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NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND AND CONTROL IN THE CUBAN CRISIS OF 1962

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CONTENTS

PREFACE 1

PURPOSE 1

SCOPE AND METHOD 2

DATA SOURCES 4

LIMITATIONS 5

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY 5

INTRODUCTION 7

NATURE OF THE CRISIS SITUATION 7

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE US NATIONAL RESPONSE . . . 8

PROPERTIES OF COMMAND AND CONTROL 9

RECAPITULATION OF SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO COMMAND AND CONTROL 12

NATIONAL COMMAND ACTIONS AND THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES . 12

Precrisis Policy and Planning
The U.S. Basic Decision
Coordination with Overseas Unified Commands and Allies
Implementing the Military Course of Action
Quarantine Operations
Contingency Planning during the Crisis
Termination of the Crisis

PROCEDURES IN THE NMCC AND J-3 32

The JBS Concept of Operations
Administrative Operations
Briefings
Debriefings
The Master Check List
Contingency Plan Implementation Procedures
Message-Processing Procedures
Action Officers
The SITREP
Information Support Operations
Relocation of Alert Cadres

INFORMATION FLOW IN RELATION TO JOINT STAFF FUNCTIONS 40

Constraints on Staff Support
The Communications Lag
Availability of Information
Characteristics of Information Requiring Staffing

TOP SECRET

CONTENTS

SERVICE WAR ROOM SUPPORT OF THE JOINT STAFF 43

Organizational and Procedural Arrangements
for Coordination
Information Support
Army War Room
Navy Flag Plot
Air Force Command Post
Service Communications Support

FOREWORD

This paper is part of a study of command and control processes during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. The scope of the entire study is as follows:

Basic Paper	- National Military Command and Control in the Cuban Crisis of 1962, Log No. 200033
*Enclosure "A"	- Historical Analysis of Command and Control Actions (Log No. TS-64-158, dated 14 Aug 1964)
*Enclosure "B"	- Procedural Analysis of J-3 Command and Control Operations (Log No. TS-63-587, dated 13 Dec 1963)
*Enclosure "C"	- Functional Analysis of Command and Control Information Flow in the Joint Staff (Log No. TS-63-696, dated 7 Feb 1964)
*Enclosure "D"	- Analysis of Command and Control in the Service War Rooms in Support of Joint Staff Operations (Log No. TS-64-511, dated 23 Oct 1964)

*These enclosures were individually forwarded prior to this date.

NATIONAL MILITARY COMMAND AND CONTROL IN THE CUBAN CRISIS OF 1962

I. PREFACE

The present paper is the basic covering paper of a detailed study report on command and control aspects of the Cuban missile crisis. It is essentially a recapitulation of observations drawn from the analyses contained in the enclosures already published that constitute the main body of the study proper, but also includes additional findings of more generic scope. It represents the final portion completing the study report. The entire study is described below.

A. PURPOSE

The Cuban crisis study is one of a series of studies being prepared by the Weapons Systems Evaluation Group (WSEG) that investigate the anatomy of command and control in a variety of recent contingencies. The series is being conducted in accordance with DJSM 1111-61, dated 14 September 1961 (and other JCS authorizations), and in the case of the Cuban study, as further amplified by J3M-1418-62, dated 15 November 1962. The overall aim of these studies is to assist the Joint Staff, particularly the J-3 Operations Directorate, by providing empirical data concerning command and control in actual crises. They are intended to serve as a basic frame of reference for developing an improved command and control capability, generally, and as one of several complementary sources of guidance for the progressive evolution of the National Military Command Center (NMCC), specifically.

The purpose of the Cuban study is to explore systematically and in depth the command and control phenomena attending a unique crisis experience, one that was not only of unusual magnitude and complexity, but in which the role of command and control

figured dominantly and pervasively. It seeks to reconstruct what happened and the context in which it occurred, all with a view to gaining insights into cause-effect relationships. To this end it examines the substance, form, and dynamics of command and control manifest under a particular set of real crisis conditions. Besides analytical exposition, the objective is to isolate and identify types of problems that arose and evidence of remediable deficiencies indicated. Of special interest are informational requirements and the manner in which they were met.

It is expressly not the purpose of this study to pass judgment on what was done or not done. Nor does it propose to weigh the merit of personalities or assess the effectiveness of their actions. Finally, although there is some evaluation of the adequacy of institutional factors, it avoids going beyond observational conclusions and refrains from making recommendations

B. SCOPE AND METHOD

In light of the broad purpose and multifaceted objectives outlined above, a proportionately comprehensive range of subject matter is covered. The central focus is on the exercise of military command and control at the seat-of-government level. The study addresses itself to the structure and processes of the National Military Command System (NMCS) as configured at the time, taking into account environmental factors bearing upon how that system functioned. It accordingly treats command and control from national desiderata in policy formulation and decision making to pragmatic operational considerations of tactical implementation by forces in the field, from grand strategy issues to the minutiae of staff-support technique.

Several distinct approaches are taken, each characterized by its respective subject, perspective, and method of inquiry.

Included are four different categories of analysis, all mutually reinforcing each other but developed separately. Corresponding to these categories are four monographs that constitute the body of the study proper. They are organized formally as individual enclosures.

The first, Enclosure "A," is a historical analysis of the substance of command and control actions, their circumstances, and their implications. The presentation is in the form of a narrative arranged episodically in topical order and chronological sequence. Enclosure "A" also serves to provide the background and context for the more specialized analyses contained in the other three enclosures.

The second category, Enclosure "B," is a procedural analysis of the way command and control operations were conducted in the NMCC and J-3. It concentrates on the different types of tasks that were performed, the internal methods employed for accomplishing them, and constraints impinging upon how the various kinds of activities were carried out. Actual procedures that were followed are viewed against existing documented procedures that specified what should be done.

Enclosure "C," the third category, is a functional analysis of information flow in the Joint Staff. Based on the actual instrumental means by which command and control was articulated at the time, it examines incoming and outgoing teletype message traffic and the staff activities associated with it. Similar research is done with other formal documents and informal working papers requiring staff action. The main emphasis is on the flow characteristics of the communications media, the nature of the information content, and the staff functions involved in processing it

The fourth and last category, Enclosure "D," analyzes command and control support of the Joint Staff by the Service War Rooms. It describes the internal command and control arrangements within the Army War Room, CNO Flag Plot, and the Air Force Command Post, and how they operated. Then it examines the information support furnished by them to the NMCC/J3 and other elements of OJCS. Finally, the communication facilities of each Service for crisis-related command and control activities are summarized.

C. DATA SOURCES

The research sources were primarily the official records in the OJCS contemporary with the crisis and testimony of officials who participated in it. Most of the record data were obtained from the files of the Joint Battle Staff, various elements of the NMCC, and the divisions and branches of the Operations Directorate. These consisted of messages, memoranda, staff papers, and other formal documents, and miscellaneous charts, tables, logs, and working notes. In addition, through the cooperation of the Services, much valuable material not otherwise obtainable was provided by the Army War Room, CNO Flag Plot, and the Air Force Command Post.

Since the initial research was undertaken well before the crisis ended, many staff members who had had a direct role in command and control activities were interviewed while their recollection of their experiences was still fresh. From them were elicited many important details not reflected elsewhere in the written record. Interviews were the chief source for reconstructing the procedures of command and control mechanisms.

Advantage was also taken of the information contained in unclassified official reports that have been made public. On occasion these were used to corroborate and amplify certain points.

A great deal of literature has been published on the crisis. To date, however, open sources have added little, other than supplementary background, that was new and reliably documented.

D. LIMITATIONS

Not all pertinent data known to exist were made available. Access to some of the primary sources was denied on grounds of continuing security or policy sensitivity. Among these were certain classes of intelligence and reconnaissance documents, and records of proceedings in meetings of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Secretary of Defense conferences, and sessions of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. A considerable amount of such information, though, is reflected in secondary sources, or can be inferred from collateral or derivative indications. Interviews also proved invaluable for filling in these hiatuses.

