

WAS THE HARVARD-KENNEDY CONNECTION A MYTH?

by

DEBORAH ANN ELVEN

A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Political Science
and the Honors College of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts

June 1991

APPROVED:



Professor John Orbell

An Abstract of the Thesis of
 Deborah Ann Elven for the degree of Bachelor of Arts
 in the Department of Political Science to be taken June 1991
 Title: WAS THE HARVARD-KENNEDY CONNECTION A MYTH?

Approved:  _____
 Professor John Orbell

As a result of the concentration of Harvard men in government positions during the Kennedy Administration, there was an abundance of speculation as to the amount of influence Harvard University actually had on the Kennedy Administration. This thesis seeks to determine if there is any evidence to support the speculation: basically, was there any "Harvard effect" traceable in Kennedy's foreign policy. The case in support of a limited influence is built on the basis of comparisons between two works by prominent Harvard scholars and the policies and statements of the Kennedy policymakers. I conclude that while there is evidence that would support the speculation of some Harvard influence, that influence is much more limited than was expected; what there was seems to be more generally academic rather than distinctively from Harvard.

DEDICATION

This thesis is wholeheartedly dedicated to my brother, SP4 Patrick W. Elven, whose persistent interest in this project has been a great encouragement and incentive. Who else could or would call from Saudi Arabia (during the Gulf Crisis, no less) and ask, "How's the thesis, Sis?"

Je t'aime, mon frère.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere and complete thanks go to my thesis director, Professor John Orbell, for his assistance and encouragement. It has been a privilege to work with him and learn from him both in class and while preparing this thesis. My thanks to him also for introducing me to decision theory and the possibilities it holds for my future.

To my parents, thank you for making this opportunity possible and for always being supportive and interested, in spite of the phone bill.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	INTRODUCTION.....	1
I.	CONCEPTS.....	7
	Foreign Policy.....	7
	A Note on Harvard.....	9
	Of Academics and Policymakers.....	10
	Influence.....	13
	Indicators of Influence.....	14
	Models of Influence.....	16
II.	THE POLICYMAKERS.....	19
	McGeorge Bundy.....	19
	Robert McNamara.....	22
	Robert Kennedy.....	26
	John F. Kennedy.....	29
III.	THE HARVARD CONTEXT.....	35
	Henry A. Kissinger.....	38
	Thomas C. Schelling.....	48
IV.	A RETURN TO THE MODELS OF INFLUENCE.....	58
	CONCLUSION.....	62
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	66

INTRODUCTION

When Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected to the presidency, he was referred to as "that man" from Harvard. When John F. Kennedy was elected, his administration was referred to as "that tribe." The Harvard background of many of Kennedy's advisors led to nicknames such as "Harvard braintrust," "Cambridge gang," and "the thought brigade." A cartoon in *The New Yorker* in 1960 shows a national campaign headquarters in which a worker is holding up a telephone and shouting, "It's Harvard, Professor. They want to know when you're going to grade last June's exams." Writes William Carleton in an essay on Kennedy, "Franklin D. Roosevelt will be known as the founder of the Presidential braintrust, but Kennedy will be known as the President who widened and institutionalized it" (Ions, 1967, 207).

In the case of the Kennedy Administration, the university most associated with the Presidential braintrust was Harvard University. The question, then, is whether the connection between Harvard and Kennedy's government and policies was a myth or a reality. (It should be noted that there is a body of literature on the topic of myth and history which examines the role of myth in society and develops definitions similar to those which follow.)

The word myth has two meanings which serve this discussion. First, a myth is a widespread belief that

attempts to explain a truth in the world. In this sense of the word, there is no judgment as to the truth of the myth. Based on the widespread speculation concerning Harvard's role in the Kennedy Administration, this definition of myth certainly applies. A second definition defines a myth as a belief whose truth is accepted uncritically. This definition implies a judgment that the myth would be found to be false if it were scrutinized. This sense of the word also applies to the case at hand. The link between Kennedy and Harvard was the subject of speculation and humor, but the connection was accepted on the basis that Kennedy and many of his appointees and advisors shared a Harvard background. The assumption of a Harvard influence was never critically examined in order to discover to what extent the myth described reality.

This lack of critical examination may be due in part to the function of myths in society. The widespread, accepted belief of the connection between Harvard and the Kennedy Administration could have served several purposes. For academics, Kennedy's recruitment of professors as advisors and their resulting position of importance would have been an idea which was pleasing and worth propagating. For the Kennedy Administration, the close involvement of academics would have served to emphasize a new rational, intellectual approach to policymaking. For others, the myth would have been a way to simplify reality so that it was easier to understand. To most people, the amount of truth in the myth

of the connection between Harvard and Kennedy was not a matter of significant importance, so it was accepted.

When one attempts to break down or define a myth in such a way that it's "truth content" can be tested, this simplification of reality becomes clear. In the case of the Harvard-Kennedy connection, the myth implies a monolithic Harvard whose ideology was the same in each department and each faculty member. This was certainly not a realistic portrayal of Harvard University. Also implied is a direct path of influence distinct from the frequently observed incoherence of the foreign policy process.

While myths are convenient as general explanations or starting points for research, they ignore the complexities and limitations of reality. This is undoubtedly true in the case of the Harvard-Kennedy connection. In this thesis, I will examine the limitations and problems with this myth and critically evaluate the truth content of Harvard's assumed influence on the Kennedy Administration.

Academics were recruited to serve as campaign advisers by both Kennedy and Nixon. In the Kennedy camp, however, there was a preponderance of Harvard men--professors, deans, and alumni. "Ever since 1952, individual professors of the Harvard faculty had been furnishing this most prominent of their living alumni with ideas, information and analysis, to shape his national thinking" (White, 1961, 248). Professor Mark Howe further emphasized this to The New York Times in an article on the 1960 election campaign, saying, "This is

where he [Kennedy] grew up and where he has been getting his ideas for a long time" (Keckinger, 1960).

This trend continued after Kennedy's election. The New York Times reports that "of the hundred-odd Democratic brains, it is estimated that 'only about half' belong to Harvard (Keckinger, 1960). "Only about half" is, needless to say, a large number.

As Kennedy began appointing his administration, his respect for intellectual men showed clearly. Of McGeorge Bundy, he said, "You can't beat brains." Indeed, many of Kennedy's appointments reflect this attitude. Almost without exception, Kennedy's advisors and appointees were well-educated men, whether from Harvard or another university. Perhaps the awareness of the involvement of Harvard men was heightened by Kennedy's being the sixth president to have graduated from Harvard University, and jokes abounded about Harvard becoming the fourth branch of government or taking over Washington, D.C. (e.g: "the quickest way to Washington is to go to Harvard and turn left"). Eventually, Kennedy began to fear "overdoing appointments from Cambridge," which led to a "Cambridge ban," according to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., in A Thousand Days (133-4). After being appointed Secretary of Agriculture, Orville Freeman was asked how he happened to have been chosen. His reply is quoted by Schlesinger: "'I'm not really sure, but I think it's something to do with the fact that Harvard does not have a school of agriculture'"

(1967, 139). It is interesting to note that Kennedy's particular selection of intellectuals for government positions was a dramatic change from the policy of Dwight D. Eisenhower. Eisenhower was especially impressed by successful businessmen, high achievers, and did not want to surround himself with professional politicians (Ambrose, 1984, 20). Writing in his diary on January 5, 1953, Eisenhower spoke of his inability "to get anybody to take jobs in Washington except business failures, college professors (crossed out and replaced by 'political hacks') and New Deal lawyers." Kennedy's respect for and welcome of intellectuals must have been a welcome change. As Peter French puts it, John F. Kennedy's taking of professors from Harvard and other universities "suggests that professors [had] generally moved up to a new place in society" (1962, 28).

Whether the anecdotes related thus far were meant as disgruntled criticism or simply humor, these comments reflect off-the cuff speculation as to the influence of Harvard University on the policies of the Kennedy Administration. Is this influence a myth of Kennedy's Camelot or did it really exist? Harvard's influence on the Kennedy Administration has been asserted, but not supported or denied by scholarly investigation. In this thesis, I will explore the proposition that Harvard did have an influence on the actions of the Kennedy Administration. I am limiting this study to foreign policy because that is the

area in which the president and his advisors have, ultimately, the most influence. Foreign policy develops as a result of many inputs, but it is within the Executive Branch that foreign policy is forged. With Harvard men in key policymaking positions, not the least being the presidency, the Kennedy Administration's foreign policy seems an appropriate place to start.

CHAPTER 1: CONCEPTS

At this point, it is necessary to discuss some conceptual and methodological concerns which are relevant to this thesis.

Foreign Policy

To speak of the foreign policymaking process as a unified coherent process oversimplifies it greatly. Foreign policy is the end result of complex interaction between actors such as advisory groups, interest groups, inter-governmental discussions, and the policymakers themselves. There is no single prescriptive process for the development of foreign policy. The policies can be formed on different levels, but ultimately it is the Executive Branch of the government which has the major responsibility for foreign policy and which is best qualified to make the decisions which determine U.S. foreign policy. During the Kennedy Administration, Kennedy put most of his energy into foreign policy because he felt that was the realm in which he had the most chance of effecting change or making any impact.

