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PART III: FROM J.F.K.'S INNER CIRCLE, 'A THOUSAND DAYS'

How the State Department Baffled Him

by ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR.

This is the third of a series of articles from A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House, *to be published by Houghton Mifflin. Mr. Schlesinger advised Kennedy in the area of foreign policy. This is his personal account and view of Kennedy's frustrations with the State Department, which the President found an organization less than perfect as he dealt with the crises of 1961—Laos, the Bay of Pigs, the Berlin Wall.*

The frustrations of the summer of 1961 brought President Kennedy's discontent with the Department of State to a climax. One muddle after another—the department's acquiescence in the Bay of Pigs, the fecklessness of its recommendations after the disaster, the apparent impossibility of developing a negotiating position for Berlin—left Kennedy with little doubt that the State Department was not yet an instrumentality fully and promptly responsive to presidential purpose.

Kennedy well understood the difficulty of converting a tradition-ridden bureaucracy into a mechanism for swift information and decision. But resistance was no less great in Defense, where Robert McNamara was plainly making progress in annexing the Pentagon to the U.S. government. Other departments provided quick answers and quick action. It was a constant puzzle to Kennedy that the State Department remained so formless and impenetrable. He would come back to the mansion at night and remark to Jacqueline, "Damn it, [McGeorge] Bundy and I get more done in one day at the White House than they do in six months in the State Department." Giving State an instruction, he would remark, was like dropping it in the dead-letter box. "The State Department is a bowl of jelly," he told TIME's Hugh Sidey in the summer of 1961. "It's got all those people over there who are constantly smiling. I think we need to smile less and be tougher."

Kennedy had come to the Presidency determined to make the Department of State the central point, below the President himself, in the conduct of foreign affairs. In embarking on this course, he was influenced not

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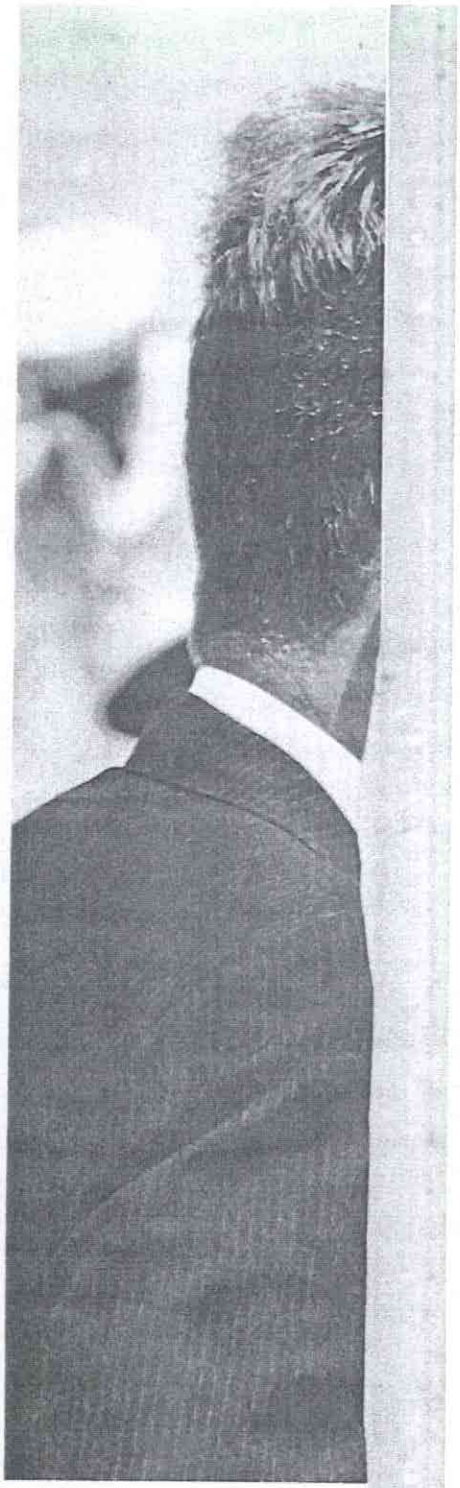

President Kennedy and his Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, in 1961.

'The hardest thing of all was to change anything'

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only by a desire to clarify and concentrate the making of foreign policy but also, I believe, by a basic respect for the skills of the Foreign Service. No doubt his attitude toward professional diplomats was mixed. He probably recalled his father's complaints, as ambassador to England, against "the career boys"; and his visit to Southeast Asia as a young congressman in 1951 had left him, as he said on his return, with an impression that Foreign Service officers often knew too little about the nations to which they were accredited, were indifferent to their language and customs, did not represent contemporary America and spent too much time on tennis and cocktails. Nevertheless, there were always the Charles Bohlens and the Llewellyn Thompsons [both Bohlen and Thompson were distinguished U.S. ambassadors to Moscow]; and Kennedy's disappointment as President about the State Department sprang in part, I think, from his special sympathy for the diplomatic enterprise. In other circumstances he would have liked to be an ambassador himself.