Another limitation is that some of the most crucial data were not retrievable. Much of the command and control activity was conducted via communication means that by their nature leave no record of what transpired. The evidence suggests that direct secure and non-secure electronic voice channels were widely used, and although some of the information thus conveyed telephonically was automatically tape-recorded on the Emergency Action console, the tapes had been erased before they could be examined.

The foregoing limitations notwithstanding, the wealth of data nonetheless permitted the resulting study to be a relatively comprehensive and definitive analysis of Cuban crisis command and control.

E. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY

In the first phase of the project, immediately following initial research, a series of working papers were originally prepared. These were made available on a temporary loan basis to

the Director for Operations, Joint Staff, as soon as they were produced, in order to effect coordination of the study effort and to provide timely access to the data generated. Subsequently, the contents of all of these preliminary working papers, amplified by additional research and further analysis, were incorporated as integral sections into the several enclosures constituting the body of the study. Final versions of these enclosures, in turn, were forwarded individually to the Director, Joint Staff, as they were completed.

Therefore, the present document, along with its four organic enclosures previously issued as listed on p. iv, supersedes all of the working papers and interim drafts that were incidental to the development of the study.

II. INTRODUCTION

A number of propositions concerning the crisis as a whole can be usefully formulated as an introductory frame of reference to place in perspective the more specific observations emerging from the detailed analyses. The following generalizations offer a gross definition of the crisis situation, the U.S. national response to it, and attendant command and control ramifications.

A. NATURE OF THE CRISIS SITUATION

The Cuban missile crisis of October 1962 was the most serious East-West confrontation of the Cold War. Militarily, it was the most serious that the U.S. has been involved in since the Korean War, if not perhaps since World War II. The imminent threat of direct full-scale attack upon its homeland made the crisis especially acute for the U.S., but the possibility of an impending U.S.-Soviet thermonuclear showdown made it an unprecedented global crisis of unique kind and magnitude.

The confrontation was at once what we have now come to identify as a Cold War crisis, with its typically elaborate posturing but little or no actual engagement of forces, and what is probably the closest we have yet come to nuclear war. From the beginning it was a military crisis revolving around a military issue -- introduction of Soviet offensive weapons systems into Cuba -- yet its resolution was ostensibly accomplished by non-military means. It had, moreover, inherent limited-war and general-war aspects simultaneously.

Despite the tactical urgency of dealing with the immediate local problem, any direct approach was inextricably wound up in strategic considerations of far-reaching consequence. Even technical operational details tended to be fraught with strategic implications. The locus of the crisis issue was Cuba, but the

principals in the confrontation were the U.S and the Soviet Union, with Cuba itself somewhat incidental. Although the Cubans were being used in a surrogate capacity, the deployment of the offensive weapons systems was in the first instance a Soviet commitment; secondly, the physical presence of large numbers of Soviet military and civilian personnel associated with these weapons represented a USSR vital interest. In certain important regards, however, Cuba could not be excluded entirely and functioned at times as an independent third principal that had to be contended with by both major parties. In this sense the crisis amounted to a triangular conflict situation, but the elemental confrontation remained essentially polarized between the U.S. and the USSR.

[Four distinct military dimensions were presented by the crisis. each requiring its respective operational response:

a. Defense of territorial CONUS against missile and air attack from Cuba.

b. Quarantine measures to prevent further influx of offensive weapons into Cuba.

c. Contingency operations addressed to Cuba in a limited-war context to eliminate the existing threat.

d. Generation of SIOP forces in a general-war context in the event the USSR elected to escalate the confrontation.

In addition, there was also an extensive reconnaissance and surveillance requirement, plus reinforcement of the U.S. Naval Base at Guantanamo and increased defense readiness posture worldwide.]

B. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE U.S. NATIONAL RESPONSE

The U.S. strategy was to mount a graduated response. Although the crisis was a military one, primary reliance initially was placed on diplomacy as the overt medium of advancing the U.S. position in the controversy. At the same time a minimal application of force was brought to bear, backed up by a credible

intent to increase it as necessary. The diplomatic negotiations were conducted bilaterally, largely as a personal dialogue between the U.S. and USSR heads of state directly. As events turned out, the first step of the graduated response proved sufficient to bring about an acceptable resolution of the main crisis issues.

Central to the response was the conveying of U.S. capability and determination to raise the magnitude of force commitment to any level required. The only military operational course of action actually carried out, other than reconnaissance and surveillance activities, was the instituting of a limited naval quarantine. However, readiness for greater force application led to operational preparations far beyond the quarantine action and accounted for overwhelmingly the largest proportion of the total military effort. Ultimately it was these other preparatory moves short of actual operations that were decisive, for they lent material cogency to U.S. diplomacy and gave substance to the entire U.S. strategy.

During the course of the crisis the concept of graduated response was progressively extended to provide for ever finer-grained shadings of selective force application on call. The result was to compound immeasurably the already complex operational requirements [stemming from the four intrinsic military dimensions] of the crisis situation. Precise discrimination in definition of increments of force, coupled with exacting reaction times, posed an especially formidable challenge to military command and control.

C. PROPERTIES OF COMMAND AND CONTROL

One of the outstanding features of the Cuban crisis experience was the unprecedented role played by command and control. Particularly significant was the conscious, deliberate emphasis

given to it as a determining factor in coordinating the U.S. military response with the political response.

There was no clear distinction between the political and military spheres of command and control. In practice the traditional institutional differentiation was often abandoned, and national political authorities exercised command and control prerogatives that hitherto had been considered within the military province. A corollary was that the classic dichotomy between strategy and tactics was not always maintained. These anomalies reflected the uniqueness of the crisis situation or devolved from the manner in which the national decision-making authorities chose to cope with it. As a consequence, the specific means and methods employed in military command and control were themselves unusual..

In structure and function, the military command and control process was marked by radical departures from assumptions, doctrine, and plans regarding the system and how it works. Fundamental readjustments to modify existing arrangements or extemporize new ones accordingly were necessary in the heat of crisis.

Quite early a compartmenting of command and control occurred within the military establishment, roughly corresponding to the four military operational dimensions of the crisis. Instead of a single integrated national system, there were actually several parallel but relatively independent mechanisms. They emerged as improvisations, each autonomously task-oriented to its respective mission. Thus functionally defined, they constituted more or less self-contained entities embracing national decision making and operational execution for their own particular kind of activity. Other than all having a common meeting point at the top -- which fell outside the military service context proper -- their organizational framework differed and procedural patterns varied.

Perhaps the most salient property demonstrated was the extreme centralization of command and control at the very apex of the national command pyramid -- literally in the person of the President as Commander-in-Chief. In recognition of the gravity and acuteness of the crisis, its management became the consuming preoccupation of the highest level of government responsible for national security. The generative source of direction, even for technical operational matters, resided in the President and a small coterie of intimate advisers. The effect was for civilian political authority to assume for itself an active role in military command and control.

Participation by civil authority was not confined to national decision making alone but also exerted tight control over actual operational implementation of the courses of action decided upon. At crucial junctures, the tendency was for military command and control to be taken out of institutional channels and performed by key personalities representing this topmost group. The national civilian authority, at its discretion and on its own initiative, would interject itself into the internal workings of the military command and control mechanisms, by-passing intervening echelons and penetrating to the operational forces in the field. At such times the command and control system was severely compressed, with national decision making interfacing with immediate local tactics of the moment.

This larger environment thus conditioned the specifically military processes. Within the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and especially the Operations Directorate and NMCC, it was reflected in microcosm. A more explicit development of how it impinged upon military command and control is included in the section immediately following.

III. RECAPITULATION OF SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO COMMAND AND CONTROL

A. NATIONAL COMMAND ACTIONS AND THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES[1]

Precrisis Policy and Planning

Before the crisis, U.S. intelligence sensing was generally aware of a Soviet-sponsored military buildup in Cuba, but intelligence estimates did not expect it to include strategic offensive weapons systems.

Intelligence evaluations and policy interpretations saw Cuban military developments in terms of their political implications, as jeopardizing the stability of Latin America -- not as a potential military threat directly to the U.S. itself.

