would be met with overwhelming opposition.⁴⁵ Ex Comm accepted his evaluation,⁴⁶ thus supporting Paige's proposition.

In addition to the theoretical implications of the quarantine decisional process listed above, some further organizational propositions may be offered. These propositions are based solely upon the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, and their general applicability must be validated through the analysis of other crisis decisions. If these proposed characteristics were present in the Korean decisional process, Paige failed to comment on them; further analysis of the Korean decisional process may well indicate the presence of similar characteristics, thus supporting the general applicability of these propositions to all crisis decisional processes. These further propositions are discussed below.

⁴⁵Supra, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁶Acceptance of this evaluation, as well as the others which the President presented in the first meeting, was manifest in the way in which Ex Comm sought to serve him in the next six days. With the possible exception of McNamara's initial stand against any action in order to avoid war, Ex Comm concerned itself solely with how the missiles could be removed. Other additional goals were discussed, but at no time did Ex Comm question the President's evaluations or his request for aid and advice.

The first organizational proposition based solely on the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process is the statement that the political leader tends to use a crisis decisional unit in such a manner as to serve his own interests. President Kennedy created Ex Comm in order to bring together a group of people whom he trusted and respected so that they could counsel him on the problem of the missiles; he charged the members with the discussion and exploration of all aspects of the problem in order that the group could develop more comprehensive perspectives of the threat and possible American responses. He was using Ex Comm to help himself choose that response which would maximize American interests. The President also used Ex Comm to protect himself from political attacks that might be made upon his choice of the quarantine response. When he indicated that he favored the quarantine response on Thursday evening, he had the support of a majority of the members of Ex Comm. Within the minority, however, were his military chiefs of staff and his chief intelligence advisor. In the event that the quarantine failed, these men would be able to leak their positions and advice to the public, thus placing the President in a politically untenable position of having overruled his military and intelligence advisors on a strategic matter upon which he subsequently was unsuccessful. In order to ensure against this, the President charged his brother and Sorenson with

engineering a consensus of opinion while he was away on Friday and Saturday; if everyone came to agree that a particular course of action was most capable of maximizing American interests, then the President felt they would be less likely and less able to attack him later. In both instances related above,⁴⁷ the President used the crisis decisional unit in order to serve his own interests.

A corollary to this first proposition is the statement that the political leader's role in a crisis decisional unit tends to depend upon what he thinks will best serve his interests. President Kennedy chose to absent himself from some of the deliberations of Ex Comm when he was told by his brother and by Sorenson that his absence produced less inhibited discussions. He was acting to ensure that the discussions were as free and as fluid as possible so that Ex Comm might explore all aspects of the problem. When the President did attend the meetings, he used his position to free the participants from possible inhibition by their department heads; he made each Ex Comm member responsible to him, and to no one else, in order to ensure that each participant could freely comment and criticize. After the first Tuesday meeting, the President hid his feelings from the participants until he was ready to announce that he had tentatively chosen the blockade response in order to keep such a disclosure from blocking the

⁴⁷Supra, pp. 47-50 and 95-98.

development or exploration of all considerations. He asked pointed questions which forced the participants to search for answers, and he sought to initiate candid and personal exchanges between the participants in order that all facets of the crisis could be brought forth.⁴⁸ When he attended the meetings of Ex Comm, the President sought to use his position to secure the same goal which he sought by absenting himself from them: a freedom of discussion and exploration that would produce a comprehensive picture of what the President and the country faced. In doing so, the President was fulfilling the role which he saw as best serving his interests.

A second corollary to the first organizational proposition drawn from the analysis of the quarantine decision is the statement that discussion within a decisional unit tends to be less constrained in the absence of the political leader. According to Ted Sorenson, one of the participants in Ex Comm, ". . . the absence of the President [from the Ex Comm meetings] encouraged everyone to speak his mind." When the President did attend the meetings, he found that ". . . lower ranking advisors . . . would not voluntarily contradict their superiors."⁴⁹ As noted in the discussion

⁴⁸For a comprehensive view of the President's role in Ex Comm, see Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 679, Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 58, Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 43, and Edward A Weintal and Charles Bartlett, Facing the Brink: An Intimate Study of Crisis Diplomacy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 65.

⁴⁹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 679.

of the previous corollary, this phenomenon was related to the presence of the President, and he sought to absent himself from some of the meetings because of it.

The second organizational proposition drawn from the quarantine decision is the statement that as new people join a crisis decisional unit, or as old members return after an absence, discussion tends to become repetitive and counter-productive. This was especially true of the Wednesday meeting of Ex Comm, which lasted throughout the afternoon and well into the night. As new members joined the group, and as other members came and went, there was difficulty in ensuring that the discussions had form and structure.⁵⁰ The situation was one in which members had to be constantly appraised and reappraised of what had been discussed and decided in the deliberations which they had missed. Robert Kennedy assumed the role of pressuring others so as to ensure that there was progress in the deliberations, but the task was a difficult one to fulfill. The Attorney General was successful in his efforts, however, and the discussions moved ahead despite the fluid nature of the meetings.⁵¹

A third organizational proposition drawn from the analysis of the quarantine decision is the statement that departmental jurisdictions in a crisis decisional unit tend

⁵⁰Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 44.

⁵¹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 679.

to become hazy where at least two areas of departmental specialization are involved. The two major areas of departmental specialization that were involved in the quarantine decision were those of the Departments of State and Defense. Much of the discussion of the group centered around the political and military problems which the proposed responses to the missiles would encounter, and the participants commented freely on both aspects. According to Sorenson, the severity of the Soviet threat and the inter-departmental nature of any proposed response effectively destroyed departmental jurisdictions, and the members from the State Department or the Defense Department acted as individuals rather than representatives of particular departmental specializations.⁵² It should be stressed that departmental jurisdictions became meaningful again as the deliberations of Ex Comm turned to the question of the implementation of the blockade; as noted in the discussion of Paige's third corollary to his second organizational proposition, the role of specialists within Ex Comm increased as the more technical problems of decision implementation arose. General policy-making, then, tends to produce the situation in which departmental jurisdictions disappear, while, the technical problems of decision implementation tend to accentuate departmental jurisdiction and expertise.

⁵²Ibid.

A fourth organizational proposition drawn from the analysis of the quarantine decisional process is the statement that some members of crisis decisional units tend to hold more important and more influential roles than formal position or expertise would seem to warrant. Robert Kennedy, the President's brother held such a position within Ex Comm. He not only assumed the role of "devil's advocate" and discussion leader, but he also was one of the stronger opponents of the air strike response. His comparisons of such a response to the Japanese attack upon Pearl Harbor had a great impact on the other members of Ex Comm. Stevenson, Sorenson, and McNamara evaluated his role as the most important one played by any of the participants, with the obvious exception of the President.⁵³ This position within Ex Comm was not the product of his formal position as Attorney General, nor was it the product of any expertise in diplomatic or military affairs. His position was the product of his personality and his close relationship with his brother, the political leader of the decisional unit. He was asked to join the group by his brother, and the close relationship that the two enjoyed affected the nature of the Attorney General's relationship

⁵³See Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 46, Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 679, and Robert McNamara, "Introduction," in Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis, by Robert F. Kennedy, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1969), pp. 14-16.

with the other participants. Another such individual was ex-Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Acheson, as the leader of those who favored the air strike, was fulfilling a role for which he had some claim to expertise, but it had been several years since he had actively been involved in diplomatic or military affairs. In addition, he lacked any formal position upon which to base his forceful role. The respect with which he was regarded by a number of the participants, including the Attorney General,⁵⁴ formed the basis for his important position within Ex Comm. Both of these individuals held roles which were not based upon expertise or formal position, but were based instead on factors that were not directly related to the nature of the crisis or the decisional unit. In addition, both had the initiative and drive to exploit these factors and assume the roles which they fulfilled.

A fifth organizational proposition drawn from the analysis of the quarantine decision is the statement that the tension inherent in a crisis decisional setting may produce aberrations in the behavior of the members of the decisional unit. By Thursday, the members of Ex Comm were beginning to feel the pressures and tensions under which they worked. Under the President's careful and pointed questions in the Thursday evening meeting at the White House, many of the members became uncertain, and some even

⁵⁴Supra, pp. 47, 75-76, and 98.

switched sides. In the Ex Comm meetings the next day, the impact of the strain and the tension was again evident; arguments that had been resolved earlier were reopened, and the majority in favor of the blockade response began to fall apart. In noting the impact of the long hours and tension of the previous few days, Robert Kennedy later wrote, "That kind of pressure does strange things to a human being For some it brings out characteristics and strengths . . . for others the pressure is too overwhelming."⁵⁵ The Friday morning meeting was characterized by arguments, anger, impatience, and uncertainty; there was no obvious or simple solution to the threat posed by the missiles, yet a response had to be formulated. In addition, time was a factor because of the speed with which the Soviets were completing their installation of these weapons.⁵⁶ In this crisis setting, some members of the decisional unit were, in the Attorney General's words, "overwhelmed."

These five organizational propositions and their corollaries constitute the body of hypotheses drawn from the analysis of the quarantine decisional process. These

⁵⁵Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 44.

⁵⁶Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 44. See also Theodore Sorenson, Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch or the Arrows (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 31 and 76.

propositions, as well as Paige's propositions that are supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, will be summarized in the following chapter.

Informational Propositions

The second set of propositions that this study will analyze is that pertaining to the variable of information within a crisis decisional unit.

Paige's first informational proposition was the statement that the greater the crisis, the more information the members of a crisis decisional unit feel that they need.⁵⁷ When this is altered so as to remove the concept of comparative magnitude, the proposition can be put forth as the statement that in a crisis decisional unit, the decision-makers experience a desire for more information to augment that which they already have. One of President Kennedy's first actions within Ex Comm was to order increased surveillance of Cuba; over-flights and peripheral flights were scheduled several times a day so as to ensure that the United States had a complete picture of the Soviet offensive build-up and the speed with which it was being effected. As noted in the narrative history, the President felt that the United States would need the strongest evidence possible to support whatever course of action it took. In addition, the participants tried to evaluate

⁵⁷Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 292.

such things as the American ability to remove the missiles with an air strike and the nature of Soviet responses to the possible policy choices before Ex Comm. Ex Comm sought both substantive and evaluative information, and there was a predominant feeling that it was desirable to have as much information as it was possible to gather. The characteristics of the quarantine decisional unit⁵⁸ then support the revised version of Paige's first informational proposition.

