



世界政治与国际关系原版影印丛书·学术精品系列



Essence of Decision  
Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis  
2nd Edition

# 决策的本质 解释古巴导弹危机 (第二版)

[美] 格雷厄姆·阿利森 菲利普·泽利科 著  
Graham T. Allison Philip Zelikow

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## 解释古巴导弹危机

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〔美〕格雷厄姆·阿利森 菲利普·泽利科 著



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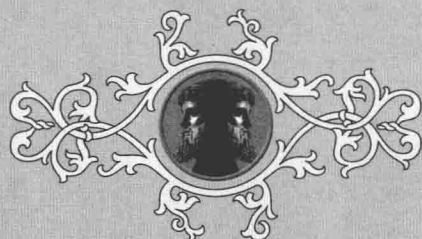
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举报电话: 010-62752024 电子邮箱: [fd@pup.pku.edu.cn](mailto:fd@pup.pku.edu.cn)



世界政治与国际关系原版影印丛书  
学术精品系列 II

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Essence of Decision  
Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis  
2nd Edition.

Graham T. Allison Philip Zelikow

# 《世界政治与国际关系原版影印丛书》

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## 出版说明

引进和交流,是国际研究诸学科发展壮大所不可或缺的一环和纽带。没有引进和交流,学术就难以活跃,也不易创新。每一位从事世界政治与国际关系研究的学者、每一位学习世界政治与国际关系的学生,无不深感阅读外文原文文献的重要性,他们都深知,原文的报刊、教材和专著,是获取最新国际信息、最新理论论争、最新参考资料的必不可少的重要来源,而获得这样的原文文献的机会是不均等的,因此,他们极其渴望更为方便地直接接触到原文文献。而在目前不易直接在国内购买原版书籍的情况下,采取原版影印的方式引进国际上的优秀教材和专著是解决问题的一条捷径,如此就可以使国内普通读者方便地获得最有权威的原文读物,从而可以快速了解国外同行的教学和学术成果,为深入学习和研究、为开展有效的对外学术交流、也为国际关系诸学科在我国的创新和发展,打下更坚实的基础。

这套《世界政治与国际关系原版影印丛书》,正是基于上述认识而组织出版的,并且得到了我国国际关系教学与科研领域最有权威的专家教授们的认可,他们分别来自于北京大学国际关系学院、复旦大学国际关系与公共事务学院、中国人民大学国际关系学院、外交学院、清华大学国际问题研究所、中国社会科学院世界经济与政治研究所、中共中央党校战略研究所等单位,作为本套丛书的学术顾问,他们愿意向我国该学科及相关领域的广大学者和学生共同推荐这套丛书。

本丛书第一批先行选入了一些经典文献选读性质的国外优秀教材,也包括美国大学中的一些知名国际关系学教员所编著的教材,内容主要在国际关系理论方面,也包括国际政治经济学和比较政治学方面的优秀教材。它们皆可称为原文中的精品,值得研读和收藏,不仅如此,由于它们本身在国外的大学课堂里都是应用较广的教材和读物,所以特别适合作为我国国际关系与世界政治专业大学教学中的参考读物,甚至可以直接作为以外文授课的课堂教材。在每本书的前面,我们都邀请国内比较权威的专家学者撰写了精彩的导论,以指导读者更好地阅读和使用这些文献。

根据读者的反映和我国建设中的国际关系学科的发展需要,我们决定在上述影印图书的基础上,开辟一个“学术精品系列”,以让我国国际关系专业的学者和学生有机会更方便地接触到那些堪称“精品中的精品”的学术书籍,比如摩根索的《国家间政治》、沃尔兹的《国际政治理论》和基欧汉的《权力与相互依赖》等等。这些作品大都已经有了中文译本,而且有的还不只一种中译本,它们的学术和学科地位是不言而喻的,在中国读者心目中也已有着持久深入的影响,正因如此,在这个新系列的每一种图书前面我们没有再烦请学术顾问们撰写导言。我们相信,如此有生命力的作品,当它们以新的面目出现在中国读者面前时,一定会引发新的阅读感受、新的理论遐思和新的战略决策思考。至少,

