Few presidents have left office on a pessimistic note, and one might not assume the genially patriotic Dwight D. Eisenhower to be among them. But in January 1961, after eight years in the White House, Eisenhower performed one of his last official acts as president, delivering his farewell address, on an unusually somber note. After a decade of prosperity, and with no foreign conflicts since Korea, a war he had inherited and quickly ended, Eisenhower could have permitted himself a valedictory of self-congratulation. Instead, he sounded two notes of alarm.

The first was familiar to all Americans during the Cold War: communist expansionism. Eisenhower described communism in classically bipolar terms as “a hostile ideology” that was “global in scope, atheistic in character, ruthless in purpose, and insidious in method.” Perhaps most worryingly, the communist threat “promise[d] to be of indefinite duration.” To meet this threat, the federal government needed to maintain an unprecedentedly large standing military and pursue the containment of communism globally, while at home American citizens had to remain on a permanent war footing. Vigilance was the price of liberty.

Yet here lay the origin of Eisenhower’s second warning, for vigilance in the Cold War was double-edged: it kept communism at bay overseas, but it also threatened to undermine the essence and purpose of American freedom at home. The expansion of the state, beginning with the New Deal and growing exponentially in World War II and the Cold War, was necessary to meet the crises of modernism and industrialism that had caused the Depression and spurred the rise of fascism, Nazism, and communism. But by 1961, Eisenhower worried that the state’s domineering role in the private economy, both industrial and agricultural, had itself become a danger that was eroding “the very structure of our society.” At the apex of this internal threat was a new relationship between private industry and government expenditures. Americans, Eisenhower concluded, “must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by...
the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes.”

When John F. Kennedy delivered his inaugural address three days after Eisenhower bid farewell, he not only recognized the irony of the Cold War, but sought to reconcile it by embracing both firmness and flexibility, strength and peace, arms and disarmament. To the communist powers, Kennedy offered “not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest for peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction.” Kennedy had, however, learned the lessons of the 1930s – and of his father’s support for appeasement as ambassador to Great Britain – well, and his speech was as much a rejection of appeasement as it was a peace offering: “We dare not tempt them with weakness,” he warned of America’s communist enemies. “For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed. So let us begin anew – remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate.”

Stirring though it was, Kennedy’s inaugural vision remained trapped between the imperatives of security and the ambitions of idealism. The new president wanted peace without the appearance of weakness and firmness without provoking war. In trying to navigate these clashing objectives, Kennedy’s foreign policy oscillated from one extreme to another. Only days after his ominous warning about the military-industrial complex, Eisenhower met with the soon-to-be-president Kennedy and urged him to intervene, militarily if necessary, in the tiny, impoverished, strategically insignificant country of Laos. Eisenhower could not escape the irony of the Cold War; nor could JFK.

Eisenhower did not use the term, but what he feared was the national security state, a government that operated under something close to permanent wartime conditions, tolerated high military spending, and facilitated intimate cooperation between public and private interests in the pursuit of national security. The national security state may have been unwanted, but Eisenhower could see no other alternative. Nor, despite his different approach to the Cold War, could Kennedy. Instead, JFK merely entrenched the national security state even deeper in America’s public life and political economy. In Berlin, Cuba, and Indochina, Kennedy’s foreign policy whipsawed between the extremes of confrontation and reconciliation. In forward strategic planning, particularly regarding nuclear weapons, he oscillated between alarmism and negotiation. In military spending, he sought savings...
but wound up with the same expenditures and a much more lethal military. In overseas development and foreign aid, he promised much but ultimately delivered little. Kennedy began his foreign policy career by founding the Peace Corps, and he ended it at American University with one of the most eloquent peace addresses in history. In between, however, the inconsistencies of his approach twice brought the superpowers to the brink of war and augmented the power of the military-industrial complex his predecessor had warned about.

