

History/PS # 315

Re: R. Rhodes, "The General & WW III"  
Use w/ Dallas in Persepctive

LeMay's C.V.

His Priors: LeMay and the incineration of Japan during WW II.

The dilemma of deterrence as it played out for LeMay and the boys of SAC. LeMay sees US nuclear arsenal as a "wasting asset" unless US policy was to move from deterrence to first strike.

1949 the Dayton fiasco

LeMay and SAC thwarted by US presidents.

Rhodes cites the Korean War when HST refused to allow massive incendiary attacks on No. Korean cities a la WW II bombing of Japan. But LeMay's bombers carpet bombed the countryside and produced over 2,000,000 North Korean civilian casualties any way.

LeMay's and SACs "killing a nation" war plan runs afoul of Ike's rejection. Ike rejects the concept of preventive war.

LeMay a run-away general. Rhodes cites his unauthorized use of reconnaissance planes over the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Tactics that the Air Force lingo called "rattling their chains" to check response times. On one occasion he launched all SACs Recon. planes over the city of Vladivostok. Was he trying to bait the Russians so he could create conditions for a prevenative war.

1957 LeMay had control over nuclear arsenal. He makes it clear that when it came to a decision about using these weapons he would make the decision and not necessarily wait for orders from the White House.

### The Cuban Missile Crisis

SACs provocations under Thomas Powers (1) Def Con 2 in English so Russ would know (2) Shooting off missile down range in the Pacific (3) U 2 strayed over Kamchatka, the SU missile testing range in the Pacific (4) some US bombs flew beyond their fail-safe points of turnaround toward the Soviet Union. More provocation.

Kennedy/LeMay

LeMay regarded Kennedy as weak, a coward for refusing to use the Cuban missile crisis as the opportunity to preempt against the Russians.

For LeMay and others on the JCS the US "lost" by settling this crisis by negotiation rather than military means.

For Kennedy the LeMays and Powers and their like in the military he regarded as operationally insane.

History/PS # 315

OTF

Re: R. Rhodes, "The General & WW III"  
Use w/ Dallas in Persepctive

His Priors: LeMay and the incineration of Japan during WW II.

The dilemma of deterrence as it played out for LeMay and the boys of SAC. LeMay sees US nuclear arsenal as a "wasting asset" unless US policy was to move from deterrence to first strike.

1949 the Dayton fiasco

LeMay and SAC thwarted by US presidents.

Rhodes cites the Korean War when HST refused to allow massive incendiary attacks on No. Korean cities a la WW II bombing of Japan. But LeMay's bombers carpet bombed the countryside and produced over 2,000,000 North Korean civilian casualties any way.

LeMay's and SACs "killing a nation" war plan runs afoul of Ike's rejection. Ike rejects the concept of preventive war.

LeMay a run-away general. Rhodes cites his unauthorized use of reconnaissance planes over the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Tactics that the Air Force lingo called "rattling their chains" to check response times. On one occasion he launched all SACs Recon. planes over the city of Vladivostok. Was he trying to bait the Russians so he could create conditions for a prevenative war.

1957 LeMay had control over nuclear arsenal. He makes it clear that when it came to a decision about using these weapons he would make the decision and not necessarily wait for orders from the White House.

### The Cuban Missile Crisis

SACs provocations under Thomas Powers (1) Def Con 2 in English so Russ would know (2) Shooting off missile down range in the Pacific (3) U 2 strayed over Kamchatka, the SU missile testing range in the Pacific (4) some US bombes flew beyond their fail-safe points of turnaround toward the Soviet Union. More provocation.

LeMay's  
C.V.

History 228

Re: Outline of Rhodes article on C. LeMay

Read off Rhodes credentials

For presenters: Maybe it would be best to focus on your reactions to the article. Any questions you may have. This is a very rich piece of writing; in that I mean, it is smothered with implications that are truly mindboggling and terribly unnerving.

I would just say that Rhodes raises the whole question of the fragility of our Constitutional system in which we all rather blindly accept the proposition that the elected head of government--the president of the US and Commander-in-Chief--would make the life and death decisions when it came to national security matters. (We have already seen this basic or core constitutional relationship challenged with MacArthur and Korea; I believe with Ike and the U-2 affair; SAC commanders \* Cuba missile crisis).

LeMay unilaterally develops SAC's own SIOP. That was independent of national policy. This was full wush war. A preemptive attack on the Soviet Union and everything Red--Eastern Europe and China. (not spelled out in Rhodes but this was LeMay's own SIOP. Toe to toe/ mano a mano w./ the Russkies.

[Comment: Why you ought to see Terry Southern's movie "Dr. Stangelove"]

LeMay had allocated for SAC (without official authorization the warheads to do the job. This was before the development and installation of what they called PALS (codes or permissible action links to arm all nuclear weapons).

Comment: The myth that was perpetuated by national leaders and contermprorary judgment was that the missile crisis was JFK's greatest victory. That the crisis was a tetament to crisis management. (Chafe notes this and rightly dismisses this as just a fell good illusion.)

With all the new information about these darkest days of the cold war we know now that few Americans at the time understood just how the first Cuban crisis (Bay of Pigs) contributed to the second one in October 1962. This was the real fear that Cuba and Khrushchev had of a second invasion of Cuba in the fall of 1962. This one with American forces and not Cuban emigres. The October 1962 crisis that is still under analysis sweeps away the crisis management puffery and replaaces it w/ the inescapable conclusion that crisis avoidance--rather than management--must be the determining con sideration if superpowers (or nuclear outfitted nations) are to avoid nuclear disaster). Say this in mind of the current situation in the Taiwan Straits.

*see  
"North-  
wards"*