In shaping foreign policy, decisionmakers are subject to diverse influences. First and foremost, policymakers are influenced by their own world views and ideologies based on their backgrounds. Advice from other individuals or groups is also a significant influence, especially given the

complexity of most foreign policy decisions. Which outside advice to listen to is a decision which policymakers are faced with, and the sources of advice chosen can either counteract or compound the biases of the decisionmakers. This advice does not necessarily come from groups outside the government--during the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy organized the ExComm for the purpose of advisorship--although the people usually considered to be foreign policy "experts" are academics at universities or think tanks. Aside from personal influences on foreign policy, decisionmakers are also constrained by the length of time they have in which to make the decision or by world opinion. Also a factor may be the resources on hand with which to respond. A last point which must be made regarding foreign policy is that it involves an anticipation and prediction of what could happen as a result of each possible option. Despite the most vigilant efforts of policymakers, not all the possible consequences will be foreseen. Foreign policy formation is both reactive to world events and a gamble on what will happen in the future.

To some extent, foreign policy decisions are made under circumstances of uncertainty. However complex the policy-making process, the President will ultimately be held responsible for the policies of his administration whether successful or not.

A Note on Harvard

To assert that there is a single, discernible Harvard influence is problematic in and of itself. An anecdote told by Mark Alcott, Harvard '61, will illustrate the reason.

A shipwreck left ten Harvard men, ten Yalies, and ten Princeton men stranded on an island. They decided to build replicas of their schools. Fifteen years later a rescue ship came along. The rescuers found a beautiful Gothic structure; that was Yale. They found a beautiful Georgian structure; that was Princeton. And they found ten little Harvard huts.

One Harvard man, when asked about what Harvard meant to him, responded, "The most impressive thing about Harvard is its tolerance. There's no worry about gingerbread molds" (French, 1962, 33). Given that one of Harvard's strong-points and sources of great pride is its tolerance and a multiplicity of viewpoints among its students and faculty, the assumption of Harvard as a coherent, single influence becomes problematic. Rather, it is necessary to look at specific academics and their work.

In The Long Reach: A Report on Harvard Today, Peter French, writing in 1962, refers to Harvard as a "'national resource' in the sense that it provides experts on all kinds of problems" (28). Later, he writes, "Harvard cannot claim that it is the best in all departments . . . , but the university as a whole is widely recognized to be the head of the centipede of American universities" (35). Harvard, according to French, is thought of as the model and pacesetter in academia (11). Although these considerations

will take more importance later on, the argument for Harvard as a leading university must be recognized. French quotes one Harvard student who queries, "Why is Harvard the hot university?" (32). This question, in itself, reinforces the very position of Harvard that it questions. In answer, French suggests that the varied intellectual views and the excellence of the school contribute to making Harvard a university whose "influence goes far beyond [the world of education]" (11). In a statement that nicely ties in with the subject of this thesis, French concludes that "the influence of even an outstanding institution is difficult to trace" (11-12).

It should be noted that Peter French is not a Harvard man himself. In the Author's Note preceding his text, French refers to himself as bringing to Harvard the look of a reporter and outsider. This would add weight to his arguments concerning Harvard because they are presumably not motivated by organizational loyalty or self-interest.

Of Academics and Policymakers

Henry Kissinger's book, The Necessity for Choice, ends with a chapter entitled "The Policymaker and the Intellectual." The chapter opens with a critique of government policymaking which addresses the difficulties inherent in a situation in which administrators are also expected to be experts in foreign policy. Kissinger then launches into a discussion of the involvement of academics

in policymaking. Kissinger makes a distinction that is extremely relevant in the case of the Kennedy Administration. Intellectuals or academics are people who work with ideas professionally--for example, university professors or policy analysts with independent firms. By contrast, policymakers are government officials who, though they may be intellectual in their own right, are primarily administrators. As politicians, policymakers are constrained by political necessity. They do not have the same freedom to theorize. This point is descriptive of the position which Robert McNamara, the Kennedy brothers, and McGeorge Bundy were in as policymakers.

Kissinger posits that policymakers need to depend on academics for expert advice. I would continue that this is especially important in the complicated realm of foreign policy. He does address the problems faced by academics who choose to participate in policymaking. The intellectual "is asked to solve problems, not to contribute to the definition of goals," states Kissinger. "The intellectual is rarely found at the level where decisions are made. His role is commonly advisory. He is called in as a 'specialist' in ideas whose advice is combined with that of others" (1960, 350). That is to say, there are limitations to the extent to which intellectuals outside the policy process can influence it. Kissinger maintains that the intellectual has the responsibility to remain independent, free from political constraints, in order to "prevent routine from

becoming an end in itself" (353) and yet, at the same time, too much independence will prevent effective input.

Kissinger concludes that partly as a result of the tensions in this relationship, "the entire free world suffers not only from administrative myopia but also from self-righteousness and the lack of a sense of direction" (352). Writing in 1960, Kissinger's words advise change, but the conclusion just mentioned seems almost prophetic when one looks at the Kennedy Administration in retrospect.

This does not reject the proposition that Harvard had special influence. I think it did, but to quote Herbert Simon, that influence would only have been one of the "evidential bases" used by the Kennedy Administration politicians when making decisions. The ideas coming out of Harvard would have been combined with other inputs to generate a policy.

Kissinger makes a statement in the chapter already mentioned which also limits the possibility of Harvard having a large influence. "Crisis conditions do not encourage calm consideration. They rarely permit anything except defensive moves" (347). Again, this sounds prophetic in light of the several crises during the Kennedy Administration. Kennedy's foreign policy dealt primarily in crises, most notably the Cuban Missile Crisis. Under circumstances of duress, intellectuals outside the inner circle of political actors do not have the opportunity to provide significant input.

Influence

What, then, is influence? According to the Random House College Dictionary, influence is defined as "the action or process of producing effects on others by intangible or indirect means." Herbert Simon's Administrative Behavior adds a large measure of finesse and depth to this definition. Writes Simon, "influence is exercised through control over the premises of decision" and is "exercised in its most complete form when a decision promulgated by one person governs every aspect of the behavior of another" (1957, 222-3). This most complete form of influence is defined as authority, "the power to make decisions which guide the actions of another" (125).

Of course, Simon is dealing primarily with a specific set of relationships within a formalized organization, and one would not expect to see Harvard in a position of influence in which academics could dictate foreign policy based on their authority. This relationship of supervisor and subordinate is not a truly applicable model. Simon does, however, put forth a model which applies to the relationship between Harvard and the Kennedy Administration. Contrasted with the person who sets aside his own critical faculties and uses a received command when making a choice, is

a person who receives a suggestion [and] accepts it as only one of the evidential bases for making his choice-but the choice he will make depends upon conviction. (127)

Harvard's position would be one of advisors and consultants who provide information, counsel, and persuasion. Kennedy, on the other hand, would hold the position of the decision-maker who receives advice, but then makes a decision based on all that he has been told and his personal convictions. There is no doubt that, as the dictionary suggests, the process is often indirect and intangible.

To understand how ideas at Harvard may have influenced the Kennedy Administration's foreign policy, it is necessary to specify models of how that influence might have happened. The following indicators and models will frame my investigation:

Indicators of Influence

In the context of this thesis, the presence of Harvard men in key government positions can be seen as indicators of potential influence. Harvard could be said to be influential insofar as there were Harvard men in positions of power. However, this does not assume any distinctive result of their appointments--simply, Harvard men were there. It would be shortsighted to assume that these men from Harvard shared the same political outlook as a result of their education--partly because they all had different experiences at Harvard and partly because of the aforementioned lack of a mold at Harvard. While it is fair to speculate that these men probably shared a sense of identity as a result of being connected with Harvard, they

also shared a great deal of pride and excitement at being a part of the New Frontier which was in itself like a club of unusually young, well-educated politicians.

In the Kennedy Administration, key foreign policymaking positions were held by Harvard men. These men were arguably some of the most influential of Kennedy's advisors during his term in office. Who were they? McGeorge Bundy, Dean of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, was appointed to serve as Kennedy's National Security Affairs Adviser. Robert McNamara, who had completed a graduate degree in Harvard's School of Business, was Kennedy's choice for Secretary of Defense. John F. Kennedy was himself a Harvard graduate, as was his brother, Robert Kennedy. It may seem odd to introduce the Attorney General in a discussion of foreign policymaking, but as the brother of the president and a trusted advisor, Robert Kennedy's involvement is known to have been substantial (Sorensen, 1966, 299). There were other Harvard men in positions which had to do with foreign policymaking, but these four men represent the central and most arguably influential of the Harvard men involved with foreign policy. Kennedy also had several "special assistants" and consultants who were academics at Harvard and who served as advisors, but these men were not at the core of policymaking in Kennedy's administration.

Model #1

The first model suggests that the context of ideas at Harvard influenced Kennedy's foreign policy. This model asks whether men in policymaking positions explained events in the international arena within a context identifiable with a particular Harvard faculty member. There are any number of ways in which the ideas of Harvard academics could have been introduced to policymakers--for instance, through their own reading, through discussions with advisors. If the policymakers did frame their thoughts or defined their world in terms of the theories and ideas of specific Harvard academics, this should be reflected in the speeches and policy statements of the Kennedy Administration. Evidence in support of this model will be connotative and interpretative in nature, but will provide an opportunity to examine closely what was being said by Kennedy himself and his key advisors concerning the international events they faced.