The U.S. precrisis policy toward the military developments in Cuba evolved gradually on an ad hoc basis. It took the form of indirect diplomatic and economic countermeasures. The policy had little success, and Allies tended to be critical of it.

Military contingency planning for Cuba was undertaken long before the crisis, but its origins were independent of the main Cuban military buildup of late summer 1962. It had been expressly initiated by Presidential directive immediately following and as a reaction to the Bay of Pigs experience of April 1961.

Contingency planning started from a single sharp focus as a straightforward invasion plan, but because of continuous national political requirements to reduce reaction times, progressively multiplied. By the eve of the crisis a "family" of plans was under way.

[1] For the detailed development of these observations see Enclosure "A" of the study.

The predominant influences governing contingency planning were the U.S. attitude toward Cuba's internal political system, which was never articulated in terms of firm policy objectives, and the local military circumstances of Cuban defense capability in the event the U.S undertook to change that system by force.

All of the precrisis planning was oriented to a simple unequivocal contingency situation. It assumed a localized limited-war confrontation involving the U.S. and Cuba alone, in which vital U.S. interests would not be at stake, where the motivation for military action would be essentially preemptive, and in which the tactical initiative was a U.S. prerogative. The Soviet factor did not figure militarily in the determining assumptions.

The impetus for most of the significant planning developments came from outside the military establishment. In each instance the national political authorities, usually the President or Secretary of Defense personally, were the prime movers who expressly directed that particular planning actions be accomplished. The characteristic process was for military objectives, force levels, the operational concept, and in some cases even the basic outline plan, to be determined in relatively explicit terms at the political level, then conveyed as instructions to the military establishment through the JCS. On occasion, political authorities stipulated in detail specific operational provisions to be incorporated into the plans.

Most of the substantive planning was actually performed at the LANTCOM staff level and by the Service commands designated to become LANTCOM Service component commands (LANTFLT, ARLANT, AFLANT). The Service Headquarters, although not in

the direct chain of command, contributed importantly to the content of the plans. The JCS had largely an intermediary, and somewhat procedural, role between planning principals, i.e., as agent between those who levied planning requirements and those who fulfilled them.

[Precrisis military contingency planning, in structure and functioning, was not tightly systematic. The pattern of command and control processes was correspondingly variable. As a result, the complex of incomplete and overlapping plans, rather than being a product of comprehensive programmed development, emerged piecemeal without benefit of a common overview or master design to lend focus and direction to their evolution.]

The U.S. Basic Decision

The precipitate onset of the crisis, and its unanticipated character, caught the U.S. by surprise. General war implications were inherent from the start. Covert discovery of the presence of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba had revealed a suddenly materialized strategic confrontation of the first order directly with the USSR, in which vital U.S. interests were threatened. The crisis situation at hand was quite different from the abstract model of a Cuban contingency such as had been contemplated in plans

Because of the unexpected nature, gravity, and imminence of the threat, an immediate U.S. national response had to be devised on an ad hoc and short-term basis. The earlier broad policy objectives vis-a-vis Cuba were abruptly abandoned and the primary U.S. concern became limited to a return to the status quo before the missiles.

Two cardinal considerations shaped the formulation of the U.S. decision: the urgent need to deal with the threat before the missiles became fully operational, and fear that the situation would escalate to a Soviet-U S nuclear exchange. Both the speed and type of response were therefore crucial.

The decision-making process was highly centralized. It was taken out of the usual institutional channels as soon as the significance of the photographic evidence was recognized, and put into the hands of specific personalities at the very apex of national authority. The focus was the Executive Office, with the President immersed in every step of the process. Those directly involved in the decision-making group advising the President numbered very few and were almost exclusively civilian officials. The nucleus eventually narrowed to about eight individuals who were constituted into an Executive Committee of the NSC, the sole military member of which was the Chairman, JCS.

Although the crisis was a military confrontation, the JCS itself, as a corporate body, had neither a direct nor central role in formulating the basic national decision. Only the Chairmen participated in the NSC Executive Committee's deliberations. The Joint Staff, in the institutional sense, generated no formal staffed inputs designed to structure or influence the choice of alternatives.

The basic national decision on the U.S. response began to emerge on 18 October, four days after the initial evidence of the crisis situation was acquired. Within two days, by the morning of 20 October, the response options had been weighed and the decision had crystalized to the extent of a consensus being reached by the Executive Committee of the NSC. The proposed course of action agreed upon was tentatively adopted by the President on the afternoon of the same day (20 October), and as implementing preparations got under way, the U.S. was rapidly committed de facto to the choice made. The commitment became formal two days later on the evening of 22 October, with the President's public disclosure of U.S. intentions. One week had elapsed between the time the issue first came to the attention of the national decision authority and the time when the course of action decided upon as the U.S. response went into effect.

In essence, the basic national decision was open-ended, namely, to employ minimum force initially yet be in a position to raise the scale to any level that circumstances might require. In effect, this concept amounted to responding in graduated stages, with the first course of action (imposition of the naval quarantine) but one step in a potential series of increasingly forceful measures. Within the framework of the basic decision, successive moves were to be contingent upon Soviet reaction to the first. Each subsequent decision juncture would be dealt with as it arose.

The rationale underlying the open-ended decision to adjust progressively the U.S. response was that the Soviets would be forced thereby into a reactive role, with the burden of choice on them. They could either elect to disengage early at relatively little cost or, alternatively, risk allowing the confrontation to escalate to unknown proportions.

Coordination with Overseas Unified Commands and Allies

Because of the need for secrecy and speed (in order to spring the U.S. response as a surprise before the missiles became operational), the basic national decision was arrived at and the opening course of action planned and launched unilaterally without prior consultation with Allies. For similar reasons, the overseas Unified Commanders were not formally apprised nor consulted until shortly before the decision was implemented

It was nevertheless imperative to coordinate with the overseas CINCs, particularly with those in areas potentially vulnerable to local Soviet countermoves. It was equally important to gain Allied political and military support in order to present a common global posture that would deter the USSR from risking escalation of the crisis.

USCINCEUR and CINCARIB, the overseas Unified Commanders most immediately concerned, were especially hampered by the strategic requirement for surprise. Though the U.S. for once enjoyed the advantage of holding the initiative, the JCS were not authorized to alert and inform them of the developing situation in advance. Last-minute notification thus imposed the added handicap of little time available for planning and operational preparations in anticipation of possible repercussions in their areas. Besides the direct effect on readiness of assigned U.S. forces, it precluded timely military coordination with friendly forces of host countries

In the case of CINCEUR, the constraints and obligations implicit in the existing U.S.-NATO relationship posed fundamental command and control dilemmas. On the political side, a certain degree of policy coordination was accomplished through the ad hoc means of the President personally communicating with key Allied leaders, and by a personal emissary of the President being sent to the North Atlantic Council [redacted]

[redacted]

In the case of CINCARIB, one of the chief coordination problems revolved around the limited CARIBCOM capabilities in relation to the extent of assistance that might be required by Latin American governments to suppress any Communist-inspired internal uprisings in support of Cuba. It was aggravated by the fact that the residual force resources of CINCSTRIKE severely restricted the augmentation available. Another coordination problem attended implementing the U S. policy objective of actual Latin American military participation in operations against Cuba On both scores, complex politico-military arrangements had to be negotiated quickly, with each country involved having to be dealt with on an individual national basis.

With respect to policy coordination, formal Allied political support of the U.S. position in the crisis was achieved when all of the Allied governments declared their official backing. In Latin America some military support was also obtained. But the NATO powers, because of standing attitudes on the Cuban issue and differing perceptions of the crisis threat, gave little military support to the overall deterrent posture. Of a lesser

order, even coordination of U.S. military operational activities vis-a-vis Allies was conditioned by local policy reservations.

Thus, a major constraint circumscribing the range and type of national command and control action abroad was the critical interrelationship between U.S.-oriented military considerations and prevailing foreign political factors. A clearly demonstrated concomitant was that these political variables tended to slow down the military command and control process.

