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John G. Stoessinger

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POWER AND ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

**A lecture delivered at the
Naval War College
on 31 August 1967 by
Professor John G. Stoessinger**

Good morning and many thanks, Mr. Chairman. It's a great compliment to me, gentlemen, that you read my book; it does however, put me at a disadvantage when I make up a new lecture since, obviously, I can't repeat what you are already reading. Quite seriously, I thought about what might be most meaningful to you on this question of national power, and I came to the conclusion that a case study, or rather two case studies, comparing the uses of the elements of national power by the United States might be most useful to you, because these case studies are, what you might say, the spice of life. They are also of immediate interest, and you can anchor some of the abstracts, the observations, which you can read in text-

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books onto specific material. Therefore, I have decided to select the case study of the Cuban missile crisis and the uses of power by President Kennedy and the decisionmaking process in Cuba and compare and contrast this with President Johnson's decision-making process and his uses of national power in the war in Vietnam.

Specifically, here is what I shall do. In each case I would like to take you into the workshop and show you how decisions are being made; in the former case, to quarantine Cuba, in the latter case, what specific policy to adopt in Vietnam. Second, I would like to show you the nature of the dialogue in the workshop between what is called somewhat euphemistically and unsatisfactorily "the dove and the hawk"

dialogue, and, third, I should like to conclude with some reflections on the problems of the uses of national power in the national state system and specifically in U.S. foreign policy. I will have to talk fairly quickly and rather economically as I am actually packing two lectures into a single hour.

First, I would like to develop some conceptualizations about national power, some practical, specific, down-to-earth studies which I think will make the abstract material more meaningful to you. Let me then begin with the missile crisis. How was the decision reached to quarantine Cuba? Second, what happened on the power scene after the decision was reached, and, third, how would you evaluate the decision of President Kennedy to quarantine Cuba in terms of the uses of national power by the U.S. Government? This is roughly the threefold division I'd like to adopt for the analysis of the missile crisis.

Now, the first time that we found out that Krushchev had put intermediate-range missiles into Cuba was on 14 October 1962 when George Bundy, who was then Special Assistant to the President, got hard evidence in the form of photographs which he received from U-2 surveillance flights over Cuba to the effect that two such bases had gone up in Cuba, and, moreover, it was estimated that it would take roughly 10 to 14 days for these two missile sites to become operational. That is, that the Soviets would be able to use them and endanger any city in the continental United States and Canada. According to Schlesinger's book which some of you have probably read, *The Thousand Days*, Bundy let the President have a good night's sleep because he figured he couldn't do much anyhow during the night on the matter and then showed him the photographs on the following morning. When

President Kennedy saw the photographs he immediately called into session a select group of men, later called the Executive Committee, the Excom, or the Work Council, a group of men not necessarily from any one organizational body, such as the National Security Council, but an ad hoc group, who, he felt, would be most useful in dealing with this particular problem. These men included the Vice-President, Mr. Johnson; the President's brother, Robert Kennedy; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, then Maxwell Taylor; Director of the CIA, John McCone; Special Assistants Schlesinger, Sorensen, and Bundy; U.N. Ambassador Adlai Stevenson; Secretaries of State and Defense Rusk and McNamara, respectively; and a few other people who joined the sessions from time to time. There was a group of roughly a dozen to 20 men who were confronted with the problems of what to do to get these missiles out.

Now, if I can engage you in a bit of psychodrama, I'd like to outline for you what President Kennedy called the "escalation ladder," because what President Kennedy first wanted to know from his advisers is what they thought the United States could effectively do to get the missiles out. The problem before the President was the use of national power, to use it in such a way in order not to overdo it or to underdo it. This is a classic problem, of course, in any deterrent strategy. If you use too much power, you might trigger off a nuclear war; if you use too little power, the enemy will not be convinced of your intentions. This is a problem that lay in the capacity somehow to hit that optimal balance in the medium range between the equally undesirable alternatives of all-out war or doing nothing.

This was the problem — the use of power in this optimal sense. Now, the

President presented his advisers with the evidence which was on the table and said he didn't know actually why Khrushchev decided to put the missiles there. No one really knows, even to this day; people have various conjectures about it, but the one that is most persuasive to me is that Khrushchev might have figured that he had nothing to lose because at best we might do nothing, and actually it was quite possible that Khrushchev had sized up President Kennedy as somewhat indecisive since, after all, we didn't follow through with air cover in the Bay of Pigs affair only a year earlier. Also, we hadn't torn down the Berlin Wall so he might have figured that at best we might do nothing, but even if we did stand up on the issue he might get a partial deal out of it which he later actually proposed, and, at worst, he might pull his missiles back and actually retain control over Cuba in fact. This is more or less what the Rand Corporation had figured in its analysis of why Khrushchev himself did what he did.

At any rate, we didn't know much then, and the President said, "Here are the facts. What are we going to do about them?" Well, the first thing that happened was utter chaos. Everyone in the room had a different opinion. I can tell you this with some degree of emphasis because two of these men still talk to me: Bundy, who is now Head of the Ford Foundation on leave, and Arthur Schlesinger, who is now a colleague of mine at the City University; both have confirmed this and said, "There was utter confusion, and everybody had a different point of view."

So the first thing the President suggested was that the discussion itself be structured and that an escalation ladder be drawn on the board so that you could at least have a rational discus-

sion about the pros and cons of each possible alternative that the United States might adopt. So they finally came out as a point of departure with seven different alternatives which I shall outline for you, in ascending order of seriousness, by the way.