Model #2

The second model involves the framing of thought and ways of defining situations that were used by Kennedy and his advisors. Where it differs from the first model is that it focuses on Harvard's position in academia. Was political thought and theory at Harvard a subset of mainstream political thought at the time, not distinctly different or

uniquely different from political thought at other universities? If Harvard political theory was not significantly different from theory at other schools, the Kennedy Administration's ways of explaining, defining, and framing should be understandable as more generally academic, rather than a result of a specific Harvard influence. Again, the evidence to support this kind of influence will be largely connotative and subjective.

Model #3

A third model assumes that Harvard University was the pacesetter university for the intellectual mainstream in political theory. There is a saying, "As Harvard goes, so goes the nation" and this is the idea underlying the third model. If, indeed, Harvard was the leading institution in the nation, this model would suggest that there was a two-step flow of influence from Harvard to the academic world and thence to the Kennedy Administration. It is also theoretically possible that Harvard's political theories would have a more concentrated influence through being the leading academic theories in the nation. To develop this idea further, it is possible that the Harvard men in policymaking positions continued to be strong leaders just as their university was a leader. Like the two previous models, this one will prove inherently difficult to test. The judgment as to which university was the leading university of the period is certainly subjective. Also, as

already mentioned in the discussion of influence, the process by which the Kennedy Administration could have been influenced by Harvard is largely an indirect one. Influence can be asserted based on circumstantial evidence, but the evidence in support of such an influence is not conclusive.

Model #4

By the final model, administration positions were the result of political experience, common sense, and a "seat of the pants" approach to political decision-making rather than theory and academia. Basically, this model puts forward the idea of Harvard University having no influence despite all the assumptions to the contrary. Support for this model could include evidence of no parallels between Harvard thought and Kennedy's policy, parallels which occur with no input from Harvard, or else a direct denial of any Harvard influence on policy from a policymaker. If this model is the most applicable, then the myth of Harvard's influence will be just that--another myth surrounding the Camelot of the Kennedy Administration.

CHAPTER II: THE POLICYMAKERS

The question which must be answered now is, "Who were the primary foreign policy decision makers in Washington during the Kennedy Administration who came from Harvard?" The four most prominent are McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, Robert Kennedy, and John F. Kennedy. These were the men at the top of the hierarchy, the ones who had the power and responsibility for the decisions taken. Reports David Halberstam in The Best and The Brightest:

It was said that in the Kennedy-Johnson years, the three places with the most talented people were the White House under Bundy, the Justice Department under Robert Kennedy, and the Defense Department under McNamara. (1972, 276)

These names appear repeatedly as some of the men closest to Kennedy as friends, advisors, and men with power and influence in the foreign policymaking process. (For the following information, The Kennedy Circle, edited by Lester Tanzer, has been the primary source unless explicitly noted otherwise.)

McGeorge Bundy

Halberstam describes McGeorge Bundy as the "brightest light in the glittering constellation around [Kennedy]" (1972, 57). Born into an established Boston family, McGeorge Bundy went to school at Groton and then enrolled at Yale for his undergraduate work. While Bundy was in school

at Groton, his father served as an Assistant Secretary of State under Henry L. Stimson during the Hoover Administration. His father would again serve in this post during World War II during the Roosevelt Administration. The Bundy family was both wealthy and involved in government. From an early age, Bundy was in the "right circles" to get the elite preparation and exposure for his later role in the Kennedy Administration. At Yale, Bundy distinguished himself in mathematics and was also known for being outspoken and bold. At this point, he "dabbled" in politics, but not significantly. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1940 and went to Harvard where he studied as a Junior Fellow, one of "the chosen of the chosen," part of a special program roughly equivalent to a Ph.D., only much more exclusive (68).

Halberstam describes Bundy at this period as "already deeply involved in foreign affairs, a committed internationalist and interventionist" (68). It was at this time that Bundy made his only foray into elective politics when he ran for the Boston City Council. Says Bundy, "It would probably be a good contender for the worst campaign in history" (34). He left Harvard in 1942 to serve as an aide to Admiral Alan G. Kirk after training as an intelligence officer, but Bundy returned to Boston after the war. For a year, he spent time in daily conversations with former Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson while the two wrote a book on Stimson's government career. In 1948, Bundy took

his first job in Washington, D.C., working on the Marshall Plan. Also in 1948, Bundy worked on the foreign policy team for Dewey in his bid for the presidency. Douglas Dillon--later Kennedy's Secretary of the Treasury--John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles were other members of the team. Before returning to Harvard in late 1949, Bundy was a policy analyst on the Marshall Plan for the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. Upon returning to Harvard, Bundy taught an undergraduate course in American foreign policy.

In 1952, he edited the public papers of Dean Acheson, and in the book defended Acheson against charges of being "soft" on Communists. During this time, Bundy wrote, "Very near to the heart of all foreign affairs is the relationship between policy and military power," making it clear that he felt the U.S. could only successfully deal with the Soviets from a position of strength (36). When Senator McCarthy went after Bill Bundy, McGeorge's older brother who worked for the Central Intelligence Agency, Bundy again proved himself unafraid to speak out when others remained silent. He stood up to McCarthy.

In 1952, Bundy had his first job in national security when he served as secretary for the secret M.I.T. panel chosen by Acheson to study the alarming growth of Soviet arms and related military issues. The next year, Bundy became the Dean of Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, in which job he proved himself capable as an administrator. Kennedy, an overseer for Harvard, met Bundy at this time.

Bundy and Kennedy were seated together at the 1960 commencement and got along well, but Bundy was never part of the Harvard braintrust during Kennedy's campaign. Just before Christmas of 1960, McGeorge Bundy was offered the position of Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, which he accepted. There was some debate about his qualifications as a national security expert, basically that "one year in defense planning and seven as a Harvard dean do not qualify" as security expertise (37). In defense of his selection, Bundy said, "the conduct of American foreign affairs has been my specialty since the war" (37). Bundy is further described by Halberstam as having "a hard-line attitude which was very much a product of the fifties and the Cold War" (1972, 76). Kennedy liked Bundy, a man who shared a similar background and was also very intelligent and confident. When in 1962 Bundy was offered the Presidency at Yale, Kennedy's response was that it was "out of the question" (1972, 57).

Robert McNamara

Halberstam describes Robert McNamara as not "of the Establishment" (1972, 271); even so, his intelligence and hard work brought him into the circle of Kennedy's advisors. His family, from California rather than the East coast, was much more middle class and of much more modest means. Robert McNamara did his undergraduate work at the University of California at Berkeley, working summers in various jobs.

McNamara was Phi Beta Kappa while at Berkeley. Upon graduating, he went to Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration. In spite of a scholarship he won, McNamara continued working summers.

Upon completing his graduate degree in 1939, he returned to California where he went to work for Price, Waterhouse and Company. Within a year, the Harvard Business School offered him a teaching position, which he accepted. He taught on the faculty at Harvard for three years.

It was during this time that Robert Lovett, Assistant Secretary of War, had been persuaded that the Army Air Force needed to update its management system in the interest of better meeting the logistical demands of the war. Under the guidance of Colonel Thornton, a select group of officers was put into a specialized course designed to train them in statistical control. Harvard was the university in charge of organizing the course, and Robert McNamara was one of the faculty members assigned to the project. This experience gave him some preparation for his later job under Kennedy. After later serving as a civilian consultant in England, McNamara was commissioned a captain. He continued work in the B-29 program, reaching the rank of lieutenant colonel by the end of the war.

At this time, Colonel Thornton determined to try to keep his team together by offering its managerial skill as a package to various companies. Henry Ford was just then taking over Ford Motor Company from his grandfather, facing

serious challenges, and hired the team. Elie Abel describes it as "the wildest bargain Ford ever made" (Tanzer, 1961, 177). As could have been expected, they were not met with much enthusiasm, being pejoratively referred to as "Whiz Kids" by other employees--a name which followed McNamara into the Defense Department (Halberstam, 285). McNamara soon emerged as the "top Whiz Kid":

a new kind of executive in American business... men who had not grown up in the business, who were not a part of the family but who were modern, well-educated, technicians. (285)

After six years at Ford, McNamara became a vice-president and general manager of the division responsible for making cars and trucks. Of McNamara, Abel writes, "He did not pretend to have all the answers, but he seemed to have more of them at his fingertips than anyone else" (Tanzer, 178). This was a quality which would eventually recommend him to Kennedy as a man who would be a valuable asset.

While his experience in Detroit certainly was of great impact on McNamara's life at this point, it was not the only one. McNamara lived in Ann Arbor, choosing to commute to work. He did not socialize with industry leaders, but rather with friends in Ann Arbor, many of whom were faculty from the University of Michigan. "Above all, McNamara was at home in the college-town atmosphere," writes Abel (178). McNamara was known for being intelligent, an avid reader, a man who continually challenged himself intellectually.