Paige's first corollary to this proposition stated that the more limited the information, the more emphasis the decision-makers within a crisis decisional unit tend to place upon the reliability of the informational source.⁵⁹ Without the concept of comparative magnitude, this proposition can be put forth as the statement that if information is limited, the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to stress the reliability of its source. In the quarantine decisional process the discovery of the missile threat was based upon intelligence photos that did not indicate the definite presence of a single missile; the intelligence community interpreted certain types of construction and related activities as representing the initial stages of the introduction of offensive missiles onto Cuban soil by the Soviet Union. When McNamara was presented with the

⁵⁸Supra, pp. 49, 60, 65-66, 68-74, 83-85, 100-101, and 115-116.

⁵⁹Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 292-293.

information, he did not feel that this proof was definitive, but others, including Bundy, disagreed. When the President was briefed on Tuesday morning by Bundy and members of the intelligence establishment, he accepted the assertion of the intelligence experts. Without having positive proof of the existence of a single missile in their first meeting, the members of Ex Comm, with the possible exception of McNamara, also accepted the statement of the intelligence community that the activities present in the high-level reconnaissance photos indicated that the Soviets were indeed in the process of building medium-range ballistic missile sites.⁶⁰ The respect for the ability of the intelligence community experts to interpret pictures taken from planes flying at heights over fifteen miles, and the respect for the intelligence community's ability to piece together bits of information, tended to create a sense of reliability of the intelligence information in the minds of the participants. Because of this, they accepted the sketchy information as indicating that there would soon be Soviet missiles threatening American interests from Cuban soil. In addition, President Kennedy went directly to the man who could most authoritatively evaluate the effectiveness of an American air strike before he completely ruled out this response as the initial American action; in his

⁶⁰Supra, pp. 45 and 48-49. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 17-18.

Sunday meeting with General Sweeney, the chief of the Tactical Air Command, the President was seeking the advice and counsel of a person whose position and expertise made him the most competent to declare how successful an air strike could be in removing the missile threat.⁶¹ In doing so, the President set aside even the statements or evaluations by his Joint Chiefs of Staff. Given the limited or hypothetical nature of the information desired, the most authoritative and direct source was regarded as the most reliable, and information obtained from this source had emphasis placed upon it.

Paige's second corollary to his first informational proposition stated that the greater the variation of organizational origins and routes of like information, the greater is the confidence of the members of the decisional unit in its validity.⁶² This proposition cannot be validated by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process. There was only one real source of substantive information; the photographic intelligence was used exclusively to determine the nature and extent of the Soviet build-up.⁶³ In his discussion of this corollary, Paige

⁶¹Supra, pp. 115-116.

⁶²Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 293.

⁶³The information presented in each of the intelligence briefings was based upon the photographic surveillance of the island. If other sources of information were used, they were so secondary as to be completely overlooked

referred to information detailing the extent of the North Korean actions, or information that was substantive in nature. Since his corollary is based upon comparisons of degree or magnitude, the single source of substantive information for the quarantine decisional unit cannot serve to validate the proposition, nor can a comparison in degree be made between the Korean decisional process and the quarantine decisional process that would serve to validate the corollary. If the concept of comparative magnitude is removed from the corollary, it could be stated as the proposition that varied organizational routes and sources of similar information tend to elicit the confidence of the members of a decisional unit in the validity of such information. Even this cannot be supported by the quarantine decisional process, because there was no substantive information except that which came from one source and through one channel.

Paige's third corollary to his first informational proposition stated that the more prolonged the crisis, the greater is the feeling by the members of the decisional unit that their information is adequate.⁶⁴ When the concept

in the discussions of the intelligence briefings. See Roger Hilsman, To Move A Nation: The Politics of Foreign Policy in the Administration of John F. Kennedy (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 193-201.

⁶⁴Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 293.

of comparative magnitude is removed from this corollary, it can be stated as the proposition that in the later stages of a prolonged crisis, the members of the decisional unit tend to feel that their information is adequate. This corollary, as it is restated, is not supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process. The information which Ex Comm had relative to Soviet reactions to possible American responses was based upon evaluations by the members, but no one knew exactly what reaction the Soviets might make. There was a definite feeling of information inadequacy that manifested itself in the short tempers and impatience of the Friday meetings; any action which the United States took might have led to nuclear war, and this weighed heavily upon the minds of the participants.⁶⁵ The blockade was finally chosen as the initial American action because it was thought to have less chance of provoking a nuclear confrontation with the Soviets, but it was not known whether this would actually be the case.⁶⁶ The photographic evidence of the Soviet moves in Cuba was thought to be adequate, both as a basis for American action before the world and as solid intelligence data upon which to evaluate American interests, but the lack of information regarding the Soviet reaction to any American response made the task of choosing the course of action

⁶⁵Supra, pp. 98-100 and 102-103.

⁶⁶Supra, pp. 108-112.

that would maximize American interests a difficult one to perform.

Paige's second informational proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the tendency for primary messages to be taken to the top of the organizational hierarchy.⁶⁷ When the concept of comparative magnitude is removed, this proposition can be put forth as the statement that in a crisis decisional situation, there is a tendency for primary messages to be taken to the top of the organizational hierarchy. This is supported by the experience of Ex Comm; the intelligence report, comprised of data collected daily, was presented to Ex Comm at the beginning of each meeting.⁶⁸ The intelligence data constituted the bulk of the primary messages related to the quarantine decisional process, but other such information was also elevated to the top of the organizational hierarchy. For instance, Ambassador Foy Kohler was called to a meeting with Khrushchev on Tuesday, October 16; Khrushchev again pledged that Soviet intentions in Cuba were peaceful and defensive, and he asked that Kohler report to the President that the last thing he or the Soviet Union wanted to do was to cause the President any embarrassment on the eve of American elections. When this message was reported to the

⁶⁷Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 294.

⁶⁸Supra, pp. 65-66.

President, it was evaluated as an attempt to deceive the United States and its leaders.⁶⁹

One point should be made before Paige's second informational proposition is accepted upon the basis of the analysis of the quarantine decisional process. When Bundy learned of the missile presence on Monday evening, he did not relay this information to the President until the following morning. Bundy's reasons for doing so are covered in the narrative history,⁷⁰ but the point should be made that he took it upon himself to decide whether the President should or should not be informed of matters that were of vital importance to American security. He informed the President of these matters early the next morning, but one night had been lost in which the government might have begun its operations to counter the missile threat. Based upon the experiences of the quarantine decisional process, information has a tendency to be elevated to the top of the organizational hierarchy in a crisis, but there may be delays in the process that are the product of the judgement of men who find themselves in key positions within that hierarchy.

Paige's third informational proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the more the decisional unit members rely upon the central themes in information which

⁶⁹Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 291. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 37.

⁷⁰Supra, pp. 43-44.

exist prior to the crisis.⁷¹ When the concept of comparative magnitude is removed, this may be stated as the proposition that in a crisis decisional process, the decision-makers rely upon the central themes in information that exist prior to the crisis. This is not supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process. The central theme of previously existing information precluded the introduction of offensive missiles into Cuba; the "September Estimate," the intelligence community's evaluation of strategic actions or developments for the Fall of 1962, ruled out such an eventuality because of the Soviet knowledge that the introduction of offensive missiles into Cuba would be met by a strong and negative American reaction.⁷² The photographic intelligence presented to the President and Ex Comm on Tuesday, October 16, indicated that the central theme in previously existing information was obviously fallacious. Instead of placing reliance upon previous information, as Paige proposed, Ex Comm was forced to act upon the basis of information that was immediately incidental to the crisis itself.

In a corollary to this third informational proposition, Paige said that the greater the confidence in existing information, the greater is the amount and authority of contrary evidence that the decisional unit requires to change

⁷¹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 294.

⁷²Supra, p. 37.

its interpretation.⁷³ When the concept of comparative magnitude is removed, this can be stated as the proposition that when there is great confidence in existing information, the decisional unit requires a large amount of authoritative evidence if it is to change its interpretation. As indicated earlier, the initial evidence presented to Ex Comm on the first day of the crisis was accepted, and previous evidence and interpretations were set aside. While the authoritativeness of the information was accepted, there was no large quantity of physical evidence. What pictures there were indicated that the Soviets were installing ballistic missiles upon Cuban soil, and the trust and faith which the members of Ex Comm had in the ability of the intelligence establishment in the area of photographic reconnaissance and interpretation caused the members of the decisional unit to set aside the previous interpretations and analyses that such an occurrence was unlikely. The characteristics of the quarantine decisional process indicate that the authoritativeness of new information is an important factor in prompting a change in interpretation of situational properties, but these characteristics do not support the proposition that a large amount of such information is required for such a change. Paige's corollary to his third informational proposition is only

⁷³Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 295.

partly supported by the analysis of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's fourth informational proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the tendency of the decision-makers to supplement the information incidental to the crisis with information based upon their own past experience.⁷⁴ When the concept of comparative magnitude is removed, this becomes the proposition that in a crisis setting, the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to supplement the information incidental to the crisis with information drawn from their past experiences. In the case of the quarantine decisional process, the members of Ex Comm, including the President, felt that the Soviets had to be stopped in order to prevent them from committing more aggressive acts in the future. This was not the sole basis for the consensus against allowing the Soviets to successfully place missiles in Cuba, but it was a major consideration. Ex Comm felt that if the Soviets were not challenged, they would feel free to move to maximize their international position, possibly in ways or in areas which would provide an even greater strategic threat to American interests than did the Cuban missiles.⁷⁵ While some of the members of Ex Comm -- such as Acheson, Rusk, Thompson, Nitze, and

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Supra, pp. 50 and 54.

Martin -- had participated directly in the foreign policy-making process prior to the Kennedy Administration, the entire group had the traditional evaluations of the Soviet-American rivalry and "containment" theory as integral parts of their background and experiences relative to foreign affairs. The participants were proceeding to evaluate the possible outcome of American acquiescence in the same manner in which it had been evaluated since 1947; while no one knew that the Soviets would act in even more aggressive ways if not challenged, the members of Ex Comm thought that this would be the case. It would seem that this feeling or evaluation was based, at least in part, upon the past experiences of the participants, or the way in which they had perceived the Soviet-American rivalry in the post-war world. Paige's fourth informational proposition is then supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige put forth a hypothesis in his propositions concerning the relationships between crisis and external setting that pertained more to informational properties than it did to external setting properties. His first external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the tendency of the decisional unit to seek additional information from the external environment.⁷⁶ With the removal of the concept of comparative

⁷⁶Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 309.

magnitude, this proposition becomes the statement that in a crisis decisional setting, the decisional unit tends to seek additional information from the external setting. President Kennedy's directive for accelerated photographic coverage of Cuba at the first meeting of Ex Comm⁷⁷ supports this hypothesis. By directing his intelligence establishment to seek more information regarding the extent and nature of Soviet actions on the island, the President was ensuring that additional information would be obtained from the external environment, thus validating Paige's revised first external setting proposition.