One was the possibility of doing nothing — sometimes, I might add, doing nothing can also be a policy provided you decide rationally that doing nothing is the best thing to do; doing nothing because you drift is not a policy, that's just drift. But sometimes doing nothing can also be justified as a rational policy. *Two* was to bring the crisis before the Organization of American States or before the Security Council of the United Nations. *Three* was to take some kind of retaliatory action but nothing dramatic, something like economic retaliation, cutting off any kind of trade that had by now come into being between the United States, the Soviet Union, and Eastern European countries, any kind of economic retaliatory move. *Four* was a blockade of Cuba which was later more euphemistically called a "quarantine" in order to get around the international legal point to the effect that a blockade is illegal. There are some fine points between blockade and quarantine, but at first the idea was a naval ring around Cuba to prevent any kind of hardware from reaching Cuba. *Five* was the possibility of what McNamara later came to call "a surgical airstrike" against the two bases in Cuba as precision bombing knocked them out. *Six* was the possibility of an invasion of Cuba, the type of thing that was planned in a much more limited way in the Dominican Republic affair of 1965, and, *Seven*, there was even some talk temporarily by a couple of people about a preemptive strike against the Soviet Union. Now, the interesting thing is that after half an hour of discussion,

alternative *Seven* was knocked out as unwarranted, and alternatives *One* through *Three* were eliminated as insufficient, which leads me to the first conceptual point about the uses of power: generally the decisionmaking process tends to dissolve in the middle range, and the real options which seem to be open, realistically speaking, are not the extremes which usually are much more popular in armchair analysis but are typically fine points of distinction somewhere along the intermediate range of the spectrum. In other words, the hard debate which now ensued among the members of the war council and which lasted for another 6 days was about the respective merits or demerits of the three alternatives in the intermediate range. The blockade vs. the airstrike vs. the invasion of Cuba. This actually, now, was where the issue was joined.

Now, on this issue, gentlemen, the war council began to divide itself into two main parts: and this is where the term "doves and hawks" first began to make its appearance as a household term. I might add here, by the way, that both Schlesinger and Bundy related to me that everybody changed his mind at least once — an interesting sidelight — in the course of the discussions. For example, Roger Hilsman, who is now on the Columbia staff, in his very fine book called *To Move the Nations* revealed that McNamara, for example, jumped all the way from nothing over to *Six* at one point. His first reaction was "Well, a missile is a missile; whether we're hit from Russia or from Cuba doesn't make much difference — we're hit from the Soviet Union, so why do anything about it?" But later he jumped on up to *Five* and talked about surgical airstrikes and even the possibility of invading Cuba. Well he was not the only one. Everyone changed his mind, and at the end, as President Kennedy

put it rather interestingly, there weren't any doves or hawks left, there were just dawks and hoves left in the room, and this, as I say, is fairly typical.

Now, on this question then as to the respective merits of the blockade against the airstrike or the invasion of Cuba, the discussions really got very tight and very serious and were very closely argued. The doves took the view, and at the end Robert Kennedy was the man who led the forces of the doves in particular, that you couldn't really bomb the bases — it would look a little like a Pearl Harbor by a nation that had made Pearl Harbor a symbol of infamy — but maybe even worse than that, tactically speaking, if we bombed the bases we would kill Russian personnel because Soviet personnel were manning the missile sites in the two bases, and that kind of thing might be just the thing that might push Khrushchev over the brink, and this you can't risk.

On the other hand, the hawks took the view, and this was largely the view of McCone, for example, of the CIA, that who knows whether all the hardware was not already in Cuba and if, indeed, it was, then what good would it do to blockade Cuba? Then the entire thrust of the American defensive gambit would be misplaced, you see; if all they needed was already on the island, then the blockade, or quarantine, call it what you will, would become completely irrelevant.

Well this was actually where the issue was joined. Kennedy asked questions and tried to draw out most of the participants, and after 5 days of this, Kennedy finally made his own decision, and his decision, as most of you probably heard in the radio speech on 21 October 1962, was somewhere between *Four* and *Five*. I'd say *Four and a half*, and this is why I say it. You remember from the speech he

said, "We shall begin with a quarantine (that is point *Four* on the escalation ladder) but that is not all." Also, he said that any missile launched from Cuba on the United States would immediately entail a retaliatory blow by the United States, not on Cuba but on the Soviet Union. In other words, this is what Rusk later called the "eyeball to eyeball" confrontation. This was checked to the king, but the king wasn't Castro; Castro by now had become a pawn in the game. The king was Khrushchev himself. With this act you had a United States-Soviet confrontation in effect.

Second, as you may recall, the Polaris fleet was moved up within striking range of the Soviet Union. There were very serious naval maneuvers in the Caribbean, as you may remember also; you people were probably involved in this. There were some rather amusing and not so amusing sidelights to this which somebody told me. Some of the people in the Navy were given orders by the President, who was also a naval man, of course, what to do if any Soviet ships would run the blockade, and the answer was, "Well, first you shoot one across the bow as a warning shot. If that doesn't help, you shoot another one to cripple the ship, and if that doesn't work, you sink it." And some fellows wanted to know what happens if we don't shoot accurately and also what happens if the Soviet submarines surface and then we have a naval encounter going on in the Caribbean. In other words, the people were worried about contingencies which fortunately did not arise in the situation.