During this time, McNamara also began to involve himself in public affairs. He helped organize Citizens for Michigan, a bipartisan group concerned with finding solutions to the state's economic and political troubles. Like Bundy, McNamara was known for being outspoken and willing to speak out when he disagreed with a political leader, and for being willing to work to solve problems.

When Kennedy began his "talent search" for people to fill the many government appointments he had to make, Sargent Shriver first brought up the name of Robert McNamara. Along with his other qualifications, McNamara had the attraction of not being so obviously a "Harvard man" like McGeorge Bundy or Douglas Dillon. Kennedy offered McNamara the position of Secretary of either Defense or Treasury. McNamara was not interested in Treasury, and was uncertain of his ability to handle the Defense job. Unlike many of the other top Kennedy men, McNamara had no personal political ambitions. Five days after meeting with Kennedy in Georgetown and after talking with Thomas Gates, the outgoing Defense Secretary, McNamara accepted the position.

As Kennedy's Secretary of Defense, McNamara continued to be a "man of force, moving, pushing, getting things done . . . , the can-do man in the can-do society," writes Halberstam (265). He and Kennedy were much alike in their activity and reading; McNamara was one of the few men who worked with Kennedy and was also a close friend of the Kennedys socially. David Halberstam writes that McNamara

was very much a man of the Kennedy Administration. He symbolized the idea that it could manage and control events in an intelligent, rational way. (264)

Robert McNamara had the style and confidence to make him fit well with the other Kennedy men; in his own right, he was also one of the elite.

Robert Kennedy

Theodore Sorensen quotes President Kennedy as once excusing himself to take a phone call from Robert Kennedy, smiling and saying, "Will you excuse me a moment, this is the second most powerful man calling" (1966, 301). Robert Kennedy had the advantage of being an active and capable man, but also the brother of the President, which gave him considerable latitude to speak his feelings openly. This close relationship also guaranteed that Robert Kennedy would be involved in foreign policymaking due to the confidence his brother had in him. "I'll take Bobby's word over anybody's," said the President of his brother (Tanzer, 210). And so, during the Kennedy Administration, the Attorney General played a role not traditionally expected of an Attorney General.

Growing up in the Kennedy family, Robert Kennedy seems to have been always in the shadow of his two older brothers. School was much tougher--academically, socially, and athletically--for him than it had been for his elder brothers. A friend says that Robert "made up for it with

hard work" (193). Perhaps it was this early hard work and activity that later made Robert Kennedy unafraid to do the legwork necessary to make things happen in his brother's election campaigns.

Of his childhood, Robert says,

I can hardly remember a mealtime when the conversation was not dominated by what Franklin D. Roosevelt was doing or what was happening around the world Since public affairs had dominated so much of our own actions and discussions, public life seemed really an extension of family life. (Schlesinger, 1965, 80)

This seems to have been a major influence on the lives of all of the Kennedy sons, especially John and Robert. Like Bundy, the Kennedy's were groomed from an early age for an elite role in either the private or public sector.

When Robert Kennedy graduated from Milton, World War II was already underway. He enlisted in the V-5 naval-aviation program in which he spent eight months before being transferred to V-12 for officer training. From there, he was sent to Harvard and enlisted in the R.O.T.C. program. At this point he was frustrated and asked family friend, and Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, for an assignment at sea. He got it, but even then, his war record was hardly as distinguished as that of his elder brothers. Seaman Second Class Kennedy spent four months scraping paint in the Caribbean (194).

On his return from the Navy in 1946, Robert Kennedy got his first experience in politics when his brother ran for

Congress from Boston's 11th District. Robert's responsibility was to get votes in East Cambridge, a poorer section of the city. Says Robert, "I went from house to house ringing doorbells. I don't remember what I said I guess I just asked them to vote for my brother" (195).

After graduating from Harvard, he spent time in the Middle East as a correspondent for the Boston Post, flying north to see the Berlin airlift before returning to the United States and enrolling in the University of Virginia Law School. There his grades were high, as was his level of campus involvement.

Out of law school in 1951, he went to work for the Justice Department. His first jobs were in investigating the corruption of the Truman administration. He left his Washington job in 1952 to return to Boston and manage his brother's campaign for the Senate. At 26, he decided that "the major ingredients lacking in existing political systems were hard work and common sense" (197). His approach was to work hard, give everyone a sense of participation, and do whatever task needed to be done. It paid off.

After John Kennedy's election, Robert returned to Washington to work for Senator McCarthy's subcommittee on investigations from which he resigned after protesting the way some of the cases were being handled. He joined the Hoover commission, which worked on recommendations for administrative reform in government. When the 1956 Democratic convention was over, he returned to Washington,

where his work on the Rackets Committee gained him national attention as he went after the big labor bosses suspected of misusing union funds.

In 1959, he finished a book concerning his three years of investigations, The Enemy Within, and then turned his full attention to running John Kennedy's presidential campaign. Of Robert Kennedy's work, his father said, "It's the best organization job I've ever seen in politics" (207). Once again, the result was a victory for John Kennedy, this time the presidency.

John F. Kennedy wanted his brother as Attorney General, but it took some time to convince him to accept it. Writes Theodore Sorensen, the President-elect

predicted that the nomination of his brother as Attorney General ("Let's announce it at midnight," he said) would prove to be his most controversial choice then and one of his wisest choices later, and he was right on both counts. (1972, 288)

Robert Kennedy proved to be a reliable and hardworking advisor, one who shared the elite background and the advantage of also being in the family.

John F. Kennedy

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. describes John F. Kennedy as an intellectual,

a man of action who could pass easily over to the realm of ideas and confront intellectuals with perfect confidence in his capacity to hold his own." (1966, 104)

Schlesinger also writes that Kennedy's approaches to domestic and foreign affairs were the same in that they shared "an emphasis on the factual, the rational, and the realistic" (574). This emphasis was also shared by the other three men just introduced.

John F. Kennedy was raised with the advantages of being a Kennedy--wealth, social status, and political connections. He was also raised with his father's ethic that Kennedys "were not supposed to finish second" (81). After finishing prep school at Choate, Kennedy refused to follow in the footsteps of his father and elder brother and enrolled at Princeton. Due to a case of jaundice, he missed most of his freshman year, and so gave in to his father's wishes, enrolling at Harvard the following fall.

He spent time in 1938-39 travelling around Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Middle East. During this time, his father served as the Ambassador to England. Kennedy returned to Harvard to write his honors thesis, Why England Slept, before graduating in 1940.

Kennedy enlisted in the Navy, eventually getting a position at sea through aid of a family friend. He was decorated for heroism after the PT-109 incident. Back in Boston after the war, Kennedy concluded his paragraph in the six year report on his graduating class from Harvard with the sentence, "'I am pessimistic about the future of the country'" (89).

There is much speculation that after Joe Jr.'s death in the war, John was chosen to be the son in politics--the assumption being that his father forced him to pursue that career. Such a statement overstates Joseph Kennedy's control and ignores John Kennedy's will. The younger Kennedy became more interested in politics upon his return from the war, testing the political climate in Boston with a successful campaign for the 11th Congressional District seat in the House of Representatives.

From there, Kennedy proceeded to win a seat in the Senate, growing in political power and popularity. His background at Harvard and social experience as a Kennedy stood him in good stead for Washington society. His ties at Harvard and in Boston were still very strong, though. Schlesinger speaks of Kennedy as "our senator," meaning that Kennedy represented the district in which Harvard was located and was a Harvard alumnus. Kennedy also served on the Board of Overseers at Harvard, as was already mentioned.

John F. Kennedy was an avid reader, a man whose respect for intellectuals led him to surround himself with them as his advisors. When he was elected to the presidency, the earmarks of his administration were comparative youth, activity, and an emphasis on rationality and intellect. Kennedy's primary focus was on foreign affairs because, as he said, "a domestic failure could hurt the country, but a failure in foreign affairs could kill it" (Walton, 1972, 4). He was the hub of the network in his administration, the man

with the final power and responsibility for the policies of his administration.

These biographical sketches give a little more detail on the men in key policymaking positions in the Kennedy Administration. They were not the only men or even the only Harvard men in jobs which somehow involved foreign policy, but these four were the "men at the top." It is a theory of policymaking put forth by Roger Hilsman that the advisors closest to the president personally and professionally will have the most power to influence the final policies that the he enacts. Given this, McGeorge Bundy, Robert McNamara, and Robert Kennedy were arguably some of the most powerful and influential men in Washington.

The four men just profiled all spent at least four years at Harvard University, but this commonality can be overstated. Their experiences at Harvard were in different departments, at different levels of education, and at somewhat different times. While there were differences, each of these men was a part of the Harvard University setting at some time in his life. As can be seen from their backgrounds, Harvard was not necessarily the single most significant influence in their lives, but it certainly was one of the influences.

Erich Segal wrote a novel entitled The Class which follows a class of Harvard graduates, exploring the network that develops between them with Harvard as the symbol which

ties them together. Their sense of identity as elites results in the development of a network that lasts throughout their lives. Though Segal probes this idea in fiction, the Kennedy Administration could serve as an actual example of an elite network in action.