它们可以带给我们真正原汁原味的享受,让我们更加贴近当代的国际关系理论和国际关系理论家。

今后,我们会陆续推出更新、更好的原版教材和专著,希望广大读者提出宝贵意见和建议,尤其欢迎更多的专家学者向我们推荐适合引进的国外优秀教材和专著,以帮助我们完善这套丛书的出版,并最终形成一套完整的世界政治与国际关系及其相关学科适用的原文教学研究参考书系。

最后也要特别提醒读者,我们引进这套丛书,目的主要在于推动学术交流、促进学科发育、完善教学体系,而其著作者的出发点和指导思想、基本观点和结论等,则完全属于由读者加以认识、比较、讨论甚至批评的内容,均不代表北京大学出版社。

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## Preface

The decision to revise a best-seller in political science that has been in print continuously for over a quarter century requires justification. First, the historical evidence about the Cuban missile crisis has grown dramatically, stimulated by a series of oral history conferences and declassification efforts and culminating in 1997–1998. With publication of heretofore classified documents in the relevant volumes of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series published by the Department of State (which must be used in conjunction with the Berlin and arms control volumes for the Kennedy administration published earlier in the 1990s); exploration of central files from the Soviet government in Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali's book, *“One Hell of a Gamble”: Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy 1957–1964*, and finally, transcription and publication of the secret tapes of the Kennedy Administration's deliberations during the crisis by Ernest May and Philip Zelikow in *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis*, the most important evidence about the crisis is now available. This new evidence shows a number of explanations in the original edition to have been incorrect, and others insufficient. For the coauthors of this revised edition of *Essence*, the most pleasurable part of the endeavor has been to see how this new evidence glistens when examined through alternative conceptual lenses. This book is the first analytical synthesis of all that evidence. Students of this event will notice, perhaps with some surprise, that despite the many books written on the missile crisis, the explanations for key choices and events in the crisis deserve, and get, a fresh interpretation in this book.

Second, analytical and theoretical scholarship from which the core arguments in the original edition of *Essence* drew have advanced: in studies of international affairs; in the disciplines of political science, economics, sociology, social psychology, organization theory, and decision analysis; and in important new applied arenas including public policy and business. The first edition engaged central questions in each of these arenas and has subsequently been engaged by authors in each. Beneath these debates lies the fundamental question to which



the original edition offered a provocative answer: *How should citizens try to understand the actions of their government?* Not surprisingly, the original statement of the argument became a lightning rod for wide-ranging criticism and debate, not only in political science but in many other fields. Some of the earliest critiques made good points that have stood the test of time. Though we believe the fundamental structure of the book was and is sound, we have listened to the critics and, thanks in part to their help, the basic explication of the theoretical models has been materially revised. We have also benefited from a generation of new scholarship (and a few fresh looks at some older works) and have attempted to clarify these fields of work and the models. While it is obviously not possible to take full account of all theoretical and analytical scholarship bearing on these arguments since the original edition, the earlier statement of the argument has been enriched and extended in several dimensions.

Third, managers in government, business, and the nonprofit sector have found the argument in the original edition more valuable than its author had anticipated. The book has been used in graduate schools of government and public policy, business, and other professional training programs where the objective is preparation for practice, rather than theory. At Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, it has served as a text in the political and institutional analysis curriculum for almost a quarter century. Philip Zelikow was drawn to the potential for revision during the five years that he chaired this core course. Use of more abstract concepts and propositions to provide perspectives and checklists for practitioners who must stretch beyond explanation to prescription constitutes an important extension of the work that deserves more focused attention.

Finally, the author of the first edition, Graham Allison, has of course learned a great deal from students, colleagues, and critics. Leading a large organization in the federal government, he had opportunities to apply the frameworks. But not until a partnership emerged with a (then) Harvard colleague trained as a historian who had served in the White House and then taught from *Essence* for a number of years, did the idea of attempting the challenge of revision become credible.

