

Chapter 6 DUAL-TRACK DECISION MAKING AND THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY SYSTEM

In chapters 4 and 5 I drew lessons from a sequence of American government decisions to identify blocks to foreign policy learning. That review also concluded that recurrent policy outcomes could not be explained by technical flaws in bureaucratic organization or rational analysis procedures.

In this chapter I will complete the process of reorganizing the historical material to identify recurrent, learning-relevant patterns, and will then turn to the question of causation. Specifically, I will assess attempts to explain foreign policy choices and errors as a result of "natural" errors in cognition. Then, I will draw upon this discussion, earlier chapters, and recent behavioral science research concerned with how ambitious men experience the nature of power to propose a new theory: that American foreign policy is shaped by two channels (rational analysis and imagination-derived thinking about power relationships), and that it is via a second channel of strong imagination systems that political information is understood, foreign policy is created, and from which — by consequence of the functioning of the mind within a distinctive larger-than-life drama — learning is blocked, and, further, that similar American policies are repeatedly adopted, by similar processes, which run aground in local reality.

THE ORGANIZATION OF POINTS OF VIEW

As a first step to develop this integrated explanation, I invite the reader's attention to five patterns of thinking reflected in the case material.

Decisions reflected subjective "positioning," adoption of a point of view. Policy derives from an enterprise larger than analytical reasoning, a choice of interpretation, and a personal point of view. As in the solution to a set of simultaneous equations, a policy is a joint expression of who one is, what the important values and purposes are conceived to be, who others are, and what role is imagined for America. As we have seen, bureaucratic identities typically created — and limited — the interpretations and viewpoints of men in lower roles. But personal identity directly entered the equation at the senior level.¹ Dwight Eisenhower, for example, positioned himself "above" these

problems and was less buffeted, "hysterical," and impassioned than men whose personalities and lesser stature and sense of mastery located themselves amidst tense, consequential battles with uncertain control. He opposed Communism, and he would probably have authorized an expatriate invasion of Cuba. But he was not obsessed to eliminate Castro, he did not credit alarmist projections of rapidly spreading Communist revolution, and he did not fear that, should he fail to take action on a minor irritant, he would thereby mislead the Soviets to test his personal resolve in areas of vital American interest such as Berlin. "Boys," he simply would say to Dulles and Bissell (when they would brief him about their difficulties in preparing the operation they had wanted to mount), "if you don't intend to go through with this, let's stop talking about it."⁵

Eisenhower's confidence and equanimity probably were a result both of his personality (he was a secure man) and his experience as the victorious Supreme Allied Commander in World War II. After the successful defeat of Hitler's armies, it would have been far-fetched to imagine that a histrionic Latin American leader of a poor island nation, without a navy, posed a consequential threat. American conventional forces in the Caribbean were overwhelming. Nor was Eisenhower an activist with idealistic zeal; unresponsive to such appeals himself, he was personally skeptical that Castro could foment revolutions in other countries easily.¹

Eisenhower's calm style contrasted to that of more typical American politicians — for example, Nixon and Kennedy, tenser and younger men still competing for prominence, success, and the presidency. Both imagined a world of greater threat, of compelling necessities for tough and masterful action: Castro loomed larger in their imaginations.

Eisenhower's calm also derived from his standing as a genuine national hero. He had been drafted to run for the presidency, did not compete for it from a position of relative obscurity. He was elected, and reelected, by overwhelming majorities and enjoyed public confidence: It was an asset, and a support for forbearance and patience, the two relative unknowns lacked.¹

Policy thinking was overconfident. People imagined they knew more than they did, and their plans worked more easily in their heads than in reality. In political life, legitimacy may come from the pretense of knowledge. If one admits there is something to learn, one thereby admits he does not yet know the answer. When public standards for evidence and serious argument in a political system are low, a competitive, Darwinian advantage accrues to men who are verbally impressive and pretend to confident knowledge of the outer world that they do not possess.

Overconfidence may be a general human trait, and this fact has been cited as a general explanation of one factor in foreign policy error. In recent years, research has supported the proposition that many people have overconfident estimates of the validity of their current knowledge.¹ CIA political analysts,

specifically, have been asked by researchers to estimate the confidence of their knowledge of simple facts (which is larger, Greenland or Australia?) and typically overestimate the probability they have given the correct answer.⁶

We have seen that President Kennedy and the CIA planners made many overconfident assumptions about the Bay of Pigs plan. Nothing about that operation — except the technological trickery of the Pinar del Rio diversion — turned out as bright people imagined, before the event, that it would.

A contributing cause of a flawlessly imagined implementation was probably that most men were without extensive and varied experience with these problems; as beginners, they could work only with their imaginations. At points where men had extensive, realistic experience, their planning was attentive to detail and of higher quality. The Bay of Pigs logistics plans, on paper, were excellent: 72 tons of supplies off-loaded on D-Day; 415 tons to arrive within ten days; then another 530 tons; then another 607 tons. Weaponry was well chosen, the men well trained, and they inflicted casualties at an impressive 20:1 ratio until their ammunition ran out. The logistics of MONGOOSE, and the tight management and press control to keep it secret for a decade were also impressive.⁶

This contrast, between simple and overconfident images of beginners and the integrated, detailed, and realistic analyses of experienced men, underscores a characteristic of learning in foreign affairs. Subjectively, learning is not a shift from ignorance to confident knowledge. It can be observed as a shift from too simple and too confident generalizations — often boldly advanced and staunchly defended — to complex, integrated understandings grounded in realistic attention to detail. (For example, as I proposed in chapter 3, a shift analogous to that from an impressionistic earth, air, fire, and water conception of elements of the physical universe to the periodic table.) Thus, one source of foreign policy overconfidence and failure is simply that the United States is not sufficiently imperialistic: no administration intervenes frequently enough in other countries to learn to do it well before it leaves office.

That the American president is typically a foreign policy "beginner" is a structural feature of the American political system. A president need have only *domestic* political experience: To win the presidential nomination, he and key aides must spend years building contacts, talking and listening, getting to know the names and concerns of thousands of convention delegates, interest group representatives, and donors. They spend a lifetime developing a sense of the "touch and feel" of the American political system and its news media. But American leaders (and too, their domestic publics) have relatively little personal basis to judge the people, the systems, the reactions of other countries. Predictably, simple fantasies — and passionate debates around them — can take hold more readily.

Simple emotional themes and avoidance of complicated, unpleasant truths. Dissonance reduction has been proposed by psychologists as a mechanism

widely used to organize viewpoints.⁹ The theory predicts that, once we know certain elements of a decision maker's beliefs, attitudes, and allegiances, we may often predict other elements by asking "what, given these, would it be most *comfortable* for this man also to believe?"¹⁰

A story from the fall of 1960 suggests the type of process psychologists have found may occur internally and automatically. The CIA's chief in Guatemala flew back to Washington to discuss a serious problem he did not want to solve on his own responsibility. The young Cuban males in his charge, isolated in the secret camp, had no contact with women; increasingly they went AWOL to find them. He could not effectively confine the men, thus he had a security problem: Should they talk too freely with the prostitutes they hired, especially after they had been drinking, this might expose the operation.

The man explained his problem to Richard Bissell and Tracy Barnes over dinner. He thought it necessary to hire security-cleared prostitutes for the men; as this solution required authorization and proper budget authority, he wanted Bissell to make the decision. At this point in the discussion, Tracy Barnes quickly excused himself and left the table for several minutes. Whatever the "order from Washington" would be, Barnes did not want to be in a position to admit, later, that he knew.¹¹

This byplay is a model for a deeper, internal process that pervades these two years. Intelligent men, psychologically, chose to avoid truths *and* in patterns suggesting, at a deeper level, they *did* know already what reality would be if they faced it. They stopped asking questions at exactly the point where the realistic answers would begin to be uncomfortable to know. Richard Barnett has called it a national security manager's "need not to know."¹²

For example, many participants identified with President Kennedy and secretly imagined the president's true commitments were to themselves and their own positions or well-being. Faced with contrary evidence they retained such beliefs. No one was willing to consider that he and the president had fundamentally different inner sympathies; when the supposition was vital and problematic, they did not test it. Cuban leaders in New York, told three times American troops were prohibited, required formally to assent to the condition, still did not believe it. Many (favorable) advisers "knew" the president was committed to the operation's success and would use troops. But after a key Pentagon meeting, Schlesinger confidently imagined it was *he* and the president who were of one mind in sharing major doubts. Many years later, in his memoirs, Chester Bowles still believed he and the president were "extremely close" in their foreign policy views and attributed Kennedy's persistently different actions only to his failure to "think through" bad advice.¹³