This was especially important when Kennedy began the search for qualified men to fill the many presidentially-appointed positions he had to fill. The network of elites based on wealth, education, and politics determined which names were mentioned. It was often a case of "someone knew someone" who recommended a potential candidate. While this is not a set, exclusive process, there was a tendency for the network to be self-selecting because the names which were suggested were often members of some elite group.

This sense of an elite network continued once Kennedy took office. Within the administration, the "elite identity" of various men was derived from several places. For the interests of this thesis, the most interesting source for this elite identity was the Harvard background of many Kennedy men. In a comment on Bundy, for example, David Halberstam writes,

McGeorge Bundy, then, was the finest example of a special elite, a certain breed of men whose continuity is among themselves. They are linked to one another rather than to the country; in their minds they become responsible for the country, but not responsive to it. (1972, 76)

While the experience was not the same for each man, the social ties and connections resulting from having been a

part of Harvard were very similar. The Harvard men were drawn together because of shared experiences. Of course, Harvard was not the sole reason why men like McNamara, Bundy, and the Kennedys worked well together and became friends, but the trust network resulting from their sense of being part of an elite was certainly a factor.

Harvard was one source of the elite identity of the Kennedy men, but not the single, exclusive source of it. Simply being a part of the New Frontier gave its own feeling of excitement and eliteness. Thus, while the "Harvard network" was influential, its members were also interacting with other intelligent, active men who were not explicitly Harvard men and whose ideas were not necessarily those of Harvard. The result is a balance of input into the foreign policy process as represented by policymakers and ideas.

CHAPTER III: THE HARVARD CONTEXT

Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in their authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back. I am sure that the power of vested interests is vastly exaggerated compared with the gradual encroachment of ideas.

--John Maynard Keynes, The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money, 1936

In order to determine if there was any intellectual influence on the Kennedy Administration by Harvard University, it is necessary to understand what the context of ideas was at Harvard at the time and also to what extent Harvardian ideas were distinct from ideas at other universities.

In the field of international relations, Harvard had organized the Center for International Affairs. The nucleus of this center included five academics: Edward S. Mason, Alex Inkeles, Robert R. Bowie, Henry A. Kissinger, and Thomas C. Schelling. During the late 1950s and early 60s, the faculty of the Center for International Affairs was actively studying and publishing literature in the field.

In The Strategy of Conflict, Thomas Schelling writes,

those who have grappled with ideas like deterrence, being motivated largely by immediate problems, have not primarily been concerned with the cumulative process of developing a theoretical structure. This seems to be true not only of policy-makers and journalists

Remedying this lack of theory seems to have been an interest of the Harvard Center for International Affairs. In a book which presents an overview of international relations theory, James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff, Jr. assert that this period of time "witnessed a considerable expansion of interest in theoretical analysis" (1981, 11) based on "the appearance of several anthologies in international theory" (46) in the late 1950s and early 60s. This new interest included an emphasis on deterrence, game theory, and decision-making in international relationships. These are some of the very topics on which the faculty of the Center for International Affairs was writing.

However, while there was a renewed interest in developing a theoretical structure, there was also a strong pragmatic emphasis in the work of scholars.

The productivity of the Harvard scholars would suggest that they were leaders in their fields, actively researching and developing new ideas. Harvard's Center for International Affairs was one of "a dozen or so" (Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff, 1981, 10) university-based programs designed especially for research in international relations. Peter French refers to it as a "new phenomenon in American education" (1962, 151)--centers such as the one at Harvard where the emphasis was on graduate level education and research in a specific field.

It can also be asserted that the confidence and intellect of Harvard faculty influenced the administration. Scholars at Harvard had an underlying belief in the ability to find models which would aid in understanding international relationships. Choice theories in themselves assume rationality, and this seems to have carried over to the thinking of the Kennedy policymakers. Like the Harvard faculty, Kennedy's top men were confident, perhaps even certain of their ability to find rational answers to every problem given enough input. The trend toward theoretical analysis was certainly reflected in Kennedy's policymaking. An example would be the ExComm during the Cuban Missile Crisis which was charged with examining possible policies and the costs and benefits of each in order that the final decision could be taken after thorough examination showed which option was optimal.

While Harvard academics at the Center for International Affairs were certainly leaders in their fields, the ideas being discussed at Harvard were not significantly different from those being worked with at other universities in the United States. The preoccupation with deterrence theory and possibilities for security alliances were themes which also cropped up in the work of academics not at Harvard. Karl Deutsch, from Yale, was a predominant academic at the time whose writings covered security communities and theoretical approaches to international relations.

In two leading international relations textbooks of the period, Politics Among Nations by Hans J. Morgenthau (1962) and World Politics by A.F.K. Organski (1968), Harvard scholars are referenced, but not disproportionately or to the exclusion of other academics. The same is true in International Politics and Foreign Policy (Rosenau, 1961), one of the anthologies listed by Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff. This would further suggest that Harvard scholars were active in their fields, but certainly not the only academics working on similar ideas. On the contrary, there seems to be an extremely close relationship between the academics of the Center for International Affairs and faculty members at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

At this point, it would be useful to examine closely the writings of two of the Center for International Affairs academics who were also part-time consultants to the Kennedy Administration (French, 1962, 153-4), Henry A. Kissinger and Thomas C. Schelling.

Henry A. Kissinger

The book already mentioned, The Necessity for Choice by Henry Kissinger, is an appropriate place to begin. At the time of the Kennedy Administration, deterrence policy and theory were getting much attention from policymakers and academics. The supposed "missile gap" between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. gave rise to a reexamination of current policies, largely out of fear and curiosity as to what the

ramifications of the perceived changes in nuclear balance would mean for U.S. foreign policy. Kissinger begins with a discussion of deterrence which is theoretical, but has a definite pragmatic side.

The outbreak of war is increasingly considered the worst catastrophe. Henceforth, the adequacy of any military establishment will be tested by its ability to preserve the peace. (1960, 12)

Along with this, Kissinger reasserts the familiar idea that "deterrence requires a combination of power, the will to use it, and the assessment of these by the potential aggressor" (12). Assessment becomes the "reality" on which deterrent policies function. The way in which opponents interpret the forces and intents of each other determines their actions. Developing these ideas in light of the changes in the world situation, Kissinger raises three issues which directly correlate with policies and statements of the Kennedy Administration. These are retaliatory forces, flexible response forces, and the need for local defense.

First, Kissinger discusses the necessity for policies of deterrence to deter pre-emptive and surprise attacks. (The difference between the two being that pre-emptive strikes are mounted for defensive purposes.) In order for a strategic force to be able to deter these types of attack, the strategic force in question must have the capability to survive a first strike sufficiently to retaliate, causing unacceptable amounts of damage to the aggressor.

The smaller the gap between a country's first- and second-strike capability, the

lower will be the opponent's incentive to launch a pre-emptive blow. (18)

40

In light of the concerns about U.S. nuclear capability, this means that the U.S. needed to have a force which was capable of surviving a Soviet first-strike which would presumably have been larger than a U.S. strike due to the supposed missile gap. Discussing the U.S. nuclear arsenal, Kissinger maintains that there was reason for grave concern during the early 60s because the U.S. did not have a sufficient retaliatory force. "As long as these [retaliatory] forces are composed of airplanes and stationary, liquid-fuel missiles, they will be extremely vulnerable" (18).

What follows from this is the development of Kissinger's stance that the U.S. nuclear force needs to be updated to deal with current challenges. "Perhaps the single most fruitful approach to invulnerability lies in creating a mobile deterrent system," writes Kissinger (22). Along with creation of a mobile deterrent system, programs for further dispersing and hardening existing missile sites are recommended. The paradox is that the invulnerable retaliatory force Kissinger recommends must convey a defensive intent if stability is to be maintained in the international arena (19, 22). A warning is also issued. Kissinger warns policymakers against considering any strategic relationship as static and against sacrificing present readiness to long-term plans for budget procurement (25). "Constant effort will be required to maintain invulnerability," posits Kissinger, and his words seem to

have caught the attention of the Kennedy Administration (24).

Kennedy's inaugural speech describes the trumpet sounding, but "not as a call to arms, though arms we need": this is the first of many statements concerning the state of U.S. forces. In a sentence that echoes the words of Kissinger, Kennedy states in his special message to Congress of March 28, 1961 that "the primary purpose of our arms is peace, not war--to make certain that they will never be used" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 1988, 85). Given this, Kennedy proposed large military build-ups during his presidency. However, even before his election, Kennedy had emphasized this need for a strengthening of forces. In a TV debate with Nixon, Kennedy said,

Well, I think we should strengthen our conventional forces. . . then I believe we should move full time on our missile production, particularly on Minuteman and on Polaris . . . we must get started immediately. (Walton, 1972, 61)

In his budget message of January 18, 1962, Kennedy describes as key elements in the U.S. defense program, "a strategic offensive force which would survive and respond overwhelmingly," which would include "additional Minuteman missiles and Polaris submarines" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 1988, 89-90). In Kennedy's rhetoric, the theme of military strength as central to national security is ever present. In his State of the Union address on January 30, 1961, Kennedy says:

First, we must strengthen our military tools. We are moving into a period of uncertain risk and great commitment in which both the military and diplomatic possibilities require a Free World force so powerful as to make any aggression clearly futile. (Walton, 1972, 65)

42

The strength of nuclear forces with retaliatory capability was also central; however, not simply in rhetoric. In Kennedy's defense request on March 28, \$1.8 billion of the requested \$2.4 billion dollars was for increased spending on existing strategic programs--primarily the Polaris program and Minuteman and Skybolt missile systems (Walton, 1972, 65). The Kennedy Administration emphasis on improving strategic nuclear defenses mirrors the suggestions posited by Kissinger.