In addition to the discussion of the propositions put forth by Paige, another proposition may be offered and discussed that is based solely on the characteristics and properties of the quarantine decisional process. This proposition is the statement that tension within the decisional unit is increased by the introduction of additional information detailing the expansion of a threat. The Wednesday morning intelligence briefing disclosed the discovery of several more missile sites, including three intermediate range ballistic missile pads. In the Thursday morning intelligence briefing, McCone disclosed that the rate of installation could provide for the operability of all missiles within one week. These additional facts⁷⁸

⁷⁷Supra, p. 49.

⁷⁸Supra, pp. 66-67 and 81.

served to expand the nature of the threat in that the number and character of the missiles now represented a capability to strike most of the United States, and that this capability would very soon become operational. The effects upon Ex Comm were to increase the seriousness of the possible impact of the Soviet move in the minds of the participants and to place a premium upon the time which Ex Comm needed to complete its deliberations. These factors in turn increased the tension and pressure upon the participants, and the combination of the expanded threat, the shortage of time, and the need to carefully choose the proper response produced the irritability, indecision, and uncertainty which characterized much of the Thursday and Friday meetings of Ex Comm.⁷⁹ Additional information detailing the expansion of the threat thus led to heightened tension within the quarantine decisional unit and the related problems which an increase in tension might produce in any decisional unit.

This informational proposition constitutes the only theoretical implication drawn solely from the analysis of the quarantine decisional process. This proposition, as well as Paige's propositions that are supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, will be summarized in the following chapter.

⁷⁹Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 58. See also Kennedy, Thirteen Days, p. 44, and Sorenson, Decision-Making in the White House, p. 30.

Value Propositions

Paige chose to analyze values and their relationships to crisis decision-making in terms of the explicit statements of the objectives of the decision-makers associated with the decisions made in response to the crisis in Korea. Within this framework, he divided values into two categories. First, there were the negative or positive statements about desired goals, or the goal values. Second, there were the positive or negative statements about the various means of achieving these goals, or the instrumental values. When combined, these values made up the explicit value structure of the Korean decisional process. The implicit value structure, Paige felt, was not something which could be adequately researched, if it could be researched at all.⁸⁰ The analysis of the quarantine decisional process supports Paige's contention; it is virtually impossible to determine the implicit value structure that pertained to the decision rendered, but it is possible to determine the explicit values as they were represented in the particular goals and means supported by the Ex Comm members.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 295-296.

⁸¹ Implicit value structures involve values which are not made public, possibly for some reason or purpose. In addition, these values may be either consciously or unconsciously held by the decision-makers, thus making the structure hard to determine even to the participants in a particular decisional unit. With these drawbacks, any attempt to reconstruct the implicit value structure underlying a

Since the explicit value structure may not be readily apparent in the narrative history of the quarantine decisional process, it is desirable to reconstruct this structure. The dominant goal was the removal of the missiles, and the two dominant means for securing this goal concerned the use of a blockade and the use of an air strike. This goal and these means, and their related values, will be discussed below, but it should be noted that the values discussed will not exhaust the range of values which were made evident in the quarantine decisional process. Other values will be discussed as they are important and incidental to the analysis of Paige's propositions.

The major goal of Ex Comm was to secure the removal of the Soviet missiles from Cuba. With the possible exception of McNamara's comments on the first day of the crisis, this goal was unanimously supported during the entire decisional process. The related value to this goal was the preservation of American interests, and it was felt that the removal of the missiles would remove this

particular decision would prove to be a very difficult, if not impossible, task to fulfill. The explicit value structure is relatively easy to reconstruct, however; it consists of the goals, and the means of achieving the goals, which are put forth by the participants. While they are at best an incomplete presentation of the total value structure underlying a particular decision, these explicit values can be used to make general propositions concerning the relationships between values and particular types of decisional processes.

specific threat. American interests were accepted as encompassing three different concerns, or related values.⁸² First, the decision-makers were concerned with the preservation of American security. The missiles were viewed as a direct threat to American security by many of the members of Ex Comm; they would represent a significant increase in the nuclear capability of the Soviet Union, and they would enable the Soviet Union to launch an attack upon the United States, if it so desired, with little warning. Second, all of the members of Ex Comm felt that the Soviet missiles would adversely affect American prestige and influence. The United States would no longer be without serious challenge in the Western Hemisphere, and this might decrease American influence in Latin America. More important, however, other allies might begin to doubt American defense commitments and resolution; faced with a serious deterrent capability on its southern border, the United States might not choose to act to uphold its commitments, and the fact that it allowed such a deterrent force to be developed might be viewed as a lack of resolve and will on the part of the United States. Third, the Soviet action in placing the missiles in Cuba was viewed as a serious threat to peace in that it showed that the Soviets were capable of serious miscalculations concerning American will and determination to react to provocative and interest-damaging

⁸²Supra, pp. 50-56, 67-69, and 112-113.

Soviet moves. Ex Comm believed that these three particular concerns would be removed, and American interests in general would be served, through the removal of the missiles by the Soviet Union.

The two major means to this end which were considered by Ex Comm concerned the implementation of a blockade of the island and the use of a surgical air strike upon the missile sites. While there was unanimous agreement on the goal of the removal of the missiles, there was serious disagreement upon the means which would secure this end in a manner which would best serve American interests. Other means were also discussed early in the deliberations of Ex Comm, but they were rejected and the efforts of Ex Comm were concentrated upon the two means mentioned above.⁸³

The values which were associated with the support of the air strike were based upon the belief that the air strike could eliminate the threat in a fast, sure way. Those who supported this action -- such as Acheson, McCone, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff -- maintained that the missiles had to be removed as soon as possible, and that the air strike was the only means which could ensure that this could be accomplished.⁸⁴ Those who opposed the air strike -- such as Robert Kennedy, Ball, McNamara, and

⁸³Supra, pp. 59-62 and 68-79.

⁸⁴Supra, pp. 71-72, 82, 88, 95, and 98-99.

Thompson -- did so upon the basis of one or more of three associated values.⁸⁵ First it was maintained that the air strike would not be as sure as its adherents thought. No guarantee could be given that all the missiles could be destroyed, and it was thought that the remaining missiles would constitute a very real danger to at least some American cities or military targets. Second, the opponents of the air strike felt that it would be extremely provocative and that it might conceivably lead to a nuclear exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Union would be placed in a position which could very well force it to respond to the American action in such a way as to escalate the conflict to the point of general war between the two countries. Third, some of the members -- such as Ball and Robert Kennedy -- felt that such an action would be an abandonment of traditional American values; if there were an air strike, many Cubans would be killed. The surprise nature of the attack and the resultant loss of civilian life were viewed as being contradictory to American values, and it was felt that American interests would be hurt by such an action.

Robert Kennedy, Ball, McNamara, and others who supported the blockade based their actions upon three associated values.⁸⁶ First, they maintained that the blockade

⁸⁵Supra, pp. 72-75, 79, and 81-82.

⁸⁶Supra, pp. 76-79, 88-90, and 109-111.

would register strong opposition; the Soviet Union would be made aware of American determination to secure the removal of the missiles. This would indicate to the Soviets that the United States would not fail to react to what it considered a threat to its interests. Second, it was maintained that the blockade would not be so provocative that the Soviet Union would be forced to make some punitive or retaliatory military response. Third, those who supported the blockade believed that it gave the United States more control over ensuing events; if the blockade were not successful, the United States could escalate the military aspects of this response into whatever action was required to effect the removal of the missiles. Whatever was done, however, could be controlled by the United States so as to ensure that the removal of the missiles was secured at the lowest cost and the least threat to American interests. McCone, Acheson, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and others who opposed the blockade based their opposition upon two values.⁸⁷ First, they believed that time was a factor which would work against American interests; the blockade could not immediately secure the removal of the missiles, and the Soviets would have the opportunity to complete their installation. When the missiles were installed and ready, it was believed, it would be very hard and very dangerous to force their removal through an air strike.

⁸⁷Supra, pp. 82, 96, and 98-99.

Also related to the factor of time was the belief that the Soviets would be forewarned of impending action by the United States, and they would be given the opportunity to prepare themselves for any eventuality. Second, the opponents felt that the blockade could not be successful; at some point, the air strike would have to be implemented. Any warning or opportunity to prepare for this action would detract from the American advantage, and it was in the best interests of the United States to go ahead and act to destroy the missiles rather than wait until the advantage of surprise had been lost or until the missiles had increased the ability of the Soviet Union to respond to such a move.

The members of Ex Comm who favored one means usually opposed the other, and the values associated with opposition to one response and support for the other were usually closely related, as is indicated by the discussion of the values presented above. These values, and those which were presented in association with the goal of the removal of the missiles, constitute the explicit value structure which was predominant in Ex Comm's deliberations, and which formed the basis for Ex Comm's choice. With this value structure in mind, the propositions put forth by Paige may now be discussed in a more enlightened fashion.

Paige's first value proposition stated that crisis tends to educe a dominant goal-means value structure that

persists as a framework for subsequent responses.⁸⁸ Paige meant that the goal-means value structure that is created or that exerts influence in a given decisional process will continue to exert influence on decisions that are made subsequent to the initial decision and which are related to the initial decision in substance and in nature.⁸⁹ Since the quarantine decisional process encompassed only one decision, the hypothesized impact of a goal-means value complex upon subsequent decisions cannot be verified by the quarantine decisional process characteristics.

Paige's second value proposition stated that the goal-means value structure educed by a crisis setting tends to have broad applicability.⁹⁰ The values associated with the goal of the removal of the missiles indicate that the members of the quarantine decisional unit were concerned with the broader aspects of American interests. The removal of the missiles would promote the preservation of American influence and prestige in Latin America and the rest of the world, and would offset the damage to American influence and prestige that would accrue when the knowledge of the missiles became public. In addition, American efforts to force the removal of the missiles would impress upon the Soviet Union the danger of miscalculating the will

⁸⁸Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 296.

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 296-297.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 298.

and determination of the United States. By acting in an extremely provocative way to enhance its interests at the expense of the United States, the Soviet Union had shown that its view of American willingness to protect American interests was a mistaken one that could lead to a nuclear exchange. Seen in this light, the missiles themselves were of incidental importance to a much broader range of American interests; the strategic threat of the missiles was evaluated differently by the individual decision-makers, but the broader aspects of the introduction of the missiles were unanimously recognized as a threat to more general American interests.⁹¹ By their very nature, the means were closely related to the goal and its associated values. Moreover, certain considerations or values put forth in relation to either of the two means had a broader impact than simply to effect the removal of the missiles. Such considerations as the desire to choose a means which would not force the Soviets to react militarily to the American response and the desire to uphold traditional American values and traditions are indicative of such a broader impact.⁹² The goal and the means, and their associated values, were thus part of the value structure that went beyond the missile bases in its applicability; the missiles were seen as an immediate threat to American

⁹¹Supra, pp. 50-56 and 67-68.

