

Airlifts in Time

1st Lt Justin Giovannettone

Lessons in Time

“History repeats itself” is a common refrain among many casual and even some more formal observers of history. For the policymaker however, such thinking is surely a trap. No two crises are exactly the same – whether in terms of circumstance, appropriate response or corresponding outcomes. On the other hand, a policy or decision maker who does not examine the past in order to gain insight into the present is surely handicapped. This article examines two historically unique strategic airlifts and the crises and decisions that led to them in the context of these assertions.

The first operation considered below is the Berlin Airlift – the successful United States led effort to supply the western sectors of Berlin after ground access to the city was cutoff by the Soviet Union in June 1948. The airlift, codenamed Operation VITTLES, emerged as an enormous operational and strategic success for the U.S. and its western allies – demonstrating the impressive capacity of the newly created U.S. Air Force, saving West Berlin from envelopment by the Soviet Union, and demonstrating U.S. resolve against Soviet aggression; all while avoiding an outbreak of war in Europe. The second operation, NICKEL GRASS, involved the unilateral U.S. resupply of Israel during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. That airlift, though a significant success operationally, was at best only a partial success strategically. The resupply very likely saved Israel from defeat and by doing so prevented a Soviet proxy victory in the Middle East. However, Operation NICKEL GRASS also helped prompt, if not directly resulted in, the devastating Arab oil embargo from October 1973 to March 1974, the effects of which burdened the economies of the U.S. and its allies for years to come.

Operations VITTLES and NICKEL GRASS are distinct in U.S. history in that they were both strategic airlifts used exclusively to support an ally or allied population in peril without the presence of or intent to introduce combat forces. Each operation was also executed under complex domestic and international political conditions and had enormous global strategic significance. There are important differences as well – in the structure of the crises themselves, the responses by the administrations under whose watch they occurred, and in the content of the supplies airlifted.

The intent below is to answer one simple question: Why was one operation a strategic success, while the other was only a partial strategic success (and thus a partial strategic failure)? Emerging from the answer to that question is a set of lessons learned that can assist American strategic policymakers; first, to identify where potentially dangerous crises of a similar nature may occur in the future; and second, to better position the country and themselves to deal with such crises when and if they do emerge.

The method of analysis used here was adapted from Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May’s 1986 book, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*. In conjunction with analysis of how decision makers – primarily American presidents – have used history since the

end of the Second World War, *Thinking in Time* prescribes a set of “mini-methods” that decision makers can apply to make more effective decisions and make better use of history when making such decisions. The book is helpful here in two ways: First, Neustadt and May’s “mini-methods,” when applied to historic case studies, conveniently offers a means to analyze the decision making process and helps pinpoint where policymakers in the past might have done better. For example, they recommend leaders faced with an erupting crisis list (on paper, not just orally) what is *Known*, *Unclear*, and *Presumed* about a situation in order to isolate the key issues at hand.¹ Thus, for the purposes of this article, comparing the *Knowns*, *Unclears*, and *Presumed* of Presidents Harry S Truman and Richard M. Nixon leading up to and during of Operations VITTLES and NICKEL GRASS help us to better understand the events from their perspectives. Secondly, Neustadt and May also recommend decision makers list the *likenesses* and *differences* between a present crisis and apparently analogous crises from the past. Doing so should help avoid simplistic and dangerous conclusions about cause and effect and sharpen one’s own objectives. For our purposes moreover, the likeness and differences “mini-method” helps us to flesh out Operations VITTLES and NICKEL GRASS from the perspective of an American president facing a similar crisis today and thus is key to deriving our lessons learned.

“We Stay in Berlin, Period”

On 28 June 1948, ten days after the Soviet Union announced the blockade of all western ground traffic to Berlin, President Truman chaired an oval office meeting with Secretary of Defense James Forrestal, Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royal and Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett. The question of how to respond to the blockade was the primary topic. “We stay in Berlin, period,” was Truman’s characteristically blunt answer. Royal asked Truman whether the consequences had been fully thought through. To this Truman replied, “We will have to deal with the situation as it develops.”²

Such apparently hasty decision-making would probably not be endorsed by Neustadt and May, who emphasize the importance of considering both *what to do* and *how to do it* as two “inextricably interlaced” questions in the decision making process. The idea being that the right decision about what to do cannot be arrived at without understanding how, and therefore if, said decision might be achieved. Thus *what to do* - staying in Berlin – did not address the *how to do it* – which could have meant an attempt at busting the blockade with a ground convoy and therein risking war with the Soviets, or could have meant an airlift of undetermined duration.

Of course, by the time Truman held the meeting on 28 June, the airlift had already begun. On 22 June, General Lucius D. Clay, U.S. Commander in Chief European Command, directed Lt. Gen Curtis LeMay, Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe to begin the airlift. USAFE aircraft delivered 156 tons in 64 sorties that day.³ Truman seemed to have settled on the airlift as the *how to do it*; however, he and others understood the airlift as only a temporary operation while a diplomatic solution to the crisis was worked out: “In this way we hoped that we might be able to feed Berlin until the diplomatic deadlock could be broken.”⁴

Clay meanwhile advocated sending an armed convoy through the blockade to Berlin to call what he presumed was a Soviet bluff. On 25 June, he sent a message to Army Undersecretary William Draper stating, “I am still convinced that a determined movement of convoys with troop

protection would reach Berlin and that such a showing might well prevent rather than build up Soviet pressures which could lead to war.”⁵ Truman vetoed the proposal. He likely had more faith in a diplomatic solution than Clay, but additionally, Truman’s *what to do* – stay in Berlin – had an important footnote.