While pressing for strengthening of the U.S. strategic force, Kissinger also recognizes the limits of massive retaliation as an effective deterrent in modern society. Kissinger writes that the missile gap

speeds up what technology would have made inevitable in any case: the decreasing utility of the threat of all-out war as a deterrence for an ever wider ranges of challenges. (26)

In this context, Kissinger frames his argument for a development of limited war strategies and forces. "It would be foolhardy in the extreme to invite a pre-emptive blow by threatening all-out retaliation to limited aggression" (35). The point that the deterrent threat is no longer credible in this case is a valid one indeed. Kissinger perceives that diplomatic flexibility is only effective inasmuch as it is backed by a corresponding spectrum of military capabilities

(56). To this end, limited war capabilities include conventional forces and special forces units able to respond at the level of the challenge they face. States Kissinger, "the best situation is one in which the conventional forces of the free world can be overcome only by nuclear weapons" (86).

This would seem to mandate quite a build-up of conventional forces on the part of the free world and would also seem to start an arms race, but the logic stands to reason. Limited war was to deter aggression on the local level not by threatening destruction, but by "depriving the aggressor of the possibility of gaining his objective" (59). Limited war capabilities would fill the gap where nuclear forces failed to deter aggression. Kissinger emphasizes that conventional and nuclear forces should complement each other, and also that increased conventional forces and greater reliance on them was essential (86). The argument is nicely summed up in the statement:

The challenge before our military policy is to strike the best balance between deterrence and the strategy we are prepared to implement should deterrence fail. (58)

It would seem that the failure of deterrence to meet every challenge adequately was a foregone conclusion, and flexible response became one of the trademarks of the Kennedy Administration.

Of the Kennedy Administration, Sarkesian and Vitas write, "Limiting response only to massive retaliation was,

in the view of the new administration, a unidimensional strategy incapable of responding to nonnuclear conflicts" (1988, 79). In the case of limited war and flexible response, Kennedy's rhetoric again sounds much like Kissinger's. In his defense message to Congress on March 28, 1961, Kennedy states that U.S. military posture must be flexible enough to explore all possibilities, and further:

The strength and deployment of our forces should be sufficiently powerful and mobile to prevent the steady erosion of the Free World through limited wars. (Sarkesian and Vitas, 85)

The position of the Kennedy Administration was a fear of areas of the world such as Southeast Asia, Africa, South America, and even Europe falling prey to Communist subversion if the U.S. was not equipped to meet such challenges with a corresponding degree of force significantly below the nuclear threshold. On May 25, 1961, Kennedy spoke to Congress on the subject of urgent national needs. "What is needed is rather a change of position to give us still further increases in flexibility," said Kennedy (Sarkesian and Vitas, 89). To this end, Kennedy ordered the modernizing and reorganization of the Army to

increase its non-nuclear firepower, to improve its tactical mobility in any environment, to ensure its flexibility to meet any direct or indirect threat . . . ,

adding that,

special forces and unconventional warfare units will be increased and reoriented. (Sarkesian and Vitas, 89)

Kennedy explicitly stated the concerns about Communist subversion in his budget message of January, 1962. Other key elements in the national defense program were:

combat-ready limited war forces and the air and sealift needed to move them quickly to wherever they might have to be deployed; and special forces to help our allies to cope with the threat of Communist insurrection and subversion. (Sarkesian and Vitas, 89-90)

The Kennedy Administration wanted to have its options open to respond to challenges in the manner it saw most fit. "If we are to retain for ourselves a choice other than nuclear holocaust or retreat," said Kennedy, "we must increase considerably our conventional forces" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 90). In remarks to the graduating class at West Point in June of 1962, Kennedy refused the idea that "our security rests only on the doctrine of massive retaliation." (Sarkesian and Vitas, 92).

As Kissinger had stated that military flexibility was a requisite for diplomatic flexibility, so Kennedy also stated that "our forces, therefore, must fulfill a broader role as a complement to our diplomacy, as an arm of our diplomacy, as a deterrent to our adversaries" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 92). Given this belief in and reliance on the linkage between diplomacy and military postures, it is no wonder that Secretary of Defense McNamara also emphasized the need for a "military power base" sufficient to "meet the entire spectrum of challenges" in his address at the University of Michigan in June of 1962. However, McNamara and other

Kennedy policymakers also realized that one nation could not⁴⁶ provide defense for the entire world.

On this subject, Kissinger writes,

The minimum goal of local defense must be to prevent the possibility of cheap victories. The optimum situation is where aggression can be defeated locally. (74)

Kissinger maintains that this can be achieved in Europe and that other areas could improve their stances through their own forces as well as American limited-war capability (74). Local defenses (conventional) could also increase the flexibility of Western diplomacy by making it impossible for an aggressor to force Western defenders to retreat from untenable positions in which they could have been trapped by a lack of choice (75). Of course, local defenses were no guarantee, but they were a step in the direction of strength and security because they created more uncertainty for the aggressor while giving the defender more choice as to his level of response. Kissinger's primary example in support of his position is the case of Berlin. "The disparity in forces suitable for local defense must be remedied or the crisis over Berlin will prove but an augury of ever-increasing pressure" (73). His point is that the Soviets had much greater capability to fight a conventional war in Europe than the NATO allies, and that the Soviets could not be deterred from doing what they chose in the region unless the situation was remedied. Local defenses and cooperation

among the allies is necessary for protecting the free world,⁴⁷
according to Kissinger.

Similarly, Kennedy, in his inaugural speech, says to the allies, "united, there is little we cannot do . . . divided, there is little we can do." Then, in March, Kennedy stated that "the burden of local defense against attack, subversion and guerrilla warfare must rest on local populations" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 86). While the truth of this seems obvious, it also raised doubts in the minds of other nations as to the seriousness of the U.S. commitment to their defense. Thus, Kennedy goes on to say, "But given the great likelihood and seriousness of this threat, we must be prepared to make a substantial contribution." Increases in conventional forces were a task that the U.S. shared with its free world allies, Kennedy said in another speech. The emphasis, rhetorically at least, was on working together, as if to say that even though each must provide somewhat for its local defense, the U.S. would stand by its commitments to support the free world. At West Point, Kennedy emphasized the role of U.S. forces as a "symbol to our allies of our determination to support them" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 92). To further allay doubts while also emphasizing the necessity for local defense, Secretary McNamara stated that "[U.S.] security cannot be separated from the security of the rest of the world" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 96). Kennedy policymakers, like Kissinger, deemed local defenses

as a needed tool in order to allow for more flexible response to challenges.

Kissinger makes some other points that are relevant in light of events during the Kennedy Administration. Writes Kissinger, "The mere fact that the West constantly feels constrained to emphasize that nuclear conflict is unthinkable may raise serious questions about its resolve to resort to the chief strategy at its disposal" (14). Indeed, in a speech to Congress, Kennedy says, "Our arms will never be used to strike the first blow in any attack." While on the one hand this does strengthen the case in favor of stronger retaliatory forces, it does seem to communicate a lack of credibility in the threat on which deterrence is based. On this topic, Richard Walton writes "that no responsible student of the Kennedy years could suggest that he intended to use the increased might in an outright military offensive (Walton, 1972, 65). That is the paradox of deterrence--threatening to do what no rational person would want to do. The credibility of such a threat is problematic indeed.

Thomas C. Schelling

In The Strategy of Conflict, Thomas Schelling makes a statement which is interesting in light of this thesis.

Within the universities, military strategy in this country has been the preoccupation of a small number of historians and political scientists, supported on a scale that suggests that deterring the Russians from a conquest

Given this, the academics at Harvard who were studying issues of international strategy were indeed leaders in their field. Peter French would be right in his assertion that even if Kennedy had not been from Harvard, he would have probably come to Harvard for advice because Harvard had a group of academics studying international strategy.

Schelling begins with what he terms "the retarded science of international strategy", in which conflict is "taken for granted" (1) and behavior is studied in light of it. To some extent, it seems that Kennedy also took conflict for granted. Much of his foreign policy was conflict-oriented. In his inaugural address, Kennedy says:

Let every nation know whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty.

However, while Kennedy's perception of Cold War conflict was "zero sum" in nature (Paterson, 1989, 11), Schelling views international strategy more in terms of "mixed motive" conflict. Although Schelling wrote less explicitly about current international events than did Kissinger, there are parallels between Kennedy's foreign policy and Schelling's ideas concerning international strategy. The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 was perhaps the best known international crisis and challenge during the Kennedy era. What follows here is a discussion of issues surrounding this crisis in light of Schelling's ideas.