At any rate, it was also stated that the Strategic Air Command was put on alert, at least semi-alert, so everything was done by the President short of an actual, physical act. This is why I say *Four and a half*. It was more than just a quarantine as such. It is

interesting to tell you, by the way, that our Allies were informed of this, not consulted. The OAS was prepared for it. MacMillan was told; De Gaulle was told. It was a big problem that Kennedy faced. Whom should he send to tell De Gaulle? This was not the easiest job. Finally he sent Acheson over. Acheson, somewhat wobbly-kneed, got in there and said, "Monsieur le Président, we have problems," and then told him about it, and President de Gaulle asked him, "Are you informing me or are you consulting me?" And the answer was, rather tremblingly I'm afraid, "We are informing you." And De Gaulle, surprisingly enough, said, "I am France. France understands. We would have acted the same way." And Acheson left, in rather relief, but De Gaulle added, rather caustically, "Now you know what it was like at Suez, you see, except we helped you. You didn't help us." (You remember, of course, that in the Suez crisis of 1956 we voted against Britain and France.) And De Gaulle said, "This might by your Suez, you see, in Cuba. Now you know what it feels like."

At any rate, the Allies were informed, they were not consulted, and the Congress was not told except for a few Congressmen and Senators just before Kennedy went on the air. Many Congressmen grumbled about this, but when they heard the speech, they fell into line. So, actually, when the speech was made the country was pretty much behind the President, and the Allies, although rather a little bit upset that they weren't consulted more, also fell into line quite rapidly behind the President after the quarantine speech.

Now, part II: what happened after the speech was made? In the business of national power? Well the first thing we did, of course, was that we launched Adlai Stevenson in the United Nations to confront Valerian

Zorin, the Soviet representative, with the photographs, and on the following day, United Nations Day, 24 October, the two men met in the Security Council. Stevenson displayed the photographs in a very dramatic scene. Zorin claimed they were all fakes and also said that we were a bunch of international pirates and that the blockade would have to be lifted right away. Adlai Stevenson said he would be glad to ask that it be lifted, but that first the missiles would have to be removed. Deadlock — no resolution. Everyone, meantime, watched on the TV screen the Soviet ships moving up to the blockade line; American ships taking their place on the blockade line (you probably know this much better than I do); and Wall Street collapsed; the mood was pretty grim. On the following day, 25 October, more of the same. Zorin and Stevenson had another set-to in the Security Council; Wall Street collapsed some more. We see the same situation. The third day, however, 26 October, produced a slight sense of relief on the horizon because the report came into Wall Street that some of the Soviet ships had veered, and others had slowed down. Wall Street began to rally. However, in the meantime, in the White House the mood was grim, and Wall Street was not aware of this, but intelligence had just reached the President from the U-2 pilot photographs which continued to survey Cuba every hour on the hour that the speed on the building of the Soviet missile sites had quadrupled. In other words, the CIA estimated that it wouldn't take another 7 to 8 days but just another 48 hours until the missiles would be operating, be operational. Well, now, of course, Kennedy immediately had to call the men into session again, and now the hawks told the doves, "See, we told you so. All the stuff was already there. The blockade was irrelevant. There is now no

alternative but to block the two sides immediately."

Kennedy said, "Let's try one last thing before we do this. Let us leak to the press — let us make a conscious news-leak to the press, especially the tabloid press, which is very ready to pick this up, that unless the Soviet Government removes the missiles within 24 hours, further measures will be taken. Now when the reporters ask 'What do you mean by certain measures?' tell them steps *Five* and *Six* on the ladder. Airstrikes and invasion of Cuba." Well that night, the 26th, some of you might recall there were banner headlines throughout the American press: "Arming of Cuba Imminent; Invasion of Cuba Imminent," and that night, the 26th, a telegram arrived at the White House personally sent from Prime Minister Khrushchev. I had the privilege of seeing portions of this telegram, and it is an incredible document. It's a three-page telegram; it's written — it was written, most Khrushchev experts said, by Khrushchev, obviously shaken up, written by a man in a nightmare of anxiety, in a rambling tone. The first page was about Khrushchev's childhood in the Ukraine, and he had a tough time growing up there. Who was the President? A young man telling him what to do, and then he got to the point finally and said on page 3 that "you and I, Mr. President, are like two men pulling at opposite ends of a rope; unless one of us stops pulling, we'll have to cut the knot with a sword, and I herewith propose to stop pulling; I'll take my strictly defensive missiles out." This was basically it; it was virtually a capitulation.

The President called his committee together — everyone was naturally very relieved, and they were going to draft a response to the telegram on the following morning, the 27th. However, the following morning, to the conster-

nation of everybody in the war council, another telegram had arrived from Khrushchev. This one, however, was very different from the first. It had been made public. The airwaves had it; the United Nations had it; Walter Lippmann had it; everyone was in possession of it; and this telegram was very much more formal in tone, much more demanding in content, and in it Khrushchev said, "I have only defensive missiles in Cuba, but you have your aggressive imperialist missiles in Greece and Turkey and all over the border of the Soviet Union. However, I will offer to remove my missiles if you remove your missiles from Greece and Turkey." In other words, a barter deal. Well, now they were up against it once again, and this leads me to what you might call a second conceptual point, and that is, that when you make a decision on the uses of power for your country, usually it won't be the last in the same crisis. Sometimes a second or a third decision ensues which is often as dramatic and often as important as the first. And now the choice before Kennedy was, which telegram do you respond to? To the first or the second? If you respond to the first, that's obviously an ultimatum because you reject the barter deal; if you respond to the second, well then you barter away two missile bases under pressure. So again the hawks and doves went to it. This time the hawks said, "Look you can't barter this away under pressure; this will encourage a Munich psychology. Moreover, if the Russians get something out of us and do this 15 times, and every time they bargain it away for something which we already have, then after 15 such gambles there won't be any NATO left; you can't do this kind of thing."

On the other hand, the doves argued, "Look, it does look reasonable — give and take — compromise. Two-

thirds of the United Nations, at least, are in favor of it. U Thant is in favor of it. Walter Lippmann has written a glowing editorial in its favor. It does look reasonable. Why don't we go ahead and do it? It will get us off the hook. Moreover, the missiles are obsolete. Why don't we get rid of them?"