Kennedy did transform the national security state in one regard, by radically concentrating its bureaucratic procedures. Before Kennedy, the position of “national security adviser” did not exist. The special assistant for national security affairs, as the position had been known, was established with the creation of the National Security Council (NSC) in 1947. The special assistant was supposed to be a clerical position, an administrator who would process paperwork and coordinate decisions for the NSC. The role of policy making would still remain with cabinet officials, such as the secretaries of state and defense and their subordinates. But Kennedy distrusted the national security bureaucracy, and he wanted to act as his own secretary of state. To facilitate this, he appointed McGeorge Bundy, then serving as the dean of Harvard College, to be his special assistant for national security affairs. With Kennedy’s approval, Bundy – who had not left Harvard to become a White House clerk – transformed his post from a powerless administrator to a decision maker with nearly the same level of influence and authority as Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. Based in the White House, Bundy’s small staff of desk officers had direct access to the president. They also, thanks to Bundy, had direct access to all classified national security communications. Bundy’s “foreign office in microcosm,” as Undersecretary of State George Ball called the NSC staff, was able to use its presidential access and institutional dexterity to shape foreign policy. This system was obviously prone to abuse, and although Bundy used his power judiciously he laid the groundwork for subsequent national security advisers, such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who wielded immense institutional authority over U.S. foreign policy.  

As the reform of the NSC showed, Kennedy thought of himself as a modernizer. According to Kennedy aide and chronicler Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Kennedy practiced “the politics of modernity” in order to “dissolve the myths which had masked the emerging realities in both domestic and foreign affairs. His hope was to lead the nation beyond the obsessive issues of the past and to call forth the new perceptions required for the contemporary world.” The 1960s, JFK promised, would break the shackles of the 1930s
and 1940s, because the old way of thinking no longer applied to an increasingly modernizing world.6 “Today our concern must be with the future,” he declared upon accepting the Democratic nomination for president in June 1960. “For the world is changing. The old era is ending. The old ways will not do. Abroad, the balance of power is shifting,” and not in America’s favor. “We stand today on the edge of a New Frontier – the frontier of the 1960s – a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils – a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.”

As usual with Kennedy, soaring rhetoric masked a much more complicated reality. Kennedy’s pragmatic and fiscally cautious liberalism had more in common with that of his predecessors Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman – or even with Eisenhower’s moderate conservatism – than it did with the more ambitious reformism of his successor Lyndon Johnson. Wary of deficits and committed to a policy of “sound money,” as well as fettered by the constraints of the Bretton Woods system, Kennedy sought economic growth and liberal reform within established parameters. He displayed similar caution, even reluctance, when it came to pressing domestic issues such as civil rights.8 Foreign policy, however, allows presidents more freedom of maneuver, and on these matters Kennedy showed a boldness lacking in his domestic agenda. He laid out an ambitious plan to recapture the momentum he feared the United States had lost to the communist world, one reliant on expansive conceptions of economic power, national security, and American ideology. But even in the realm of foreign affairs, Kennedy left behind an ambivalent legacy.

In part this was because Kennedy’s approach to crises was often aggressive, sometimes reckless, and occasionally driven by panic. Immediately upon becoming president, he was beset by crises overseas. The period between 1958 and 1963, bracketed by periods of relative superpower calm, were “the crisis years” that brought the United States and the Soviet Union closer to a direct conflict than at any other time in the Cold War.9 As a result, Kennedy found himself on the defensive in several parts of the world, most notably Berlin, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam. Lawrence Freedman has dubbed these four conflicts “Kennedy’s wars,” describing them as hostilities epitomizing his ambivalent approach to the world.10

If Kennedy had noticed Eisenhower’s warning about the military-industrial complex, he did not act on it. To be sure, defense spending did not significantly increase in the Kennedy era. In fiscal year (FY) 1961, Kennedy inherited a budget of $49.6 billion; by FY 1964, this had risen to $54.8 billion, hardly a dramatic increase when inflation is accounted for. When economic growth is also considered, the increase is even less significant. For example, over the same three-year period, America’s gross domestic product
(GDP) rose by an annual average of 4 percent, meaning that as a share of GDP defense spending actually declined under JFK from 9.4 percent to 8.5 percent.  

What did increase under Kennedy was the striking force of the U.S. military. Under Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara – whom Kennedy had poached from the Ford Motor Company and tasked with cutting spiraling costs and waste at the Pentagon – the U.S. military spent more on deployable and sophisticated weapons systems while holding overall spending steady. As Kennedy’s secretary of defense, McNamara applied the systems analysis techniques he had employed as one of the “Whiz Kids” who had rescued Ford from insolvency in the years after World War II, saving the Pentagon billions in new efficiencies. So if the quantity of military spending remained fairly constant under Kennedy and McNamara, it saw tremendous qualitative changes, particularly in the realm of the nuclear weapons that allowed the United States to maintain its overwhelming strategic dominance over the Soviet Union.