⁹²Supra, pp. 61, 73-75, 76-79, 89-90, 93, and 105.

interests, but these interests were defined by most of the members in terms of a much broader framework than the Soviet-Cuban-American triangle. Based upon this analysis, Paige's second value proposition is supported by the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's third value proposition stated that a crisis setting tends to educe a goals-means value structure that is strongly conditioned emotionally.⁹³ It would seem that the emotions present in the quarantine decisional process were incidental to the dominant value structure rather than an integral part of it. The stress and tension under which the participants operated, plus the virtual impasse created by the conflict of differing opinions as to which of the two means would best satisfy American interests, produced the emotional nature of the Thursday and Friday meetings of Ex Comm.⁹⁴ The values themselves were relatively unaffected by such emotions, even though the inter-group relations and individual thought processes and viewpoints were greatly disturbed. The only incidence in which emotion seems to have affected the value structure was in the case of Robert Kennedy's stand on the immoral nature of a sneak attack; part of his argument was based upon the feeling that such an action was inherently wrong rather

⁹³Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 298.

⁹⁴Supra, pp. 91-92 and 99-100.

than upon the feeling that such an action would fail to maximize American interests.⁹⁵ The Attorney General received some support for this stand, but the over-all impact of this phenomenon cannot be said to support the broad nature of Paige's contention that crisis will produce a value structure that is strongly conditioned emotionally.

Paige's fourth value proposition stated that a crisis setting tends to educe the gradual establishment of related values around a central value core.⁹⁶ The properties of the quarantine decisional unit were created within the first twelve hours of Ex Comm's deliberations; the goal of the removal of the missiles and its associated values were settled in the first Ex Comm meeting, and by the end of the day the two competing means to this end and their associated values essentially had been crystallized.⁹⁷ These values can be said to have been present from the start, because it was on this first day that Ex Comm was creating a basis for its future substantive deliberations through its attempts to "box the compass." The use of the word "gradual" involves a certain degree of imprecision, but it should be maintained that Ex Comm's establishment of associated values around a central value core cannot really be said to have been gradual relative to the general nature of the

⁹⁵Supra, pp. 74-75 and 80.

⁹⁶Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 299.

⁹⁷Supra, pp. 44-62.

quarantine decisional process. Paige's fourth value proposition can then not be generally applicable.

Paige's first corollary to his fourth value proposition stated that the wider the range of values served by a costly commitment, the more willing to accept the risks of this commitment the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to be.⁹⁸ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that when a wide range of values are served by a costly commitment, the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to be willing to accept the risks of the commitment. Paige equated risk with cost in his proposition, and either of the means seriously considered by Ex Comm involved risks if they were to be implemented. The fact that the quarantine logically seemed to create less danger of immediate war does not detract from the seriousness of the confrontation that the decision-makers thought would follow. Even though they called it by another name, the blockade which they were endorsing had the character of an act of war. Ex Comm was willing to embark upon a course of action based upon this means because the goal of the removal of the missiles was seen as serving several values, collectively called American interests, which they held to be important.

⁹⁸Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 300.

Paige's corollary is thus supported by the properties of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's second corollary to his fourth value proposition stated that the greater the willingness of the members of a crisis decisional unit to accept the risks of a commitment to protect a central core value, the wider is the range of additional values which they tend to try to serve.⁹⁹ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that the members of a crisis decisional unit who are willing to accept the costs of a commitment in order to protect a central core value tend to try to serve additional values as well. This is not supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process; the members of the decisional unit very pointedly limited their objectives so as to direct American efforts toward the goal of removing the missiles.¹⁰⁰ The three dominant values associated with this goal formed a central value core that was viewed as important to the United States, and any subsidiary goal value, such as the removal of Castro, was viewed as endangering the success of the principle American aim. While the removal of Castro was viewed as an occurrence which would serve American interests, it was not deemed important enough to the United States to

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Supra, pp. 60-61, 81, and 119.

risk the success of the American effort to secure those three values which comprised what Ex Comm felt to be the major American interests associated with the missile crisis.

Paige's third corollary to his fourth value proposition stated that the more prolonged the deliberations between crisis stimulation and response, the greater is the tendency of the members of the crisis decisional unit to specify relevant values.¹⁰¹ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be restated as the proposition that a prolonged period between crisis stimulation and response tends to cause the members of a crisis decisional unit to specify relevant values. While the values associated with the goal of the removal of the missiles were specified from the start, the values associated with the means through which this goal might be achieved were subject to much scrutiny during the entire period of Ex Comm's deliberations. The attempts on Thursday afternoon, and again on Friday afternoon, to critically examine both the air strike and the blockade were examples of a type of specification process.¹⁰² While the values associated with these means were fairly well-defined, Ex Comm split itself into two groups to dissect the two courses of action in attempts to more completely understand all the ramifications

¹⁰¹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 300.

¹⁰²Supra, pp. 85 and 100-101.

of each of the approaches. In doing so, Ex Comm was making the values associated with the means more specific by thoroughly analyzing them for their strengths and weaknesses. One of the results of these actions was a greater appreciation of the basis for the value concerning opposition to the air strike on the grounds that it was a dangerous and provocative move that might lead to nuclear war. As the dangers inherent in this approach were made more specific, the argument that the blockade would be less likely to cause a nuclear holocaust, but that it did not rule out further action if this should prove necessary, began to eat away at the support for the air strike.¹⁰³

While this example of the specification of a value does not exhaust the cases in which this occurred, it is sufficient to indicate that Paige's corollary is supported, and that there does tend to be greater specification of values during a prolonged period of deliberation between crisis stimulation and response.

Paige's fourth corollary to his fourth value proposition stated that the more costly the response in a crisis setting, the greater the complexity of the value structure associated with it tends to be.¹⁰⁴ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be put forth as

¹⁰³Supra, pp. 88-91 and 101-105.

¹⁰⁴Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 300.

the statement that a costly crisis response tends to be associated with a complex value structure. Both of the responses to the missiles seriously considered by Ex Comm were costly, but the value structures associated with them do not appear to have been particularly complex. The three values associated with the goal of the removal of the missiles were rather straightforward statements of what the members of Ex Comm believed to be the relevant American interests involved. The pro and con positions regarding the different means through which the goal might be achieved were related in that the same values which prompted one to oppose a particular means usually formed the basis for the support of the other; for instance, the concern with time and the certainty of the removal of the missiles played a large role in both the support for the air strike and the opposition to the blockade. The values which seemingly prompted support or opposition for one or the other of the courses of action were generally stated in as straightforward a manner as were the values associated with the goal. The value structure was composed of a relatively small number of values, and these values were not inter-related in a very complex way. While a statement regarding the complexity of the value structure associated with the quarantine decision, or the deliberations of the decisional unit which rendered this decision, involves a personal judgement or evaluation, one can say that in the case of

the quarantine decisional process, a costly response was not associated with a complex value structure. Paige's proposition would not seem to be generally valid when examined against the characteristics of the quarantine decision.

Paige's fifth value proposition stated that with a greater sense of urgency on the part of the members of a crisis decisional unit, negative values tend to be less effective as inhibitors of a positive response.¹⁰⁵ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that a sense of great urgency on the part of the members of a crisis decisional unit tends to weaken the inhibiting effect of negative values upon the choice of a positive response. In the case of the quarantine decisional process, the negative values forming the basis of the opposition to both the air strike and the blockade were extremely effective in preventing positive action. Early in the deliberations of Ex Comm, a majority of the members favored the air strike; this majority was slowly eroded until a majority in favor of the blockade was formed.¹⁰⁶ The air strike was not chosen when a majority supported it because the minority was able to present its case well enough to cause

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Supra, pp. 62, 79, and 90-91.

uncertainty and to create a feeling of need for further consideration. The blockade was finally officially accepted as the initial American action, but this was two days after there was a clear majority in favor of it, and also two days after the President had tentatively chosen it as the course of action upon which the United States would embark.¹⁰⁷ The blockade was not chosen sooner because those who opposed it were important to the united front which the President wished to present later, and also because such men as Dean Acheson were able to put forth their values in opposing the blockade eloquently enough to cause uncertainty in the minds of many of the members of Ex Comm.¹⁰⁸ In both instances, then, negative values were effective inhibitors of the choice of a positive response. That there was a great sense of urgency has been demonstrated in previous discussions of the tension and stress that were produced by the magnitude of the threat and the pressing nature of the time element. Paige's proposition that urgency causes a relative ineffectiveness of negative values upon the choice of a positive response does not represent the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process.

¹⁰⁷Supra, pp. 89-91 and 92-93.

¹⁰⁸Supra, pp. 96-97.

Paige's sixth value proposition stated that in a crisis decisional setting, costly responses tend to be followed by a decline in the prominence and the importance of their associated values.¹⁰⁹ This proposition was based upon the nature of the several decisions which Paige referred to as the Korean decision. Since the quarantine decisional process concerned only one decision, it cannot be used to verify this proposition; the implementation of the costly response chosen by Ex Comm ended the quarantine decisional process. If there was a decline in the salience of the values associated with the quarantine response, then it occurred at a time other than the one encompassed by this particular crisis decisional process.

Paige put forth a proposition in his analysis of the relationships between crisis decisional processes and the external setting that should have been presented in conjunction with his propositions concerning the relationships between crisis decisional processes and values. His seventh external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the tendency to clarify the values associated with international political objectives.¹¹⁰ When the concept of comparative magnitude is removed, this proposition can be put forth as the statement that there is

¹⁰⁹ Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 301.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 314.

a tendency on the part of the members of a crisis decisional unit to clarify the values associated with international political objectives. It has already been noted that Ex Comm sought to isolate the interests which it sought to promote; in rejecting such additional goals as the removal of Castro, the decisional unit was acting to try to prevent subsidiary values and goals from diluting the impact, or weakening the chance of success, of whatever course of action the group finally chose. In addition, Ex Comm attempted to clearly delineate what it sought in the speech which the President would use in announcing the nature of the Soviet move and the American reaction. The speech was carefully examined in both of the meetings held on Sunday, October 21, and the final draft of the speech was examined by the group at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, October 22.¹¹¹ In all three of these meetings, Ex Comm was ensuring that the speech would serve American interests by clearly putting forth what interests the United States felt were threatened by the missile presence, and in what way this threat could be removed in an acceptable fashion. The decision-makers did not want to allow the Soviets an opportunity to delay the removal or to shift the responsibility for the crisis; the Soviets had threatened American interests by emplacing offensive missiles in Cuba, and these interests could be

¹¹¹Supra, pp. 116-117 and 119-120.

protected only through the direct removal of these weapons by the Soviets. Care was taken to define the crisis in terms of the threat posed by the missiles; if the crisis were expanded to encompass other areas or other matters, it was to be by Soviet initiative.¹¹² The United States sought to simplify the crisis in every way possible; only in this way did the members of Ex Comm feel that the main issue would be met without the chance of obfuscation or the danger of escalation. Through these efforts, the values were clarified by the decision-makers in a manner which supports Paige's revised seventh external setting proposition.