The Foreign Service had been the elite unit of the American government. Still, as his pre-election task forces reminded Kennedy, the Service had its professional deformations. After his election, Kennedy set up a new task force on "State Department Operations Overseas and in Washington." Among its members were David Bruce, Harlan Cleveland, Lincoln Gordon, Richard Neustadt, Don K. Price and Robert Bowie, all of whom had had experience with American diplomacy.

The task force stated the problem with candor. "Even such a distinguished career group as the Foreign Service," it said, "has failed to keep pace with the novel and expanding demands of a changing world." The department must recognize that "the prototype diplomatic officer of the past, the so-called 'generalist' whose experience was largely 'political,' cannot be the apogee of the Service." Reform, the report conceded, would provoke the cry that the morale of the Service was in danger; but "that raises the question of whose morale? The morale of real concern to the country is that of the young, imaginative, all too frequently circumscribed officer."

The role of American diplomacy before World War II had been largely spectatorial and ceremonial. But in the postwar world U.S. diplomats could no longer be merely observers. They were operators, and they needed regional knowledge and technical skill. In many cases the older career men deplored the new tendencies toward specialization. The embassy political officer remained the Service's *beau ideal;* and the economic, scientific, cultural, commercial and agricultural attachés made up its rather grubby supporting cast.

The Service was not so much an instrument of action as a way of life—and one which not seldom divested the career officer of strong substantive views. Because the job was to carry out national policy, however idiotic one might personally consider it to be, emotional investment in any particular policy became unprofitable. The lack of continuity in assignment—Iceland one year, Tanganyika the next—made it difficult for personnel to develop an intense interest in policy issues. Moreover, nearly every problem inherent in the Foreign Service process had been compounded by prodigious growth.

As it grew in size, the department diminished in usefulness. Franklin Roosevelt and Cordell Hull had started the department's descent from its traditional place at the summit of the foreign policy process—Roosevelt because he wanted certain things done and Hull because he was not temperamentally able to get them done. Thwarted in the Secretary's office, Roosevelt fell into the habit of using other instruments. No Secretary of State after the Second World War was quite able to gather back the department's vanished powers. By 1961 the State Department was but one of the many bodies involved in foreign affairs. The London embassy, for example, housed representatives of 44 agencies of the U.S. government.

But bureaucratization was only part of the explanation for State's malaise when Kennedy came to office. The other part was the shock of Senator McCarthy—or rather the shock of the readiness of Dulles, as Secretary of State, to yield up Foreign Service officers to McCarthyism. These years saw the expulsion of experienced and independent-minded diplomats like John Paton Davies Jr. and the exile of others like Charles ("Chip") Bohlen. The McCarthy era, by demonstrating the peril of dangerous thoughts, elevated conformism into a conditioned reflex. Career men stopped telling Washington what they really thought and consecrated themselves to the clichés of the Cold War.

The new Administration almost immediately bogged down in the bureaucratic tangle. Men like Averell Harriman and George Kennan, who had known the department as late as the Truman administration, were startled by the transformation. When a foreign ambassador made a courtesy call on Harriman early in 1961, a junior officer mysteriously appeared to record the conversation. Harriman ascertained that he planned to write an *aide-mémoire*, submit it to Harriman for correction and send copies to all interested bureaus and embassies. Shuddering at the proliferation of paperwork, Harriman said that, if by chance anything of consequence were said, he would inform somebody, and told the officer to leave.

The machinery was becoming an end in itself, and all this involved more than just a waste of time. "The heart of the bureaucratic problem," Dean Rusk once observed, "is the inclination to avoid responsibility." Kennedy used to divert himself with the dream of establishing a secret office of 30 people or so to run foreign policy while maintaining the State Department as a façade in which people might carry papers from bureau to bureau.

Nor did the department respond to the President's emphasis on the values of specialization. On a trip to Morocco Jacqueline Kennedy came upon a young officer who loved the country and had learned the Berber languages but was about to be transferred to the Caribbean. When she reported this to the President he said wearily that he had sent the department a memorandum six months before saying it was better to let officers build up expertise than to rotate them mechanically every two years.