The desire to avoid uncomfortable truths was also reflected in the simple road maps through complex issues offered the president by the strongest proponents and opponents. A. A. ("Let'er rip") Berle believed Castro was a Communist revolutionary, a power clash was inevitable, the operation was morally

justified, and it was likely to succeed.¹⁴ Schlesinger and Fulbright propounded a different but equally straight and simple viewpoint: Castro's future was unknown but unlikely to be a serious political threat; the invasion's American sponsorship would not be secret; it would undermine American prestige; it would fail or produce a prolonged civil war.¹⁵ Each strong advocate "lined up" all considerations in a point of view to support, consistently, his conclusions. Notably, the simpler and more consistent the scenario for interpretation, belief, and action urged on Kennedy, the stronger — pro or con — the advocacy.¹⁶

Finally, the organizing power of emotional themes to supercede analytical thought is evident in the evasion of President Kennedy. He wanted the Bay of Pigs to be American support for idealistic Cubans — not American "aggression" — and he did not ask tough questions about realities in Guatemala or pursue Barnes's report that Miro did not believe the American troop restrictions. Ambivalent about the "CIA's" operation, he did not ask for a military briefing, remember crucial details, or ask for military staffing of his D-Day decisions. In MONGOOSE, he ordered both secrecy and the elimination of Castro, and did not want to analyze responsibly whether both objectives conflicted, once again, with what his subordinates could produce.¹⁷

Policy thinking was primarily defensive. The psychologist Abraham Maslow has asserted that a hierarchy of motives determines human behavior.¹⁸ When basic (lower) needs are threatened, the individual ignores opportunities to pursue other needs and values, and becomes preoccupied — even obsessed — with meeting the basic needs. Security needs — survival of the self and of anything the self identifies with itself — are among the basic needs that can readily become preoccupying, to the exclusion of other values.¹⁹

A pattern emerges if we view the Bay of Pigs and MONGOOSE decisions from this perspective. Men, at each turn, first identified threats to the survival of themselves or things they cared about, then organized (interpreted) the decisions they faced primarily to respond to these threats. They adopted points of view to manage these "security" risks they defined, and discounted other aspects of the problem. More than it first seemed, the 1960–1962 sequence of decisions — underneath the aggressive postures and bold rhetoric — also emerges as a series of maneuvers organized to cope with fear, the apprehension of future imagined consequences.

President Kennedy experienced threat from every direction: what Castro might do, what the Russians might do, what critics — especially Republicans — would do if he cancelled and left himself vulnerable. At each point, his primary motive was to identify and manage the threats. Later, the increased violence and savagery of MONGOOSE was deemed a necessity to cope with the increased threat posed by Castro's success.²⁰ After the Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy said privately he would have been impeached if he had

not adopted his bold and tough posture.²¹ The CIA's planners, committed to their plan, misled the president and other officials, fearful that to tell the complete truth would risk their plan's rejection. Helms avoided the decision process to keep his job. Schlesinger, intimidated, resorted to private memos rather than speak out — and lose — before others with tough, virile stances who were his senior in rank.

As we have seen in chapter 4, the fears of ambitious men who wanted to keep their jobs was a consistent determinant of behavior during the decision process. Thus we may observe that foreign policies *and* the policymaking process reflected a *defensive* logic. Survival and security were more salient than potential gains. The image of men acting boldly to pursue positive values should be supplemented by the image of men maneuvering defensively, in reaction, to manage current and future threats to security and survival.²² Especially during MONGOOSE, under stress, the lives of Cubans became "nothing to lose," the men abandoned ideals and did what, to their understanding, "must be done."

Opponents' behavior was often explained by referring to their predispositions, America's by referring to its situation. Another common cognitive mechanism is also reflected in the case material, a tendency to attribute the cause of behavior of other people (nations) to their predispositions, while thinking of one's own (America's) behavior as a response forced by the circumstances.²³ Such differences in the perception of causation have been studied by psychologists and appear to occur frequently. For example, a professor might attribute the cause of a student's late paper to an inner characteristic of the student (poor work habits) but explain his own delay in submitting a paper for publication to situational factors (the complexity of the task and competing pressures and demands upon him).

In the case material we have seen a tendency to explain Castro's behavior by his predispositions (for example, that he was extraordinarily ambitious, mad, a Communist — or all three; even moderates in the Eisenhower administration treated him as an immature juvenile delinquent to be calmed down and "brought around"). Russian behavior, in precipitating the Cuban Missile Crisis, was also attributed to Khrushchev's ambitions rather than to American actions or threats.²⁴ And, throughout, the American self-concept was of righteous behavior, the resort to violence or threat being forced upon it.

Perspective on Cognitive Processes

Each of these last patterns we have just considered has been proposed as a possible source of choices, and an autonomous source of error, in foreign policy perceptions and judgements. Each of these processes for organizing viewpoints can be established as a naturally occurring human tendency in ex-

periments. Transferred "naively" and intuitively to foreign policy decision making, however, they may run the risk of being used unreflectively, applied to situations erroneously, and producing a mismatch which results in unrealistic, ineffective policy.²⁵

These processes do occur in the case material, but I believe the proper judgment is that they do not occur autonomously and produce policy simply and directly. My reasoning is as follows. First, we may observe that each mechanism had exceptions; many men were bold but some men (e.g., Helms) were cautious. Many men were fearful ("hysterical") but some men (e.g., Fulbright, Eisenhower) were sanguine. Many blamed Castro or Khrushchev for their aggressiveness but others (principally outside of government circles) blamed America's threatening actions. The mechanisms by which the mind of the individual — and especially the minds of the majority — *selected* a mechanism and came to rest wants explaining to give a satisfactory explanation.

Second, these mechanisms were not adopted or maintained unreflectively — as on an individual's private checklist following an experiment. Both in the Cabinet Room and in the press, Cuban policy was debated loudly over an extended period. One would have needed to be deaf not to know, accurately, that one's own views were subject to challenge. Thus to posit simple *unreflective* processes ("if only they had recognized it, it might have been different") is an inadequate explanation. Where these decided men "came down" requires a theory of political judgment with more elements than an unreflective failure to recognize that there were other alternatives with evidence to support them.

I believe the answer is that specific cognitive mechanisms were not adopted autonomously but by individuals — the majority — when these were consistent with a strongly held sensibility concerning power.²⁶ It is to an explication of what, to the majority, I believe that sensibility to have been that I now turn.

INTEGRATION: POLICYMAKING INSIDE A LARGER-THAN-LIFE DRAMA

My purpose in this section is to propose a theory that the phenomenon we have observed represents a distinctive and strong system of imagination, a personal way of knowing about political power. It is a characteristic of tough, ambitious, shrewdly calculating men who vie for power and status behind a public veneer of civilized and idealistic concern.²⁷ I will draw upon research and literature independent of the current case material to explain this system of experiencing political reality.²⁸ I will then return to the case material from recent American foreign policy to discuss how this interpretation of hardball politics allows us to recognize the three vectors of blocked learning to have a common source.

Two Imagination Subsystems in the Experience of Power Relationships

The defining feature of a practitioner of hardball politics is the simultaneous existence of two different and unintegrated experiences of the self. Each is linked with a companion imagination system of larger-than-life drama that arrays other people and nations—regardless of physical reality—in this drama above or below the relevant sense of the self (viewpoint) of the knower.

In the foreground of the mind is a "lower," depleted, insecure self. Here is a sense of low self-esteem and of self-doubt, a strong propensity to feel inadequate and ashamed, continuing worry about social acceptability, discomfort with intimacy, fear of genuineness, candor, and self-revelation, insecurity and apprehension about (vaguely defined) impending disaster. But above and in the background there exists a wholly different, relatively split-off sector of the mind, a "grandiose self."³ This sector includes fantasies and drives for grandiose accomplishment, total recognition and admiration, complete dominance of events of the world, and a complete self-confidence. It is a highly charged sector, and much of the individual's life is organized by it as an effort to establish himself subjectively in the ongoing social and political drama so that he will achieve recognition as its director, superior to the other participants.⁴

Moving from this basic description of two selves (and associated dramas) of a hardball-politics decision maker (HP), let me now elaborate the outline, jointly aligning personality tendencies and characteristics of hardball politics in a discussion of eight themes: ambition for the self; deficiencies of love and superficial interpersonal relations; twinship images of hardball opponents; weak ethics and disconnected moral restraint; defective humor; aggressiveness, tactical manipulateness, and vanity; moderately dreamlike and emotionally organized mental processes; and hyperactivity.