Kennedy, in this case, went with the hawks. He said, "You can't bargain this away under pressure." He was furious, by the way, because he had given the order 6 months before to dismantle the obsolete missiles, and someone had fouled up. Now they hung this around his neck like an albatross, and there was nothing he could do about it. Nevertheless, he decided not to bargain them away, but now the problem was, how do you somehow draft this convincingly? So Bobbie Kennedy had the very deceptively simple idea. He said, "Let's just answer the first telegram first because it arrived first. Very simple. Ignore the second telegram." So they said, "Dear Mr. Chairman, we are in receipt of your telegram dated Oct 26 (three times underlined); we welcome your constructive contribution to the peace, and we expect eagerly the withdrawal of the missiles, et cetera, et cetera. Sincerely yours, . . ." and then everyone went to bed (this was now the 28th), and Kennedy said to Schlesinger, "Now, it can go either way."

Well, fortunately for us, it went the good way, because the following morning, Sunday morning, the 29th, a third telegram appeared that Khrushchev had thrown in his hand. He offered to pull the missiles out, and, in effect, the missiles were pulled out the next few days under our continued aerial surveillance, and with that the acute stage of the crisis came to an end.

Now, what can be said very briefly about this, about the uses of power, and to be objective, I think you have to look at two sides here. On the posi-

tive side, Kennedy and, I think, most of us at least, in the political science field, are persuaded that he used power in a very shrewd and skillful fashion — that he managed to hedge very well this nuance, this optional intermediate range point on the spectrum; that he had a very fine sense of balance; that the calibration of the deterrent strategy was really honed down to a very fine edge, and that this sense of balance came through throughout the entire 13 days of the crisis. It appears also that Kennedy never lost sight of the limited objectives in order to get the missiles out of there; that he gave Khrushchev an honorable way out; in fact, Khrushchev in a recent television program, you may recall, which came from his garden as a retired gentleman farmer, stated that he actually won the crisis because he got Kennedy to give him a no-invasion pledge of Cuba, so he really won the whole thing. This was one of the impressions, of course, that Kennedy wanted to give so as not to humiliate the guy on the other side; and also, of course, through this act he prevented a rather serious disturbance of the military balance of power that was built up in the years before.

Now on the other side of the ledger we have to cite two rather disturbing examples, namely, that this kind of thing is pretty accident-prone and might have slowed up a couple of times. For example, Bundy said, and this was later divulged in the Hilsman book, that on 26 October, of all times, one of our U-2 pilots went astray on an air sampling mission, of all things, and blundered from the Alaskan airspace into Siberian airspace. Well Khrushchev fortunately kept his cool, but if he hadn't, this might have resulted in a Dr. Strangelove situation or something akin to that. Also, the kind of naval Caribbean thing that I told you about before raises the possibility of con-

tingencies arising for which you have no contingency plan. Supposing that Soviet submarines had accompanied the Soviet ships, they might have surfaced, they might have shot at us, and then all kinds of unpredictable naval encounters might have taken place in the Caribbean, and for this whole show there were no contingency plans, unless you people know something I don't. At any rate, I'd be very happy to hear that I am wrong on this.

Now on the balance that does emerge, and this is perhaps the most important thing of all, this crisis acted like a good purgation — like a good catharsis — it cleared the air. Both we and the Russians, after this, figured that we better use our power in a somewhat more restrained fashion. The Russians thereafter, immediately, in fact, after the missile crisis, as you may recall, agreed to the Potsdam Treaty, agreed to a hotline being installed between the Kremlin and the White House, a teletype hotline, and also pulled back their paralytic formula for the U.N. Secretary Generalship, the Troika proposal, and permitted the election of U Thant as Secretary General. And generally, what we call today a limited détente between the Soviet Union and ourselves dates from the confrontation of the Cuban missile crisis. But the most important conclusion here is that very few lives were lost, no shots were fired; there were some American lives lost and only very few; Major Anderson, for example, who flew over Cuba, was shot down, but the loss of the American lives was very, very small indeed.

Basically the cosmos remained in the minds of two men. It was a psychological use of power, and I'd like you to hear this particular concluding point in mind because it will figure very heavily in my contrasting analysis with the story to follow on Vietnam.

With this, let me pass on to case

study two, that is, the use of power in Vietnam with an analogous kind of and descriptive exposition and then give you some contrasting material. First, who are the people involved? Second, what is the escalation ladder now before the American Government broadly defined in Vietnam; third, what are the basic points of difference at this time between hawks and doves on how power should be used? Also, we might treat here as a sidelight which you might not have heard: What is the nature of the dialogue in North Vietnam between the doves and hawks over there about us, which will put the picture in a slightly higher plane of confusion even than before, and then, in conclusion, what are the basic comparisons that one can name about the uses of power in these two very different crises situations?

Before the Vietnam war, as far as I know, there never has been a war in which a Chief Executive has kept in such close touch with actual, not only strategic, but tactical decisions of the war. The President really keeps a finger on the pulse very closely, coming even to the point of individual targets in North Vietnam. The main people who make policy on the Vietnam war today are, in effect, the President and the Secretaries of State and Defense, and there is now, as you know, a very serious disagreement between the Secretary of Defense and other members of the Chief Executive's Advisory Group on the question of the efficiency or, rather, the effectiveness of the American aerial bombardment of North Vietnam. Secretary McNamara is much less convinced of its effectiveness than many other members of the Executive Branch, including the President himself. Now, let's give you the main escalation ladder, that is, what part the main alternative opens about the uses of power by our Government in Vietnam, and then, in con-

clusion, I will be able to give you a more abstract analysis.

