at "a very major university," explains that his clients say, "'Abe, help me, I don't know how to write a paper.' I write them one, as an example, and then they go and pass it in. Is that my fault? No. If I help you in physics and work one problem, and you turn that problem in, am I to blame? No. I'm just a tutor."

Of course, a 1973 Massachusetts law forbids the sale of a term paper by someone knowing or "having reason to know" that it will be submitted as somebody else's work. And Texas passed a similar law last year. But, even if selling term papers is potentially illegal, the law can't do much to shut down sites like "School Sucks"—sites where students generously make their own papers available to others for free. By one count, there are 38 free term-paper sites like School Sucks, a page started in 1996 by a former Florida International University student, Kenny Sahr. By last July, School Sucks, which started with one English paper Sahr borrowed from a friend, had grown into a megasite with 2,000 free term papers and a convenient search engine to locate essays by key words. As of January, according to Sahr, his site registered 1,140,690 hits and advertising revenues of $5,000 a month.

Some of these free papers are, by anyone's standards, awful. One paper on *Macbeth* begins: "*Macbeth* is primarily about villains. And the villainy that the play has knows no bounds." Yet other free-paper sites, such as the one designed by Harvard sophomore Dorian Berger, are gems. Dorian's swanky homepage posts about 20 of his generally quite good Harvard papers, free to download.

Even more helpful are pages like "1 Stop Research Paper Shop," which links to 32 scholarly sites, each with free papers posted by altruistically minded academics. Linked to the site: economics papers from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, research works from the NASA Laboratories, papers from the Center for Cognitive Science, like "Mechanics of Sentence Processing," and a trove of essays from an assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago, Casey Mulligan. The homepage of J. Michael Miller, a teacher at Virginia's Episcopal High School, who has a master's degree in history from Georgetown University and a Ph.D. in Russian History from George Washington University, features five of Miller's college papers, ripe for the picking. Miller is only slightly troubled by the prospects of plagiarism. "It's really up to the individual reader," he says, "to do with the information what they will, good or evil. I belong to the school that says teach people to do the right thing and then turn 'em loose."

Concern over Internet plagiarism has led at least a few educators to contemplate high-tech solutions. Two employees of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Ned Feder and Walter Stewart, have designed a computer program to scan text and recognize word-for-word similarities as short as 32 characters long. Still, the programs have their limits, and, in the end, it's a losing battle. The whole point of the Internet is to share information. To get the benefits of online technology, universities have to cope with the costs. The only real solution to cyberplagiarism, then, is old-fashioned vigilance. Having spent millions of dollars wiring their students to the Internet, universities may have to invest in smaller classes and a better teacher-to-student ratio. A return to some good old analog, face-to-face teaching may be the only way to keep online plagiarism at the fringes, where it belongs.

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Why did Khrushchev go to the brink?

MISSILE MYSTERY

By Adam Ulam

For years, most Americans have seen John F. Kennedy's stand in the Cuban missile crisis as a bold feat of statesmanship which changed the course of the cold war by forcing the Soviet Union to beat a retreat. Now, Seymour Hersh, in *The Dark Side of Camelot*, presents the president's action as yet another Kennedy blunder inspired by purely political and partisan considerations. "The Kennedy brothers brought the world to the edge of war in their attempts to turn the dispute into a political asset," Hersh writes. Hersh claims that, once JFK learned the Soviets were secretly installing nuclear missiles in Cuba, he should have given Khrushchev an opportunity to withdraw them in secret. But, instead, he dramatically revealed the Soviet move and simultaneously instituted a blockade of Cuba. To gain a personal triumph, Hersh argues, JFK risked a nuclear holocaust. Then, to preserve the impression of complete American victory, he concealed the fact that, in the end, he did make a trade with Khrushchev: in return for the Soviets' removing their missiles in Cuba, the U.S. promised to remove its Jupiter missiles from Turkey. The only pledge made public by Washington following the Soviets' capitulation was that the U.S. would not invade Cuba.

Whatever one's initial reaction to Hersh's argument, one cannot really assess it without revisiting what is still, after almost four decades, the main historical problem posed by the Cuban missile crisis: What impelled the Soviets to undertake this hugely hazardous gambit? Here, at least, one must agree with Hersh that the crisis remains "the most misunderstood and poorly reported event of the cold war." Why did the Kremlin masters think they could get away with placing their nuclear weapons so close to the United States? What objective was, to their minds, worth the risk?

When his Soviet colleagues finally obliged him to account for the Cuba affair, Khrushchev gave the following explanation: The missiles were placed in Cuba at Castro's request to protect the island from American invasion. Once the U.S. pledged not to attack Cuba, there was no reason for the Soviets to keep the missiles there. This was obviously untrue. Yet, since the end of the cold war, Moscow's newly opened archives have yielded only scraps of information—nothing that bears on the real internal deliberations of Khrushchev and his Politburo. Thus, as of 1997, Khrushchev's lame excuse remains the official Russian version of the affair, except for a belated admission that the initiative for putting the missiles in Cuba came not from Castro but from Moscow. Even more amazing, this version has been accepted by most Western analysts of the cold war.