In addition to the propositions which Paige drew from his analysis of the Korean decision, there are two propositions that can be put forth upon the basis of the analysis of the quarantine decisional process. The first is the proposition that a crisis setting tends to lessen the emphasis placed upon the use of international organizations or multilateral action as a means for the solution of the problem causing the crisis. Ex Comm decided early in its deliberations not to depend upon the United Nations for a solution to the crisis; it would bring the issue before this body, but it would not rely upon it for satisfactory action. The chairman of the Security Council for October was Valerian Zorin, the Soviet delegate to the United

¹¹²Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 698-700. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 98-99.

Nations; he would have been able to use his position to favor Soviet interests. In addition to the Soviet advantage in the Security Council, the Soviets could have exercised their veto to hamstring or cripple United Nations action.¹¹³ Multilateral action in the form of a joint hemispheric effort was seen as desirable, and the United States acted to elicit the support of the members of the Organization of American States.¹¹⁴ Just as in the case of the United Nations, however, the United States would not rely upon such action for the removal of the missiles; if support from the members of the Organization of American States were not forthcoming, then the United States would act unilaterally to protect its interests.¹¹⁵ The United States refused to bind itself with commitments to the machinery either of the United Nations or of the Organization of American States. When American vital interests were concerned, the United States reserved the right to act to protect these interests; if it felt that the situation demanded actions which did not coincide with the practices or requirements of international bodies of a regional or world-wide nature it would act in the manner in which it

¹¹³ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 68.

¹¹⁴ Robert D. Crane, "The Cuban Crisis: A Strategic Analysis of American and Soviet Policy," Orbis, VI (Winter, 1963), 542-543. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 73.

¹¹⁵ Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 699.

felt it could best serve American interests. Multilateral or United Nations action would be abandoned if their requirements hampered the achievement of the goal which Ex Comm had set before itself.

The second proposition drawn solely from the analysis of the quarantine decisional process is the statement that values put forth by the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to be strongly influenced by role. With some notable exceptions, those who were associated with the military tended to favor the air strike as the response which would best serve American interests. Also with some notable exceptions, those who were not associated with the military tended to favor the blockade as the optimum policy choice. The exceptions which were most prominent were Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and former Secretary of State Dean Acheson; McNamara favored the blockade and Acheson favored the air strike. There were others who did not fit this dichotomy, but in most instances, insofar as it can be determined, these generalizations were applicable.¹¹⁶ Those who were associated with the military tended to value the speed and the certainty which the air strike afforded; it was a response which

¹¹⁶It should also be noted that these generalizations were most applicable after the initial Ex Comm meetings; in these early meetings, the members tended to favor the air strike, but this was before the problems associated with such an action were fully developed.

would directly act to destroy or neutralize the missiles before they could be made operational. These decision-makers also tended to evaluate the danger of Soviet reaction as negligible in relation to the American interests which would be served. Those who were associated with the non-military interests present in the decisional unit tended to support the blockade because they evaluated it as less provocative than the air strike; they felt that it would register American opposition to the missiles in such a way as to possibly lead to their removal, but in any event, they felt that the United States would not place the Soviet Union in a position in which it would be forced to react in some dramatic and dangerous way. When the membership of Ex Comm is categorized upon the basis of a military/non-military dichotomization, the support for the proposition that role and values within a crisis decisional unit are directly related can be recognized.

These two propositions constitute the body of value hypotheses drawn from the analysis of the quarantine decisional process. These propositions, as well as Paige's propositions that are supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, will be summarized in the following chapter.

Internal Setting Propositions

The fourth set of propositions that this study will analyze is that pertaining to the internal setting of a

crisis decisional unit. It should be noted that internal setting refers to the national environment or political setting in which a particular decisional unit operates.¹¹⁷ It should be further noted that this variable was not one which Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin put forth as a major determinant of action. They considered the internal setting an important part of any decisional environment, but it was thought that its impact was a product of the subjective or personal interpretation of the internal setting by the decision-makers. This phenomenon was in turn thought to be a product of the impact of the variables of communication and information.¹¹⁸

Where the propositions which Paige put forth in relation to the internal setting were more pertinent to one of the previous variables that this paper has analyzed, they have been incorporated into the discussion of that variable. There are others, however, which were not amenable to such incorporation, and they are discussed below. That such propositions can be put forth and analyzed separately would seem to support Paige's action in collectively presenting them as an important variable in the decision-making process.

¹¹⁷Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "Decision-Making," pp. 67-68.

¹¹⁸Ibid., pp. 124-137.

Because the quarantine decisional process was a tightly guarded secret throughout the period in which the decisional unit met to choose a response, there are differences between it and the Korean decisional process. For this reason, Paige's first internal setting proposition cannot be verified by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process. Paige hypothesized that the greater the crisis, the greater are the demands from the national environment for information concerning the responses which the decision-makers are considering.¹¹⁹ There were certain demands made by the national environment for information during the quarantine decisional process, but these demands were the requests for information by a very few reporters, and they were directed at trying to determine if there was a crisis rather than what responses the decision-makers were considering.¹²⁰ This is not what Paige meant by "environmental demands" in his proposition. He referred to the activities of reporters as an example of environmental demands, but the activities which he characterized were specific questions or demands for information which were based upon the knowledge that there was a crisis in Korea and that the United States was considering what response it should make to this crisis.¹²¹ This knowledge

¹¹⁹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 303.

¹²⁰Supra, pp. 87, 94-95, and 117-118.

¹²¹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 303.

of a crisis and the questions which it produced were not characteristic of the quarantine decisional process because of its secret nature, and Paige's first internal setting proposition is therefore not supported by an analysis of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's second internal setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater are the attempts of the decision-makers to limit the information concerning possible responses that is transmitted to the internal setting.¹²² With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be restated as the proposition that the decision-makers of a crisis decisional unit tend to limit the information concerning possible responses that is transmitted to the internal setting. This is supported by the efforts to maintain the secrecy of the quarantine decisional process. Ex Comm did not just try to limit the "response-relevant" information that was transmitted to the internal setting; it sought to prohibit any information of any nature from reaching the national environment. Through the President's order to maintain the strictest secrecy, and Ex Comm's acceptance and implementation of this order, the internal setting was kept unaware of the crisis and the top-level deliberations until the

¹²²ibid.

President made his October 22 speech.¹²³ Some high-ranking administrative personnel and legislative leaders were told of the crisis and the American response prior to the speech, but this occurred after the decision was finalized on Sunday morning; these men were enjoined to secrecy, and their briefing was ex post facto in its nature.¹²⁴ The decision to quarantine Cuba was the product of a process which was kept extremely secret, and this secrecy dramatically supports Paige's second internal setting proposition.

Paige's third internal setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater are the efforts of the members of the crisis decisional unit to diminish anxiety in the internal setting.¹²⁵ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be restated as the proposition that the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to try to diminish anxiety regarding the crisis in the internal setting. Much of the effort in drafting and re-drafting the President's speech on Sunday and Monday was directed at preventing it from alarming the American people any more than was necessary. Words or phrases which were thought to be unduly alarming were struck from the speech and replaced with less frightening phraseology.¹²⁶ While

¹²³Supra, pp. 49, 57, 87-88, 94-95, and 106-107.

¹²⁴Supra, pp. 120-121.

¹²⁵Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 303.

¹²⁶Supra, p. 119.

the internal setting was as yet unaware of the crisis, Ex Comm was ensuring that the anxiety caused by the public announcement of the crisis and the American response would be minimized. Even though Paige referred to actions which were directed at diminishing the anxiety which was already present in the internal setting during the Korean crisis, the action taken by Ex Comm would seem to be of a similar enough nature to support Paige's proposition that crisis decision-makers tend to attempt to diminish popular anxiety. Upon this basis, Paige's third internal setting proposition can be said to be supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's fourth internal setting proposition¹²⁷ pertained more to the question of organizational roles and relationships, and for this reason, it has already been examined with the organizational propositions which Paige put forth.

Paige's fifth internal setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the more the members of a decisional unit tend to avoid involvements which would inhibit their choice of responses.¹²⁸ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be put forth as the proposition that the members of a crisis decisional unit

¹²⁷Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 304.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 305.

tend to avoid involvements which would inhibit their choice of responses. One could present an argument that the attempts to maintain the secrecy of their deliberations represented, in part, efforts by the members of Ex Comm to maintain their options, or to prevent American public opinion from forcing them to choose a response before they had fully considered the various courses of action which they had before them.¹²⁹ More important, however, is the manner in which key legislative leaders and many top executive officials were informed of the crisis and the American reaction; these people were told of these things after the decisions had already been made.¹³⁰ These were people who could have directly influenced the choice of policy through their political power and prominence, but they were informed of the quarantine just hours before it was announced by the President, and after it had been finalized as the initial American response. If one would argue that this was a function of secrecy, or that such action represented an effort on the part of Ex Comm to prevent the Soviet Union from being fore-warned of impending American action, a counter-argument can be presented based upon the observation that these people could have just as easily released

¹²⁹ Both Sorenson and Abel could be said to imply this. See Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 676, and Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 36.

¹³⁰ Supra, pp. 120-121.

the news to the Soviets on Monday as they could have in the earlier stages of the decisional process. While there is direct evidence that shows that the United States sought to avoid response-inhibiting involvements with the external setting, there is no clear evidence that this was the case in regard to the internal setting. Yet the comments above indicate that many top leaders were told of the crisis and the American response before it was announced but after the decision was made, or at a time when they could do very little to inhibit the choice of the American reaction to the missiles. Again, there is no direct evidence that Ex Comm sought to avoid inhibiting relationships with the internal setting, but the circumstantial evidence indicates that this was the case. Thus, Paige's fifth internal setting proposition is supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's sixth internal setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the more the members of the decisional unit tend to avoid involvements which challenge their legitimacy.¹³¹ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to avoid involvements which challenge their legitimacy. Ex Comm's actions in withholding the information of the

¹³¹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 306.

crisis from the key legislative leaders could be said to represent an attempt to avoid involvements which could challenge its legitimacy, for the Congressmen could have, and indeed initially did, challenge the response which the President chose as the official American policy.¹³² By waiting to tell the Congressmen until shortly before the response was to be implemented, Ex Comm created an environment in which the negative influence of Congress could not be exercised to block the action which had been chosen. Again, circumstantial evidence indicates that Ex Comm had more in mind by maintaining strict secrecy than simply preventing the Soviet Union from seizing the initiative from the United States. In addition, the President sought to limit involvements which could have challenged the legitimacy of his actions by creating an internal concensus behind the quarantine response. By waiting until all members of the decisional unit were agreed upon the course of action, and by attempting to engineer this agreement, the President was working to prevent political attacks upon his choice of policy after his choice was made public.¹³³ He was avoiding any kind of future involvement which would weaken the American commitment or his own political position; his subordinates would be inhibited from making attacks upon

¹³²Supra, pp. 120-121.