Ambition

One could view the job of a politician or president solely as a tedious, stressful, overly demanding, ethically compromising, uncertain job, a psychodrama role forcing the individual to act out public fantasies and anxieties and be the target of everyone's complaints. But to the HP, in his internal psychodrama, it is inconceivable that anyone would want anything else, or any other associations, as the fulfillment of a life.⁵ Looking upward, the HP manifests what is known as "idealizing transference" to the institutions (and especially to the major symbols and highest offices of those institutions) of which he is a part. This aspect of the internal topography of upward ambition reflects faith there is something above worth being ambitious for. The "higher" the office, the more it is idealized as a location of prestige, honor, recognition, and power, the more desirable it seems. The HP feels an almost

religious awe of these offices, his upward distance to personal salvation is a political distance.¹²

It is important to be clear that what the HP wants primarily is to realize the experience of directorship atop the unfolding social and political drama of his times. He seeks a position of power less to use power to accomplish certain specific goals than for the personal gratification of being engaged and a top dog. Although he may genuinely dedicate himself to certain ideals of grandiose accomplishment, these typically are stylistic and symbolic, and seldom involve thoughtful and well-elaborated programs.¹¹ The major story is that, above all, he wants to succeed; he imagines a better society to follow (he is vague about details) once his own will occupies the idealized "over-mind" location of high office.

This "upward" ambition has the character of a single-minded obsession, fusing a desire for personal integration (and salvation) within a political quest. (In the American political scene, to be in the White House or as close to it—even to the Oval Office—as possible.) It organizes an entire life in its service.¹⁴ But it is a quest whose consummation is always in the distance and there is little genuine pleasure in the striving.¹⁴ The tragic fact is that in his ambitious "upward" quest for personal salvation and fulfillment, the HP is not a satisfied man; he is caught up in the push and pull of an ambition that gives him little rest or deep satisfaction. Simpler pleasures pass him by; he is a man made for more important things.

The upward striving of the HP involves also what is known as "mirror transference."¹⁶ That is, he relates implicitly to most other people (i.e., of lower status) with the expectation and need that they confirm his grandiose strivings, give him public recognition that shows him as he wishes himself to appear. He seeks an echo of applause, love, and unbounded admiration and respect coming back.¹⁷ And he is certain such response is out there, albeit latent and mobilizable, that "in their hearts," in their "hearts and minds," the people, the silent majority, know he is right and eventually will respond.¹⁷

It is difficult to say whether the HP seeks love, or unbounded admiration, or status, or unlimited power or success; these connotations become joined in high political office. He is on a public ego trip; in fact, he wants all simultaneously. The "public" is not important to him in a genuine sense; he perceives them not as autonomous fellow human beings of equal status and respect with whom he works collaboratively in a specialized role, but as a supporting cast of subordinate parts in his own drama. He will aspire to be a "public servant" only if this status means he will be in a higher status role "looked up to" by the public. Favorable publicity and recognition are, of course, important to the HP "rationally," in order to be elected, but his vanity requires these for more than their strategic value.

Thus, the ambition of the HP involves two kinds of biased drama simulta-

neously. He subjectively experiences both an idealized goal above himself and—below—a potentially attentive and supportive mass public. In both cases there is probable overdramatization and distortion: the harsher reality is that the majority of a congressman's constituents do not bother to remember his name, and in a pluralistic society, and world, universal acclaim is a chimera, perhaps even for an American president. It is likely that the HP's hopes and fantasies, this selective absence of reality testing in his epistemology, are useful to society since they help to sustain his lifelong quest and the dutiful and energetic performance of his roles.

One particular feature of ambition in the HP is worth additional comment: He vastly overestimates the probability of achieving fulfillment of his long-range grandiose project.³⁹ He has an almost religious confidence in his own eventual success. Such inner certainty that he will be recognized by future events as the conquering hero is an invaluable aid to perseverance in the skirmishes and setbacks inevitable in the political arena. The HP (as we shall see in detail later) bases his long-range plans substantially on the strength of these internal fantasies and not upon rational assessments derived from external evidence. He will leave his mark upon history, and he is not deterred by ambiguities and low probabilities of success. Success *must* be accomplished.

Deficiencies of Love

The interpersonal relations of the HP are superficial; he has little genuine love and affection for others.⁴⁰ He does not become involved (even in marriage) to an extent that would divert him from pursuing his own ambitious self-interest, and he does not let sentimentality or genuine emotion get the better of him. There often is a facade of cordiality and considerable skill at ingratiation, glad-handing, and interpersonal relations—a kind of “Hiya fella, how are you?” (to person A), “Hiya fella, how are you?” (to person B), “Hiya fella, how are you?” (to person C). The essential that is absent is qualitative, true caring for another unique person's welfare, relating to other people as ends rather than as means. The HP operates with cool, even cold, detachment.

There is, however, one area of interpersonal relations—technically, narcissistic object choice—where this inner distance does not apply: In ordinary English, it is the area of loyalty. With people who support or potentially support his grandiose striving, the HP develops intense emotional involvement.⁴¹ But such relations are vampiresque (he does not form strong bonds of mutual respect and love with autonomous individuals) and he denies such people (including, e.g., wives and staff) independent lives, molding them to live for him and expecting them to serve his ambitions. Fundamental disagreement is perceived as disloyalty, and disloyalty engenders a powerful and violent rejection by the HP.⁴²

Such a style of interpersonal relations can be quite functional in hardball politics. The HP has “permanent interests but no permanent allies” (in the

phrase sometimes used in a *realpolitik* prescription for American foreign policy). He does not let his ambition become encumbered by love or loyalty or personal friendships. He can shift coalitions instrumentally without regret, continuing in the pursuit of his own success and reparative vindication.

Mirror Images of Opponents

The image of opponents evidences what is technically a “twinship transference:” the HP experiences other people as essentially like himself, replicas of his own psychodynamics.⁴³ All participants are expected to be “grown up” (*sic*), to know their self-interest, to look out for “number one” first, and to engage in shrewd, rational calculations in the service of hardball maneuvering for domination, status, and power in the world. He thereby experiences himself to inhabit a fearful, insecure, and dangerous arena, a competitive, Hobbesian world. Other men in the arena are experienced to be as ambitious as he is himself, untrustworthy when egotistical self-interests diverge sharply. He expects others have secret desires to be opportunistic, to outmaneuver and defeat him, dominate and control him, to string him along, trip him up, win away his constituents, expand their spheres of influence, stab him in the back (although this latter is only figurative in American domestic practice these days).⁴⁴ And as there is some truth in this—other hardball players *are* like himself—this intuition-based knowledge can stand him in good stead because there *are* people who will try, opportunistically, to outmaneuver him, undermine him, steal his constituency, dominate and control him, string him along, trip him up, or stab him in the back. To ambitious men of this type, then, both foreign and domestic opponents will be expected to press advantages, to be vigilant for weakness, and to take advantage of vulnerabilities if they find an opportunity. Moreover, the presumption of shrewd, self-interested calculation by others eliminates moral qualms: others are imagined to know the risks they are taking in a political arena.

Of course, no politician can afford to be completely treacherous, and there are game rules, norms of accommodation, surface camaraderie, and ethical sensitivities among the powerful.⁴⁵ And fortunately not all of American society, politicians, or countries, play hardball, but the hardball politician lives in an uncertain subsystem, a “cold, cruel world” of “dog eat dog.”⁴⁶ Power politics is partly a collective and uncomfortable *folie à deux*.

Weak Ethics and Disconnected Moral Restraint

The ethics of the HP differ from ordinary morality. He does not have a strong and principled superego.⁴⁷ Rather the ideals of his grandiose self (and the fears of social shame and exposure of his insecure, depleted self) join to provide a substitute for ethical restraint. He plays hardball without moral qualms about his typical lack of candor, dissembling, his hypocrisy, or manipulativeness, his using of other people, his wars or invasions for national interest (i.e., to further national power), his covert activities, his “leaks” of in-

formation to the press which unfairly damage his opponent's reputation, and so forth.⁴⁸ The HP always seeks an edge on what he would achieve by ethical means; while fear of exposure will be a deterrent, his character structure does not inhibit him. And he fears, perhaps with some justification, that in playing hardball "nice guys finish last." "This is not an honorable undertaking conducted by honorable men through honorable means," Secretary of State Henry Kissinger — in the Nixon administration — lectured one of his idealistic subordinates.⁴⁹

But this is not to say the HP lacks a sense of morality. The fantasies embedded in the grandiose self include an almost religious sense of moral justification. The HP feels greater moral virtue to be identical with his higher location in his grandiose dreams. He imagines he will be a high status benefactor to mankind, and achievement and retention of power thus become the *sine qua non*, his greatest moral guide. He experiences a "higher purpose" served by his day-to-day hardball escapades. In its most rationalized form the HP gives a name to this vaguely specified higher virtue which supersedes normal morality and ethical conduct, "*raison d'état*," "*staats-raisen*," "public interest," or "national security."