The hardest thing of all was to change anything—attitudes, programs and clichés. No one was more annoyed by this fidelity to the past, or more poignant in expressing his annoyance, than [Ambassador] J. Kenneth Galbraith. "You have no idea," he wrote me from New Delhi in 1961, "how difficult it is to control one's reaction over the smug pursuit of what experience has already shown to be disastrous policies." At times, it almost seemed to me that we had achieved the fully automated foreign policy. I spent three years in the White House in a plaintive and unavailing effort to beg the State Department to stop using the phrase "Sino-Soviet bloc." This was a typical Foreign Service expression—barbarous in form and obsolescent in content. A memorandum to the State Department Secretariat in January 1963 said:

"Whatever substance [the phrase] might once have had as referring to a unified Russo-Chinese operation has surely been trickling away rather fast in recent months. Today the phrase . . . suggests that those who use it don't know what is going on in the world. I assume that this is not the case."

This dedication to the past found its ultimate sanction in what now seemed the Service's unshakable determination to protect those who, if wrong, were wrong in the right way and to penalize those who, though right, were out of channels or out of cadence. Caution, moreover, smothered the department's relations with its own ambassadors abroad. In Western Europe, after the Bay of Pigs, one ambassador after another, after reading the explanatory cables from Washington, asked me in varying tones of perplexity and anguish what in hell had really happened. Even though the Attorney General interested himself in the problem, we were never able to persuade State to level with its own embassies on this matter. This sort of thing happened too often. Galbraith, after receiving one useless "explanation" of U.S. policy, sent a crisp cable to the department suggesting that in the future the confidential communications of the State Department not be used for purposes of "internal bemusement."

The intellectual exhaustion of the Foreign Service expressed itself in the poverty of the official rhetoric. In meetings the men from

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In 1961 Secretary Rusk (second from right) *arrived for a White House meeting with Russian experts* (from left) *Foy Kohler, Charles Bohlen, Averell Harriman and Llewellyn Thompson.*

State's 'gobbledygook' offended

KENNETH GALBRAITH

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State would talk in a bureaucratic patois borrowed in large part from the Department of Defense. We would be exhorted to "zero in" on "the purpose of the drill," to "crank in" this and "phase out" that and "gin up" something else. This was not just shorthand; part of the vocabulary involved a studied multiplication of words. One never talked about a "paper" but always a "piece of paper" and never said "at this point" but always "at this point in time."

The result was far worse when the department stopped talking and started writing. Whether drafting memoranda, cables or even letters or statements for the President, the department fell into full, ripe dreariness of utterance with hideous ease. The President, with his sensitive ear for style, led the fight for literacy in the department. But as late as 1963 the department could submit as a presidential message to Congress concerning the National Academy of Foreign Affairs a text which provoked this resigned White House comment:

"This is only the latest and worst of a long number of drafts sent here for presidential signature. . . . A message to Congress is a fairly important form of presidential communication. . . . At the very least, each message should be (a) in English, (b) clear and trenchant in its style, (c) logical in its structure and (d) devoid of gobbledygook. The State Department draft on the academy failed each one of these tests (including, in my view, the first)."

Kennedy saw the White House and the department as intimate partners in the enterprise of foreign policy. The operating link in this partnership was McGeorge Bundy and the now streamlined National Security staff. This was a remarkable body of men. Bundy himself was a brilliant and unflagging leader. Walt Rostow, an able economic historian turned social philosopher, served as Bundy's

McGEORGE BUNDY

deputy. His combination of the spacious historical view with a passion for counterguerrilla warfare caused much joking about his being "Chester Bowles with machine guns," all of which he took with gentle tolerance. Carl Kaysen applied his brilliant intelligence to security as well as economic issues. Robert Komer, a government career man, had responsibility for the uncommitted world.

The Bay of Pigs made all of us at the White House more aggressive in defending the interests of the President and therefore in invading on his behalf what the foreign affairs bureaucracy too often regarded as its private domain. We tried to become the President's eyes and ears through the whole area of national security, reporting to him the things he had to know. We were the President's men, and the government knew it—in part welcoming it, in part resenting it.

Kennedy's use of his staff provoked much press comment about White House "meddling." One day, in the midst of the Berlin crisis in 1961, Mac Bundy and I wondered whether we dared to ask the State Department to rework a draft white paper on Berlin. When we explained to Kennedy our reluctance to incense the now highly sensitive State Department further, Kennedy, unmoved, said they ought to read the Constitution and find out who was responsible for foreign affairs and whose government it was anyway.

Beyond all this there was the President himself, increasingly the day-to-day director of American foreign policy. Kennedy had had a considerably more varied and extensive international experience than most men chosen President. In his twenties he had talked to Franklin D. Roosevelt, to Neville Chamberlain and Stanley Baldwin, and in his thirties to Winston Churchill, Jawaharlal Nehru and David Ben-Gurion. Averell Harriman, who worked for them both, remarked once that Kennedy was more his own Secretary of State than Franklin Roosevelt had been. He meant that Roosevelt picked out the problems he wanted to handle himself and left everything

J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

else to Under Secretary Sumner Welles, who ran the department, while Kennedy dealt personally with almost every aspect of policy around the globe. Kennedy wanted particularly to stay ahead of problems; nothing exasperated him more than to be surprised by crisis. More than anyone in the government, he was the source of ideas, initiative and imagination in foreign policy. "Domestic policy," he used to say, "can only defeat us; foreign policy can kill us."