¹³³Supra, pp. 96-97 and 115-116.

the choice, either in a private or public manner, because they had supported the choice at the time at which he finalized it. The characteristics of the quarantine decision then support Paige's contention that the members of crisis decisional units tend to avoid any involvements which could challenge their legitimacy.

Paige's seventh internal setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the propensity for the members of the decisional unit to receive positive and reinforcing responses to their actions from the internal setting.¹³⁴ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that the members of a crisis decisional unit tend to receive positive and reinforcing responses to their actions from the internal setting. It should be noted that Paige based this proposition on the responses by the internal setting to the decisions which were rendered by the Korean decisional unit;¹³⁵ in short, he relied upon relationships which were actually beyond the scope of the decision-making processes which he was studying. These processes ended with the decisions which were the basis for the responses by the internal setting. It may well be that the internal setting responds with support for the actions of decision-makers in time of

¹³⁴Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 307.

¹³⁵Ibid.

crisis or great national stress, but such a response is not a part of the decision-making process which results in these actions unless it is anticipated or sought by the decision-makers, thereby in some way affecting their calculations or values.

Even though this proposition really pertains to relationships between the decisional unit and the internal environment that occur after the decision-making process has ended, it is important in that if it is a valid generalization, it can be a useful piece of information to those who participate in a crisis decisional process. The characteristics of the quarantine decisional process support this proposition, thereby making it more generally acceptable. Even though some of the Congressional leaders who had been given a special briefing on the crisis and the American response at least initially opposed the policy chosen by the President, the overwhelming reaction from the internal setting was one of support. Not all Americans were happy with the President's speech, but most rallied behind him.¹³⁶ The President, with the aid of Ex Comm, had made a decision in a crisis setting, and the majority of the American people supported him, thus supporting the proposition that such a decision will engender such support from the internal setting.

¹³⁶Sorenson, Kennedy, p. 704.

Paige's eighth and last internal setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the tendency of the decisional unit to engage in the preferential communication of its decisions to those parts of the internal setting that are politically sensitive and important to the decision's implementation.¹³⁷ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that a crisis decisional unit tends to engage in the preferential communication of its decisions to those parts of the internal setting that are politically sensitive and important to the decision's implementation. President Kennedy's meeting with the legislative leaders on Monday, October 22, represented an attempt by Ex Comm to engage in such preferential communication with an important part of the internal setting. These men were told of the crisis and the quarantine decision before the American people were informed; their briefing was by the President himself.¹³⁸ In addition, those members of the National Security Council and the Cabinet who were not also members of Ex Comm were informed of the situation prior to the public announcement in meetings with the President.¹³⁹ While it is true that the President had

¹³⁷ Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 307-308.

¹³⁸ Supra, pp. 120-121.

¹³⁹ Supra, pp. 108 and 120.

some control over the members of the Security Council and the Cabinet, it is also true that his control was not complete.¹⁴⁰ Just as he wished to have the full support of Congress, he sought the full support of his top advisors and administrators. These actions on the part of the President, who was acting in the name of Ex Comm, support Paige's propositions that a crisis decisional unit will tend to engage in the preferential communication of its decisions to those parts of the internal setting that are important, both from a political and administrative viewpoint.

In his eighth external setting proposition, it should be noted, Paige has again put forth a proposition which actually refers to a relationship which exists beyond the limits of a decisional process. The communication of a decision has ended, or else the decision would not exist to be communicated. Just as in the previous proposition, Paige, has noted a relationship between the internal setting and the decisional unit which may be important, but which is not really a part of the decision-making process.

In addition to the internal setting propositions which Paige drew from his analysis of the Korean decisional

¹⁴⁰Such control is never absolute. In fact, such control may not even approach being absolute. Cf. Richard E. Neustadt, Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960).

process, one proposition can be put forth upon the basis of the analysis of the quarantine decisional process. This is the proposition that the past policy statements or actions of the decision-makers in a crisis decisional unit tend to limit the alternatives open to these decision-makers because of the expectations which these past statements or actions are thought to create in the internal setting. These expectations may be real, or they may exist solely in the minds of the decision-makers; if the decision-makers believe that they are expected to react within a narrow range of alternatives, then they will do so, and the limiting influence of their past behavior will be made effective. It was felt within Ex Comm that the President could not choose a policy which simply acquiesced to the presence of the missiles. One of the reasons for this feeling was the nature of the President's past statements on American Cuban policy. He had dichotomized weaponry into those weapons which were offensive and those weapons which were defensive, and he had stated that the United States would act to protect American interests if the military build-up in Cuba became offensive in nature.¹⁴¹ American public opinion was not favorable to the President on Cuban matters; the public felt that he had not done enough to remove Castro and the Communist threat from the hemisphere. In addition,

¹⁴¹Supra, pp. 29-30, 32, 34-35, and 50-51.

he was under strong attack from the Republican Party for his Cuban policies.¹⁴² Given the nature of public opinion and of his past statements, the President could not avoid action in the face of the Soviet emplacement of missiles in Cuba without serious political threat to his Administration. In short, the President was prevented from accepting one choice of action, no matter how little chance there was that he might otherwise have chosen this response.

This proposition is the only such proposition drawn solely from the analysis of the quarantine decisional process. This proposition, as well as the others which were put forth by Paige and which were supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, will be summarized in the following chapter.

External Setting Propositions

The fifth and final set of propositions which this study will analyze is that pertaining to the external setting of a crisis decisional unit. It should be noted that external setting refers to the international environment or political setting in which a particular decisional unit operates.¹⁴³ It should be further noted that, just as in the case of the internal setting, this variable was not one which Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin put forth as a major

¹⁴²Supra, pp. 33-35, 39-40, and 58.

¹⁴³Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin, "Decision-Making," p. 67.

determinant of action. It was part of the decisional environment, but, like the internal setting, it was thought that its impact was a product of the subjective interpretation of the external environment by the decision-makers. This in turn was a function of the communicational and informational variables of a decisional process.¹⁴⁴

Just as in the case of the propositions which Paige put forth relative to the internal setting, some of the propositions which he put forth relative to the external setting were more pertinent to some of the other variables. His first external setting proposition is such a one.¹⁴⁵ This first proposition has been analyzed with and incorporated into the propositions concerning the informational properties of a crisis decisional process. In addition, Paige's seventh external setting proposition¹⁴⁶ was more pertinent to another variable. This seventh proposition has been analyzed with and incorporated into the propositions concerning the value properties of a crisis decisional process. The other external setting propositions are discussed below. That these remaining propositions can be put forth and analyzed separately would again seem to justify Paige's actions in collectively presenting such

¹⁴⁴Ibid, pp. 124-137.

¹⁴⁵Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 309.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., p. 314.

propositions as an important variable not otherwise stressed in the application of the decision-making approach.

Paige's second external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater is the sensitivity of the decision-makers to the response expectations of the external setting.¹⁴⁷ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that crisis decision-makers are sensitive to the response expectations of the external setting. Since the decision-making process was shrouded in secrecy in the case of the quarantine decision there were no response expectations manifested by the external environment. The members of Ex Comm were sensitive, however, to what they considered these response expectations would be after the knowledge of the Soviet introduction of offensive missiles into Cuba were made public. Ex Comm, in its first meeting ruled out the alternative of acquiescence to the missile presence. The members felt that the Soviet action constituted a challenge; if this challenge were unanswered, the members believed that the Soviet Union would have been tempted to take even more threatening actions in order to maximize its strategic and political interests. Such actions might have led to a confrontation in which nuclear war was unavoidable. In addition, the members felt that by not

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 310.

answering the Soviet challenge, they would drive the allies of the United States into striking a more neutral international stance; the faith of these allies in the will and determination of the United States to meet its strategic commitments would have been shaken, and they would have felt that they were being forced to arrive at some understanding with the Soviet Union in order to enhance their own security interests. In order to ensure that the allies and the Soviet Union did not misinterpret American determination, Ex Comm felt that the United States had to act in a forceful manner to secure the removal of the missiles.¹⁴⁸ Whether these evaluations of probable response expectations from the external setting were correct does not matter; they were viewed as being correct, and Ex Comm predicated its actions partly upon the basis of these beliefs. The characteristics of the quarantine decisional process then support Paige's second external setting proposition.

Paige hypothesized two corollaries to his second external setting proposition. The first stated that the greater the crisis, the greater are the demands by the external setting for response information.¹⁴⁹ Paige based his corollary upon a decisional process that was conducted

¹⁴⁸Supra, pp. 49-56, 58-61, and 69-79.

¹⁴⁹Paige, The Korean Decision, pp. 311-312.

in an environment which involved an informed internal setting and an informed external setting; the environment knew of the crisis and the fact that the United States was formulating a suitable response. In the case of the quarantine decisional process, however, the external environment was unaware of the crisis until after the President's announcement. Some foreign diplomats and allied heads of state were informed of the American decision before the public announcement, but their notification was similar to that which key political figures in the internal setting received; they were told shortly before the announcement, and they had no opportunity to take any action that would have had a bearing on the President's speech or its subject matter. They were informed in an ex post facto manner, or after the decision had been made.¹⁵⁰ Since the external setting was not aware of the crisis while the decisional process was in progress, requests for information by the external setting were not a factor in the process. Paige's proposition cannot therefore be supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's second corollary to his second external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater are the efforts by the decision-makers to withhold information concerning response strategies from unfriendly

¹⁵⁰ Supra, pp. 117 and 120-121.

elements within the external setting.¹⁵¹ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that crisis decision-makers tend to withhold information concerning response strategies from unfriendly elements in the external setting. The point in keeping the deliberations of Ex Comm secret was partly to avoid allowing the Soviet Union the opportunity to prepare for American action; Ex Comm felt that surprise would work in favor of the United States.¹⁵² In short, part of the response strategy of Ex Comm was to withhold all information from public disclosure so as to maximize the impact of whatever American action was chosen. In acting to prevent the internal and the external environments from receiving any information concerning Ex Comm's deliberations, the decisional unit was attempting in part, to withhold information concerning response strategies from unfriendly elements within the external environment, thereby supporting Paige's second corollary to his second external setting proposition.