In The Strategy of Conflict, Schelling writes,

A decision taken quickly in crisis may depend on who is present, on whether particular studies have been completed, on the initiative and forcefulness shown by particular leaders and counsellors who are reacting to a quite unprecedented stimulus. (202)

The Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExComm) was the group responsible for recommending to the president a policy in response to the Soviet placement of intercontinental ballistic missiles in Cuba. The men profiled in Chapter 3 were all members of the ExComm with the President only sitting in on periodic meetings in order that his presence would not inhibit the decision process. Douglas Dillon, another Harvard man, was also a member of the ExComm. The arguments which ensued as the ExComm strove to devise a policy recommendation are neatly detailed in Thirteen Days, a memoir of the crisis written by Robert Kennedy. According to him, it was Robert McNamara who first suggested a blockade and argued for it with the support of Robert Kennedy and others. Whatever the eventual outcome, several incidents during the Cuban Missile Crisis bear out the theories of Thomas Schelling.

Schelling further writes that

conflict situations are essentially bargaining situations in which the ability of one participant to gain his ends is dependent to an important degree on the choices or decisions that the other participant will make. (1960, 5)

The idea is simply that there is a mixture of mutual dependence and common interest in any international conflict

situation. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara said, in an address at the University of Michigan in June of 1962, that "our own security cannot be separated from the security of the rest of the free world" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 1988, 96). McNamara omits the non-free world, but in the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis in which nuclear weapons were potentially involved, the security of the entire world was at stake. Though disagreeing over the placement of missiles in Cuba, both the United States and Soviet Union were, by necessity, interested in finding a solution short of war. "Neither side wanted a war over Cuba, we agreed, but it was possible that either side could take a step that . . . would bring about a counterresponse," writes Robert Kennedy of a conversation which occurred during the crisis between the President, Ted Sorensen, and Ken o'Donnell (Kennedy, 1969, 62). As Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. writes, "collaboration was essential to prevent another war destroying everything" (1967, 579).

What Schelling devotes most of his book to is a discussion of how the process of bargaining and collaboration takes place in situations of mixed conflict and interdependence. He writes,

the players must *bargain* their way to an outcome, either vocally or by successive moves that they make, or both. They must find ways of regulating their behavior, communicating their intentions, . . ., tacit or explicit, to avoid mutual destruction of potential gains. (106)

The bargaining process is not so simple as it may sound, however, and it is especially complex in international settings. There are several issues relevant to successful bargaining which Schelling introduces.

Communication, whether tacit or explicit, is central to the whole process. The challenge is how best to persuade the other "player" of one's own preferences and choices, while also trying to predict how that player will respond to one's own actions in pursuit of those preferences. "We are dealing here with the players' shared appreciations, preoccupations, obsessions, and sensitivities to suggestion," states Schelling (114). Complications arise when this communication has to occur at a great distance or under circumstances of crisis because verbal communication becomes difficult and suspect. "Patterns of action may speak louder than words," writes Schelling (107). This statement sounds obvious, but it has great force for this discussion.

Even before the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Kennedy Administration and Soviet government had experienced actions as speaking louder than words. When Kennedy asked Congress for the large expenditures needed for the military build-up discussed earlier, the Kremlin must have been alarmed. Richard Walton writes that Khrushchev told Kennedy "that the American military buildup was putting pressure on him to increase Russian preparedness" (1972, 78). In a radio and television report on the Berlin crisis, Kennedy says,

While we are ready to defend our interests,

we shall also be ready to search for peace--
in quiet, exploratory talks--in formal or
informal meetings. We do not want military con-
siderations to dominate the thinking of either
East or West. (Sarkesian and Vitas, 1988, 123)

53

While Kennedy officials did talk about world peace as the ultimate objective (Sarkesian and Vitas, 1988, 95), programs such as the Peace Corps and Alliance for Progress received much less funding and attention than military programs such as developing a flexible response force. Walton further writes that Kennedy "hoped that in broad outline the Soviet Union would tacitly settle for stability and the considerable prerogatives accruing to even a number-two power" (1972, 66). Communication between the two governments had to have been complicated by these mixed signals, more so when placed in the context of a crisis.

Schelling makes the point that in situations such as the one just detailed, communication becomes difficult because of subjective interpretations (115). Another problem is that subjective information is inherently impossible to communicate.

How can we know how badly the Russians would dislike an all-out war in which both sides were annihilated? We cannot; and the reason we cannot is not solely that the Russians are necessarily unwilling that we should know. (115)

Since the choices of each player will be based on rational preference structures and each player bases his preference structures to some extent on what he expects the other player to do, this inability to communicate subjective valuations of outcomes has major results for the players.

Each player depends on the others to communicate honestly and openly if they are to "find the 'rules of the game'" and not "suffer the consequences" of failure (107).

This is perhaps the most outstanding point with regard to the Cuban Missile Crisis. In Kennedy's radio and television report to the American people concerning the missiles in Cuba, what seems to have upset him as much as the placement of the missiles is the fact that Khrushchev had repeatedly assured him "that under no circumstances would surface-to-surface missiles be sent to Cuba" (Kennedy, 1969, 27). To the American people, Kennedy calls the placement of the missiles in Cuba as

[a] clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace and stable relations between our two nations (Sarkesian and Vitas, 1988, 113)

and also,

a deliberately provocative and unjustified change in the status quo which cannot be accepted by this country. (111)

Kennedy further tells Americans that after evidence of

this rapid offensive build-up was already in [his] hand, Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko told [him] in [his] office that . . . Soviet assistance to Cuba . . . , 'pursued solely the purpose of contributing to the defense capabilities of Cuba'. . . That statement was false. (Kennedy, 1969, 133)

Richard Walton writes that, when Kennedy heard of the missiles,

The President was furious; if, after all his denials and protestations, Khrushchev could pull this, how could he ever be trusted again on anything? Throughout the various accounts

. . . there is frequent reference to the Russians' 'deceit,' 'duplicity,' etc. (1972, 117)

Schelling speaks of "deliberate decisions--decisions to take an action or to abstain from it" (190). For the Kennedy Administration, the deliberate decision of the Soviet Union to place potentially offensive missiles in Cuba and then lie about them necessitated a responsive and deliberate decision on its part.

The Kennedy policymakers decided on a blockade which prevented any more offensive weapons from reaching Cuba. Schelling describes a strategic move as one that

influences the other person's choice, in a manner favorable to one's self, by affecting the other person's expectations on how one's self will behave. (160)

In terms of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Kennedy policymakers hoped that the blockade would convey to the Soviet government the conviction that the U.S. would not tolerate the presence of offensive missiles in Cuba. The blockade, if it worked, was a move designed to influence the Soviet leadership to remove the missiles. As Schelling writes, "talk can be cheap when moves are not" (117), and in instating the blockade, Kennedy made a risky move.

During the meetings of the ExComm, much time had been spent on predicting the possible consequences of each option. Discussions covered potential negative world response to a surgical air strike and the possibility of the Soviets closing off West Berlin in retaliation (Kennedy, 1969, Chs. 2-3). This "expectation of outcomes" is a major

tenet of the models Schelling tests as well as a rational procedure when dealing with such an important decision.

In his speech at the University of Michigan earlier in 1962, Robert McNamara had said, "[Nations] misjudge the way others will react and the way others will interpret what they are doing" (Sarkesian and Vitas, 1988, 97). Both the United States and Soviet Union are guilty of this during the Cuban Missile Crisis. However, the Kennedy policymakers gambled on the idea that a blockade would convey a credible threat to the Soviet Union, but a threat which gave the Soviets the choice as to whether it would be realized. Certainly, the ExComm breathed a sigh of relief when the Soviet ships stopped in the water rather than challenging the U.S. blockade (Kennedy, 1969, 72).

"Strategy . . . is not concerned with the *application* of force but with the *exploitation of potential force*," asserts Schelling (5). "The threat has to be credible" (6). To communicate a credible threat, one must give evidence of preparation to carry it out in the event that the threat fails (147). Kennedy policymakers recognized this. Even before the blockade was put in place, preparations were made for a military action if necessary. Men, planes, and ammunition were being deployed as early as the 17th of October, with the B-52 bomber force being ordered fully loaded on the following Saturday as armored divisions were deployed to Florida (Kennedy, 1969, 37, 52). The hope was that the blockade would present a serious risk that would

deter the Soviets, but readiness was stepped up "just in case." Blockading Cuba involved an implicit threat that falls into Schelling's category of "interesting threats" in which "the greatest is the risk of having to carry it out, and the more ordinary 'cost' is not a controlling factor" (177-8). Kennedy and his advisors did leave something to chance in that they really did not know what the Soviet response would be.

Early in his book, Schelling writes,

There is an important difference between the intellect required for carrying out a military mission and for using *potential* military capability to pursue a nation's objectives. (9)

Based on his foreign policy, it would seem that Kennedy sought to develop both types of intellect during his presidency. This two-track intellect in foreign policy makes sense in light of the writings of both Kissinger and Schelling who both examine international situations from both theoretical and pragmatic perspectives.

The parallels between the writings of Harvard academics and the foreign policy of the Kennedy Administration are, in some cases, striking. While they are not conclusive proof of influence, they are evidence in support of it.