This enhancement of defense capabilities was an integral part of “flexible response,” as the Kennedy administration’s overall strategy was known. Flexible response was intended to replace Eisenhower’s New Look, which had sought to curtail defense spending through a reliance on cheaper nuclear weapons and a reduction in the deployment of much more expensive conventional forces. Eisenhower, it seemed, had entered office much as he left it, alarmed by deficits, wary of the military-industrial complex, and fearful that higher defense spending would usher in a “garrison state” thanks to higher taxes and a more interventionist government. But critics, including Kennedy and many who would fill the ranks of his administration, said that Eisenhower’s foreign policy was static and passive, and they charged that he had ceded the global initiative to more dynamic communist and nationalist movements. In *The Uncertain Trumpet*, a landmark book published in time for the 1960 election campaign, Maxwell D. Taylor, a recently retired army general and fierce critic of the New Look, warned that the United States would be unable to counter revolutionary movements and wars of national liberation in the Third World. Unlike the Soviet Union or the People’s Republic of China, which had fixed industrial and metropolitan targets and thus could be deterred with nuclear weapons, decolonization and nationalist movements relied on rudimentary military technology and had few if any industrial targets. Against such adversaries, which the Soviets were adeptly cultivating with their pledge to aid the oppressed, nuclear arms were useless. The answer, Taylor argued, was for Washington to augment its conventional forces, particularly in counterinsurgency, so it could meet new threats on their own terms.
After Kennedy’s election, Taylor’s views were adopted throughout the Kennedy administration, and Taylor himself served JFK first as a White House military adviser, then as chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and finally as ambassador to South Vietnam. Under the premises of flexible response, the Kennedy administration would have been expected to increase its conventional forces – and it did. Yet the tenets of flexible response should also have led the Kennedy administration to decrease America’s reliance on its nuclear arsenal – and this it did not. Despite flexible response’s promised turn from the Eisenhower administration’s provocatively named doctrines of “brinkmanship” and “massive retaliation,” very little actually changed. In fact, according to John Lewis Gaddis, Kennedy oversaw “an increase of 150 percent in the number of nuclear weapons available, a 200 percent boost in deliverable megatonnage, the construction of ten additional Polaris submarines (for a total of 29) and of 400 Minuteman missiles (for a total of 800) above what the previous administration had scheduled.”

Moreover, Kennedy did nothing to alter the strategic premises based on the Pentagon’s Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP). In the event of the outbreak of war with the Soviet Union, the SIOP made provisions for an automatic overwhelming nuclear strike of total annihilation – the Pentagon’s estimate was that 2,500 missile launches would kill 350 million people. Kennedy and many of his officials were critical of indiscriminate slaughter on this scale – Bundy, for instance, believed “there was really no logic whatever to ‘nuclear policy;’” and most civilian officials in the administration shared his view – yet the SIOP remained unaltered until well into the Nixon presidency more than a decade later. In other words, while his rhetoric was more careful, Kennedy relied just as much on “massive retaliation” as Eisenhower had.

The 1961 Berlin Crisis provides a good example. West Berlin had little military or strategic significance, but it had long been a source of political, economic, and cultural vulnerability for the Soviet Union. The thousands of refugees from communism who poured across the boundary from East to West Berlin were an embarrassment to communist internationalism. And in a global conflict in which political appearances mattered as much as military realities, West Berlin constituted a unique strategic asset for the United States and its allies. By the summer of 1961, after three years of bluster, Khrushchev had had enough. While neither side wanted Berlin to spark a war, the Soviets could not allow West Berlin to continue acting as a haven for people fleeing communism. Tensions increased to the point where war seemed a real possibility. Kennedy’s dilemma was not as acute as Khrushchev’s, but it was real enough. On one hand, he felt he could not appear weak and passive in the face of communist aggression. At a summit
in Vienna in June, in a humiliating experience that was widely reported in the press, Khrushchev had openly bullied the young and inexperienced president. On the other hand, however, Kennedy did not want to lose control of events and oversee the start of World War III.\textsuperscript{19}