But while John Kennedy had no doubt that the President's seniority in foreign affairs was his constitutional duty, he earnestly hoped that the State Department would really serve as his agent of coordination. To make coordination effective, it was very necessary to strengthen the department's instrumentalities of control. This was especially important overseas. Consequently, Kennedy's circular letter to U.S. ambassadors in May 1961 gave them the authority to "oversee and coordinate all the activities of the United States Government" in their countries, except for military forces in the field under a U.S. area military commander. These instructions were aimed particularly at the CIA. The President's letter now gave an ambassador for the first time the authority to know everything the CIA people were doing in his country (even if not always the way they were doing it). The directive constituted at least a first step toward bringing secret operations under policy control. And in Washington, after the Bay of Pigs, Attorney General Robert Kennedy took a personal interest in the CIA and became an informal presidential watchdog over covert operations.

The Bay of Pigs, of course, stimulated a wide variety of proposals for the reorganization of the CIA. The State Department could not wait to separate CIA's overt functions from its clandestine functions and even change the agency's name. The President decided not to go that far, but he did move quietly to cut down the CIA budget and, anticipating the resignation of Allen Dulles, he began looking for a new director. After

WALT ROSTOW

a long search, he came up in September 1961 with the name of John McCone, a California Republican who had served Truman as Under Secretary of the Air Force and Eisenhower as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. Kennedy summoned McCone to the White House on the pretext of asking his views on nuclear testing, sized him up in a two-hour conversation and, when McCone returned a fortnight later, startled him by offering the CIA post. The President did this with notable secrecy recognizing that the appointment would bring a moment of consternation to the New Frontier. McCone had the reputation of a rigid Cold Warrior who viewed

the President's ear

the world in moralistic stereotypes. Scientists who recalled his opposition to a test ban were particularly agitated. But McCone turned out to be a cautious, realistic and self-effacing head of CIA. Declining to allow his own views to prejudice intelligence estimates, he showed a fair-mindedness which shamed some of us who had objected to his appointment.

As further evidence of his desire to place responsibility in the diplomatic professionals, Kennedy gave the Foreign Service an unprecedentedly large share of ambassadorial appointments. In 1940 career officers held only 47% of the embassy posts; but by the middle of 1962 they held 68%. Yet, in spite of the presidential effort to give the State Department the central role in foreign affairs, the partnership between State and the White House remained uneasy. Part of the trouble was inherent in the effort, as Richard Neustadt defined it, to make the State Department "at once a department and then something more." Part of the trouble, too, lay in the attitude of the White House toward the Foreign Service. Talk of the need for specialization was all very well, but as Chip Bohlen used to urge with urbane persuasiveness, the art of diplomacy must also be recognized as a specialization. Once Kennedy, exasperated over the difficulty of getting action out of State, said, "What's wrong with that goddamn

GEORGE W. BALL

department of yours, Chip?" Bohlen answered candidly, "You are." By this Bohlen meant, as he explained to an interested Kennedy, that the President did not make sufficient allowance for the virtues of professionalism. Too much emphasis on diplomatic activism per se might lead people to forget the limits of diplomatic action.

The aggressiveness of the White House staff no doubt compounded the trouble. White House "meddling" struck some of the professionals as careless intrusion by impulsive and ignorant amateurs. In his visits to Washington, John Davies, then in retirement in Peru, would talk acidly about the Foreign Service, "purged from the right under Dulles, now purged from the left under Kennedy," and ask, "How can you expect these men to do a good job?" The question was a real one, and the partnership seemed chronically out of balance. But Kennedy never ceased hoping that it would work. The President tried one thing after another. "I have discovered finally that the best way to deal with State," he said to me one day in August 1961, "is to send over memos. They can forget phone conversations, but a memorandum is something which, by their system, has to be answered."