Here, when I use the term "Government" I'll also include the Congress because some of the provisions of the Congress are not represented in the Executive Branch, and this will give you a much broader picture. In the Government, views range between extremes with all kinds of shadings in between. There is, *One*, the view of Senators Morse and Gruening, which is really, in effect, "Let's get out of there, we can't win it; let's pull out; the whole thing is really against American national interests; let's just cash in our chips and go home." This is only a very small group of members of the Congress, actually, as far as I know, only Gruening and Morse.

Two, there is the Fulbright position. This is a position which you might describe as one of gradual disengagement which he puts forth in his book *The Arrogance of Power* (which some of you might have read). His point is, in effect, the gradual disengagement of American forces from Vietnam, aiming for some kind of neutralization of Vietnam and Southeast Asia. If you will, let's pull out 10-15,000 men (hopefully when nobody is looking) and gradually disengage ourselves because we are overcommitted. This is basically the Fulbright view and is now supported by a rather articulate minority in the Senate and also in the House. *Three* is a facesaving. This is more or less the same as to accept *Two* in some shape or manner, but so that we can camouflage our withdrawal. For example, to give you a couple of scenarios of this type, if there should be a coalition government emerging from the presidential elections in South Vietnam or from the elections in the Chamber of Deputies, maybe we might ask these people to ask us to get out of there, or if the election is rigged, we can use this as a good excuse to get out

of there, or we can set up a situation in the United Nations where we can get out of there. For example, we can put a very pro-American resolution in the Security Council, set it up for a Russian veto, or bring it up to the General Assembly under the Uniting for Peace Resolution. In the General Assembly, as you know, the view on our policy in Vietnam is not exactly congruent with the American view so there might be a mild resolution recommending our deescalation, and then if we have unilaterally decided to deescalate, then we can say, "Well, we are getting out of there because the United Nations asked us to do so, and we respect world public opinion," thus blaming the whole thing on the United Nations. There is another possible scenario that arises. This is where we leave the dove country and move into hawk land. Or go on into Hobson-Dobson country. This business of Hobson-Dobson, or hawks-doves, is sometimes confusing. As one fellow to whom I talked recently said when asked what he thought of Vietnam, "Well, I think we ought to go in there and clean up, but I'm scared. I guess that makes me a chicken hawk." So the birds in this aviary are somewhat confusing but take this with several grains of salt. Now, in choice number *Four* we get into what you might call the two-handed policy of the U.S. Government, which is bombing the North and the pacification program in the South, the objective being, as you all know — I don't need to belabor this point — to force the other side to the negotiating table, which is precisely what McNamara disagrees with. He says, "You can't bomb the other side to the table," and the Government still believes maybe you can. While we do this in the North, we continue with the pacification program and try to build up a relatively democratic regime in the South. Now this hasn't worked, at least

since September 1965 since the regular bombings began, so we escalated it up to alternative *Five*, the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, as you know, some of the industrial centers in the major cities, and, more recently, President Johnson extended the permissible number and quality of targets to be bombed in North Vietnam. This also, so far, has not shown any discernible results. Now the debate is whether we ought to make limited ground wars, not only with the city of Hanoi — don't misunderstand that — but a limited, American-South Vietnamese move to the North and maybe cut off the Ho Chi Minh trail which goes from North Vietnam to Laos and Cambodia and South Vietnam and which has been named the route via which the North Vietnamese guerrilla infiltrates into the South. Since we haven't been able to stop them from the air, there is a serious debate going on in Washington as to whether we might not have to do this on the ground. This is alternative number *Six*. And since many people feel that this might just bring in China, there is even a very small minority that feel it might not be such a bad idea to bomb the nuclear installation in China and thus make it impossible for China to get in, at least with her nuclear potential. Now this is then the range of possibilities, ranging from one extreme to the other, as you can see, on Vietnam, and we are now suspended very uneasily over here between *Five* and *Six*. This is roughly where the position of the Government is.

Now let me give you my second point: the major dialogue as I have witnessed it both in the Government and in the United Nations in the last few weeks — after all, where do we go from here? It is most interesting, and I think most helpful to you here, that there is an increasing polarization that is occurring in the U.S. Government;

that is, let's do it one way or the other. There is an increasing impatience building up not only by the American populace at large but also by many members of the Government. That is, a kind of dark horse attitude of either let's finish it off or let's quit and let's cut out this ambiguity in the middle, and this is, from what I gather, precisely what the President hopes to avoid. This is precisely the kind of squeeze which he fears most; that the people might force him to go one way or the other. The pressure by both hawks and doves is probably greater than it has been since the beginning of the war, since the beginning of the American involvement in the war in Vietnam.

Now what are the main arguments? The hawks argue, first, the domino theory of which you have all heard. If we pull out of Asia, Southeast Asia will go, Asia will go, the American presence in Asia will be finished. This is the domino's argument. Second, and this is a much more sophisticated view which has recently come out of the hawk school in the Government, if we now get out the Chinese will have a tremendous propaganda victory to the effect that wars of liberation actually can and do work and the Americans are a paper tiger; if you push them long enough and hard enough they do cave in, and, therefore, the Russians, in order to keep up with the Chinese and thus avoid being frozen out of the international Communist movement altogether, may have to build up their own expansionist moves once again; otherwise, they will look pretty sick in comparison to the Chinese with the results that some points in between the East and West which have been fairly quiescent recently, such as Berlin, for example, might begin to boil up again.

So the hawks argue that the price for pulling out the half million Americans from one crisis point might be

the necessity of sending two million more to different ones which erupt as a result of the American withdrawal from Vietnam. This is a very persuasive argument which one hears recently in the hard lines in Washington.