His response, in a televised address to the nation on July 25, threaded the needle between war and peace, even as its frank acknowledgment that nuclear war was a realistic possibility worried many.\textsuperscript{20} In the end, Kennedy’s dilemma was solved for him. To stem the tide of refugees without triggering war, Khrushchev authorized the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. Relieved, the Kennedy administration remained silent and did not protest the violation of Berliners’ freedom of movement. Nor did Kennedy condemn the fact that the escape route for millions of Eastern Europeans had been shut off. Kennedy took a great deal of criticism on both counts in Europe and at home. But he was willing to bear that burden if it meant avoiding war and settling the issue of Berlin.

The overwhelming nuclear superiority that underlined massive retaliation also came into play during the most dangerous crisis of Kennedy’s presidency, over Cuba. Fidel Castro had been in power in Havana for a year when Kennedy entered office, though he not yet completed his conversion from revolutionary nationalism to doctrinaire communism. Nonetheless, the Eisenhower administration had begun to isolate Cuba diplomatically and economically, and the CIA had begun to plan for the United States to arm, train, and transport more than a thousand anticommmunist Cuban exiles to invade Cuba and remove Castro from power. Kennedy inherited this covert plan, and after some initial misgivings approved it for action in April 1961. The result was the biggest failure of his presidency, the Bay of Pigs invasion, which fell apart when Kennedy decided not to support the overmatched exiles with U.S. air power or ground troops.\textsuperscript{21}

The invasion attempt prompted Castro to seek the protection of the Soviet Union, thereby pushing him sharply leftward and firmly into the communist camp. But while picking a fight with Cuba now meant picking a fight with the Soviet Union, Kennedy went on the offensive. He authorized Operation Mongoose, an indefinite campaign of economic warfare and political sabotage that also included several assassination attempts against Castro himself. Mongoose in turn prompted Castro to request further assistance from Moscow. Seeing an opportunity to not only cement an alliance with Cuba but also to redress the nuclear imbalance with the United States, Khrushchev deployed nuclear missiles to the island. He did so in secret, hoping to present Kennedy with a fait accompli. When U-2 spy planes uncovered evidence of the deployment, Kennedy convened a series of top secret crisis meetings that have gained legendary status as ExComm. After ruling out capitulation and
invasion, Kennedy opted for a middle path of blockading the island and offering Khrushchev a face-saving way out: in exchange for the removal of the missiles, the United States would publicly vow not to invade Cuba and privately promise to remove U.S. nuclear missiles from Turkey.  

Kennedy was hailed, at the time and often since, for his peaceful solution to the crisis. There is some truth to this verdict – most of ExComm’s members advocated an air strike against the missile installations and many pushed for an all-out invasion – but it ignores the facts that it was JFK who chose to escalate the situation into a crisis in the first place, and that he did so for largely political and symbolic reasons. As Kennedy himself (along with McNamara) admitted, Soviet missiles in Cuba did nothing to change the superpowers’ nuclear imbalance: the Soviet Union would be just as strategically inferior with them as it was without. Kennedy remarked in one of the first ExComm meetings that “it doesn’t make any difference if you get blown up by an ICBM [intercontinental ballistic missile] flying from the Soviet Union or one that was 90 miles away. Geography doesn’t mean that much.” But the Republicans, particularly Senator Kenneth Keating from New York, had spent the months before the crisis attacking Kennedy’s record on Cuba; Keating had even accused the Soviets, accurately as it turned out, of secretly placing nuclear weapons on the island, a charge the Kennedy administration initially denied. Thus the world came perilously close to nuclear Armageddon thanks to Kennedy’s need to not only address an imagined strategic weakness but also shore up his domestic political credentials before the 1962 midterms.