But this story defies credulity. Why would the Soviet Union keep nuclear weapons *permanently* in Cuba, where they might not always remain under their control? How could even impulsive Khrushchev, not to mention his prudent Politburo colleagues, believe that the Americans would acquiesce in the stationing of the deadly weapons 90 miles from their shores? And surely the Soviet leaders would not have been so foolhardily selfless as to expose the USSR to nuclear obliteration just to protect Castro? Indeed, we did recently learn that, at the very height of the crisis, Moscow ordered the Soviet commander on the island not to use his nuclear weapons in the case of a U.S. invasion.

Plainly, then, the Soviet nuclear missiles were placed in Cuba to serve as a bargaining chip to be removed for an American concession on an issue that really mattered to the Soviets. What might that issue have been? The evidence is, of necessity, circumstantial. But the weight of it suggests that the Soviets were actually concerned with a trouble spot much closer to home: Germany.

Prior to the Cuban crisis, the besetting concern of both U.S. and Soviet governments was the second Berlin crisis. It began in November 1958 with a Soviet ultimatum to the Western powers. Unless the long-postponed German peace treaty were concluded *within six months*, Moscow would sign a separate pact with its East German satellite. The latter would then have full control of access to West Berlin; that is, the USSR, through East Germany, would institute a second blockade of West Berlin.

Of course, the Soviet proposals for a treaty included three items that Moscow knew were unacceptable to the West: formal recognition of East Germany; the withdrawal of West Germany from NATO; and West Berlin's conversion into a "free city," devoid of either links to the Bonn Republic or a Western military presence. What, then, was the Kremlin's real objective? It was not, as many Western governments then believed, to push the West out of West Berlin—though of course the Soviets would have been delighted to receive such a gift. Rather, the Soviets saw West Berlin as the most exposed nerve of Western defenses in Europe, and, by occasionally pressing it, the Kremlin hoped to exact other concessions. In 1948, the goal was to block the unification of the Western zones of occupation, leading to the creation of the Bonn Republic. And, in 1958, the Soviets' apprehensions centered on what was then the real possibility that West Germany, as part of NATO, would be given nuclear weapons.

This prospect was deeply alarming to the Soviet Union, even more frightening than a nuclear-armed United States. For all of the Soviets' rhetoric about the American imperialists, they knew that the U.S. had not resorted to the ultimate weapon when it enjoyed a nuclear monopoly prior to 1949 or even when faced with possible defeat in Korea. But such weapons in the hands of German "revanchists"—who, Moscow believed, still ached for eastern lands they lost in the cruel Hitler-Stalin war—well, that would be a clear and immediate danger to the Soviet bloc.

Moscow never revealed its true fears to the West, of course, so as not to weaken its bargaining position. It was only when trying to get Communist China to give up its nuclear ambitions that the Soviets hinted at what was really behind the Berlin crisis. As their formal communication to Beijing stated, the USSR could not "present nuclear weapons to China with one hand and struggle with the other against the U.S. giving them to Western Germany."

The second Berlin crisis dragged on for four years. The U.S. and, albeit less firmly, Great Britain refused to recognize East Germany. And then Cuba's accession to the Communist bloc, coupled with U.S. discomfiture over the Bay of Pigs, inspired a belief in the Kremlin that Cuba offered a better way to secure the neutralization of West Germany than a blockade of West Berlin.

Castro agreed to the placing of the weapons in Cuba in June 1962. Publicly, the Soviets kept up the drumbeat over Berlin. Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko informed Kennedy on October 18 that Khrushchev would be coming to New York in November to address the U.N.; the German peace issue had to be settled then, or else. But once it was done there would remain no major problems between East and West. In all likelihood, the Kremlin scenario called for Khrushchev to reveal in November the presence of the missiles in Cuba. The shock produced in the West would be followed by relief at the Soviet Union's "reasonable" conditions for the weapons' removal: a U.S. pledge not to give West Germany nuclear arms and a German peace treaty.

This end-around play was blocked by the discovery of the sites on October 14 and Kennedy's proclamation of the "quarantine" of Cuba on October 22. It was believed that the world stood on the brink of a nuclear holocaust. But, as we have seen, the Soviet commander in Cuba was told not to fire his nuclear weapons. Castro, to his fury, was left out of the U.S.-Soviet negotiations—more evidence that it was not solicitude for his security that brought the Russian missiles to the island. There was no point now for Khrushchev to visit the U.N. in November; as the Soviets were dismantling their installations, the Berlin crisis simply evaporated. Khrushchev's Cuba stratagem was undoubtedly included among those "hare-brained schemes" with which his unsentimental colleagues were to charge him after his ouster in 1964.