Implementing the Military Course of Action

Because of the nature of the crisis situation and the U.S. decision in response to it, there were simultaneously four military operational dimensions to the crisis. Besides the naval quarantine, which was the only operation (other than surveillance and reconnaissance activities) that was actually carried out, these were: preparation for defense of territorial CONUS, achieving general-war posture (including generation of SIOP forces), and readiness to implement the Cuban contingency plans. The structure and processes of military command and control were distinct for each and individually complex in their own right. The problem of keeping them properly synchronized with one another and, together, all in phase with political developments, exercised the total politico-military command and control system, from the White House to the forces in the field.

The covert discovery of the missiles on 14 October had afforded the U.S. strategic warning of eight days, but from the military operational point of view it was nullified to some degree by the political necessity of maintaining secrecy in order to spring the U.S. response as a surprise on 22 October.

The strategic warning did not confer an advantage on the invasion assault forces, who constituted overwhelmingly the largest proportion of forces affected. Although they were the ones who most needed advance warning, in view of the ponderous marshalling and staging necessary, they could least benefit from it, because the magnitude of activity would tip the U.S. hand and might be undesirably provocative.

Besides the surprise element, optimum mobilization had to give way in favor of projecting a national image of deliberate restraint balanced by firm determination. Ultimately, it was hoped, the purpose of military operational preparations would be symbolic, as an earnest of U.S. intentions in the larger dialogue with the Soviet Union.

However, the CONUS-based CINCs, i.e , LANT, SAC, CONAD, although not officially informed by the JCS of what the U.S. course of action would be until 21 October, were alerted to coming events early enough by the Services to permit staff preparations in anticipation of operational requirements, so that all were engaged in readiness activities by 17 October. USAF forces, especially, exploited to advantage the grace period; actual operational air deployments began on 17 October, well before a national decision had been reached.

Fear of escalation created basic command and control dilemmas bearing directly upon operational preparations. The effect was at once to expand and narrow the scope, type, and degree of combat readiness required and permitted, because measures to deal with the local contingency inescapably impinged upon general-war issues. On the one hand, the Soviet military presence in Cuba made the consequences of otherwise conventional

limited-war invasion or air attack unknown, and U S. strategic posture for general war had to be prepared accordingly. [redacted]

Rules of engagement, in terms of concrete application in specific circumstances, also constituted a major operational command and control problem area. There was a noticeable reluctance on the part of the JCS to make precommitting decisions defining the criteria for initiating, and the parameters for conducting, combat operations not explicitly covered in plans, especially regarding the critical issue of tactical response to hostile acts of the enemy The guidance provided by the JCS that ostensibly was to govern U.S. reaction in the hypothetical exigency in question was sometimes so qualified as to be self-contradicting. Whatever handicapping effect this may have had operationally for the tactical forces involved, the resulting ambiguity tended to enhance centralized control at the highest level, for it insured that field commanders would in each instance have to seek authorization before taking a potentially serious move.

Current operational activity connected with readiness preparations under way accounted for many urgent substantive problems to which the military command and control system had to address itself. Limitations in available resources, particularly forces, lift capability (land, sea, and air), and base facilities, required intensive rescheduling of movements and revising of staging plans, which amounted to a complex

secondary order of technical decision junctures.. Monitoring the response of all the forces so affected in order to keep abreast of the status of readiness as a whole, posed extensive information requirements. In both respects, the burden of attendant command and control functions fell on the Joint Staff, specifically on J-3, as the focal common denominator embracing the various Service interests and command echelons involved.

When operational conflicts arose between CINCs, as in the case of competing demands of LANTCOM contingency air deployments against those of CONAD and SAC, coordination was effected at the JCS level. The degree of detail in which some of these problems had to be approached before they could be resolved by the JCS imposed correspondingly intensive ad hoc information and staffing support requirements on J-3.

Discrepancies between operational needs of a CINC and logistic resources and capabilities of a Service similarly had to be reconciled at the JCS level. Sometimes these required that the JCS render explicit rulings on the technical and tactical details of operational deployment for the CINC concerned. In the process, because an appropriate ready data base was not normally maintained within the OJCS, J-3 had to improvise information retrieval and perform technical staffing to support the JCS disposition of the problem.

After initial operational readiness was achieved, maintaining it without degradation over a sustained period, while at the same time bringing the posture to the required full state of preparedness, continued to preoccupy the military command and control system. Maximum readiness of total assault forces was not reached until the latter part of November. In the interim, what adjustments were necessary to avoid undue force attrition,

to rectify deficiencies, or to refine and improve special facets of operational readiness tended to be accomplished at a more decentralized level. During this second phase, the perspective of the JCS role gradually reverted to broader overall functions of conveying requirements, review, and approval.

Quarantine Operations

The limited, selective naval Quarantine that was actually implemented as the initial course of action in the U.S. response was essentially a form of military demonstration in support of diplomatic measures. Nevertheless, it constituted the most critical area of command and control of the entire crisis.

Since subsequent decisions on other political and military moves would be dependent in large measure upon Soviet reaction to the Quarantine, it was pivotal to the overall national strategy for dealing with the crisis. Quarantine operations accordingly received the intensive attention of national decision makers, and command and control related to them was subordinated to considerations other than military operational criteria alone

Fundamental ad hoc adjustments to the established institutional command and control system were occasioned early in the crisis by the designation of the CNO to serve as JCS representative for the Quarantine. The effect was to shift the focus of Quarantine command and control from the Joint Staff to OPNAV, thereby precipitating a series of secondary changes in staff organization and procedures. CNO Flag Plot assumed many of the functions connected with the Quarantine that normally would have been the responsibility of the Joint Battle Staff. [This necessitated the creation within J-3 of a special "Blockade Group" to maintain liaison with OPNAV and keep the Chairman, JCS, the Director, Joint Staff, and other elements of OJCS informed on current developments in the Quarantine]

In practice there were also significant procedural departures in the functioning of the Quarantine command and control system beyond those implied in the ad hoc modifications to its structure. At crucial junctures, the entire system was radically compressed; national decision makers preempted tactical command, bypassing intermediary command links, and would themselves exercise direct operational control over the immediate actions of Quarantine task force units.

There were three instances of such real-time command and control of the details of tactical operations from the seat of government. The first was in connection with the principal targets for interception (Soviet Poltava-class ships) reversing course - when the Secretary of Defense, the CNO, and their deputies relayed explicit White House instructions via secure voice channels directly to commanders of ships assigned to carry out the intercepts.

A second instance of similar real-time national command and control was in connection with Soviet tankers, especially the BUCHAREST - when the CNO and his Executive conveyed White House guidance directly to quarantine task force elements.

A third instance was in connection with non-Bloc vessels, particularly in the case of stopping and boarding the Soviet-chartered Lebanese freighter MARUCLA - when decisions governing the moment-by-moment operational moves of the specific quarantine ships involved were made by the Secretary of Defense and his Deputy acting on specific instructions of the President, then communicated directly to the individual ship commander concerned.

An unanticipated additional mission for the quarantine task force was verification of Soviet withdrawal of its deployed missiles. The terms of the bilateral U.S.-Soviet inspection arrangements that were negotiated on the political level, however, covered in comprehensive detail the operational procedures to be followed. Command and control processes proved to be routine.

The modest Latin American operational participation in the Quarantine occurred near the end of the crisis and was of little military significance. The contributed ships were made part of a separate U.S. task force, and the only special command and control problem was providing each foreign ship with a U.S. communication liaison team having bilingual operators and appropriate cryptographic equipment.

Contingency Planning During the Crisis

Command and control considerations pervaded contingency planning during the crisis. The function of the plans themselves was essentially as a vehicle of command and control to optimize military responsiveness to national political direction. Concern at the political decision-making level with operational details deemed critical to the larger U.S. strategy in the crisis accounted for most of the planning activity and largely determined the content of the provisions that resulted.