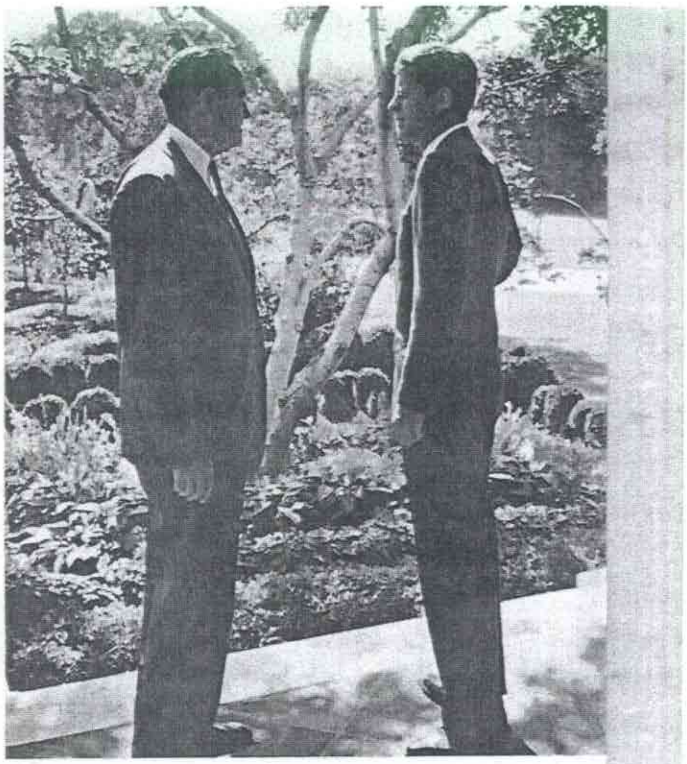
Kennedy had decided on Dean Rusk as Secretary of State after a single talk. It was an understandable choice. Rusk was a man of broad experience and marked ability. He rarely spoke about himself; but I remember one night on a plane his talking with quiet charm over a Scotch and soda about his boyhood in rural Georgia. He was delivered by an aged veterinarian whose medical training had come from the Civil War. Rusk's father was the only one of 12 brothers and sisters who attended college. But three of his father's five children went to college; all the grandchildren would go to college. In the same way, the Georgia back country, a land of kerosene lamps and goiter and pellagra when Rusk was growing up, had been transformed by public health and rural electrification. These memories

CHESTER BOWLES

made him a convinced if undemonstrative liberal on domestic issues.

War service in the China-Burma-India theater was followed by government service in the Pentagon and then in the State Department before he left Washington in 1952 to become president of the Rockefeller Foundation. Rusk had a tidy and exact mastery of the technical detail of a bewildering range of foreign problems and a marked talent for concise and dispassionate exposition. As Secretary of State he worked as long and as hard as anyone in Washington. In negotiations with foreign countries, he was vigilant, impassive, patient and skilled. He displayed the same qualities in his relations with Congress and proved the most effective Secretary of State on Capitol Hill since Cordell Hull. Within the executive branch, he had excellent relations with Defense Secretary McNamara.

Both were men bred in the large organizations of mid-century America. But unlike McNamara's, Rusk's organization instinct was for service, not for mastery. His mind, for all its strength and clarity, was irrevocably conventional. He mistrusted what he called "the flashy or sensational" and rejoiced in the role of "tedium" in diplomacy. "A great deal of our work," he would say without complaint, "is perhaps on the boring side." He



In the White House garden, Kennedy briefed Harriman for his 1963 Russian visit. Harriman told Schlesinger that the department "had declined greatly in purpose, clarity and liberalism."

seemed actually to prefer stale to fresh ways of saying things. One felt that he regarded novelty as an effort to shock or make mischief. Presidential speeches sent over to State for Rusk's comment would return with arresting phrases stricken out and weary State Department formulas proposed in their place. He was unembarrassed by banality; the stereotypes of diplomacy were his native tongue. At times one wondered whether the harshness of life—the seething planet of revolutionary violence, ferocity and hate, shadowed by nuclear holocaust—ever penetrated the screen of clichés, ever shook that imperturbable blandness.

Rusk was a superb technician; this was his power and his problem. He had trained himself all his life to be the ideal chief of staff, the perfect No. 2 man. But the inscrutability which made him a good aide and a gifted negotiator made him also a baffling leader. Since his subordinates did not know what he thought, they could not do what he wanted. In consequence, he failed to imbue the department with positive direction and purpose. He had authority but not command.

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J.F.K. on Rusk: capacity to define, reluctance to decide

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At White House conferences Rusk would sit calmly by, with his Buddhalike face and his half-smile, often leaving it to Bundy or to the President himself to assert the diplomatic interest. He rarely seemed to have strong views as to what should be done beyond continuing what we were already doing, and he rarely argued a position. His relationship with the President remained formal. Kennedy remarked to a friend in State that Rusk was the only Cabinet member he did not call by his first name. When this was repeated to Rusk, he said he liked it better that way. One of those who had strongly backed Rusk's appointment later explained his endorsement by citing the words of a preacher caught in bed with a choir singer: "If I'd of known before I done it what I knew after I done it I wouldn't have did it."