CHAPTER IV: A RETURN TO THE MODELS OF INFLUENCE

Skeptics professed to see a brain cartel in the making, a dangerous if well-intentioned alliance between Harvard, her sister universities, the foundations bankrolling creative thought, the RAND corporation, the Council on Foreign Relations, and others who together forged what sociologist C. Wright Mills in 1956 had dubbed the power elite.

--Richard Norton Smith, in
The Harvard Century, 1986

I will now return to the models of influence put forth in chapter two and reexamine them in light of the later chapters.

The first model suggests that the context of ideas at Harvard had an influence on the Kennedy Administration. There are a variety of ways in which this influence could have been effected. First, Harvard academics were "hired" as part-time consultants for the Kennedy policymakers. As already mentioned, Thomas Schelling, Henry Kissinger, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. were all engaged in policy analysis and advising in some capacity. There would have been a direct line of influence through the discussions these men had with Kennedy policymakers. The papers prepared on specific policy issues by the academics for the policymakers would also have been a direct line of transfer for the ideas of the Harvard academics.

This kind of influence can be supported by the comparison between the writings of Harvard scholars and the

words of Kennedy policymakers as shown in Chapter 3. Based on this examination, there is definitely a case in support of this model of influence, but the parallels between the writings of Harvard academics and Kennedy's foreign policy can be overemphasized. This is particularly true because other academics were making similar points. The case in support of this model is limited to being circumstantial because the academics were writing to build a theoretical base, not merely to prescribe foreign policy. Also, to some extent, the argument could be made that Kennedy's foreign policy was the result of common sense rather than academic influence, even if the two coincided. Lacking any quantitative measure for influence, the similarities and parallels serve as the support for this model of influence.

The second and third models posit the same kind of influence on Kennedy's policymaking, but deal more with the position of Harvard in academia during the period just prior to and during the Kennedy Administration. Was Harvard University a part of the academic mainstream or the pacesetting university in international relations? The answer seems to be that Harvard was a leading university due to the presence of the Center for International Affairs and academics such as Schelling and Kissinger. However, the ideas coming from scholars at Harvard were not distinctly different from those of scholars at other universities. This is, of course, a subjective judgment and one which is not easy to make. The preoccupations of politicians with

reaching out to developing third world nations, deterrence, arms control, and security alliances were also the preoccupations of American scholars.

This is not to say that Harvard had no influence on the foreign policy of the Kennedy Administration, as the fourth model suggests. Foreign policymaking is certainly constrained by time, who is present, and subjective predictions of world response to any action, but even decisions taken "by the seat of the pants" are affected by the perspectives of the policymakers themselves. The style, world view, and experiences of the policymakers will influence their perceptions and decisions. Thus, even in the case of the fourth model, the Harvard background of many Kennedy men was influential. The result would not be uniform in each different man, but the influence would exist in an indirect way. As a result of the senior foreign policymakers having some Harvard experience in their backgrounds, the probability was heavily weighted in favor of having at least two Harvard men involved in the final policy decisions.

There can be no doubt that ideas from Harvard were influential: the resulting policies simply do not bear any marks which distinctly and unquestionably from Harvard and Harvard alone. The influence is more generally academic rather than specifically Harvardian. Harvard, as a leading university in the nation and the school which was generously represented in the Kennedy Administration, got the credit

given by speculation and humor for academic influence on the⁶¹
policies of Kennedy policymakers.

CONCLUSION

Basically, the question remains whether, despite the presence of Harvard people in the administration, there was any distinctively Harvardian influence on foreign policy. The answer is not so simple. It seems to me to lie in a combination of the models just put forth.

Harvard University was definitely a leading university, perhaps even *the* leading university, during the 1950s and 60s. The Center for International Affairs at Harvard included men such as Thomas Schelling, Henry Kissinger, and Robert Bowie--all outstanding academics and leaders in their fields. These men studied and wrote about the major international political issues of the time. They were not alone in studying topics such as deterrence and defense or NATO, though, as these topics, especially issues surrounding nuclear war, were on the national agenda simply because of their life and death nature. It is therefore difficult to assert that there was a distinctively Harvard school of thought because many academics were examining the same issues and reaching similar conclusions. Harvard scholars were arguably influential academically, but political influence is another thing altogether.

While Harvard scholars were sources of information and advice for the Kennedy Administration policymakers, the speculation and jokes of the period greatly exaggerated the

amount of influence which Harvard had. This is largely due to the constraints of the foreign policy process, but also to the fact that there was not a distinctly Harvardian school of thought in international politics which is traceable in Kennedy's foreign policies. Rather, the evidence put forth earlier in this thesis suggests a more generally academic influence that was anchored in elite Northeastern universities such as Harvard, Yale, and M.I.T. Harvard men played major roles during Kennedy's presidency, but they were not the only actors in Washington who served as advisors. Basically, while there were Harvard men in many influential positions, there was no "Harvard effect" in Kennedy's foreign policy. The conclusion of this thesis, then, is that while there were Harvard men in influential positions, there was no distinct "Harvard effect" in the content of Kennedy's foreign policy.

Harvard's contribution to the Kennedy Administration's policies can be seen in areas other than policy content, however.

First, there was an elite network of Harvard men within the administration. This network was not exclusively of Harvard men as there was also a sense of identity derived from simply being a part of the New Frontier leadership, but I do not think it is purely coincidental that Kennedy's senior and most trusted foreign policy advisors share some experience at Harvard. Kennedy did not choose his advisors solely on their schooling, but the common experiences and

backgrounds shared by the Harvard men served to draw them together because of the things they had in common.

When there is a recognizable network of elites, there is always the danger of phenomena such as groupthink occurring, interfering with decision-making processes, and resulting in suboptimal policies. In Groupthink, Irving Janis discusses the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile Crisis as case studies of an early failure and later success for Kennedy's policymakers in handling groupthink. The argument can be made that the elite network was both an advantage and a disadvantage for Kennedy policymakers.

Second, Harvard's influence can be explained as stylistic as well as substantive. Richard J. Walton argues that the sense of renewed hope for world peace which surrounded Kennedy's presidency was due to his style rather than his rhetoric which continued Cold War ideologies of the 1950s (Walton, 1972). As Harvard scholars were confident and actively seeking ways to rationally explain world events and solve problems, so were the Kennedy policymakers confident, active, and rational. This stylistic change was heightened by the contrast between Eisenhower and Kennedy, whose youth and charisma underscored his confident rhetorical style.

The implication of this thesis for academic influence on U.S. foreign policy should not be completely disheartening. There is a need for expert advice in the foreign policy realm as argued by Kissinger because policymakers do

not have the time to study in detail all the intricacies of all the international situations they are faced with each day. The foreign policymaking process is not a straightforward, coherent process. It is subject to many different influences through varying channels. What this implies is that each single input into the process is important, but should not be overestimated in terms of its overall influence.

In this thesis, I have examined Harvard and the Kennedy Administration as a case study in which speculation based on the number of Harvard men in the government led to expectations of great influence being exerted by Harvard. This thesis has found support for a more limited notion of Harvard's influence in the foreign policymaking process. There was a Harvard-Kennedy connection, but it was not the driving force in Kennedy's foreign policy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ambrose, Stephen A. (1984). Eisenhower (Vol. 2). New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Dougherty, James E. and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr. (1981). Contending Theories of International Relations. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.
- Fitzsimons, Louise. (1972). The Kennedy Doctrine. New York: Random House, Inc.
- French, Peter. (1962). The Long Reach: A Report on Harvard Today. New York: Ives Washburn, Inc.
- Halberstam, David. (1972). The Best and The Brightest. New York: Random House, Inc.
- Ions, Edmund S. (Ed.). (1967). The Politics of John F. Kennedy. New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc.
- Keckinger, Grace and Fred A. (1960, October 9). Election Cry: 'Win With Harvard'. The New York Times, p. 28ff.
- Kennedy, Robert F. (1969). Thirteen Days. New York: The New American Library.
- Kissinger, Henry A. (1960). The Necessity for Choice. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers.
- Morgenthau, Hans J. (1962). Politics Among Nations. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Organski, A.F.K. (1968). World Politics. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Paterson, Thomas G. (Ed.). (1989). Kennedy's Quest for Victory. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Rosenau, James N. (Ed.). (1961). International Politics and Foreign Policy. New York: The Free Press.
- Sarkesian, Sam C. and Robert A. Vitas. (1988). U.S. National Security Policy and Strategy: Documents and Policy Proposals. New York: Greenwood Press.

- Schelling, Thomas C. (1960). The Strategy of Conflict. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Schlesinger, Arthur M. Jr. (1967). A Thousand Days. New York: Fawcett World Library.
- Simon, Herbert A. (1957). Administrative Behavior (2nd ed.). New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Sorensen, Theodore C. (1966). Kennedy. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.
- Stuart, Roger W. (1963). The Thought Brigade. New York: Ivan Obolensky, Inc.
- Tanzer, Lester (Ed.). (1961). The Kennedy Circle. New York: Van Rees Press.
- Walton, Richard J. (1972). Cold War and Counterrevolution: The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy. Baltimore, MD: Pelican Books.
- White, Theodore H. (1961). The Making of The President 1960. New York: Atheneum Publishers.