There are, however, constraints of shame and embarrassment to cope with and, feeling potentially ashamed, the HP does much of his scheming in private and conducts most of his deals in back rooms. He has a penchant for secrecy. And players believe everyone else is calculating and maneuvering backstage. No one is believed to have integrity or to be open, candid, or trustworthy except as a semblance, a strategy. But while the secrecy is sometimes functional, in the hardball power drama it does not arise only from this source. Rather the HP is also afraid to tell the truth about his hardball politics because he presupposes instinctively (and perhaps correctly) that full public knowledge would risk public rejection.⁵⁰ What the HP fears most is that such rejection would result in subjective separation from the higher idealized images (i.e., high office) in the larger-than-life drama within which his life is located.

Defective Humor

An additional characteristic of the HP is a defective sense of humor.⁵¹ He lacks a playful, warm detachment about himself and the conduct of human affairs. He takes himself seriously. If he has a sense of humor it favors being unkind about someone else: "Gerald Ford can't walk and chew gum at the same time," said Lyndon Johnson. The pure form is best captured by Hobbes's theory of humor, that it expressed coolness and dominance, perhaps a touch of malicious superiority, rather than a playful amusement.⁵² And the HP does not much care for jokes or funny stories told about himself.

Cold, Condescending Aggression and Vanity

The HP handles many interpersonal and political situations with tactical shrewdness because he retains an aloof inner distance, a lack of major emo-

tional investment in anything save winning. But just as personal disloyalty will stir his wrath, so does a challenger, particularly of lower status (hence unworthy and, comparatively, underestimated) who unsettles the fantasy and threatens the grandiose location and control he is driven to effect. Under such challenge he experiences cold, imperious rage and an aggressive drive for control and reparative revenge, for punishment of those lesser men, upstarts so insolent as to question his natural superiority and benevolent wisdom.⁵³ Theodore Roosevelt dispatched American troops into Cuba in 1906 and wrote in a private letter, "Just at the moment I am so angry with that infernal little Cuban republic that I would like to wipe its people off the face of the earth."⁵⁴

The fact of emotion-charged vanity increases the sensitivity to "face" and avoidance of embarrassment in the world of power politics. Professional politicians are cautious not to express such ridicule openly (although ambitious aides often will do so in anonymous leaks to the press). The tact of professional diplomats is especially helpful in dealing among such men without arousing complicated emotions of insult and revenge.

The inner nexus of such cold, imperious vanity and anger is the psychology of the grandiose self. One patient in psychoanalysis expressed this typical stance when he was leaving a job and his employers were speculating about a suitable replacement. The thought went through his mind of saying, "How about God?"⁵⁵

But the people who lack an independent power base and are dependent upon the HP, his staff, often get the full force of his vanity and frustrations. He can be a bully and petulant, taking as a personal affront any deviation from perfection and any sign his staff has not absolutely dedicated their lives to him. He gives them little autonomy. Nietzsche's theory appears correct: "One will seldom err if extreme actions are ascribed to vanity, ordinary actions to habit, and mean actions to fear." The HP is especially likely to act from both vanity and fear.⁵⁶

It should be clear, however, that stubbornness, imperial determination, and aggression to effect control of what are seen as lesser men are not always dysfunctional.⁵⁷ The capacity to persevere in a course of action despite travails, opposition, and criticism can be a formula for success, whether creating a revolutionary movement or "toughing out" the attacks of critics. HPs have a Darwinian advantage in the competitive quest. And once in office, critics of the direction of policy are more readily ignored: To the HP the *advantage* of being a leader is to be able finally to ignore lower status critics.

Partial Regression: Slightly Drunken, Emotionally Organized Thought

The HP is engaged by power, his mental life preoccupied with it. He cannot get away from it and relax because the concern is part of his personality. He directly, physically, experiences "forces," "threats," and "pressures" moving him to act in various ways. In technical terms, his mental processes are

partly regressed and primary process. The HP may have the gift to fashion bold visions or alarms from such material, but he usually lacks the detached executive control to be a first-rate artist; proportion is lacking and often he is only vague, emotionalistic, dull, and vacuous. The HP has a "veil of ambiguity and indirectness"; there is a slight drunkenness to his thought when he thinks or declaims about important issues.⁵⁸ His thinking seems to reflect underlying emotional themes and, in perspective, he appears caught up powerfully in a world of his own imagining.

It should be clear that the term "slight drunkenness" is used here in a specialized sense. Power exists in the mind, and the conventional subculture of hardball power is a subculture of mental processes widely shared. The primary process dramatizations of the HP put him in touch with, and allow his intuition to guide him within, this subculture. It is functional; in fact, someone without his sensitivity might be unable to succeed in hardball politics. He would be like Plato's former prisoner in a cave who, returning to the world of shadows and semblances, is unable to perform effectively because his eyes are not attuned to the lack of light.⁵⁹

I do not wish to be misunderstood: The HP can be shrewd, and often effective, in the capture of high office. It is simply that analytically rational intelligence operates in connection with a larger part of his mind that functions as if he were sleepwalking: manipulating vaguely defined, emotionally laden, symbols; adopting dramatic poses; exhorting; attacking; reassuring; defending; declaiming. This is the nature of public rhetoric in hardball politics.⁶⁰ What rationalist accounts of such ambiguity and emotionalism (which see such traits as mere stratagems) omit is the deeper cause that men with ambition are psychologically predisposed to be caught in their own imaginations and speak with this slight drunkenness of mind.⁶¹

There are other important senses in which the HP's mental processes, while common among politicians, are regressed. As discussed above, he lives partially in a world of strong imagination, of empowered abstraction, of visceral-ly experienced threats, forces, and pressures; as well, his ambition typically involves major psychic investment in his internal dramatization with grandiose fantasies, substantial overestimation of his probability of ultimate success, and his biased perceptions idealize too much (upwards), stereotype too simply (others as like himself), and misconstrue the lower status public as (at least potentially) fully attentive and a responsive cast of supporting characters. In a psychiatric taxonomy his is in part a "borderline" character (Table 6.1).

Hyperactivity

There is a final characteristic of the HP syndrome closely allied to grandiose striving: hyperactivity. When he is engaged in, or associated with, projects he considers heroically important, his being becomes flooded with nervous energy. He walks fast (typically with the grandiose fantasy that his project

Table 6.1. From Within: The "Hardball Politics" Imagination System

<i>Normality</i>	<i>Borderline (HP)</i>	<i>Psychosis</i>
Integrated subjective self	Structural split into two selves (grandiose/depleted)	Complete fragmentation of subjective self
Mature self-esteem	Grandiosity/shame	Full delusional constitution of grandiose self; cold paranoid grandiosity/omnipotent persecutor
Mature self-confidence	Imperial, absolute self-confidence/hypochondria, continual worry about well-being, insecurity	Full delusional constitution of grandiose self; cold, paranoid/omnipotent persecutors and malevolent forces
Mature ambition	Compelling drive to merge with ("attain") idealized powerful offices; solipsistic claims for attention; fears of inadequacy	Full delusional constitution of grandiose self; cold paranoid grandiosity/omnipotent persecutor
Genuine love, warmth with autonomous individuals	Partial withdrawal of object libido; partial narcissistic bonding (loyalty/disloyalty)	Complete withdrawal of object libido; narcissistic bonding
Secondary process (secularized) reality testing and creative use of primary process under ego control	Partially distorting idealizing, twinship and mirror stereotypes; vague awe, primary process "religious" feelings, reified abstractions, and experiences of forces, pressures, power; habitual ambiguity and indirection; marked libidinal intrusions into speech and thought	Massive projection and transference; full deterioration of reality testing; uncontrolled intrusion of primary process, incomprehensible, illogical, fully emotionally expressive speech and thought
Mature, playful humor	Deteriorated humor	Absent
Capacity for enthusiasm	Episodes of hypomanic excitement	Auto-erotic tension state

is essential to preserve the well-being and functioning of the world, that it will come part or degenerate if he ceases).⁶² He over-schedules himself. He works long hours, seldom with time to relax or enjoy recreation. The importance of his own projects may produce so much physiological arousal that he needs to turn to alcohol to calm himself.

Coda

Individuals whose inner worlds are complex, larger-than-life power dramas of enormous grandiosity and apprehensive vulnerability, while they have a basic skeleton in common, are not identical. Some are motivated simply to live out their wish to occupy the role of a high-status benefactor, others have such fantasies infused with genuine ability and socially useful content, a gen-

uine idealism of heroic accomplishment to produce a better world. (But it is, of course, not a world to be produced now by truth, compassion, fairness, the freeing of individuals from warping roles, and the rearrangement of norms. It is a vision predicated on the scenario of grandiose competitive accomplishment, dominance—in the imagination, integration of the self by being above others—and survival of the self against countervailing forces: utopia first requires domination; political control precedes ethics.) The subjective intensity of such a power drama varies in degree and is not a complete description either of all determinants of hardball practice or of other aspects of personality.