Nothing in the entire story entitles us to believe that, as Hersh suggests, Khrushchev would have pulled the missiles from Cuba had Kennedy warned him in private that the U.S. knew about his ploy. The president had to assume that pleading with Khrushchev would have signaled that America was susceptible to nuclear blackmail. And that would have only encouraged Khrushchev to raise the stakes, perhaps by instituting a blockade of West Berlin and/or by threatening to place the missiles directly in Castro's hands. In view of the Soviets' deviousness and previous duplicity, no other conclusion seemed logical. Hersh cannot criticize Kennedy both for being reckless in proclaiming the quarantine and for being craven in making a compromise. To Kennedy, the risk in not reacting boldly to the Soviet missile gambit had to appear greater than its possible consequences. He was right. And the secret concession on Turkey was a reasonable price to pay for the Soviets' acknowledgment of defeat.

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The media ♥ Princeton basketball.

HYPE DREAMS

By David Plotz

Princeton, an institution long dedicated to the advancement of above-average white guys, has produced five more specimens this winter. As college basketball's annual 64-team championship tournament approaches, the Princeton squad is the most talked-about entrant in the field. The Tigers have won 26 of their 27 games by playing an archaic, unselfish style of basketball. Their starting five are regular-sized student athletes who pay tuition and write their own term papers—even senior theses! Jaundiced sportswriters and buoyant fans alike are downright dewy over Princeton. This, they say, is basketball The Way It Ought To Be.

The New York Times Magazine extols the Tigers as "the last amateurs." They are "a throwback to a bygone era" (*The Dallas Morning News*); the antidote to this "era of me first, I want it now" (*Sports Illustrated*). "You could go to 127 NBA games and never see basketball played as wondrously," gushes *Times* sports columnist Ira Berkow. Princeton basketball is "the carefully rehearsed syncopation and counterpoint of a symphony orchestra." Even George Will, the high priest of socio-athletic pontification, has spoken: "This team might be a leading indicator of cultural improvement, advancing virtues important in society and decreasingly apparent in sports."

Talk about March Madness! Baby-boomer nostalgia, which has insinuated itself into every other corner of American culture, has now penetrated college basketball, too. Ah, Princeton: Remember the good old days of *real* student athletes?

Make no mistake, Princeton has a fine basketball program—for an Ivy League school. During the mid '60s, Coach Butch van Breda Kolff's Tigers, led by Bill Bradley, made it to the Final Four. Under Coach Pete Carril, Princeton dominated the Ivies and repeatedly scared powerhouse teams in the first round of the NCAA tournament. In 1996, the Tigers even knocked off UCLA, the defending NCAA champion, before losing in the second round to Mississippi State.

Carril's successor, Bill Carmody, has carried on the Carril system (or "the System," as they say). Because Princeton offers no athletic scholarships and will only bend academic admissions standards so far, its recruits are slower, smaller, and weaker than those at major college programs. To compensate, Princeton emphasizes patience and teamwork. The result is an anachronistic style—the analogue to football's old single-wing formation. Carmody's squad fluidly and precisely executes backdoor cuts, bounce passes, and three-point jump shots. The five starters are all seniors and juniors—no one left early to go pro—and they play wonderfully together.

But does that really make Princeton the eighth-best squad in the country, as the *USA Today* coaches' poll would have it? Princeton went undefeated in the Ivy League—but you and four guys from the local YMCA could probably go undefeated against the likes of Brown and Dartmouth. Princeton mattressed its schedule with Monmouth, Manhattan, and the College of New Jersey. This is not all Princeton's fault: stronger teams are afraid to schedule them, for fear of an embarrassing upset. And Princeton did beat Wake Forest, Texas, as well as North Carolina State. But all three are having off years, and Princeton lost to the only top-25 team it played, North Carolina. (Yes, it was a close road game against a team then ranked number two in the nation. But it was a loss nonetheless.) According to the Sagarin Ratings, which ranks teams on strength of schedule as well as record, Princeton is only the eighteenth best team in America. According to the similar RPI index, Princeton should rank thirtieth. Even Princeton's own starting center, Steve Goodrich, says the team is overranked.

Hype crashes into reality in next week's tournament. Thanks to its inflated rank, Princeton will be seeded high, which means its early competition should be easier than usual. But don't expect the Tigers to go far. Sports pundit and loyal Princeton grad Frank Deford gave me 20 minutes of poetry about the wonders of the Princeton squad before conceding that they'll likely lose in the first round.

So what explains the outpouring of media affection for Old Nassau? Underdog status, for one thing. Disgust with the commercialization of college ball and the corruption