Kennedy’s categorical victory in the crisis – “We were eyeball to eyeball,” Rusk is reported to have said when news of Khrushchev’s capitulation reached Washington, “and I think the other fellow just blinked” – was possible only because of the overwhelming strategic advantage the Pentagon’s nuclear arsenal gave the president. Once Kennedy decided to impose a blockade against Cuba, Khrushchev had little choice but to withdraw. But what Kennedy did next was unexpected. He did not boast or press home his advantage. Instead, he conceded an effective parity with the USSR, known as mutual assured destruction (designated by the fitting acronym of MAD). Despite America’s strategic superiority, the missile crisis made it clear that both sides would lose a nuclear war, even if one side could “win” by incurring fewer casualties. Herman Kahn and Kissinger had theorized that the United States could wage “limited” nuclear wars, but nobody before had actually faced the realistic – indeed, imminent – prospect of a nuclear exchange. The reality terrified Kennedy, along with McNamara and most other members of his administration. Nuclear superiority was pointless; instead, Kennedy now settled for sufficiency, a suitable amount of firepower to deter a Soviet attack.
and an assurance that U.S. forces could launch a retaliatory attack against the Soviet Union after absorbing a Soviet first strike. The logic of MAD was perverse, but it helped maintain peace.  

After the Cuban Missile Crisis, moreover, Kennedy’s new top priority became cementing the new relationship of peace. In June 1963, in the commencement speech at American University, Kennedy acknowledged that Americans and Soviets were human beings with different political systems but the same basic interests and the same desire for a peaceful world. Nuclear weapons had made their ideological disputes too dangerous to continue unregulated, and he promised to seek new ways of managing superpower tensions. It may seem simple now, but this was the first time a U.S. president had acknowledged moral equivalency with the Soviet Union since World War II. If there was a key turning point in the short-lived Kennedy presidency, one that carried with it real potential for a genuinely new era, it was this.  

Another crucial aspect of flexible response was the widespread use of unconventional military but nonnuclear force, and here Kennedy’s difference from his predecessor was more pronounced. While the Eisenhower administration had readily resorted to covert operations – for example, using clandestine operatives and psychological warfare to topple the governments of Iran in 1953 and Guatemala in 1954 – Kennedy imagined a much wider, more integrated, and more aggressive system of covert operations and counterinsurgency. Under Kennedy, both the CIA and the Pentagon expanded their counterrevolutionary operations. Kennedy himself was fascinated by espionage and intelligence, though much of his knowledge was derived from Ian Fleming’s James Bond novels rather than from briefings. He was also fascinated with the advent and spread of guerrilla warfare, and terrified that the Soviets were taking advantage of it. When Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev vowed to assist “wars of national liberation” around the world, Kennedy disseminated a copy of the speech throughout his administration. “Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest,” he instructed his aides. “Our actions, our steps should be tailored to meet these kinds of problems.” With presidential support, the CIA expanded its operations and planned for coups and assassinations against the leaders of Cuba, Congo, and even the United States’ ally South Vietnam. Prodded by Kennedy, the Pentagon established the Green Berets and other counterinsurgency operations and augmented the School of the Americas, an anticommunist training center for right-wing Latin American military officials based at Fort Benning, Georgia. As Stephen Rabe has shown, the “Kennedy Doctrine” pledged there would be “no more Cubas.”  

In these ways Kennedy promised, in contrast to the supposed passivity of
Eisenhower and his useless nuclear arsenal, a suitably dynamic response to a world in the throes of revolution.

In practice, this meant an excessive reliance on military solutions and counterinsurgency operations by the CIA and the Department of Defense. But Kennedy officials recognized that many of the problems facing the United States were political, ideological, and especially economic in nature, and so they also offered a suitably nonmilitary solution in response: modernization. It is no surprise that many of the Kennedy administration’s most important foreign policy initiatives aimed to put modernization theory into practice. The Peace Corps, for instance, was Kennedy’s attempt to harness the era’s burgeoning and highly idealistic youth culture to the aims of U.S. foreign policy. Peace Corps volunteers would live in the developing world and assist in the modernization process, both by participating in local microeconomic development projects and by simply carrying with them the optimistic values of American democratic capitalism. Another instance of modernization in action was the Alliance for Progress, which pledged billions of development aid to nations south of the border in order to stave off the communist advance. In the words of Schlesinger, the Alliance “by its very existence warned Fidel Castro that he could no longer count on the Latin American states falling into Marxist revolution of their own weight.” The goal was to build a middle class who would then create durable liberal democracies throughout Latin America. Unfortunately, this lofty goal was never funded sufficiently and ultimately was sacrificed in exchange for the certainties of military repression and counterinsurgency.