Compassion and the Hardball Politics Practitioner

This review of hardball politics has drawn upon a psychiatric humanism which diagnoses as pathological, by comparison with its ideals, the behavior I have described. The rationale is that the two “selves” are seen to be parts of a potentially integrated whole; therapy is thought to be a more effective nurturant than the pursuit of worldly ambition to effect such spiritual healing. But this diagnosis—which suggests why psychologists, with a larger perspective, are skeptical of the limited “realism” in international politics—also implies, within a psychiatric mode, compassion for what one sees as the problems of the HP (a compassion which the HP, with his scorn of weakness—including, often, a misinformed view that psychology is only a “soft,” liberal viewpoint—seldom would reciprocate).⁶¹ How much sympathy and compassion to accord the hardball player who makes others victims of his irrationalities will have to be left to the reader. But it would be appropriate to recall Ernest Jones’s summary of Freud’s image of man and to note also that the HP himself is driven by imperatives whose origins are a mystery to him (and especially suffers physically from stress and psychogenic illness when success is problematic or he encounters setbacks), and that his political agendas (an effort at self-therapy—a lifelong quest to integrate his depleted self with the image of a charismatic idealized self) are seldom wholly successful: “The images of the innocent babe or unfolding plant have been replaced,” Jones wrote, “by more sympathetic and living ones of creatures pathetically struggling ‘with no language but a cry,’ to achieve the self-control and inner security that civilized man has so far attempted in vain to attain.”⁶² Yet the fused quest to effect both inner security and national security simultaneously can be deadly as well as tragically unrealistic.

The prayer for beneficent transformation of the world and the syndrome of its hardball practices is an old one. “From pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us” reads the litany of *The Book of Common Prayer*.⁶³ In his 1837 Phi Bet:

Kappa address at Harvard, Ralph Waldo Emerson spoke eloquently about the disheartening effects of “business as usual,” pointing out that “Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire.”⁶⁴ An inspired goodwill and “patience” were Emerson’s prescriptions to idealistic youth. Yet 124 years later, in 1961—and almost 150 years later in the mid-1980s (as I will discuss in the next chapter)—there was still no effective remedy for this condition.

A THEORY OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

U.S. officials were inclined to believe [national security] justifications however misled or misinformed they might have been.

—C. Blasier, *The Hovering Giant: U.S. Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America*⁶⁵

On the Cuban beaches, in 1961, the American-sponsored expatriates shot and wounded a twelve-year-old boy wearing the uniform of Castro’s militia, who sought to defend his homeland against capitalist invaders. On the afternoon of D-Day, the Brigade’s political commander, Manuel Artime, spoke to the boy: “I started explaining to him what communism meant . . . that he was only a little part of the big machine; that it was a regime that would destroy anybody who opposed its policies . . .”

Manuel Artime himself had only forty-eight hours remaining before he was abandoned . . . a little part in a big machine. His men dying and Castro’s forces pressing forward, he clung to faith in the American president he idolized, waiting, any moment, for the awesome *deus ex machina* of American jet firepower to blaze across the skies above the mosquito-infested Zapata swamps. It never came.

And shortly the American government would begin the next phase of its hardball campaign to eliminate a Communist opponent—more assassination contracts, the “boom and blast” of MONGOOSE.

There is a common logic when national policies have the form of a hierarchical power drama.⁶⁶ Both American planners and Castro treated people like little parts of big machines, both became agitated and driven, when in positions of superiority, to neutralize or destroy anybody who seriously challenged their position.

The “hardball” style has often advertised itself as a simple, dispassionate

rationality and realism. My suggestion is that there is nothing dispassionate about hardball politics save its impersonal callousness and lack of compassion. The dispassionate, calculating, sophisticated talking is a facade: a surface expression of an extraordinarily complex system of powerfully charged imagination accompanied by fierce tensions, arrogance, stark fear. There is a logic to power, but no technical rationality to the knowing of it. It is a system that belongs to a different psychological realm altogether: maximize technical rationality in a process with unchanged imaginations, and there would be little noticeable difference in the conduct of American foreign policy.

Let me now proceed, formally, to integrate the argument. Like the shape of iron filings on a sheet of paper which reveals the shape and power of a magnet beneath, the strong imagination system we have surveyed produces the form, and repetition of, three vectors of blocked learning: (1) characteristic policies; (2) characteristic self-blocking behavior within the American executive branch's policy process; and (3) a characteristic syndrome of errors of judgment and perception.

Vector 1: The Form of Policy

The American government since World War II has not been empire-minded to the same degree as many other regimes in history; there are important distinctions and discriminations to be made. Nevertheless, I think we best understand American foreign policy toward leftist revolutionary challenges to governments within its (self-designated) sphere of identification and influence as expressing, in the main, the impulses and motives I have just described.

The principal American policy, in fact, is not intervention but "business as usual" inattention; any lower-status country, without power, which has not yet become a "trouble spot" is taken for granted. The depth of analysis and search in the American decision process is limited, and only when another major power which *genuinely* threatens America is involved (e.g., the Missile Crisis) is there motivation for extensive, consequential thought.

When a leftist revolutionary process begins, a standard American policy sequence (see the discussion of the 1980s in the next chapter, Table 7.2) unfolds, accompanied by agitated debate (with overdramatization) and producing an increasingly activist policy designed to restore a sense of control with respect to this growing, public challenge. Events thousands of miles distant suddenly arouse "hysteria" in American policymakers, overconfidence in their power to manage events, and a feeling of necessity to do so.⁶⁹

I have outlined the core elements of this policy structure in Table 6.2, elements reflecting the presence of this top-down drama: overconfidence, fear, defective ethics, slightly drunken and emotion-charged talk, depersonalized and scornful hostility (regardless of the merits of the revolution), deteriorated humor, and feverish activism.

Table 6.2. Hardball Politics: A Repeated System of American Foreign Policy

Main Characteristic: Inattention to lower status nations between crises.

Reaction engaged via revolutionary challenge from below

I. Ambition and Overconfidence

1. Escalating violence employed to preserve a dramatic role (above) of unchallenged domination and control. "Light at the end of the tunnel" faith, albeit without externally validating evidence and without a rational plan for an end game.

II. Fear and Suspicion

1. "Domino theory" national security threats are overdramatized.

III. Defective Ethics

1. Ideals poorly integrated and abandoned readily. Absence of principled restraint.
2. Depersonalization leads to "technocratic" rationality. Deaths and injuries to foreigners, especially of low status, enter rational calculations as "nothing to lose."

IV. Emotionally Organized Thought

1. Discussions, especially if public, will appear slightly drunken, that is, confident yet decoupled from reality, use emotion-laden symbols consistent with an imagined role of rightful American dominance, and possess only a modest ability to afford clear analysis of local realities.

V. "Cold," Scornful Aggression

1. Policies are designed to prevent America's "visible" (i.e., dramatically consequential) defeat—or the "visible" success of an illegitimate challenger. Rational, "coercive diplomacy" designed simply to negotiate specific changes or limits in behavior is not used.

VI. Deteriorated Humor

1. Absence of modesty and good humor.

VII. Hyperactivity

1. Activism, particularly increasing to the point of obsession as earlier policies prove ineffective and challenges grow.

Vector 2: Behavior Within the Policy Process

If we recognize the national security world to be, as I have suggested, a subculture with a highly charged sensibility of power drama, I believe we can understand more clearly a common cause of the self-blocking behavior reviewed in chapter 4.⁷⁰

Primarily, one finds highly ambitious men, decided in the rightness of their views (to the point of overconfidence) and preferring like-minded advisers. The deepest fear of the highly ambitious is to be excluded from the inner circle at the top, and they dissemble, engage in self-censorship, and mute the emotional force of their communication upwards. Individuals have strong fear of appearing weak or tender-minded in such circles and engage in self-censorship of any reservations that might appear to reflect these traits, leading policy discussions to further bias toward the hardball sensibility.

Also characteristic of such a system will be a tendency to disregard (and take for granted) the "invisible," lower status subordinates who will implement any plans. There will be defective ethics, ready dissembling and manipulation, and morality will only be discussed in pragmatically utilitarian (rather than principled) terms. There will be angry rejection of the disloyal and scorn for any perceived weakness.

I have listed these and other characteristics of the foreign policy process in Table 6.3. It is, perhaps, not a reassuring picture: The system can, I believe, work better when men of unusual maturity, responsibility, and strength of character serve in top posts—such men would be needed to supplant the natural tendencies of such a system, with its powerful attraction to the highly ambitious.