The White House staff's judgment of the Secretary failed, I am sure, to take account of his problems. He was a proud and sensitive man, surrounded in his own department by figures of greater public note and dominated by a President who wanted to be his own Secretary of State. He lived under fear of inadequacy and humiliation. At times his colorlessness of mind appeared almost compulsive, his evenness of tone and temper purchased at inner cost. His feelings were stronger than he permitted them to seem. Some who talked to him late at night over highballs on planes bound for conferences caught him pouring out bitter resentment over intolerable "interference" by the White House staff. But these moments were rare. Most of the time one felt his decency, dignity and durability.

Kennedy remained impressed by Rusk's capacity to define but grew increasingly depressed by his reluctance to decide. Nonetheless, when Washington *Post* publisher Philip Graham tried in 1962 to persuade Kennedy to send Rusk to the U.N. and Stevenson to London and make Ambassador David Bruce Secretary of State, the President replied (so Phil said later), "I can't do that to Rusk; he is such a *nice* man." He was also an able and useful man; and most compelling perhaps was Kennedy's feeling that dismissal of his Secretary of State would constitute too severe a comment on his original judgment.

In the opening days of his administration, Kennedy talked informally in his oval office to Secretary Rusk. Schlesinger says Kennedy sought—but rarely got—fresh ideas from the department.

Chester Bowles, as under secretary, had second place of responsibility in the State Department. Bowles had important assets for the Administration. He had unusual gifts for public persuasion. He had been right on Cuba. He retained a strong following in the liberal community. But Bowles had his vulnerabilities too. His ambassadorial appointments, though they pleased everybody else, had outraged the old-line professionals. Foreign Service officers, trying to stop the designation of Edwin Reischauer to Japan, for example, had gone to the length of extracting statements from the Japanese embassy saying that it would be terrible to send to Tokyo an American ambassador with a Japanese wife. The new under secretary left behind a covey of unemployed and embittered diplomats who circulated rude stories about him over martinis at the Metropolitan Club.

Once the appointments were completed, Bowles's role was ill-defined. To Bowles's supporters it appeared that Rusk was unwilling either to manage the department himself or let Bowles do it. Nor had Bowles made any effort to preserve his personal relationship with the President; indeed, he had no private talks with Kennedy between December 1960 and July 1961. More access would not necessarily have improved things though, for there was a fatal difference in tempo between Bowles and the New Frontier. Kennedy agreed with nearly everything that Bowles had to say, but he had generally thought of it himself and grew impatient when people explained to him things he already knew. Bowles spoke the unabashed liberal language of the New Deal; the New Frontiersmen disagreed not with the sentiment but with what they considered the sentimentality. The New Frontier put a premium on quick, hard, laconic, decided people; it was easily exasperated by more meditative types. "Chet is a fine fellow," the President said to me one day in early May 1961, "but he's just not doing the job. Because Chet isn't doing his job, Rusk is spreading himself too thin and is not able to do his job either."

The situation dragged on unhappily for several weeks. One day in June 1961, after a meeting with the President on another matter, Robert Kennedy asked me to stay behind to discuss the State Department. The President observed that the present state of affairs really could not be permitted to continue. Someone, he said, would have to be put in Bowles's place who could make the department work; but "of course it will look as if we were throwing out the one man in the State Department who was right on Cuba." Bobby proposed that Chet be made roving ambassador to the underdeveloped world. The President asked me, "Do you think he will take it?" I was doubtful.

Rusk, it appeared, had his own candidate for Bowles's job. This was Arthur Dean, a Wall Street lawyer who had come to the department as a negotiator on test-ban problems. Robert Lovett and other representatives of the foreign policy establishment were urging Dean's appointment. But the Bay of Pigs experience had provided convincing evidence that the President required people in the State Department whose basic loyalty would be to him. I discussed this with Abram Chayes, the department's legal adviser and an old friend of Bowles's. We speculated about the possibility of a reallocation of functions within the department, the chief of staff job to be given to George Ball, then Under Secretary for Economic Affairs. Bowles liked the idea of some reallocation of responsibility between himself and Ball; but the President shook his head. "It wouldn't work," he said. "It would just prolong the confusion and the agony." He thought for a moment and said, "What about Brazil? Chet could do a great job there." He told me to phone Bowles and ask him if he would go to Rio.

When I called him, Chet listened in silence, dismissed the idea of Brazil and finally said, "There's no point in this. I guess the fat's really in the fire now. I want the President to know I will do everything I can to make my exit as graceful as possible. He need not worry. I'll go off to Switzerland where no newspaperman can find me."