The contingency plans became the midpoint on a projected spectrum of military courses of action ranging from the naval Quarantine, on one extreme, to general war, on the other. But because Cuba was the immediate locus of the crisis issue, the contingency plans remained central to the total U.S. response and were accordingly a major focus of attention for the entire national politico-military command and control complex

Much the same general patterns as had been evident before the crisis characterized contingency planning experience during the crisis -- only they were more pronounced. A salient difference was in the greatly accelerated pace and intensity of the planning, but despite the changed context, the basic form and substance of the earlier plans were retained. The two types of contingency planning undertaken prior to the crisis, i.e., for air-strike operations and invasion, continued to be developed as two separate plans. [redacted]

Neither of the two contingency plans ever reached final completion, but, because of modifications and additions, were constantly in a state of transitional growth. Although individual portions gained specificity, the plans as a whole, rather than being narrowed by materialization of the crisis, progressively expanded in dimension and detail. The cumulative effect over time was a considerable transformation of the original plans.

The associated command and control processes also were similar to precrisis practice. As in other crisis-related military activity, the highest echelon of national political authority interposed itself into the contingency planning machinery. The dominant factors influencing the plans, besides the concrete limitations set by available military resources, proved to be: assessments by political decision makers of the intrinsic military situation in Cuba; and interpretations by the same political decision makers of the significance of that

military situation in terms of operational planning needs -- evaluations that did not always coincide with the views of the military The typical role of the JCS was, as before the crisis, largely still that of intermediary agency between planning principals

Within the OJCS, the special "Cuban Planners" group was created in the Operations Directorate to deal with contingency planning matters exclusively. Organizationally separate from the Joint Battle Staff or regular Divisions and Branches of J-3, the Cuban Planners functioned independently of established channels and procedures. Rather than substantive planning, their job was one of monitoring and providing informational coordination and staffing support in connection with the plans.

Within LANTCOM headquarters, as soon as tactical command for planned contingency operations was centralized to give CINCLANT operational control over all forces involved, a separate LANTCOM staff was formally activated to handle Cuban contingency responsibilities, including planning The special contingency staff, however, did not function as intended Instead, it was informally integrated into the regular permanent CINCLANT staff, which performed the Cuban staffing along with general-war-staffing.

Lack of unequivocal criteria for determining the approval status of basic plans, components, and changes at any given time made for an element of procedural ambiguity, potentially of far-reaching command and control consequence Various kinds of approval, and inconsistencies in their application, sometimes made it impossible to know which particular planning provisions were currently governing and official.

Stringent security restrictions imposed in the early stages of the crisis were an added constraint militating against full

and timely dissemination of planning information to all the staffs and forces affected by the plans. The tendency persisted even after security restrictions were relaxed, and was especially evident in the use of the severely limiting "EXCLUSIVE FOR" device on messages crucially pertinent to planning.

The same themes that dominated precrisis contingency planning were the major planning problem areas during the crisis. All were traceable to command and control desiderata of the national political authority. Centralizing of command relations was accomplished relatively early, but reduction of reaction times, discriminate force application, and augmentation of force levels, were more complicated and exercised a greater portion of the total national command and control system.

Compliance with recurrent White House insistence on minimizing the time lag between a political decision to execute military action and implementation of the action ordered placed a great strain on both contingency planning and operational readiness preparations. Crucial to the whole command and control process involved was reciprocal information exchange As the number of planned specific courses of action multiplied, settling upon reaction times that were both politically acceptable and militarily feasible necessitated intensive coordination between planning and operations, and in the interim, occasioned no little confusion before the various reaction times were firmly codified and universally understood.

Preoccupation with discriminate force application within the scope of the contingency plans reflected in microcosm the underlying strategic concern with escalation that characterized the whole U.S. approach to the crisis. The elaborate definition of selective options in ascending order of magnitude, coupled

with austere reaction times, grew out of Presidential demands for precise and virtually instantaneous military response capability to implement predetermined operational courses of action, in descrete increments of specified kind and measure, on call. Such fine-grained choices from a range of programmed alternatives as was ultimately provided for in the contingency plans made for unprecedented national decision flexibility.

Augmentation of force level commitments for contingency operations accounted for extensive planning modifications throughout the crisis period. The steady force increase was partly related to order-of-battle intelligence factors, and in part to planning refinements designed to accommodate secondary or peripheral requirements or to cover more remote exigencies that might conceivably occur. The chief motivation, however, was the desire on both operational and national policy levels to insure adequate safety margins. On the one hand, tactical commanders on various echelons were inclined to add, on their own initiative, combat strength in excess of what they were authorized to deploy, and the plans would subsequently be adjusted accordingly. On the other, political decision makers, remembering the Bay of Pigs experience, formally directed further large-scale augmentation, even in the face of military advice to the contrary.

[redacted]

In view of the nature of some of the planning issues dealt with, the essential information requirements for staffing support of many planning actions, such as evaluation of the adequacy of forces, were fundamentally in the realm of judgment. [redacted]

Termination of the Crisis

Successful resolution of the crisis was achieved primarily through diplomatic measures conducted at the national political level. The specific means employed were bilateral communications in the form of an exchange of messages between the U.S. and USSR heads of state. Military command and control had no direct participating role in the dialogue.

[redacted] The incident revealed a conjuncture of two different orders of command and control activity bringing into conflict the Chairman's dual role as an integral part of one institutional command and control system (the military) and his simultaneous ad hoc functions as a member of another (the national political). As he felt constrained to explain in his dissenting memorandum, the Chairman had been unable to participate in the JCS

deliberations because, at the time, he was at the White House functioning in a staff capacity as the military member of the NSC Executive Committee.

Attending the gradual military unwinding that characterized the termination of the crisis were many command and control requirements, though progressively less urgent and less crucial. A series of decisions and complex operational coordination was necessary to maintain a balanced and orderly stand-down of operational readiness in phase with political developments, the military significance of which was not always clear at the time. Concomitant with the return toward normal precrisis posture was a decrease in intimate participation by national political decision makers in the immediate operational details of reducing military readiness.

As tensions eased and the crisis subsided, the ad hoc military command and control adjustments were abandoned, although not necessarily to revert to precrisis arrangements. Within the Operations Directorate of the Joint Staff, particularly, a number of basic changes in command and control organization and procedures were put into effect even before the crisis was over.

Throughout the crisis, the military command and control system, including that portion represented by the OJCS, had been confined almost exclusively to technical military matters following on decisions already rendered by national political authorities. There was little tendency on the part of the Executive Office to relinquish centralized control and delegate autonomous prerogatives along institutional lines to the military establishment in its own traditional sphere of vested interest. Generally, most of the managerial initiative shaping the U.S. military response was exercised at the very apex of government.

B. PROCEDURES IN THE NMCC AND J-3[1]

Within the OJCS the focus of command and control staff activity was the NMCC and J-3. [The Joint Battle Staff and various elements of the Operations Directorate that were most directly involved in immediate operational matters experienced procedural difficulties affecting the Joint Staff role in the crisis.[2]]

The JBS Concept of Operations

[The general concept of Watch augmentation and transition to Joint Battle Staff operations, as specified in the COOP-OJCS, was essentially followed during the Cuban crisis. However, the Joint Battle Staff was hampered by a number of procedural problems during the early critical period of the crisis. These problems arose in part because of the lack of detailed procedures supporting that concept of operations and because many JBS members lacked the necessary training and experience with Joint Battle Staff functions. Most of the Battle Staff members were relatively untrained for their new assignments, except for general background information obtained in their normal staff assignments. Existing evidence indicates that no special briefings were planned or were given to prepare battle Staff members before or immediately after they were assigned.]

Administrative Operations

[Many established J-3 peacetime administrative procedures failed during the crisis. Because of the press of time and the volume of action papers to be prepared for JCS consideration, the peacetime procedural system for submission of papers to JCS was rarely used by J-3 action officers. Even the "short-form"]

[1] For the detailed development of these observations see Enclosure "B" of the study.

[2] NOTE: Many changes in NMCC/J-3 procedural arrangements have occurred since the time of the crisis, either as a direct result of the Cuban experience or in the course of evolutionary modifications.

Green method and other methods of expediting the processing of JCS papers proved to be too unwieldy from an operational point of view. The lack of space, shortages of administrative personnel, and the absence of procedures clearly adapted to crisis operations all contributed to operational inefficiency during the first few days of the crisis. Many of these procedural problems were alleviated during the course of the crisis, but their existence during the critical phase of the crisis suggests the need to examine the close interaction between administrative and operational procedures employed during emergency situations, and to develop new emergency administrative operational procedures which can be exercised in conjunction with other emergency operational procedures.