A third argument runs: the Chinese are not really going to come in; in the Korean case they came in because they were still allied with the Russians, and also the logistical situation was much better for them because of the railway system from southern China to North Korea. There is only one rail link from southern China to North Vietnam which we have interdicted and which actually they can't use to any optimal advantage, and therefore they probably will not come into the war, and even if they did, we could knock them out without much difficulty. Thus, the argument runs.

Then there is the overarching argument that we must teach the Chinese the lesson that to stand behind North Vietnam which, in turn, stands behind the national liberation front makes the Chinese responsible — the same lesson that we taught the Soviets 20 years ago in Europe when we built up NATO in 1948. Therefore, once we establish equilibrium in Asia, then we will be able to breathe more easily, but if we now pull out, the next battle we'll have to fight will be closer to the American home states. This is basically the argument of the hawks, including the President and the Secretary of State, as to why we have to hold out in Vietnam.

More recently, the doves have become a great deal more articulate and more persuasive, and let me quickly add here that some of the doves have come from the military establishments. Some of these arguments are talked by some very tough-minded characters. I don't mean people from Union Theological Seminary or people from various literary magazines such as *Ram-*

part, but I mean good, military people; there is no agreement at all as I need not tell you, gentlemen, within the military on this war, and, for that matter, on any question of American policy as such, and this is one of the reasons why I enjoy lecturing here so much because there is a very broad range of points of view and different opinions. Now, point one of the dove argument is that we must learn the value of the lesson from the French. De Gaulle may be going slightly senile as far as Canada is concerned, but he makes a lot of sense in Europe, and he makes a lot of sense in Indochina because, after all, he says we ought to begin to pull out of there: France was unable to win with 400,000 men, so who do we think we are to win with 500,000 men? The answer from the hawks is, "But they didn't have helicopters, airpower, and seapower, whereas the Americans do," but the doves retort, in turn, "The real war is still fought in the jungle, and for that you still need a 7-1 superiority ratio as any expert in counterinsurgency war will tell you." Hanson Baldwin of the *Times*, for example, said that any study of counterinsurgency shows -- the Filipino campaign, the Malayan campaign -- that you need a 7-1 ratio to beat an insurgency movement down. So what we have in Vietnam at best is a 1½; at best a 2-1 ratio. In other words, to whip this thing we may have to have as many as two million Americans in the war which, to put it mildly, would be a massive commitment -- more massive than it even now is.

Then there is a corollary argument, and that is that we are destroying or at least getting close to destroying the political and social fabric of the very country which we purport to want to save from communism, South Vietnam, through the search and destroy technique, the clear and hold tech-

nique, and the necessity of bombing villages including civilians, the whole argument which, no doubt you have heard. The necessity of killing innocent bystanders in order to smoke out the leaders from villages actually often turns the population, at best apathetic, and at worst hostile towards us, and as counterinsurgency warfare experts know, if the civilian population is hostile, you don't stand a chance to win the war, and unless we redress the balance between destructive and constructive activity to favor more the constructive side, we're going to be there till doomsday. This is another argument of the doves.

A fourth and corollary argument is: What if the Chinese do come in after all? How do we know that they are not going to come in? We also thought they wouldn't come in Korea; even when the Indian Government warned us that they would come in if we crossed the 38th parallel, we still didn't believe they would come. Then they came in, and we paid a terrible price. Who are we to know that they are not going to come in this time? If they do come in, what are the Russians going to do? Then, the Russians will be right in the middle between the United States and China and will have to make a terrible choice between us and China which is precisely, as McConniff says, the position that we shouldn't put them in. And then there is the overarching argument of the doves that the nature of communism has changed -- that this war would have made sense 20 or 10 years ago when Stalin was still around, when Stalin ran the international Communist movement with an iron hand. At that point any Communist regime was a vanguard of the Stalin policy, but now this is not necessarily true. The Communist world is in disarray, and the Communist Government in North Vietnam, even in South Vietnam,

wouldn't be what it is today. Ho Chi Minh might become a Tito, he might be played out against the Kremlin or Peking. There are all kinds of different possibilities. The point remaining that a Communist Government in Vietnam would no longer really be a threat to the strategic American national interests, and we're behaving as if it were. In other words, the doves argue that this war is, at best, an anachronism, and it works a catastrophe because it risks American power at the points where it is no longer relevant. It might have been relevant 20 or 10 years ago, but today with the Communist movement in a kind of state of disorder, which it is, it is no longer really a first-rate strategic threat to us even if all of Vietnam went Communist, and therefore we shouldn't extend our power to the extent to which we have done. This is basically the argument of Hans Morgenthau.

Now here are fundamentally the two sides of the dialogue in the West. So let me quickly give you the arguments of the other side, which are interesting which I recently happened upon in my own research in the United Nations, because there are doves and hawks in North Vietnam also. How do they feel about us? And this we also should know. Now the hawks in North Vietnam feel that you've got to hold out till the bitter end with these Americans, because if you negotiate with them you really get it in the neck. The one time that the North Vietnamese negotiated with the West was at Geneva in 1954, and when they sat down with the Westerners in Geneva you remember that the Geneva Agreement divided the country; the North Vietnamese were to pull back to the north, the French to the south, at the time, and then there was an agreement that within 2 years there would be an election in all of Vietnam.