Readers of the original edition will find the central argument of this edition familiar. Though most of the text is new, the basic structure of the book remains unchanged. Three conceptual chapters each state and develop a conceptual model or lens through which analysts can explain, predict, and assess situations, especially in the arena of

foreign affairs, but also across the wider array of governmental actions. Each of these chapters is followed by an account of the Cuban missile crisis that uses the conceptual lens from the prior chapter to analyze the crisis. In explaining the central puzzles of the Cuban missile crisis through each alternative lens, the authors have attempted to take account of all the evidence now available, including published material and unpublished primary sources.

Applications of the models have been updated with illustrations from recent events, mostly from foreign affairs, but noting analogues in domestic policy as well. Each of the theoretical chapters extends the original model to incorporate subsequent theoretical advances. For example, Model I now incorporates insights from psychology, rational choice, and game theory to clarify variants of the model. Model II capitalizes on recent developments in organizational studies, sociology, political science, and business to emphasize ways in which organizations first enlarge and then constrain capabilities. Model III draws upon recent public policy studies and some lessons learned from government experience to clarify the significance of individual players' performance in policymaking. Throughout, we have also attempted to take account of more subtle ways in which today's post-Cold War setting requires not just new illustrations, but also adjustments in the conceptual models. For example, the shift from Cold War clarity to cacophony has reduced the influence of shared conceptions of values and interests, thus increasing the salience of existing bureaucracies and energetic interest group advocacy. Changes in technology like CNN have combined with new rules of the game to make the Kennedy Administration's week of secret deliberations during the missile crisis appear almost antique in Washington today. That week of reflection proved essential in shaping the more measured and subtle strategy chosen. Today, if an analogous threat were discovered, an American president would expect a leak within forty-eight hours, and thus feel forced to make quicker, less considered decisions. Similarly, lessons from the missile crisis for current policy issues, from risks of nuclear war or dangers presented by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to the management of foreign policy and leadership in post-Cold War foreign policy, have been drawn more explicitly.

Our aims in this book remain the two stated in the preface of the original edition. On the one hand, we examine the central puzzles of the Cuban missile crisis. Many accounts of the crisis have been offered, appropriately so. It remains the defining event of the nuclear age and the most dangerous moment in recorded history. Lessons drawn from the crisis, or interpretations of it, continue to shape the

thinking of American leaders, and others, about risks of nuclear war, crisis confrontation, and foreign policy.

On the other hand, we explore the influence of unrecognized assumptions upon our thinking about events like the missile crisis. Answers to questions like why the Soviet Union tried to sneak strategic offensive missiles into Cuba are powerfully affected by basic assumptions we make, categories we use, our angle of vision. But what assumptions do we tend to make? How do these assumptions channel our thinking? What alternative perspectives are available? This study identifies the basic frame of reference used by most people when thinking about foreign affairs. It also outlines two alternative frameworks. Each frame of reference is, in effect, a “conceptual lens.” By comparing and contrasting the three frameworks, we see what each magnifies, highlights, and reveals as well as what each blurs or neglects.

The structure of this book reflects our dual objectives. Three conceptual chapters sketch three rough-cut frames of reference. These chapters are separated by three case studies, each of which uses one of the frames of reference in searching for answers to the major questions of the Cuban missile crisis. By addressing central issues of the crisis first from one perspective, then from a second, and finally from a third, these chapters not only probe more deeply into the event, uncovering additional insights; they also demonstrate how alternative conceptual lenses lead one to see, emphasize, and worry about quite different aspects of events like the missile crisis.

On the one hand, substantive instance; on the other, conceptual argument. Today we must confess that we are no longer certain where one begins and the other ends, or, indeed, which is the head and which the tail of this coin. But we are certain about the impulse that led us to pursue these two aims jointly.