Paige's third external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the less acceptable to the external setting is that information which emanates from the

¹⁵¹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 312.

¹⁵²Supra, pp. 49 and 70-71.

decision-makers who are directly involved with the crisis.¹⁵³ Because of the secret nature of Ex Comm's deliberations, there was no information disseminated which could have been either more or less acceptable to the external environment. Again, the fact that Paige based his propositions upon a non-secret decisional process created a situation in which these propositions cannot be verified by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, or a process that was kept entirely from public view.

Paige's fourth external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the more frequent and direct are interactions between friendly leaders in the external environment.¹⁵⁴ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that in a crisis decisional setting, there are frequent and direct interactions between friendly leaders in the external environment. There were no contacts which concerned the missile crisis between the leaders of the United States and the leaders of other friendly countries during the quarantine decisional process. In ensuring the secrecy of its deliberations, Ex Comm prevented all information concerning the threat or the possible American responses from being released. There were no contacts with other countries concerning the crisis because the other countries knew

¹⁵³Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 312.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

nothing of its nature, and the United States' leaders chose to maintain such an environment until they were ready to act. The allies of the United States were informed of the American decision only shortly before it was to be implemented.¹⁵⁵ This in no way satisfies the requirement of "frequent and direct interactions." Paige's fourth external proposition is then rejected upon the basis of the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process.

Paige's fifth proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater are the efforts by the decision-makers to secure support and cooperation from the external environment for an appropriate response.¹⁵⁶ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that crisis decision-makers tend to try to secure support and cooperation from the external environment for an appropriate response. On Thursday, the third day of Ex Comm's deliberations, George Ball and Leonard C. Meeker presented the argument that if the blockade were chosen, perhaps it should be called a "defensive quarantine." A blockade was traditionally an act of war, and they argued that defensive quarantine would provide the United States with the opportunity to construct a better legal case in support of its actions; this would enable the United States to more easily gain support and cooperation

¹⁵⁵ Supra, pp. 117 and 120-121.

¹⁵⁶ Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 313.

from the international community for its actions.¹⁵⁷ On Thursday evening, orders were given to the Justice and State Departments to begin the preparation of legal and political briefs for the blockade which would appeal to the rest of the world.¹⁵⁸ On Friday, the fourth day of the decisional process, Ex Comm was told by Llewellyn Thompson, Leonard C. Meeker, and Nicholas Katzenbach, that the support of the Organization of American States would strengthen the American case, and orders were given to prepare for the assembly of this inter-American body.¹⁵⁹ After the decision was finalized on Sunday morning, Ex Comm still continued to work to secure the support of the external community; the approaches to the United Nations and the Organization of American States were reviewed on Sunday afternoon, and envoys were sent to inform key allied leaders of the American decision.¹⁶⁰ In summary, the United States was acting to prepare the most favorable case possible to set before the world; it was attempting to secure the support of the world through this case and through its actions in presenting this case to the world leaders and international organizations. This supports Paige's proposition

¹⁵⁷ Supra, p. 84.

¹⁵⁸ Supra, pp. 93-94.

¹⁵⁹ Supra, p. 106.

¹⁶⁰ Supra, pp. 118-121. See also Abel, The Missile Crisis, pp. 91-92.

that crisis decision-makers tend to try to secure support and cooperation from the external environment.

Paige's sixth external setting stated that the wider the range of involvements with the external environment undertaken by the decision-makers in response to a crisis, the wider is the range of legitimations required to secure their acceptance by the external environment.¹⁶¹ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that international involvements undertaken by decision-makers in response to a crisis require legitimations in order to gain their acceptance by the external environment. This proposition concerns relationships which occur after a decisional process has ended, but these relationships are important in that the members of decisional units may anticipate the difficulties in legitimizing their actions in the eyes of the external setting. This anticipation by the decision-makers will affect their calculations or decision-making activities, and in this way, such anticipation affects the decisional outcome. The analysis of the previous proposition indicated that the decision-makers in Ex Comm sought to present as strong a case as possible for their actions; they were acting to legitimize their chosen response. In addition to the activities which were previously discussed, mention should be made of President Kennedy's directive for more photographic coverage of the

¹⁶¹Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 313.

island; he ordered this action in the first Ex Comm meeting because he felt that the United States would need as much proof for its case as it was possible to obtain.¹⁶² This directive is very important, because it produced evidence which was later needed in securing the acceptance of the quarantine decision by part of the external environment. With the possible exception of Canada, the NATO allies were in immediate and unqualified support of the United States. The members of the Organization of American States also responded with over-whelming support. The British press, the press of some neutral nations, and many private citizens in allied or neutral countries were negative in their reaction, however. The Canadian Government, even though it supported the United States, wavered in this support initially. In order to bolster the American case, the President released the best of the photographs of the missile sites to the world. This destroyed the effectiveness of the Soviet attempts to deny the presence of the missiles, and engendered much support for the United States.¹⁶³ Because of the attempts to create the best possible legal and political cases for its actions, and because of the photographic proof of the Soviet actions, the United States was able to create "legitimacy" for its response. In

¹⁶²Supra, p. 49.

¹⁶³Sorenson, Kennedy, pp. 705-706. See also Hilsman, To Move A Nation, pp. 210-212.

short, it was able to overcome most of the resistance to the quarantine because it had prepared for this end. The fact that it encountered some difficulty in securing support for its position supports Paige's contention that a nation requires legitimations of the response which it chooses in a crisis situation if it is to receive support from the external environment. The fact that it was able to overcome this difficulty in securing full support for its position indicates the importance of preparing for such an eventuality in the decisional process.

Paige's eighth external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater are the decision-makers' efforts to provide an opportunity for the withdrawal of the threat by the source of the threatening behavior.¹⁶⁴ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that crisis decision-makers tend to try to provide the source of the crisis with an opportunity to withdraw the threat. Much of the argument in favor of the quarantine response within Ex Comm was based upon the belief that such an action did not preclude a more peaceful solution to the problem than war between the two super-powers. Many of the members feared that an air strike or an invasion would force the Soviet Union to respond to the American action in a belligerent

¹⁶⁴Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 314.

fashion; it was feared that the Soviet decision-makers would feel that they had no alternative other than to strike back at the United States, either in a direct or indirect fashion. These people maintained that the blockade, or the quarantine, would be a forceful response by the United States, but that it would be far less provocative than either of the other two responses. It would be forceful enough to register strong opposition and the determination to see the missiles removed, but it would not push the Soviets into a political or military corner from which they would feel that they had to emerge fighting. By trying to provide the Soviets with the opportunity to remove the missiles without military conflict, the United States was acting to extend to the Soviets the opportunity to remove the cause of the crisis.¹⁶⁵ This supports Paige's eighth external setting proposition.

Paige's ninth and last external setting proposition stated that the greater the crisis, the greater are the efforts of the decision-makers which are directed toward limiting the range and the degree of the threat which they confront.¹⁶⁶ With the removal of the concept of comparative magnitude, this can be stated as the proposition that crisis decision-makers tend to try to limit the range and the degree of the threat which they confront. Ex Comm felt that it had to delimit the issue to include only the

¹⁶⁵Supra, pp. 61, 72-73, 76-79, 81-82, 88-90, and 92-93.

¹⁶⁶Paige, The Korean Decision, p. 315.

offensive weapons which the Soviet Union had emplaced in Cuba. The goal of the removal of Castro was rejected partly because it clouded the issue, or it interjected another element into the crisis.¹⁶⁷ In addition, Ex Comm directed a great deal of effort toward ensuring that the President's announcement was clear and precise; much of the analysis of the speech drafts was directed toward this end. Ex Comm sought to ensure that only one thing was at issue; it sought to isolate the offensive weapons from all other considerations. Its reasons were simple: the offensive weapons constituted the primary and immediate disturbing element, and other goals or issues would have clouded the nature of the confrontation.¹⁶⁸ If the confrontation were to have been clouded, the Soviets would have been given an opportunity to obfuscate the real issue, or the question of the missiles. They also would have been able perhaps to bring other parts of the world into the confrontation, or they would have been able to act in other parts of the world to create a stand-off between the two countries. A Soviet move on Berlin could have been used to try to force the United States to soften its stand on the Cuban missiles. If this were to have happened, the two nations very easily could have lost control of the situation, and the world could have been driven toward

¹⁶⁷ Abel, The Missile Crisis, p. 89.

¹⁶⁸ Supra, pp. 69, 81, 102-103, 116-117, and 119-120.

nuclear holocaust. In seeking to limit the range and the degree of the threat, Ex Comm displayed characteristics which support Paige's ninth proposition.

The propositions which have been analyzed in this section, and which have been supported by the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, will be summarized in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV: A CONCLUSION

This study has been based upon the decision-making approach which was put forth by Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin as an explanation of international politics. It was their contention that if man could understand the manner in which policies were chosen by those who were charged with acting in the name of nation-states, then international politics could be understood and made more predictable. The scope of this study does not provide a basis for commenting upon the general applicability or validity of the assumptions which serve as the core of this approach. The analysis of one decisional process, or possibly two such processes in the instance of this study, does not afford sufficient data upon which such comments would have to be based. This study does, however, provide a basis for commenting upon the usefulness of this approach in particular applications. Four such comments become readily apparent.

First, the variables which these three men have put forth as explaining a particular decisional process are rather hard to satisfy in terms of their informational requirements. Organizational properties and the properties of information and communication can be satisfied in terms

of their informational requirements, or the data which indicates the nature of the relationships of these two variables to the decision-making process, but this involves a great deal of effort. It may also be that much of the needed information will not be forthcoming. This is especially true of the reconstructed quarantine decisional process; when a decisional process has had national security restrictions imposed upon it, much of the necessary and relevant information cannot be obtained. One will have to rely upon secondary sources to a great extent, and there will be the need for a certain amount of extrapolation from and piecing together of what data can be obtained.

In addition, the variable of values, or motivation, cannot really be informationally satisfied in a very satisfactory way. Values or motivations are at best subjective, not only in the way in which they are held but also in the way in which they are perceived to be held. In the reconstruction and analysis of the Korean decisional process, Paige was forced to use only the positive or negative statements concerning desired goals and the methods through which these goals could be achieved; Paige's study was based upon extensive interviewing as well as many other sources of information, yet he was not able to create a value structure which went beyond the surface of the expressed ends-means statements. The decision-makers in the Korean decisional unit may have been consciously or

unconsciously misleading as to the real impetus or motivation for their actions, yet there is no reliable way to check their motivations that is readily available to the political scientist. Since the informational sources for the reconstruction of the quarantine decisional process were even more limited, the value or motivational information for this process is even more suspect.