A certain American gentleman by the name of Eisenhower said in 1954, and he's on record to have said this in his book *Mandate for Change*, that if elections should take place in 1954 Ho Chi Minh would probably win by 80 percent of the vote. Well, Ho Chi Minh agreed with him, and he said this is precisely why the North Vietnamese went along with the elections, you see. Had we known that you fellows would cop out on the elections, we would have fought for another year and would have captured all of Vietnam including the south. Well, there is a kernel of truth in this because, as you all know, that same year we organized SEATO, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, we also set up South Vietnam as a separate state, and in 1956 President Diem, with our encouragement, did not permit any election. It is also, of course, true that neither did Ho Chi Minh permit elections. So both sides accused each other of breaking the Geneva Agreement. But it is a point, I believe, when Ho Chi Minh says that had the elections been held he would have won them, and you fellows conked out on us, therefore you deprived us at the green table of what we would have gained on the battlefield; we must never sit down with you again, because if we do, you're going to do it to us again; so we have to fight it out.

Secondly, Vietnam argues, "Look at those peace marches over there. Look at the demonstrations. The American people are about to rise up against the President just like the French caved in in 1954, and they expect momentarily an internal revolt." Here, of course, they misread very strongly the American political scene. The wish is father to the thought, but they do hope that what happened to France in 1954, when France collapsed at the homefront, may also happen in the United States,

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which is why I do believe it is true that any one of these marches does give comfort to the other side, and, therefore, I regard them with a considerable degree of ambivalence: on the one hand, believing in civil rights and favoring them, on the other side, however, Hanoi does interpret them as favorable to itself.

Now, on the other side, there are doves around Ho Chi Minh who begin to say, and we get this out of Hanoi more and more, that you may have to negotiate with these Americans after all whether you like it or not. Why? Because we can no longer really rely on our two allies, Russia and China. We're getting to be more and more left to our own devices. The Chinese are caught up with their own cultural revolution up there; they no longer ship much rice down here; they no longer are able to ship much hardware; not only that, but they are so fallen out with the Russians that for an entire year they almost sabotaged missile shipments and other arms shipments which the Russians had sent to Hanoi via Mainland China. They unscrewed parts, substituted inferior machinery for the Russian machinery, and this kind of stuff appeared in Hanoi - to the chagrin of Ho Chi Minh. The Russians are also very cagey in not shipping any offensive missiles to the port of Haiphong, but only very carefully delineated defensive material for the air system on Hanoi and Haiphong in order not to risk another Cuban-type missile confrontation with the United States. The result of this is that from Ho Chi Minh's point of view neither Russia nor China is really a very reliable ally any more; in fact, recently a friend of mine from Rand said to me, rather jokingly, that maybe Mao Tse-tung might be a CIA agent because, after all, he fouled up the Chinese economy, he's lousing up the

Russian shipment via China, and he is, in effect, not helping Ho Chi Minh any more at this point. Well, I am sure this point went too far, but it is true that some American elements feel that in short-range terms Mao Tse-tung might not have been so bad for the United States as he has been cracked up to be.

Let me now, in my concluding few minutes, try to pull these two case studies together in terms of three main lines of thought. First, specifically on Vietnam, what are the hopes for a breakthrough? Second, what were the main differences in these two crises and what were the main differences in President Kennedy's and President Johnson's two approaches about the uses of power in these two crises? And finally, what do these two crises teach us about the nature of power, if you will, the fundamentals of power in the national state system? And here I hope that in your readings of Professors Hartmann, Stoessinger, and others you can somehow fit these pieces together and use the case study material as corollary material.

So far as the war itself is concerned, it is my hope that somehow, somewhere, in the next 12-month period there may be talk between us and North Vietnam, not because human nature has changed in particular, that's too much to ask for, but because the Machiavelian constellation, I believe, on both sides is getting to be such that both sides might prefer to talk rather than to continue the shooting. On our side I am getting increasingly convinced that the President will make one more last, very desperate effort to get out of this war before the 1968 election. I think this is getting clear, especially since the indications are that he might be outflanked by the Republicans on both sides. And this is getting to be a very interesting, domestic political situation, and if the Republicans are smart

that is exactly what they are going to do. That is to say, to outflank the Administration from both sides. Now, on the North Vietnam side we get increasing evidence from Hanoi about this fear that they will be left more or less in the lurch by both the Soviets and the Chinese. The Soviets because they fear another confrontation of the Cuban type in Haiphong and the Chinese because they are caught up in their own domestic turmoil and simply don't have the wherewithal to help Hanoi with any great hardware or for that matter, any manpower help — quite apart from the fact that the Chinese will be fearful also of a two-front situation with us on one hand and the Russians on the other. There is this curious triangle going on now between Russia, China, and the United States where each is afraid that the other two will gang up behind the back. Our fear is that the Russians and the Chinese will get back together; the Chinese fear that the Russians and the Americans will get together, which has practically happened; and the latest is that the Russians are fearing a de-escalation of tensions between the Americans and the Chinese. So this curious and delicate triangular balance is now going on. And what you get is that fear on both sides, I believe, that the situation may get out of hand and may lead to a situation in which there will be negotiations, namely, for only a week of homogeneity in which the doves will appear to perk up for a moment on both sides. One of the tragedies of the war has been that when we were willing to talk, the other side didn't pick up the phone, and when they were ready to talk we didn't want to pick up the telephone. You haven't had a simultaneous appearance of willingness to negotiate at the same time. Now, I believe, for the reasons I've just stated, at some point during the next 12-month period such

a situation will occur, I hope.