The operation of a Battle Staff, the development and use of the Master Check List (MCL), and the J-3 methods used to submit action items for JCS consideration in large part replaced peacetime administrative procedures of the Joint Secretariat and J-3. The JBS assigned actions to the Directorates, maintained follow-up monitoring of the status of actions, developed agenda items for the MCL, and maintained comprehensive message files for reference. These activities have been clearly defined in Joint Administrative Instructions (JAIs) and other procedural documentation as standard Joint Secretariat responsibilities for peacetime operations. However, there were no provisions in the JAIs for transition from peacetime administrative procedures to administrative support for operational procedures during crises. As a result, a transition was not made and both systems operated simultaneously during the crisis.

Briefings

The large amount of time spent by the JBS Chiefs and Team Chiefs in preparing and presenting briefings necessarily

interfered with their primary functions of planning, directing, and coordinating the activities of the Battle Staff team members and J-3 action officers. Moreover, the documented procedural guidance for the conduct of briefings proved to be inadequate to insure efficient, high quality briefing preparation and presentation by the JBS. At first, Battle Staff personnel did not have detailed knowledge of the input sources of information for briefings and were relatively inexperienced in the techniques of briefing preparation. The JBS had to rely heavily on experienced Current Action Center (CAC) briefers for the assembly of information and the preparation of briefing scripts. In general, therefore, the Cuban experience suggests the need for reducing the number of special or ad hoc briefings, for shifting the responsibility for briefing preparation and presentation to officers who do not have primary responsibilities in the direction of the JBS, and for utilizing briefing officers who have had specialized training and experience in the conduct of operational briefings.

Debriefings

Normal JCS debriefing procedures were not used throughout the period of Joint Battle Staff operations from 21 October through 12 November. The failure to use the normal debriefing mechanism derived from several special conditions surrounding the Cuban crisis. Cuban intelligence information and U.S. intentions during the early phases of the crisis had to be tightly controlled. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were in almost continuous session for many days and, as a result, key personnel normally involved in the debriefing procedure were preoccupied with the press of other work. Even had they been available, the requirement to maintain tight security control over U.S intentions would have precluded extensive debriefing of the Joint Staff.

[The failure to utilize the usual system for debriefing JCS meetings created numerous problems. It made it difficult for the JBS to ascertain the briefing needs of the JCS and to tailor their information collection, analysis, and presentation activities to these needs. It created an informational vacuum which made it difficult for the JBS to plan advance actions. It produced unnecessary confusion, duplication of effort, and lack of coordination in the performance of JBS and Joint Staff activites. In general, the failure to provide an established information feedback mechanism from JCS to the JBS seriously hampered the Battle Staff's ability to perform its intended function of expediting and coordinating JCS actions.]

The Master Check List

The Master Check List (MCL) was an ad hoc innovation developed in response to a request by the Chairman, JCS, that J-3 maintain a continuing record and history of all actions in the Cuban crisis. Despite this initial limited purpose, however, it quickly became recognized by the Joint Staff as the fastest and most reliable method of placing urgent operational matters on the JCS agenda and also as the most authoritative single source of information on topics that were being considered by JCS.

The MCL was submitted to the JCS each morning. Attached to it were appropriate action papers which contained a discussion of the problem, recommendations, and implementing draft messages. This procedure had the effect of allowing action officers to submit their papers for JCS decision in a matter of hours, instead of days. Action papers were submitted at the JCS meetings as Director, Joint Staff Memoranda (DJSMs). This process short-cut the elaborate coordination process required during peacetime operations. As a result, the Joint

Staff was able to operate more like a true military staff than is the case under normal conditions.

Contingency Plan Implementation Procedures

There were no preplanned messages for implementing limited war contingency plans comparable to those prepared for SIOP implementation. Advance planning and preparation of such implementing messages require coordination with the CINCs to insure that orders issued by JCS do not arbitrarily restrict the field commander's choice of timing based on local and tactical factors. Planners apparently had not given follow-on messages related to the implementation of contingency plans the same degree of attention that they had given to the less likely situation of general war.

Message-Processing Procedures

A review of message-processing procedures listed in JAIs and other sources suggests several shortcomings when examined in the light of the augmented Watch and Battle Staff operations in the crisis.

a. None of the documented procedures related to Battle Staff operations, crisis operations, or wartime operations. Documented procedures were essentially peacetime procedures, with provision for special short-cuts for an occasional message requiring prompt action. Despite this the COOP-OJCS specifically instructed Battle Staff personnel to follow standard message processing procedures.

b. There was no centralized source of message-processing procedures available to serve as guides to staff personnel assigned to Joint Battle Staffs.

c. The elaborately documented peacetime system for message reproduction, distribution, control, and

clearance, as defined in JAIs and J-3Is was simply too slow, complex, and cumbersome to meet operational requirements for the rapid processing of a high volume of action messages associated with crisis operations. The more streamlined and operationally oriented JBS procedures replaced many of these peacetime, administratively oriented procedures.

Action Officers

The development of action papers is probably the most crucial part of the whole process by which the Joint Staff provides support for JCS command decisions. All action officers involved in the Cuban crisis were subjected to very heavy and demanding workloads, but the pressures were particularly concentrated on a few key officers who were most knowledgeable and had the confidence of senior members of the Joint Staff. Despite the very capable performance shown by J-3 action officers during the crisis, it is questionable if the J-3 organization could have provided adequate staff support for considerably expanded emergency operations. If the Cuban crisis had escalated into larger proportions, or if a second crisis had developed simultaneously in, say, India or Berlin, the supply of experienced J-3 action officers would have been quickly exhausted.

One of the greatest assets of experienced action officers is their detailed knowledge of the appropriate sources and channels of information and of the techniques and procedures for preparing and processing action papers. They have appropriate files readily available; they know whom to call, where to go for particular types of information, and with whom their actions must be coordinated; and they are familiar with the types of format and levels of detail required by the JCS in

the submission of action papers. Knowledge of this type, together with the possession of detailed information on particular geographic areas or subject matters, represents a relatively rare combination of skills which is found in only a few key individuals who have had continuous, specialized training and experience. The fact that a number of J-3 action officers had this combination of procedural knowledge and subject matter competence probably made the difference between an effective J-3 operation and an ineffective one during the Cuban crisis.

SITREP

The preparation of the daily and supplemental Situation Reports (SITREPs) was one of the most time-consuming and difficult tasks assigned to the Joint Battle Staff. The difficulties encountered in its preparation stemmed from several sources: (a) the format for presentation of SITREP data was not known or fully understood by many of the members of the Battle Staff; (b) the lack of feedback of information from the JCS made it difficult for the JBS to determine what information to include in the SITREP; (c) the process of collating, organizing, and analyzing data relevant to the emerging Cuban situation was complicated by the sheer volume and complexity of input data arriving from CINCs, Commands, and Service War Rooms; (d) initial input data from the CINCs proved to be inadequate to the needs for JBS SITREP production; and (e) preparation of the SITREP was hampered by the lack of a centralized source of information on the current deployment and status of forces.

Existing procedural guidance for the preparation of SITREPs was limited to the assignment of responsibility for its production and a brief description and topical outline of its content. Based on the Cuban Battle Staff experience, this guidance was

not sufficient to insure the production of Situation Reports which fulfilled the basic purposes of this report. Additional procedural guidance was needed in defining the criteria of relevance for the inclusion and exclusion of information to be utilized in the report, and in identifying and centralizing the input sources of information.

Information Support Operations

The Cuban crisis emphasized the need for a more detailed data base for Status of Forces information, a capability for rapid retrieval of that information in many forms, and for more clearly defined requirements for general informational support. In responding to requests for information, Joint Battle Staff personnel would frequently turn to the Status of Forces Branch for current information on status of forces and other force data. Information was usually required "right now" and in a variety of formats. As a result, the Status of Forces Branch was overwhelmed by requests for information which far exceeded their original terms of reference and their capacity to respond. In general, it was found that Joint Operational Reporting System (JOPREP) reports containing Status of Forces information, i.e., REDAT, REDNON, REDRAD,[1] were not as useful as the SITREPs submitted by the unified and specified commands. They were not timely and did not contain the detail required by various users of this information. In effect, the JOPREP for Status Reports was not responsive to Joint Staff requirements for implementing contingency plans.