But over the weekend Bowles's friends swung into action. On Monday morning, July 17, the New York *Times* had a front-page story saying that the President intended to ask for Bowles's resignation that day. Kennedy read the story with a connoisseur's interest on the plane back from Cape Cod to Washington. "You can tell how that story was written," he said. "One paragraph is from Bowles or his people. The next paragraph is from someone at State trying to make a case against Bowles." He mused about the situation as he sipped his coffee. "This started out as a management problem. But these stories today have transformed it into a political problem. It's no longer a personnel question, now it has become a symbolic question."

The result of the Bowles counteroffensive was a reprieve. But Bowles was unable to take advantage of it. His own position had been weakened; his mandate was still ill-defined; and power did not, in Dean Rusk's phrase, gravitate toward him. Bowles was abroad a good deal in the autumn of 1961, and within the department George Ball was assuming more and more administrative responsibility. In November, on the weekend of the Harvard-Yale football game in New Haven, I ran into Bowles between halves Saturday afternoon in the crowd swirling around the Yale Bowl. He said in a puzzled way that Rusk had telephoned him that morning, asking him to come to Washington right away; apparently he wanted to discuss some personnel problems. Bowles had replied that he had 30 people coming to his house in Essex for dinner that evening; surely the business could wait until Monday? "He was awfully insistent, and I finally agreed to go down tomorrow. All this fuss just to rearrange some ambassadors!"

After the game Dick Goodwin of the White House staff reached me by telephone at a party in Fairfield County. George Ball would become under secretary; George McGhee would move from the Policy Planning Council to replace Ball as the second under secretary (though for political rather than for economic affairs); Averell Harriman would become Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern

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Kennedy had decided to seek a new

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Affairs. From the White House, Walt Rostow would go to State as Counselor and Chief of the Policy Planning Council. Fred Dutton would become Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations, and Goodwin would become Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs.

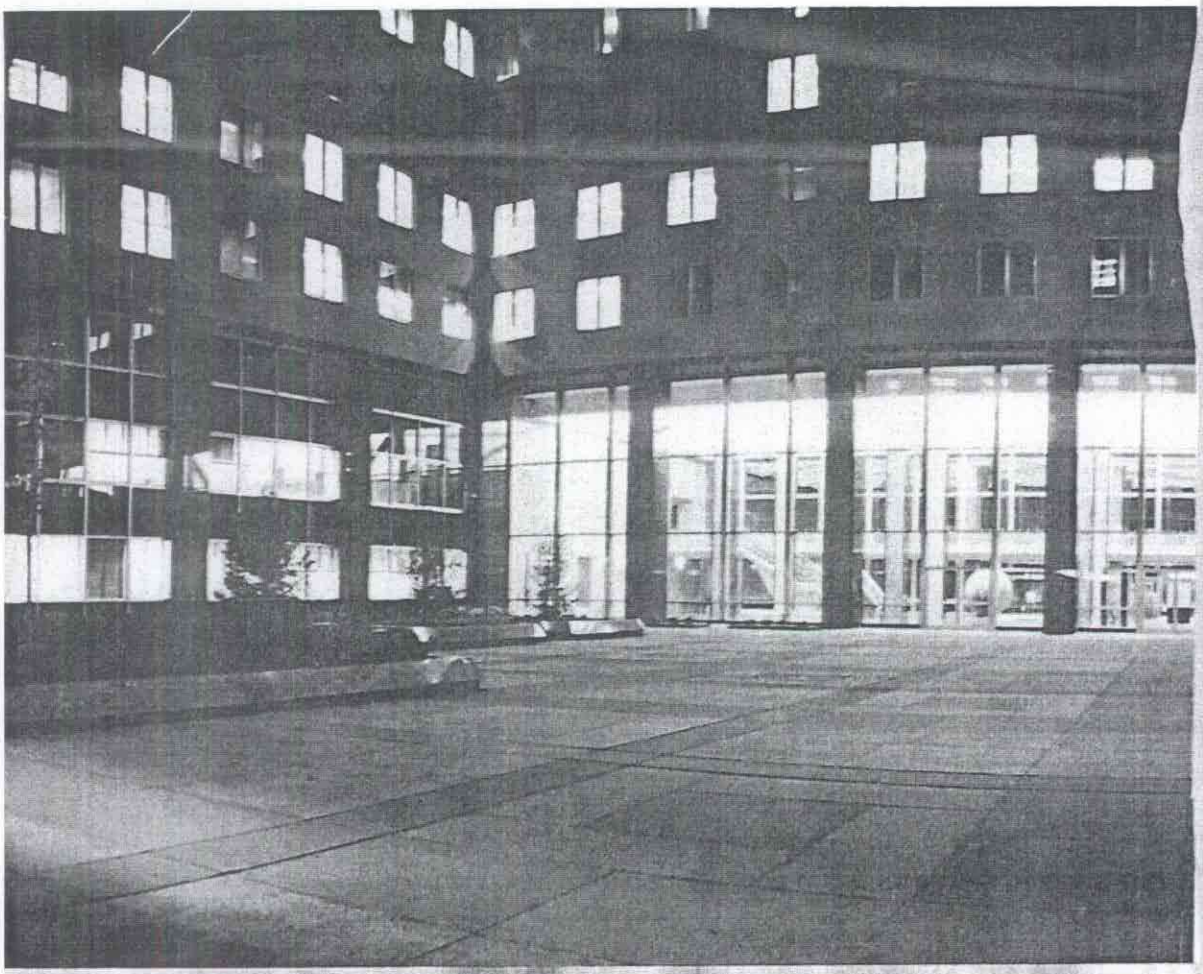
On Sunday Rusk broke the news to Bowles. Later, Ted Sorensen, after a long talk, persuaded Bowles to become Special Representative and Adviser to the President for African, Asian and Latin-American affairs.