The decision-making approach demands a complete and thorough picture of a decisional process if that process is to be explained, or if hypotheses or propositions are to be developed from the analysis of the variables operating within the decisional process. If this cannot be done, then the analysis and the propositions which are developed are subject to suspicion. This study has attempted to analyze Paige's propositions against the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process, and to develop new propositions based solely upon the quarantine decisional process, only where the information seemed to be accurate and complete enough to warrant such actions. Still, however, the narrative history created upon the framework of the decision-making approach may be inaccurate, thus creating a situation in which the analysis and the presentation of some propositions would be spurious. Given the limited nature of the available information, however, this is the best that can be done at the present time, and the propositions which the study of the quarantine decisional process

supports must be given a qualified acceptance. It should be noted that the results of the analysis of any decisional process must be given qualified acceptance at best, unless there is no doubt about the accuracy of the data and its analysis. This occurrence is highly unlikely, especially so when one considers the near impossibility of determining the relevant values or motivations associated with the behavior of the decision-makers.

The impact of these considerations upon the usefulness of the decision-making approach as a tool for analysis or the development of knowledge concerning the nature of the decision-making process is to limit such usefulness. It should be noted, however, that any approach would suffer from these limitations. If the variables can be at best imperfectly satisfied with information, then the results of the analysis of these variables can be at best imperfect, but if one realized these shortcomings, one can find value in the approach by using the results of its application with respect for its limitations. Many, if not all of the propositions which the analyst might develop may be correct or valid, especially if he has taken care to use that data which he considers to be valid or most accurate as the basis for the propositions. There will be some foundation for these propositions if they have been developed with professional concern and attention to the methodology

employed, and if they have been verified through the analysis of other such decisions.

Such efforts cannot be dismissed as inaccurate or irrelevant simply because the demands of the decision-making approach are difficult to fulfill. One cannot accept all propositions as law, or accurate descriptions of the reality of the decision-making process, but if one realizes this limitation, then one may use the information gained from the application of the decision-making approach to enhance his understanding of a decisional process.

Second, the variables which Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin have put forth as the basis for the study and analysis of a particular decisional process are not exhaustive. Paige put forth several propositions which concerned the external and the internal settings; some of these propositions were more applicable, in the opinion of this study, to the variables which had originally been put forth by the authors of this approach, but most were not. Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin thought that all relationships with the external and internal settings would be functions of information and communication, or the way in which the decision-makers perceived these settings; the propositions which Paige put forth indicated that this was not the case, and that the variables of internal and external settings should be added to those which form the basis for the application of the approach. There may be additional variables which have yet

to be isolated that should be added, and anyone utilizing the decision-making approach must bear this in mind. The impact on the usefulness of the decision-making approach of these comments is not too great; as long as the analyst is aware that there may be relationships which are important to the decision rendered by a decisional process, but which are not accounted for in the variables put forth in the basis for decision-making analysis, he may watch for these relationships and comment upon them when they are encountered.

Third, there is a certain marginal utility encountered in using the decision-making approach. If one wishes to better understand a particular decision, then he might very well be able to re-create the process and analyze it without putting his re-creation and analysis upon the framework of this approach. The narrative history of the quarantine decisional process, which is built upon the decision-making approach, could have been created if one had simply followed the tenets of thorough research. The propositions drawn from this decisional process could have just as easily been the product of a process of thorough and complete analysis. In addition, many of the propositions generated by decision-making analysis would seem to be "statements of the obvious." In short, one can study and understand a decisional process without going through

the added effort of applying the Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin approach.

Such an observation leads to the fourth comment upon the usefulness of the approach. One can study and understand a particular decisional process without employing the approach upon which this study is based, but one may encounter difficulty in comparing his analysis with those of others. The decision-making approach lends reproducibility and comparability to those studies which are based upon its application. It provides a framework that ensures a regularity in the analysis of decisional processes; such regularity can be used to verify the results of a study in that if a particular approach is applied correctly and consistently to a problem, the results should be identical no matter how many times such an application is made. In addition, the decision-making approach ensures that studies of different decisional processes can be compared; it provides a framework of analysis that regularizes the manner in which analysis is made and the phraseology or terminology that is employed. It provides a similarity of terminology which acts to prevent semantic problems of comparison, and it ensures that the properties of decisional processes are analyzed in a similar fashion or pattern so that the analyses of these processes have a common ground for comparison. These goals of reproducibility and comparability would seem to be essential if one

wishes to systematically develop valid and general propositions which increase man's understanding of decisional processes. Any lack of utility caused by the extra effort required to apply the decision-making approach then can be more than offset by the increased utility which accrues through the benefits of reproducibility and comparability.

With the limitations inherent in these comments in mind, this study may now turn to a summary of the analyses of Paige's crisis decisional propositions, and those propositions which are hypothesized solely upon the basis of the characteristics of the quarantine decisional process. The propositions which are supported by the analysis of the quarantine decisional process are listed categorically below.

Propositions Concerning the Relationships
Between Organizational Properties and Crisis
Decisional Processes

In a crisis decisional process, the following organizational properties can be observed:

1. The decisional unit tends to be ad hoc in nature.
2. The decisional unit tends to have narrow limits in terms of size and composition; the size may vary from twelve members to approximately twenty members, and the composition will vary according to the number of interests which the political leader wants represented.
3. A commitment that is anticipated to be costly tends to be made by a relatively large decisional unit.

4. The political leader will tend to use the decisional unit in such a manner as to serve his own interests (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).
5. The political leader's role in a crisis decisional unit tends to depend upon what he feels will best serve his interests (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).
6. The political leader tends to seek counsel and advice.
7. The political leader tends to accept responsibility for action, and the other members of the decisional unit tend to expect such acceptance.
8. The political leader's evaluation of domestic reaction to a particular response tends to be accepted by the other members of the decisional unit.
9. Discussion tends to be less constrained in the absence of the political leader (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).
10. There tends to be interdepartmental collaboration within the decisional unit.
11. Departmental jurisdictions tend to become hazy where at least two areas of departmental specialization are involved within a decisional unit (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).
12. Appropriate specialists tend to play a greater role in the decisional process as the problems of decision implementation become more technical.
13. Some members of decisional units tend to hold more important and more influential roles than formal position or expertise would seem to warrant (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).
14. As new people join the decisional unit, or as old members return after an absence, the discussion tends to become repetitive and counter-productive (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).

15. The tension inherent in the setting may produce aberrations in the behavior of the members of the decisional unit (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).

Propositions Concerning the Relationships
Between Informational Properties and Crisis
Decisional Processes

In a crisis decisional process, the following informational properties can be observed.

1. The decision-makers tend to seek more information to augment that which they have concerning the crisis.
2. If information is limited, the members of the decisional unit tend to stress the reliability of the sources of this information.
3. The authoritativeness of new information tends to be an important consideration if this new information is contrary to what has been accepted earlier.
4. There is a tendency to elevate primary messages to the top of the organizational hierarchy, but there may be delays in this process that are the product of men who find themselves in key positions within this hierarchy.
5. The members of a decisional unit tend to supplement the information incidental to a crisis with information drawn from their past experiences.
6. The introduction of new information detailing the expansion of a threat tends to increase tension within a decisional unit (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).

Propositions Concerning the Relationships
Between Value Properties and Crisis
Decisional Processes

In a crisis decisional process, the following value properties can be observed:

1. The goal-means value structure educed by a crisis setting tends to have an applicability which extends beyond the nature of the crisis.

2. When a wide range of values are served by a costly commitment, the members of a decisional unit tend to be willing to accept the cost of the commitment.
3. There is a tendency on the part of the members of a decisional unit to clarify the values associated with international political objectives.
4. A prolonged period between crisis stimulation and response tends to promote the specification of relevant values by the members of the decisional unit.
5. The values put forth by members of a decisional unit tend to be strongly influenced by role (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).
6. The members of the decisional unit tend to place less emphasis upon the use of international organizations or multilateral action as a means for the solution of the problems causing the crisis (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).

Propositions Concerning the Relationships
Between Internal Setting Properties and
Crisis Decisional Processes

In a crisis decisional process, the following internal setting properties can be observed:

1. The members of a decisional unit tend to try to limit the information concerning possible responses which is transmitted to the internal setting.
2. The members of decisional unit tend to try to diminish anxiety regarding the crisis in the internal setting.
3. The members of a decisional unit tend to avoid involvements which would inhibit their choice of responses.
4. The members of a decisional unit tend to avoid involvements which would challenge their legitimacy.
5. The past policy statements of decision-makers tend to limit the alternatives open to these

decision-makers because of the expectations which these past statements or actions are thought to create in the internal setting (based solely upon the quarantine decisional process).

6. Members of a decisional unit may expect to receive positive and reinforcing responses to their actions by the internal setting.
7. A decisional unit tends to engage in preferential communication of its actions to those parts of the internal setting that are politically sensitive and important to decision implementation.

Propositions Concerning the Relationships
Between External Setting Properties and
Crisis Decisional Processes

In a crisis decisional process, the following external setting properties can be observed:

1. The members of the decisional unit tend to be sensitive to the response expectations of the external setting.
2. The members of a decisional unit tend to try to withhold information concerning response strategies from the external setting.
3. The members of the decisional unit tend to try to secure the support and the cooperation of the external setting for appropriate responses.
4. International involvements or actions undertaken by a decisional unit in response to a crisis require legitimations in order to gain their acceptance by the external setting.
5. The members of a decisional unit tend to provide the source of the crisis-producing threat with the opportunity to withdraw the threat.
6. The members of a decisional unit tend to try to limit the range and the degree of the threat which they confront.

Concluding Comments

The value of the summaries presented above lies in the fact that they encompass a body of hypothesized relationships or characteristics which may help to explain a crisis decisional process. This value is dependent, however, upon the general applicability and validity of these propositions. If the re-creation of the two decisional processes is accurate, and if the analysis of these two events is accurate, then the propositions are valid, at least for these two processes. In order for these propositions to be truly useful, however, they must be checked and rechecked against the characteristics of other crisis decisional processes. If they stand this analysis, then they can truly be said to be worthwhile, for they will explain and make predictable much of the process which is encountered when the leaders of a nation-state make a decision in a crisis setting. If these propositions are not checked and rechecked in this fashion, then they will be worth little more than descriptive statements indicating the similarities of the Korean and quarantine decisional processes, and some characteristics of perhaps only the quarantine decisional process.

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