This book attempts to address the entire community of foreign policy observers, which comprises both “artists” and “scientists.” For the artists, the appeal of the conceptual chapters may be minimal. Like “spinach and calisthenics,” they will be palatable to the extent they stimulate new insight into old problems, clearer perception of additional facets, and better substantive studies. But for the social scientists, the theoretical chapters constitute the contribution: making explicit the implicit conceptual frameworks within which investigations proceed and spelling out some of the systematic implications of alternative models. In attempting to address both audiences simultaneously, we open ourselves to the objection that the cases lack the subtlety and craft of “art,” whereas the theoretical chapters display

little of the system and rigor of “science.” How justifiable such criticism may be is left to the reader’s judgment. But there should be no ambiguity about the reasons for our attempt.

If a common ground exists between the artists and the scientists, that ground is explanation. Neither art’s appreciation of the uniqueness of occurrences nor science’s grasp of occurrences as mere instances of more general propositions is limited to explanation. But central to both enterprises is an attempt to understand and explain why events occurred. The artist may appear (to the scientist) overly fascinated with nuance and randomness that would be better treated as extraneous fluff around common, recurring elements. The scientist may seem (to the artist) to ride roughshod over relevant, particular details in the quest for generality. But the achievement of neither group in the foreign policy community justifies arrogance toward, or neglect of, the other’s work. Thus, our attempt to produce explanations and, in the same book, to formulate systematically the concepts and propositions in terms of which the explanations are produced, seems appropriate.

However wide the gulf between artists and scientists, in the end both should be humbled by awareness of the insight expressed in the epigraph: “*The essence of ultimate decision* remains impenetrable to the observer—often, indeed, to the decider himself. . . . There will always be the dark and tangled stretches in the decision-making process—mysterious even to those who may be most intimately involved.”<sup>1</sup>

### A Reader’s Guide

When the original edition of this book was being written, a colleague offered wise advice. Rather than musing about a general unknown reader, or trying to write for everyman, he suggested instead choosing four or five real people and letting them stand for the circle of readers to whom one was writing. The advice proved quite helpful. It is thus instructive to identify these individuals—in general terms—and to state, briefly, our hopes in writing for each.

The first two “representative readers” are a *colleague* and a *student*. The colleague is a professional analyst of foreign policy and international relations; the student, a bright college sophomore. For the colleague the chapters on the missile crisis should provide new material, a fresh look at the central issues, and an illustration of the general argument. More ambitiously, the conceptual chapters try to (1) provide a comprehensive overview of the product of analysis in various areas of foreign policy and international relations; (2) present a set of

categories that can be used in judging this product; (3) undermine popular assumptions both about the nontheoretical nature of foreign policy analysis and about the rampant disjointedness of efforts in various substantive areas of foreign policy; (4) challenge the basic categories and assumptions within which most analysts think about problems of foreign policy; and (5) sketch two sharp, provocative alternative conceptual frameworks. The basic outline of the general argument can stand on its own feet. (Indeed, a number of other scholars have used the alternative models in their own studies.) But, strictly speaking, the argument is unfinished. It remains an invitation to our colleague, and to the reader: please join the debate.

For the student or citizen, the chapters on the missile crisis are meant to make persuasive an unhappy, troubling, but inescapable fact about this world. No event demonstrates more clearly than the missile crisis that with respect to nuclear war there is an awesome crack between *unlikelihood* and *impossibility*. Especially in the aftermath of the Cold War, most people would like to imagine that the nuclear sword of Damocles has been carefully lowered and put away, even if it has not been hammered into a plowshare. But in fact the superpower nuclear arsenals and stockpiles, even if diminished, are still in the U.S. and Russia today and will remain there for the foreseeable future (highly enriched uranium having a half-life of three quarters of a million years). While the adversarial competition between the U.S. and Soviet Union that led to the missile crisis has now faded, other nuclear risks have arisen. For reasons that will become evident in the conceptual chapters, the risk of one or more nuclear weapons exploding on American soil may even be greater now than during the last decades of the Cold War. Furthermore, the theoretical chapters, especially the summaries of various areas of the literature, should acquaint the interested student with what serious analysts do and with what their analyses have produced. But the chief attraction, we hope, will be to bring her or him to the frontiers of analysis of foreign policy, and indeed of all public policy.