Although lack of modern graphics and display production material, adequate map bases, and storage space was a problem for support operations, major problems stemmed from changing requirements for displays and graphics and the lack of uniform guidance. Lack of uniform guidance resulted, in part, from the fact that the Branch had to take direction from two different

[1] Operational Ready Reports, Atomic, Non Atomic and NORAD.

masters. Branch personnel tried to be responsive to both the operations personnel they served, namely, the JBS team and JCS/J-3 Duty Officer Watch, and to the Chief of the Operations Support Division.

Relocation of the Alert Cadre

Relocation of the alert cadre [redacted]

C. INFORMATION FLOW IN RELATION TO JOINT STAFF FUNCTIONS[1]

Constraints on Staff Support

At the beginning of the crisis, extreme security restrictions on crisis-related information precluded full utilization by the JCS of the staff-support capability of the Joint Staff in generating the required initial military planning and operations. Access to and processing of the information were confined to designated individuals, with the regular divisions and branches of J-3, as such, excluded from participation in

[1]For the detailed development of these observations, see Enclosure "C" of the study.

staffing functions that they would otherwise perform in the ordinary course of Joint Staff activities.

In the absence of normal staff support, preparation of early JCS actions had to rely mainly on information contained in check lists, outline plans, and other staff work already in existence before the crisis occurred.

The informational value of the Master Check List for staffing purposes varied in kind and over time· the listing of "Actions to be Considered" was of utmost usefulness at first, but decreased rapidly once the initial JCS directives had been issued; the record of "Actions Taken," although misleadingly incomplete, was nevertheless the only source of some information required in staffing.

The greatest demand for staff support occurred immediately following issuance of initial JCS directives to implement action in the field and primarily involved requests for amplification. This peak demand for staff support coincided with the period when the staff was least informed, most poorly organized, and had the smallest number of knowledgeable personnel assigned.

The Communications Lag

Because of heavy overloading of communication relay facilities in the field, during the first two weeks of the crisis the high-precedence messages required on the average 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 hours from time of origin to receipt in one of the Service Communications Centers of the Pentagon.

The most nearly current picture of the overall situation that the Joint Staff was capable of presenting to the JCS actually reflected conditions as they had been 8 to 12 hours previously.

To compensate for prevailing information-flow delays, Joint Staff efforts to keep abreast of developments depended on field commanders' estimates and expectations as well as on their reports of what had in fact already occurred.

Availability of Information

During the first week of the crisis, the tendency for many JCS-Out messages to be drafted at the Director level or higher, in conjunction with the lack of debriefing arrangements regarding disposition of staff recommendations, frequently prevented coordination being effected by Joint Staff action personnel on queries from the CINCs concerning JCS directives.

Special channels to limit distribution of messages, established in the first days of the crisis for security reasons, proved difficult to change after security was relaxed. Some results were: (a) that information contained in key communications between field commands was sometimes received by the Joint Staff days late via readdressed copies; and (b) in the case of the Joint Battle Staff, full background information on early developments was never received

Characteristics of Information Requiring Staffing

The basic character of both incoming messages and the attendant staff work that they occasioned changed after the first week of the crisis. The emphasis shifted from planning and operational matters to force following.

Although the Services had primary responsibility for force following and performed it for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff was instructed also to follow in detail the movements of U.S. and Soviet forces for the JCS.

Owing to variations in the kind of information submitted by the CINCs in response to DEFCON orders, it was not possible

to determine from some of their reports whether the required DEFCON had indeed been achieved.

D. SERVICE WAR ROOM SUPPORT OF THE JOINT STAFF[1]

Organizational and Procedural Arrangements for Coordination

The transition from normal to crisis staffing of all three Service War Rooms occurred at about the same time and roughly followed the same steps as in the case of the NMCC Current Actions Center. Initially, in the period 17-19 October, each Service informally created a small special alert staff to deal with the unfolding crisis situation. Then, after the U.S. national response had been decided upon and implementation preparations began to get underway, these special alert staffs became the nuclei of the formal Battle Staffs that subsequently were established within each Service War Room. Activation of the four Battle Staffs -- JCS, Army, Navy, and Air Force -- occurred on 21-22 October.

Paralleling the experience of the JCS organization, the stringent security restrictions that were imposed during the first critical week of the crisis necessitated deviation from standard emergency action procedures on the part of all three Service War Rooms. Because of these security considerations, the original alert staffs operated outside the normal emergency action area of their respective Service War Room facility, and their contacts were largely limited to a few key individuals on the Service Secretary/Chief of Staff level. Later, when they were transformed into full Battle Staffs, their functions were integrated into Service War Room operations and they dealt on a much broader range with staff and command elements of their own Service and with other agencies.

[1]For the detailed development of these observations see Enclosure "D" of the study.

The interrelationship between the Service War Rooms and the NMCC/Joint Staff was characterized by a mixture of formal and informal processes. Ad hoc arrangements, primarily in the form of direct personal contacts between individual Joint Staff officers and their Service staff counterparts, supplemented those on a more institutional basis, and in many cases proved to be the significant pattern.

The tendency for much of the Joint Staff-Service War Room coordination and liaison to be accomplished by means of personal contacts between individuals was the result of early practices emerging prior to 22 October. These had the force of precedent, so that when some standardized procedures were eventually laid down, they were for the most part a post facto codification of working arrangements that had already evolved.

There were many advantages to the informal person-to-person relationship by which Joint Staff-Service War Room coordination was conducted. Besides the speed and efficiency of direct communication between principals, it was conducive to a more effective working rapport in the reciprocal exchange of vital information. On the one hand, Service War Room officers would customarily apprise their Joint Staff opposite numbers by telephone of any important new information on matters known to be of interest to the JCS as soon as it came to their attention. On the other, when JCS requirements on the Services were forthcoming, appropriate Service War Room officers would be alerted by their NMCC counterparts to the fact that such requirements could be anticipated. This sometimes permitted preparatory staff action to be undertaken in response to the informal notification several hours before official receipt of the same information through formal administrative routing channels.

Besides timeliness, the inherent selectivity of the process helped to insure that relevant data reached the specific individual with an immediate need to know.

A drawback of the informal procedure was that it depended upon the initiative of personalities, both to identify data of interest and to pass it on Moreover, the attendant information-transfer function was confined to an essentially two-point, person-to-person exchange. Thus, although a certain amount of internal dissemination could be assumed, there was always the possibility that a given item of information might not, as a matter of course, be automatically relayed to all those who properly should be cognizant of it. Furthermore, its very informality militated against systematic consolidation of the cumulative body of information bearing upon the various aspects of the crisis.

With regard to certain categories of basic data, however, the procedures became formalized relatively early By 25 October, all three Services were periodically conveying some information to the Joint Staff in accordance with a fixed schedule, prescribed format, and designated distribution. In such cases a predetermined routine was followed more or less consistently, and the interaction occurred between organizational entities rather than individuals. Nonetheless, a great deal of other informational support by the Services remained ad hoc and was accomplished on an interpersonal level.

Information Support

All three Services furnished certain types of informational support to the Joint Staff. To some extent, the kind of information varied from Service to Service. For one thing, the capabilities of the Service War Rooms themselves varied, because

of differences in concept, organization, and available facilities. For another, different support requirements were placed on them by the JCS. In addition, each of the Service War Rooms dealt exclusively in generic classes of information unique to the particular role and assigned missions of its respective Service. There was, nevertheless, a pattern of parallel information support actions discernible among the three Services.