Vector 3: Characteristic Tendencies to Faulty Perceptions and Judgments

Finally, if we reconsider the pattern of misjudgments and misperceptions I have suggested (chapter 2), these, as well, may be seen to be expressions of the imagination system I described in the previous section: that is, to be assessments made likely as an effect of the underlying presence of a "hardball" dramatic sensibility for thinking about America's position in the world

Table 6.3. Hardball Politics: Self-Blocking Characteristics of the American Policy Process

- I. *Ambition and Overconfidence*
 1. Decided world views.
 2. Too hasty preference for like-minded advisers.
 3. Majority confident of successful use of force.
- II. *Fear and Suspicion*
 1. Strong fear of being excluded from access to power leads to inhibition and self-censorship, especially by subordinates.
 2. Fear of expressing "soft" views.
 3. Strong fear of press exposure.
- III. *Emotionally Organized Thought*
 1. Tendency, in a top-down system, to ignore subordinates and take them for granted in planning.
- IV. *Defective Ethics*
 1. Dissembling and strategic maneuvers within the policy process.
 2. Limited sense of personal responsibility for outcomes.
- V. *"Cold" Aggression*
 1. Strong rejection of the "disloyal" (e.g., Bowles).
 2. Scorn of weakness (liberal idealists "lack balls").
- VI. *Hyperactivity*
 1. Accompanied by exaggerated sense of the import and importance of one's work.

and the nature of power in international relations. I suggest the following proposition: *At each point where the policy process stopped at what was, in retrospect, a misjudgment or misperception, it did so because the stopping point was a node of the hardball dramatic sensibility.*

Thus, it will be a typical—a naturally occurring and continuing—feature of American foreign policy in its return engagements to be overdramatized and oddly wired in the following ways: overconfidence; exaggerated fears; self-deceptive ethical pretensions; symbolic entrapments and a substantial disconnection between the terms of discussion and the local realities in which the covert actions (and wars) are conducted; overconfident activism. I have outlined such tendencies resulting from the dual-track nature of American foreign policy in Table 6.4. (In the next chapter I will return again to these issues to illustrate how this overlay repeats itself in the current return engagement in the 1980s.)

One of the features of this framework may deserve to be especially underscored. Because of the two "self systems," grandiosity and vulnerability coexist. That is, the more tense and "hardball" the decision maker's own personal tendencies and participation in this general system, the greater will be the "domino" fear. "Light at the end of the tunnel" policies (believed even without an end game or rational plan) coexist with "domino theory" fears that the entire structure of order could come apart. Both are linked, predictable features of the characteristic American template.²¹

While there are personal differences—Eisenhower is the modest and integrated man in the case material—I want to emphasize the primary determinant of this thinking is systemic, the use of imagination to understand political power. One needs, in the imagination, to create a sensibility of American power and place in the world: the hardball system is, in part, an instinctive way ambitious, power-oriented men do so personally (and for one another), and the tendency of this syndrome to overdramatization and characteristic error, and to block further improvements in intelligence and effectiveness, is a risk of any great power.²²

I do not want to imply that behavior and thought in the American foreign policy process were organized and overdramatized along these dimensions, and American foreign policy driven, to a point of madness. Kennedy did not live in a world of delusion, but only part way there, in a world of compelling upward ambition and ideals.²³ His "hardball" system was not the extreme form; that was Hitler: megalomania ("a Thousand Year Reich"); paranoia about enemies (Jews were polluting; Jews and the French were sinister, plotting, dangerous, to be eradicated); amoral aggressiveness (military domination and world war). Kennedy's was a moderated form of imagination entrapment and its logic of policy response: idealistic ambition (New Frontier, a world constructively managed by U.S. power with his leadership); a perceiver only of challenges and dangerous challengers (he spoke of Castro only

Table 6.4. Hardball Politics: Characteristic American Tendencies to Errors of Judgment and Perception

- I. *Ambition and Overconfidence*
 1. Substantial overconfidence in success, even without evidence or a rational plan (a mystical "light at the end of the tunnel" faith).
 2. Overconfident faith in mass public support for American-defined purposes in the target country. Overconfident faith in eventual public vindication through success at home.
 3. Substantial underestimation (and scorn for the ability and learning rates of) lower status opponents.
- II. *Fear and Suspicion of Opponents**
 1. Strong fear of ambitions of other rival nations (e.g., Castro, Soviets) and of America's domino vulnerabilities, worldwide, if weakness is displayed.
 2. Strong fear of vulnerability to Republicans and other aggressive domestic opponents if there is "failure" through perceived weakness.
- III. *Defective Ethics*
 1. Uncritical belief in the coincidence of American policy and moral virtue.
 2. Compassion (and, to an extent, reality) disappears in a "nothing to lose from trying" obsession for success.
 3. Strategic dissembling and press manipulation to out-maneuver genuine democratic accountability.
- IV. *Symbolic Involvements*
 1. Use of ambiguous phraseologies and characterizations with modest power to clarify issues and forces in local reality.
 2. Tendency to overdramatize and to capture one's own imagination. In policymaking, this leads to the self-absorbed belief that American viewpoints effectively define reality.
 3. Direct experience of sinister, malevolent forces.
- V. *Hyperactivity*
 1. Unrealistic faith that a plethora of activist programs, begun "when the hour is late," will restore control.

*Note that fear is a function of the insecure self, overconfidence a function of the grandiose self. Hence the two will not, a priori, be thoughtfully integrated (as in the months before the Cuban missile crisis when the anxious search for missiles coincided with confidence they would never be introduced).

as "a cancer we cannot live with for another ten years"); a cool, self-deprecating wit (but not Adlai Stevenson's warm gift of humor); a pragmatic, toughness. Yet I fear we misunderstood the causes of international violence, the commonality of humanity, the nature of the mind, and the deeply personal—and even intimate—path of the personal learning and growth required of genuine statesmen (who can be larger than such systems, master them, and direct them to constructive purposes) if we fail to appreciate that such differences of degree lie along common dimensions.

NOTES

1. See C. Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" in his *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 412-453, for an example of levels of analysis that can be applied to such dramas as international conflict and arms races. See also R. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), pp. 239-271; L. Etheridge, *A World of Men: The Private Sources of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1978); the classic article by D. Pruitt, "Definition of the Situation as a Determinant of International Action" in H. Kelman, ed., *International Behavior* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1965), and D. Ball, "The 'Definition of Situation': Some Theoretical and Methodological Consequences of Taking W. I. Thomas Seriously" *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 2 (1972): 61-82.
2. P. Wyden, *Bay of Pigs: The Untold Story* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 31. Compare Robert Kennedy's tense and driven approach.
3. F. Greenstein, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower as Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) provides an able discussion of Eisenhower's sense of mastery.
4. That Eisenhower took a calmer view is not to say he was correct; my intention is that a subjective stance, not "objective" facts alone, determine a policy.
5. D. Kahneman, P. Slovic and A. Tversky, ed., *Judgment Under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982); Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, pp. 187-191.
6. R. Cambridge and R. Shreckengost, *Are You Sure? The Subjective Probability Assessment Test* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency, 1978).
7. See L. Bloomfield and A. Leiss, *Controlling Small Wars: A Strategy for the 1970's* (New York: Knopf, 1969), pp. 138-142 for a review of logistics and comparative weaponry at the Bay of Pigs.
8. What it takes to be an expert, rather than only to sound like one, is exemplified in Robert Amory's view of Colonel Hawkins, who was enthusiastically endorsed for his prior combat experience by the JCS. Amory, the DDI (deputy director-intelligence) at the CIA was the counterpart to Bissell, who was the DDP (deputy director-plans). Amory fought in 26 assault landings during World War II, many as small as the Bay of Pigs. He later said, "Hawkins made one [beach-head assault] in his whole goddamn life, and that was Iwo Jima, which was three divisions abreast. He was a very able soldier and Marine, but he didn't know beans about what a small, self-contained beachhead would be like." It is also true that Hawkins lacked experience with planning large night assaults on uncharted beaches: The American military did not do that. In fairness to Hawkins, the night assault idea was forced upon him at the last minute after Hawkins was already committed to the operation, rather than being his understanding of the operation he was recruited to plan. See Wyden, *Bay of Pigs*, p. 69.
9. A useful compendium is R. Abelson, E. Aronson, T. Newcomb, M. Rosenberg, and P. Tannenbaum, ed., *Theories of Cognitive Consistency: A Sourcebook* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1968).
10. A thoughtful discussion of applications to foreign policy decision making is Jervis, *Perception and Misperception*, chapter 4 and pp. 356-372. See especially his discussion of defensive avoidance.
11. Bissell "passed the buck" back: he laughed, said he certainly was not going to authorize American government funds, and simply added with a smile, "I don't