Third and fourth are a *regular reader* of foreign policy articles in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Financial Times*, or other serious newspaper and a *journalist*. In considering their interests and tastes, we found less difference between these two individuals and the first two readers than we had first imagined. Thus we hope that both the layman and the journalist will find the entire study relevant, for some of the same reasons. Some of them, of course, will find the summaries of the literature and more formal considerations in each of the conceptual chapters too academic. If

so, they can skip the conceptual chapters, except for the introductory sections and statements of each paradigm.

Fifth is the spouse of one of our colleagues, *an intelligent person not especially interested in foreign affairs*, and thus a good stand-in for “general readers.” After reading an earlier draft of the manuscript, a colleague recommended it to his spouse with the advice, “Read the introduction and then just read the alternate chapters on the missile crisis.” These chapters can be read simply as an unfolding of the evidence about this crucial event from three alternative vantage points. The general reader should be forewarned, however, that this path will not leave him with a confident account of “what really happened.” Indeed, if we have been successful, it should lead him to become interested in the issues to which the conceptual chapters are addressed.

### **A Note on Sources**

As John F. Kennedy warned with explicit reference to the Cuban missile crisis, “Any historian who walks through this mine field of charges and countercharges should proceed with some care.” Our discussion of the missile crisis makes use of all information in the published record. As the footnotes attest, the amount of information available and archived is extraordinary. We have also been privileged to have interviews and conversations with most of the high-level participants in the crisis and many individuals who have spent time reminiscing with the central participants. We have interviewed a number of people who were involved in the lower-level operations of the U.S. and Soviet governments during the crisis. For their patience and consideration, as well as their information, we are most grateful.

### **Acknowledgments**

The origins of this book go back at least to the spring of 1966, when several Harvard faculty members began meeting to discuss the impact of “bureaucracy” on “policy”—the gap between the intentions of the actors and the results of governmental action. The “May Group,” as it came to be known after the chairman, Ernest R. May, included Morton H. Halperin, Fred C. Ikle, William W. Kaufmann, Andrew W. Marshall, Richard E. Neustadt, Don K. Price, Harry S. Rowen, and Graham Allison as *rapporteur*. That group hooked Allison on the problem, supplied him with more ideas than he could assimilate, and provided constructive criticism of every successive attempt to formulate what became the general argument of this book. Since Zelikow later taught for years jointly with Neustadt and May, the book still represents to a large extent the most recent but still unfinished “Evolving Paper” of

that group. The group later met in the late 1960s and early 1970s as the Research Seminar on Bureaucracy, Politics, and Policy of the Institute of Politics in the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Membership in the group included Francis M. Bator, Joseph L. Bower, William M. Capron, Michel Crozier, Philip B. Heymann, Albert O. Hirschman, Stanley Hoffmann, Henry D. Jacoby, Doris H. Kearns, Lance Liebman, David S. Mundel, Edwin O. Reischauer, Thomas C. Schelling, John Steinbruner, James Q. Wilson, Samuel L. Williamson, and Adam Yarmolinsky. To this group, and to each of the members individually, we are most grateful.

In addition to members of the May Group, a large number of other readers offered pertinent criticisms and suggestions on drafts of the original edition. For services beyond any call of duty or responsibility, we thank Alexander L. George, William R. Harris, Roger Hilsman, Theodore R. Marmor, Warner C. Schilling, Leon V. Sigal, Harrison Wellford, Martin S. Wishnatsky, Albert Wohlstetter, Roberta Wohlstetter, and Charles Wolf, Jr.

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Four individuals deserve special note for the intellectual and personal debts Allison incurred. The influence of Thomas C. Schelling will be obvious in the chapter on Model I. The impact of Andrew W. Marshall's ideas is marked, especially in the chapter on Model II. The heaviest debt, which is clearest in the chapter on Model III, is to Richard E. Neustadt. To each of these individuals he is deeply grateful. Finally, Elisabeth K. M. Allison was companion, colleague, and counselor throughout the journey, from its origins to the finish line.

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## NOTES

1. John F. Kennedy, "Preface," to Theodore Sorensen, *Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch and the Arrows* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).



OCTOBER 1962

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b>	29	30	31			