Bowles, the hapless victim of the State Department conditions which he had diagnosed better than anybody, behaved with characteristic nobility and was soon hard at work in his new assignment. But he was outside the chain of command and the job was doomed to frustration. At one point the President suggested his going as ambassador to Indonesia or Canada. When he declined, Kennedy observed, "If I were Chet I would rather be first in an Iberian village than second in Rome. I guess he would rather be thirty-fifth in Rome." Finally, in December 1962, Bowles offered his resignation. Kennedy then asked him to take Galbraith's place as ambassador to India. Back in New Delhi, where he had served so well a decade before, Bowles at last found an outlet for his distinguished abilities.

The purpose of the reorganization of November 1961, and especially of the blood transfusion from the White House, was to revitalize the State Department and redress the imbalance in the foreign affairs partnership. As Kennedy explained to Walt Rostow, "I want you to go over there and catch hold of the process at the level where it counts." The upheaval somewhat improved the situation. Though Ball remained a lawyer and not a manager, he had the talents of speed and decision. Rostow, perfectly cast, made the Policy Planning Council a bustle of activity and helped shape policy on a dozen fronts. Above all, Averell Harriman gave Far Eastern policy a coherence and force which it had not had for years.

One could not but marvel at the inexhaustible vitality of this man, now in his seventies, who, after living at the summit with Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin 20 years earlier, was now cheerfully settled in a job of lower rank than any he had held for a generation. This was part of Harriman's attraction. One felt that here was a free man without personal ambition who said what he believed. The downrightness of his reactions stimulated a bureaucracy too long accustomed to postponement and

The State Department, often called "Foggy Bottom," rests in this huge building. Kennedy, says Schlesinger, was puzzled that the department remained "formless and impenetrable."



Secretary of State

evasion. He became known with affection as "The Crocodile" for his habit of biting off proposals which seemed to him stupid or irrelevant. He had been around too long to be impressed by the generals, tycoons, security officers and legislators who had so long intimidated the State Department. He tried in particular to bring forward the youthful, bright, audacious people. He once delighted Walter and Victor Reuther by saying with great emphasis, at the age of 71: "Do you know what this damned department needs? Young blood!" The young looked on Harriman with admiration and affection; the New Frontiersmen, within and without the State Department, regarded him as their champion. Perhaps no one, except the President and the Attorney General, had such a stimulating influence on policy.

In 1963, when George McGhee went on to become ambassador to Bonn, Harriman took his place as Under Secretary for Political Affairs. At the swearing-in George Ball made a graceful speech, recalling that he had first met Harriman in the early days of the New Deal, when people believed that anything was possible and that whatever had been done before was wrong. Harriman picked up the theme in his own remarks. He said that he had lived through four times of great creativity in government—during the early New Deal, the Second World War, the Marshall Plan and the Kennedy years. He talked of the mission of the State Department in carrying the New Frontier to the world. After the ceremony Harriman beckoned me into his office. He said, "Of course I had to say all those nice things about the spirit in the State Department today, but it isn't so. This place is asleep. What I want to do is to give it a little of the crusading spirit of those earlier times. I want to bring it to life."

He never quite succeeded. To the end, the department remained a puzzle to President Kennedy. No one *ran* it; Rusk, Ball and Harriman constituted a loose triumvirate on the seventh floor and, passing things back and forth among themselves, managed to keep a few steps ahead of the crises. By the autumn of 1963 the President had reluctantly made up his mind to allow Rusk to leave after the 1964 election and to seek a new Secretary of State. He always had the dream that someone like Robert McNamara might some day take command and make the department a vigorous partner in the enterprise of foreign relations.

COMING SOON

More of 'A Thousand Days'

This autumn LIFE will resume publishing Mr. Schlesinger's inner circle story of the Kennedy administration