These information support functions common to all three Services may be grouped into six categories. Each of the Service War Rooms:

a. Submitted written inputs for the daily 0800 briefing of the Chairman, JCS, that was held in the NMCC, and each had one of its officers present prepared to answer questions to amplify the written Service input if required.

b. Provided Service-wide status-of-forces data more comprehensive in scope and in greater depth of detail than would otherwise have been available from JOPREPs alone.

c. Transmitted Service position papers to Joint Staff action officers on matters pending JCS consideration and decision.

d. Forwarded copies of summary reports recapitulating significant operational developments of the Service, such as chronologies of events and tabulations of critical aspects of force posture.

e. Maintained a round-the-clock policy watch, with a general/flag officer on duty, to provide immediate response capability for coordination actions requiring Service decision.

f. Conducted, on request, many ad hoc briefings -- either within the confines of the War Room area or elsewhere -- for anyone with a need to know, and especially for high-ranking DOD decision-makers.

Army War Room

Besides the types of support indicated above, the Army War Room furnished the J-3 Cuban Planners with information regarding Army force resources available, their characteristics, capabilities, and limitations, and with comment and recommendations regarding their proposed employment. Such support was provided on a continuing basis as the various OPLANs relating to the Cuban crisis were revised, expanded, and updated.

The vast scale and complexity of Army participation, both in connection with contingency plans and CONUS defense, required proportionately comprehensive and intricate information in order to monitor the progress of readiness preparations underway. Moreover, the functional interdependence of Army operations with those of the Navy and Air Force constantly required extrapolated and projected information that might itself affect existing timetables, plans and even decisions on a given course of action. The Army War Room accordingly maintained a consolidated central repository of detailed operational data on current and scheduled troop movements covering all Army units involved, as well as data on lift, staging, and logistic support commitments associated with them. Frequent recourse was made to this data base, selectively or across the board, to answer queries from the Joint Battle Staff or other elements of OJCS.

In addition, the Chief of Staff, Army, in his capacity as "Executive" for Civil Affairs matters for the JCS, created a separate planning group charged with developing civil affairs plans for military occupation of Cuba. Although this special planning group operated apart from the Army's Cuban Battle

Staff, the information pertaining to civil affairs that it provided to the Joint Staff constituted yet another unique type of informational support, supplementing that provided by the Army War Room proper.

Similarly, the Army technical services, notably the Office of the Chief Signal Officer and the Office of the Chief of Transportation, at times provided technical information directly to Joint Staff elements.

Navy Flag Plot

The designation of the Chief of Naval Operations as JCS representative for Quarantine operations (and defense of Guantanamo) on 19 October, had the effect of transferring to Flag Plot many of the information support functions related to Quarantine matters that otherwise would have been the responsibility of the Joint Battle Staff. Inasmuch as the only military operation actually carried out during the crisis, other than surveillance and reconnaissance activity, was implementation of the Naval Quarantine, this was one of the most critical areas of information support of the entire crisis.

Throughout, the central point of contact within the OJCS for obtaining Quarantine information from Flag Plot was the special Blockade Group that had been created in J-3 early in the crisis. The Blockade Group operated independently of the NMCC Current Actions Center, and serviced the Joint Battle Staff on the same basis as other elements of the Joint Staff.

During the decision-making period prior to 22 October, rules of engagement governing the Quarantine were formulated primarily within OPNAV. Those elements of the Joint Staff with a need to know were kept apprised of developments pertaining to the planned operation through personal contacts

between members of the Flag Plot Cuban Watch Team and the J-3 special Blockade Group.

After the Quarantine was implemented, there was a considerable volume of information flowing constantly from Flag Plot to various elements of the JCS organization The principal channel continued to be through the special J-3 Blockade Group, but much of it was conveyed directly to individual Joint Staff officers functionally concerned with the substance of particular categories of information.

It was the responsibility of the Flag Plot Cuban Watch to monitor in detail the movement of vessels inbound to Cuba and the deployed positions of U.S. ships assigned to the Quarantine task force. Frequent situation maps of the Quarantine area, with accompanying tabular data on the locations, courses, and characteristics of incoming merchant ships, were widely distributed to the Joint Staff and elsewhere. These were made available regularly, often at six-hour intervals. Sometimes they were prepared more currently in response to special requests. In addition, Joint Staff officers personally visited Flag Plot in order to obtain the very latest information on the Quarantine situation.

Air Force Command Post

Information support functions unique to the Air Force Command Post were of several types. It collated data bearing upon the complex problems of air transport operations and lift priorities in connection with movement of Army troops, equipment, and supplies, as well as all of its own Air Force units involved.

Because the Air Force had been delegated responsibility for coordinating, on behalf of the JCS, with various agencies outside the DOD regarding certain measures affecting civilian activities, such as establishment of a Military Emergency Zone, the Air Force Command Post also served as the central repository of information pertaining to these matters. In this capacity, it was thus the focal point of contact whenever the JCS required such information. Similarly, after the JCS designated the Chief of Staff, Air Force, as its "Executive" for coordinating the crisis-connected missions of CINCSAC and CINCNORAD, it maintained current data on the interrelated force posture and operations of the two commands Appropriate information was furnished to Joint Staff elements as required.

Another important area of information support provided by the Air Force Command Post, one that was heavily utilized by the Joint Staff, was the automated data processing facility represented by the 473L system located at the Command Post. Since the OJCS did not possess such a capability itself, Joint Staff officers learned to rely on outputs obtained from the 473L and available nowhere else. Although the current operational data normally stored in the system were intended originally for in-house Air Force purposes, the wealth of information readily retrievable in so many useful forms proved of immediate value to the Joint Staff. Dissemination of selective readouts began to include various interested elements of the JCS organization early in the crisis, and as the potentialities of the computer were recognized by more and more Joint Staff officers, informal requests for outputs increased. The 473L capability was applied not only to solve special problems attending refinement of OPLAN 312 (the air-strike plan), but to meet urgent JCS requirements for information on generation of SIOP forces. In fact, by 26 October,

breakouts of current SAC launch schedules and alert and non-alert force data were being furnished the J-3 Nuclear Operations Branch on a continuing basis.

Service Communications Support

All JCS communication traffic was routed as a matter of course through the facilities of the three Services in the context of the Defense Communications System (DCS). Despite the greatly increased volume of communication flow incidental to the crisis, both on the part of OJCS activities and the Services, the existing communication facilities generally proved adequate. Indeed they had to be augmented for the occasion to some extent in order to meet certain special needs, and there was some transmission-time delay owing to short-term saturation. But no serious problems for command and control affecting the Joint Staff were experienced as a consequence of limitations in communication. Dislocations might possibly have arisen on the Service or CINC level had the circumstances of the crisis been different and actual hostilities been involved, especially if the contingency plans would have been implemented. As it was, no acute deficiencies impairing the exercise of effective national command and control were revealed.

No significant augmentation of communications serving the Army War Room occurred or was indicated. However, in the field, immediate operational needs devolving from deployment and staging activities underway necessitated additional facilities in the form of leased commercial circuits. Some commanders of Army forces, in order to meet anticipated tactical requirements connected with OPLAN 316 (the invasion plan) also were forced to supplement their available communications. This was largely accomplished by local improvisation, namely by obtaining more

equipment and regrouping mobile units.

The CNO's designation as JCS representative for Quarantine operations resulted in the Navy Communication Center in the Pentagon having to install a special communication channel. At the request of the White House, a direct secure telephone link connecting Flag Plot with the Executive Office of the President was added on 20 October. Some of the most crucial command and control actions of the crisis were performed in Flag Plot itself, with decision makers coming there personally to avail themselves of Flag Plot's communication facilities.

In the case of the Air Force, considerable augmenting of communications had gotten underway, both in the field and at Air Force headquarters, well before the crisis started. As early as 3 October, steps were taken to acquire adequate communication support, including lease of additional commercial facilities, for the tentative version of the newly expanded OPLAN 312 (the air-strike plan) then under development. This augmented network became operational by 20 October. Thereafter, as the contingency plans were modified, it was necessary to adjust field communication capability accordingly.

An unanticipated USAF communications requirement was a concomitant of the absence of a missile early warning capability oriented toward Cuba. At the time such a system was hastily improvised, appropriate circuitry and special terminal facilities had to be installed to tie in elements of ADC, SAC, and the Air Force Command Post. Also, full-period voice channels for intra-Air Force coordination on release of public information had to be provided on short notice.

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