But it was in Indochina where modernization, counterinsurgency, and other nonnuclear components of flexible response were applied most extensively. Nowhere were the paradoxes of the Kennedy presidency sharper than in Vietnam. After reaching a 1962 settlement on the neutralization of Laos, where a communist insurgency battled a U.S.-backed conservative regime, Kennedy shored up the anticommmunist position in neighboring South Vietnam. Despite the peaceful promise of the American University speech’s offer of détente, the summer of 1963 also saw the deterioration of South Vietnamese security and the beginning of America’s descent into the Vietnam War. Kennedy inherited from Eisenhower a firm but limited commitment to South Vietnam that consisted of fewer than 1,000 U.S. military personnel; that commitment had grown to more than 9,000 by the end of 1962 and 16,300 by November 1963, plus a significantly larger amount of military hardware that Kennedy had authorized in 1962’s “Project Beefup.” Through the Strategic Hamlet program, which aimed to separate peasants from insurgents by placing them in fortified modern villages, South Vietnam became a laboratory for techniques in modernization and
counterinsurgency – less modernization and more counterinsurgency as
time went on.37

In backing the regime of President Ngô Đình Diệm, however, the United
States had sided firmly with Catholic authoritarianism in an overwhelm-
ingly Buddhist country. When Buddhist monks led demonstrations against
the Diệm regime in the spring and summer of 1963, Saigon’s security ser-
vices cracked down hard. This only led to further protests, punctuated
most famously by the self-immolation of several Buddhist monks. Kennedy
oscillated between reaffirming America’s commitment and warning that
his patience with Diệm was not inexhaustible, an uncertainty that con-
tinued right up to the day of Kennedy’s assassination. Speculating about
what he might have done in Vietnam had Lee Harvey Oswald missed has
become a cottage industry among historians, driven by the fact that he left
clues leading to several different conclusions.38 What we do know is that he
deepened the U.S. commitment at a time when South Vietnam was increas-
ingly unable to defend itself. Lyndon Johnson was thus confronted with a
situation Kennedy never had to face: if the United States withdrew, South
Vietnam would quickly collapse, leading to a reunified Vietnam under com-
munist rule. Whether JFK would have handled that decision more adeptly
is a mostly academic question, for the war that did unfold was as much
Kennedy’s making as it was Eisenhower’s or Johnson’s.

Ultimately, the foreign policy of John F. Kennedy was marked by a pro-
found ambivalence, and an uncertainty over which direction the United
States should take. This ambivalence is reflected in the historiography.
Most presidents divide historical opinion, but few have drawn sharper dis-
tinctions than Kennedy. JFK has been presented as everything from heroic
to villainous. In truth, he was neither, but the division of opinion says a
great deal about the widespread sense that his presidency was a lost oppor-
tunity. The longing for what might have been is especially acute when it
comes to foreign policy, for Kennedy was a president who began his term
as an embattled warrior flailing helplessly on the beaches of Cuba, only
to end it as an eloquent spokesman for world peace. Perhaps the greatest
tragedy of Kennedy’s presidency is that he was killed in Dallas just as he
was coming to terms with his ambivalence and working his way toward a
possible solution.

NOTES

1 Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Farewell Radio and Television Address to the American
People, January 17, 1961,” in Public Papers of the Presidents of the United


7 Quoted in Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 275–76.


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Containment, 125–96. On Eisenhower and the garrison state, see Friedberg, In the Shadow of the Garrison State.

15 On Taylor’s ideas and influence, see Freedman, Kennedy’s Wars, 18–20.
16 Gaddis, Strategies of Containment, 217.
17 Freedman, Kennedy’s Wars, 47.
21 The Bay of Pigs is thoroughly examined in a wide variety of sources, but the best succinct account is Howard Jones, The Bay of Pigs (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
22 The literature on the missile crisis is enormous, but the best one-volume account, which also considers the Bay of Pigs and Operation Mongoose, remains the thoroughly comprehensive Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, “One Hell of a Gamble”: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997). For a more focused, recent account, see Michael Dobbs, One Minute to Midnight: Kennedy, Khrushchev, and Castro on the Brink of Nuclear War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008).


29 Quoted in Richard Reeves, President Kennedy: Profile of Power (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 41.


32 See Amanda Kay McVety’s chapter in this volume.


34 Schlesinger Jr., A Thousand Days, 759.

35 Latham, Modernization as Ideology, 69–108.