- want to hear any more about it. Your job is to get things done down there." The story is told in Wyden, *Bay of Pigs*, pp. 52-53. The president of Guatemala proved sympathetic to the plight of Latin males, his government provided funds, and the CIA established a "chit" system with extra chits awarded the men for good conduct. Ibid.
12. R. Barnett, *Roots of War: The Men and Institutions Behind American Foreign Policy* (New York: Penguin, 1972). See especially his emphasis on "managerial" styles of thought, a useful corrective to Marxist interpretations. See also A. Maslow's perceptive essay "The Need to Know and the Fear of Knowing" in A. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2nd ed. (New York: Van Nostrand, 1968), pp. 60-67.
 13. C. Bowles, *Promises to Keep: My Years in Public Life, 1941-1969* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 449.
 14. A. Berle, "The Cuban Crisis: Failure of American Foreign Policy" *Foreign Affairs* (October 1960): 40-55; and B. Berle and T. Jacobs, ed., *Navigating the Rapids, 1918-1971: From the Papers of Adolf A. Berle* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973).
 15. Other balanced, emotionally-consistent views opposed to invasion might hold that: (a) Castro was not a Communist; (b) if he were a Communist, America had forced him to become one; (c) being a Communist reflected genuinely high ideals.
 16. Cognitive complexity may thus be inconsistent with the emotional force required for policy prescription and political action. See also the discussion of cognitive complexity in the work of P. Tetlock, "Integrative Complexity as a Variable in Political Decision-Making." Paper delivered at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association. (Photocopy: March, 1980).
 17. This was also a tactic — no excuses — to dramatize a message to the bureaucracy.
 18. A. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1954).
 19. See also C. Alderfer, *Existence, Relatedness, and Growth: Human Needs in Organizational Settings* (New York: Free Press, 1972); Ethredge, *A World of Men*.
 20. The Bay of Pigs' scenario intended for Castro — to be set upon from all sides with uncertain information and control — was not far removed from Kennedy's own circumstances.
 21. See the general discussion of Kennedy's views in this regard in N. Lebow, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: Reading the Lessons Correctly" *Political Science Quarterly* 98 (1983): 431-458.
 22. The less anxious, idealistic liberals may have been motivated by moral vision, ideals, and hope.
 23. See D. Kahneman et al., ed., *Judgment Under Uncertainty* for a discussion of this "attribution" error.
 24. Note these could be reasonable (even if not correct) inferences because decision makers could remember, or observe, the same "objective" circumstances and find Castro's hostile behavior distinctive: Batista did not behave this way; nor did other liberal reformers in Latin America (for example, Betancourt of Venezuela). Other "plausible" Cuban leaders (such as its former prime minister, Miro Cardona, now in exile and head of the American-sponsored liberation government) were friendly. Vary the leader, vary the national policy — at least on the surface, the analysis could make sense.
 25. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception* is a principal theorist of this school. I want to avoid doing him a slight disservice by referencing his research while discussing *autonomous* cognitive error. He also writes of motivated mechanisms and has been

- primarily concerned to expand the theoretical universe of articulated possibilities rather than to propose a general theory.
26. For example, to blame Castro *and* to consider him dangerous was to *justify* an American policy and a vision of American power in the world.
 27. The most rigorous research in this line of investigation is reviewed by D. Winter and A. Stewart, "The Power Motive" in H. London and J. Exner, ed., *Dimensions of Personality* (New York: Wiley, 1978, pp. 392-447. This section draws heavily upon the work of others and the reader is referred to my "Hardball Politics: A Model" in *Political Psychology* 1 (1979): 3-26 for a systematic bibliography. Modern works on power motivation and characteristic modes of thought, with reference to American policy making include H. Lasswell's pioneering *Power and Personality* (New York: Norton, 1948); A. George and J. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Col. House* (New York: Dover, 1964); J. Barber, *The Presidential Character* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), especially his discussion of the active-negative character; F. Bailey, *Strategms and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1969); D. Winter, *The Power Motive* (New York: Free Press, 1973); R. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Decline of New York* (New York: Knopf, 1974); D. Mayhew, *Congress: The Electoral Connection* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1974); M. Halperin, P. Clapp, and A. Kanter, *Bureaucratic Behavior and Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 1974); C. Bernstein and B. Woodward, *All the President's Men* (New York: Warner, 1974); J. Newhouse, *Cold Dawn: The Story of SALT* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973); D. McClelland, *Power: The Inner Experience* (New York: Irvington, 1975); L. O'Connor, *Court: Mayor Daley and His City* (New York: Avon, 1975); B. Mazlish, *In Search of Nixon* (New York: Basic Books, 1972) and his *The Revolutionary Ascetic: Evolution of a Public Type* (New York: Basic Books, 1976); Ole Holsti, "The 'Operational Code' as an Approach to the Analysis of Belief Systems. Final Report to the National Science Foundation." (Duke University: Photocopy, 1977); R. Tucker, "The 'Georges' Wilson Re-Examined: An Essay on Psychobiography" *American Political Science Review* 71 (1977); D. Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest* (New York: Random House, 1972); S. Hersh, *The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House* (New York: Summit Books, 1983).
- Specialists will recognize that I am moving beyond a personality based explanation and, via the concept of larger-than-life drama, addressing the integration of individual behavior within systems. I propose a reversal of Lasswell's classic dictum and also suggest public events arouse and engage private motives. H. Lasswell, *Psychopathology and Politics* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1930). My argument is that participation in the over dramatized and oddly wired sensibility of power serves various functions, including problem solving, e.g., M. Smith, "Political Attitudes" in J. Knutson, ed., *Handbook of Political Psychology* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1973), pp. 57-82. I should emphasize that my argument addresses the national security sub-world as it responds to the return engagements observed in this book and, amidst my borrowings, do not wish to imply that those I cite would agree with, or are responsible for, the solution I suggest to explain the three vectors.
28. B. Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam* (New York: Knopf, 1984) has written a similar analysis about the same problem. I believe she is correct to locate power motivation as a key solution to the problem, although think the present theory better developed and easier to integrate with other lines of investigation, for example, psychoanalytic "self" psychology; the suggestion of a

- genetic epistemology via hardwired effects of strong and hierarchical visual imagery. See D. Bear's invited address to the International Society for Political Psychology, Toronto, 1984 (unpublished) for an outline of such possible integrations and L. Etheredge, "Dual-Track Information Processing in Public Policy Decision Making: Models of Strong Imagination Systems" Symposium paper presented to the American Psychological Association meetings, Toronto, 1984 (photocopy) for a general discussion.
29. This duality is not readily assessed with conventional measures of self-esteem as the HP is ashamed to reveal low self-esteem and in part experiences enormously high self-esteem. For a discussion of several methodological issues and evidence for high manifest self-esteem among the politically active, see P. Sniderman, *Personality and Democratic Politics* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1975). Psychoanalytic characterizations of this phenomenon are suggested in H. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1971) and his *The Restoration of the Self* (New York: International Universities Press, 1977).
 30. Early childhood antecedents appear complex and are not fully documented. They seem to include a mother whose indulgence is self-involved ("narcissistic" in psychoanalytic terminology); that is, the child, rather than being related to as an autonomous person, confirmed and loved for himself, is valued as a being who can fulfill the mother's own aspirations through heroic accomplishment. Thus the child is both empowered while (following Lasswell) he is deprived of power as an autonomous individual. See Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*; L. Pye, *Mao Tse Tung: The Man in the Leader* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).
 31. Ambition drives such men even in the face of extreme objective risk. Commenting on the attractions and the enormous risks of the office of Caesar, M. Grant, *The Twelve Caesars* (New York: Scribner's, 1975), p. 257, observes: "In view of the alarming perils involved, it may seem difficult to understand why anyone could be eager to become ruler of the Roman Empire. Yet signs of reluctance were not greatly in evidence. Even in the third century A.D., when a would-be usurper scarcely needed to be a statistical expert to note that the average reign ended rapidly and violently, candidates for the throne still proliferated on every side."
 32. One of the important therapeutic tasks in the integration of the HP is realization that such dramatizations are in his own mind, albeit shared by others in the system to create its reality. This may be especially difficult to achieve among politicians because HPs and others with similar traits in the news media join in a "colfusion of grandiosity" to define and sustain their collective and mutually reinforcing idealized fantasies of "high" public offices as "objective" social reality. See V. Volkan's work, esp. *Primitive Internalized Object Relations: A Clinical Study of Schizophrenic, Borderline, and Narcissistic Patients* (New York: International Universities Press, 1976), p. 269; O. Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism* (New York: Aronson, 1975), pp. 51-85; J. Gedo and A. Goldberg, *Models of the Mind* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1973) on disillusionment therapy. On efforts mutually to reinforce the prestige of the position they occupy and the institutional ladders they climb, see Mayhew, *Congress*.
 33. C. Bowles, *Promises to Keep*, p. 29, for example, laments Kennedy's disinterest in the drafting of the Democratic Party platform on which he ran.
 34. In terms of psychological theory, ordinary stimulus-response punishments do not extinguish the HP's long-term behavior, although they may hurt his feelings.
 35. The HP, in other words, does not enjoy his work. Contrary to what one might expect in a politician, most British prime ministers have not much enjoyed associating with other people. See H. Berrington, "The Fiery Chariot: British Prime Ministers and the Search for Love" *British Journal of Political Science* 4 (1974):