Now for the broader and second line, comparative analysis between the Kennedy and the Johnson techniques about the uses of power. First, it must be stated that these two crises are absolutely different. We really only use them to contrast points to show you quickly the uses of power. This thing in Cuba lasted 13 days, either we got out of it or we would all be dead. This thing in Vietnam is like a cancer; it's been going on now, as far as American involvement is concerned, for about 13 years, and still no end is in sight. You don't know quite how to get at it. Cuba was radical surgery, also, in the Cuban case, Kennedy knew Khrushchev, the two men had met, there had been a dialogue. In Vietnam there is a very uneasy relationship with the other side. Johnson doesn't know the other side, and the other side doesn't know its own balance: Brezhnev and Kosygin and Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh, between them it's a much more ambiguous, much more fluid relationship. Also, in the Cuban case we had our Allies behind us, almost completely. On the Vietnam war, our Allies are strung out from one extreme to the other, from very loyal support as in the case of Thailand, the Philippines, and South Korea over to outright hostility, as in the case of De Gaulle, who is still technically a Western Ally. So you get a very different situation. Also, the Cuban thing was fought in our own backyard, and the Vietnamese war is fought, as you know, thousands of miles away in much more hostile territory.

Most important, I believe, however, is this difference about the use of power; that is, and this is one of the most important points I'd like to emphasize, that Kennedy's use of power in essence was a use of power on the mind of his opponent. Underline the

word "mind" here several times. It was a psychological use of power. I would almost say that the Cuban missile crisis was the first nuclear war fought, except that it remained fortunately on the drawing boards, but it was a nuclear war. The nuclear missiles were very much in the background in this war, but the basic dialogue, the basic use of power, remained in the minds of two men, and, since both men were rational, when one of the men knew he was licked he threw in his hand. This was the first example of what wars of the future might be like when men are rational. This is the psychological use of war.

It raises an interesting question, in my mind at least, between the uses of power and the uses of force, and there is an interesting distinction here. I would suggest for your own thoughts this distinction: that force is physical hardware; power is a much more psychological relationship that may include physical hardware but is much broader than physical hardware, and I think a much more subtle concept. Now, to give you an example, power and force, until the coming of the nuclear age, I think, were more or less the same, but with the advent of the nuclear age they must be very different. When everybody has the same kind of force, power disappears; you might say when everybody is somebody in force terms nobody is anybody in power terms. When we and the Russians have the same force potential, we have no power over each other. Right? You might even say that sometimes power and force might be inversely correlated. For example, if you give a somewhat trigger-happy character, like Castro, a nuclear bomb, he might have more power over us than, say, Khrushchev, because Castro might be more trigger-happy.

If you drive down the street and see a car wobbling in front of you which

says "Auto School" — I put this in my book as an example — what do you do? You give this guy a wide berth, which means in psychological terms he has power over you because you are scared of him, so you might say that sometimes a smaller, more neurotic nation with a neurotic leader might have more power over you because he's less stable. You might be more afraid of him. In other words, the advent of a nuclear age, I will submit to you, puts us up against an interesting new challenge of distinguishing between power and force, and I think Kennedy used power in this new basically psychological sense in the Cuban missile confrontation, and Johnson, in my view, still uses more elements of the traditional uses of force. We all know that the bombing policy is basically a psychological policy to try to bring the other side to the table, but you still hit the enemy basically with physical broadsides — this is still the old-fashioned force idea. I believe this distinction is a very interesting one that you might think about in your own study of the fundamentals of the uses of power. It is a distinction between force which, I think, was the type of thing used before the advent of the nuclear age and which is still being used in Vietnam and the more psychological element, no less feared but much more subtle, which was used by Kennedy in the missile crisis. In that crisis the force components were very much there but remained more in the background and were not used until they were absolutely necessary, and I submit to you that the more the atomic age advances and the more we learn about it the less important force, per se, will become and the more important will power including force but also including other psychological elements become in the uses of national strategy.

Now, one concluding point about

the uses of power. You might let me conclude here on a philosophical point. And that is, as you get into the depths of policy study and the uses of power, one of the truths that has always struck me as a fundamental truth (which I first read in Professor Morgenthau's book), as one of the great truths in all of political science, is that you never have the privilege of choosing between good and evil, or right and wrong, or black and white in foreign politics. You usually are condemned, because human conditions is as it is, to choose from a spectrum along varying gradations of unsatisfactory possibilities what you hope will be the less unsatisfactory. Now I think we have a tough time as Americans (this must be our Calvinist heritage, or whatever you wish). We always choose for good against evil, for right against wrong, and then when we come up against a thing like this, where we have no such choice, where we can only choose from among evils the lesser evil, then we want to go home and watch television. But when you go home and watch television you don't escape from it either because you don't eliminate evil from the world — unfortunately it is here to stay — but you do eliminate, at least you blunt, your own capacity to distinguish among evils and the capacity to choose the lesser evil.

And as I study this kind of stuff, I am more and more convinced that the real capacity of statesmanship in the

coming years and decades might be this capacity of choosing the lesser evil from a whole series of possibilities about the uses of power.

BIOGRAPHIC SUMMARY



Professor John G. Stoessinger, Professor of Political Science of the City University of New York at Hunter College and Visiting Professor of International Relations at Columbia University, received his B.A. from

Grinnell College and his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has taught at Harvard University, Wellesley College, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; and he has given several courses in International Affairs on television and radio.

Professor Stoessinger is a member of the Commission To Study the Organization of Peace and has been in charge of the Peace Corps Training Program in World Affairs and American Institutions at Columbia University during 1963, 1964, and 1965. In May of 1967 he was appointed to the post of Director, Political Affairs Division, United Nations.

The Might of Nations: World Politics in Our Time, which was written by Professor Stoessinger, was awarded the Bancroft Prize by Columbia University in 1963 as the best book published in 1962 on international relations. He has also authored *The Refugee and the World Community*; *Financing the United Nations System*; *Power and Order*; and *The United Nations and the Superpowers*.