- 345-369; Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, pp. 120, 144, 199.
36. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, pp. 96-98; 251-253 et passim.
37. There may be a need, too, to receive this comparatively and competitively, by constantly seeking out and winning against challengers and opponents. See also H. Kohut, "Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage" in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1971).
38. There is the anticipated reward (via the mirror transference) of future, perhaps eternal, fame and vindication "in the eyes of history." The reference to "hearts and minds" is to a phrase which is part of this syndrome in the case of America's Vietnam policy. See L. Gelb and R. Betts, *The Irony of Vietnam: The System Worked* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1979). "Silent majority" refers to a phrase used during the Nixon Administration.
39. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, pp. 150-151. However, the observation of political life that "great power is in general gained by running great risks" may be correct. If so, the inherent inability of the HP to believe his personal failure is a realistic possibility may eliminate inhibitions to his upward ambitions that would deter more "normal" men. Hubris may lead to great successes as well as to great tragic disasters. The problem of assessing overconfidence and attitudes toward risk is subtle because, while the HP, in one sector of his mind, worries constantly about failure, in another sector of his mind he is convinced it will never occur. The above quotation is from Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus*. Translated by G. Macaulay. (London: MacMillan & Co., 1904), p. 151. See also the discussion of risk taking by a military HP, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, especially his decision for the Inchon landing and underestimation of the Chinese Communists in the Korean War in J. DeRivera, *The Psychological Dimension of Foreign Policy* (Chicago, IL: Charles E. Merrill, 1968), pp. 175-180. See also Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, pp. 150-151.
40. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, pp. 9, 85-88, 97.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 3. To retain power "Daley has intuitively known from the beginning (that) a man must surround himself with servitors, people who are totally loyal and utterly dependent on the man, Daley, for their own well-being." O'Connor, *Court*, p. 11.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 123 et passim.
43. The congressional expert, Richard Fenno, observes: "One of the dominant impressions of my travels is the terrific sense of uncertainty which animates these Congressmen. They perceive electoral troubles where the most imaginative outside observer could not possibly perceive, conjure up or hallucinate them." Cited in Mayhew, *Congress*, p. 35, note 2.
- During the Watergate cover-up case, President Nixon was often called upon by critics to apologize and ask forgiveness. A hardball practitioner such as Nixon would know (believe) this would not work.
44. Hersh, *The Price of Power* provides a recent discussion of behavior in the national security process in this light. The Nixon administration was more extreme in this regard than the Kennedy years. A general discussion of pervasive, mutual mistrust in the foreign policy process is C. Argyris, *Some Causes of Organizational Ineffectiveness Within the Department of State* (Washington, DC: Department of State. Center for International Systems Research, 1967). See also the sensibility of the self-blocking people portrayed in A. Wildavsky, "The Self-Evaluating Organization" in J. Shafritz and A. Hyde, ed., *Classics of Public Administration* (Oak Park, IL: Moore Publishing Co.), pp. 412-427.
45. See the distinction between normative and pragmatic rules in Bailey, *Strategms and Spoils*, p. 5. See also S. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*

- (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1968) on political development and "arts of association."
46. Unpleasant consequences for a polity and the international political system tend to follow, as James Madison noted in *The Federalist* #10 (J. Cooke, ed., Cleveland and New York: Meridian Books, 1961), p. 59: "an attachment of different leaders ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power . . . [has], in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for their common good." Madison did not discuss the breathless dramatizations of the mass media, but his analysis would apply as well.
 47. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, p. 232.
 48. See Halperin et al., *Bureaucratic Behavior* for an inventory derived partly from personal observation.
 49. R. Woodward and C. Bernstein, *The Final Days* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), p. 194. See also Etheredge, *A World of Men*. Dean Acheson made a similar point: Some goings-on in Washington would make the Borgias envious, he thought. He also thought it necessary for a Secretary of State to have "a killer instinct." Another former State Department official thought an ideal preparation for understanding the territoriality, coalitions, in-group secrecy, demands for loyalty, and tough style in national security circles was to have been a member of a juvenile street gang. Acheson is cited in G. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 180.
 50. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, p. 232.
 51. *Ibid.*, pp. 199, 238; H. Kohut, "Forms and Transformations of Narcissism" *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 14 (1966): 243-272.
 52. T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*. C. Macpherson, ed. (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1968), p. 126: "Sudden glory is the passion which maketh those grimaces called laughter; and is caused . . . by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another." Hobbes also felt people laughed from delight in self-congratulation. His unpleasant theory is not always true, but perceptive and of local validity if taken as the observation of one of the major observers of politics.
 53. H. Kohut, "Thoughts on Narcissistic Rage"; J. Nhemiah, *Foundations of Psychopathology* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 165-166; Etheredge, *A World of Men*, p. 82.
 54. Quoted in T. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* 10th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 500.
 55. Quoted in Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, p. 149. On competitive "credit-claiming" see Mayhew, *Congress*.
 56. F. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*. Trans. by P. Cohen. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964).
 57. See O. Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York: Norton, 1945), p. 279, on the relation of stubbornness to narcissism.
 58. Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, pp. 97, 184.
 59. Plato, *The Republic*. In E. Hamilton and H. Cairns, ed., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Pantheon, 1961), p. 749.
 60. M. Fiedman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1964); D. Graber, *Verbal Behavior and Politics* (Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1976); and D. Nimmo, *Popular Images of Politics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974) discuss these issues.
 61. See also R. Robins's introduction to R. Robins, ed., *Psychopathology and Political Leadership* (New Orleans: Tulane Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 1-34 on (potentially visionary) primary process shifts in the discourse of political leaders.

62. The HP is trying to hold himself together in the face of stress. See Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self*, pp. 152-153; also A. Wallace, "Stress and Rapid Personality Changes" *International Record of Medicine* 169 (1956): 761-764. MONGOOSE would qualify as an example.
63. The present analysis suggests how an understanding of psychology may afford a larger perspective, but I do not mean to endorse tender minded analyses.
64. E. Jones, *Sigmund Freud: Four Centenary Addresses* (New York: Basic Books, 1956), p. 145.
65. Church of England, *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1960), p. 70.
66. R. Emerson, "The American Scholar" in B. Atkinson, ed., *Selected Writings of Emerson* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 63.
67. C. Blasier, *The Hovering Giant: U.S. Responses to Revolutionary Change in Latin America* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh Univ. Press, 1976), p. 229.
68. My argument is for a system of epistemology and motivation, that is, a hard-wired effect of hierarchic imagery on brain function. See also Etheredge, "Dual-Track Information Processing."
69. As the process intensifies, in the imagination authority tends to be fused as one, and all radicals and revolutionaries tend to be lumped together. This unified top-down schema is one of the bases of the "domino" fears of contagion.
If one wishes an oversimplified account, it is that American policymakers understand power in dramatic terms, and act, as if they were Freudian analysts, interpreting any challenge to established authority as a symbolic challenge to all established authority, hence a direct threat to themselves.
70. I want to emphasize that my use of the word "imagination" is technical, and I do not mean to imply any individual is misperceiving the reality of power relations within such a system. For example, I do not believe Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., was wrong to anticipate scorn and exploitation of his vulnerability to retaliation if he were a public opponent of the plan in the inner circle; he probably was correct.
71. Richard Nixon and Alexander Haig may serve as examples of men who, comparatively, have been unusually ambitious, hardball, tense, and prone to domino fears. Note that, via this theory, the fearfulness of domestic critics does *not* come from memory of the "who lost China?" debate in the 1950s—it is instinctive, visceral "knowledge," and historical experience only serves to substantiate what is already understood about the world.
The syndrome I outline is, I believe, consistent with (but broader than) D. Ellsberg, *Papers on the War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972).
72. The unnerving thought that the entire structure of domestic and international power is, in substantial degree, based upon hierarchical drama may also be a sensibility which emerges at the top; and sometimes it is true: A blink, and social order *might* disintegrate—as it did for Arbenz (or Batista)—by only a token challenge.
72. A complete analysis would add that Kennedy's liberalism also fueled his idealism and, at war beneath the surface, produced ambivalent policies and drew him back, especially when public exposure threatened to ram together the opposing tendencies he sought, uneasily to serve and manage within himself. The inner conflict made him a better, albeit more self-doubting, man. Nixon would have sent in troops. Kennedy was too liberal and decent to be effective (devastating) in his violence, but too ambitious, competitive and "hardball" to leave Castro alone. See Etheredge, *A World of Men* for evidence concerning sources of ambivalence in American foreign policy.