Troop demobilization in Europe during 1945 and 1946 had left only about 60,000 American troops on the continent in 1948; just over 10,000 were combat troops. The Soviets, in contrast, still had some 300,000-400,000 troops in Europe.⁶ If Clay’s convoy sparked a war, Truman might have been forced to respond to overwhelming Soviet force by employing atomic weapons, of which America had about 50 at the time to the Soviet’s none. It is no secret that Truman dreaded having to resort again to the A-bomb after his ordering its use on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II.⁷ So in addition to staying in Berlin, the footnote to Truman’s *what to do* was to *avoid a war with the Soviets*.

That Truman rejected the convoy option in favor of an airlift is the crucial decision of the crisis. That it was the right decision is almost universally accepted. An important question for us is how did Truman – considering the pressure on him to respond with force and the uncertainty of indefinitely supplying a city from the air – arrive at the decision to reject Clay’s convoy option in favor of the airlift? The answer can be found by examining the period prior to the imposition of the blockade, which may have in fact allowed the Truman Administration to inadvertently accomplish something resembling Neustadt and May’s *known, unclear, and presumed* mini-method.

Truman’s Knowns, Unclears, and Presumed

Following the joint occupation of Berlin by Allied forces in May 1945, written agreements between the western allies and the Soviet Union provided three 20 mile-wide air corridors connecting West Berlin with Hamburg, Frankfurt/Main, and Hannover-Bueckeburg guaranteeing U.S., British and French aircraft the right to travel to and from the city. On the other hand, the western allies received only verbal assurances of rail, road and barge access to the city. Beginning in early 1948 the validity of those verbal assurances was put to the test. Relations between the Soviet Union and the U.S. sunk to new lows as negotiations over the reunification of defeated Germany broke down. Anticipating the allies’ intention to create a West German state, the Soviets began harassing British and American trains to Berlin. Then in March (the same month Congress passed the Marshall Plan) the Soviets imposed rules requiring all military trains to and from Berlin to obtain permits and be searched.

The U.S. responded by canceling all military trains to Berlin and implementing what became known as the “Little Lift” – a ten-day airlift to resupply the military garrison in Berlin – using C-47 Skytrains to deliver 300 tons of goods. After the “Little Lift” USAFE began work on contingency plans for limited airlifts into Berlin that might be necessary in the future. The plans were not intended to fulfill the massive requirements of what became the Berlin Airlift after the June blockade, though they were undoubtedly a primer. More importantly, the experience of those first six months of 1948 filled in much of the *knowns, unclears, and presumed* for Truman and his staff, and may indeed have been the key to their successful handling of the crisis.

By June, Truman and company knew of the Soviets' tendency to resort to harassment of ground traffic to Berlin when they were frustrated by events elsewhere. Furthermore, they knew that the Soviets could not, without breaking written agreements, block air traffic to and from the city. Though the ability of the U.S. and British air forces to supply the city indefinitely had not yet been demonstrated, an *unclear*, at least they could conduct a temporary resupply, a *known*, while diplomats would iron out the crisis, a *presumed*. The presumption that the crisis would be resolved relatively quickly by negotiations turned out of course to be wrong. This failure was remedied nonetheless by the U.S. and British air forces' ability to implement the airlift indefinitely – something that was at first not only considered unlikely by Truman, but deemed impossible by many of his domestic critics.

There were other relevant *knowns*, *unclears*, and *presumed*: the troop balance on the continent – again, a *known* – and the *presumption* that a retreat from Berlin would be similar to the appeasement of Adolph Hitler before World War II and thus would only serve to encourage Soviet aggression.

But it was the experience with the mini-blockades and subsequent “Little Lift” that not only helped prepare the newly created U.S. Air Force for the possible need for an airlift, but also educated Truman about the possibilities of airlifting supplies to Berlin. Thus, he had a clear understanding of the dynamics of the situation and an option short of war when the real blockade came. In other words, he had already applied one of Neustadt and May's key mini-methods before the crisis broke (though unintentionally, and not on paper as recommended).

Without this background, Truman might have been more agreeable to Clay's more aggressive proposals. On 10 July, when it was becoming clear that the Soviets didn't intend to back down, Clay proposed that the U.S. threaten the Soviets with the armed convoy maneuver if the blockade was not lifted by a specific date. Truman again rejected the idea, as he also did the suggestion at a 22 July meeting that he turn over control of America's atomic weapons to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁸

That meeting was also the one at which Truman made the decision to fully commit the U.S. to the airlift for the long haul. During the meeting, Clay reported that Operation VITTLES, as the airlift had been named, was exceeding all expectations in terms of tonnage delivered – 2,500 tons a day – but was still about 2,000 tons short of what was thought to be the minimum level needed to sustain Berlin without extreme hardship, particularly during the winter. He asked for and was granted 75 additional C-47s, which he estimated would allow him to reach the minimum requirements.⁹

The airlift proceeded through the summer and fall – increasing monthly the tonnage delivered – from 69,000 tons in July to 119,002 tons in August; 139,623 in September; and 147,581 in October. There was widespread speculation that the airlift could not deliver sufficient supplies through the winter months when weather in Germany would deteriorate significantly. Critics, including renowned *New York Herald Tribune* columnist Walter Lippmann, were nonetheless proven wrong after a series of logistical adjustments and the authorization of additional transports by Truman helped the airlift adjust to the winter difficulties.¹⁰ While total tonnage delivered dropped in November to 113,588 tons, it began to rise again in December to 141,468

and reached 171,959 in January. The airlift began to consistently exceed the requirements for maintaining minimum levels of comfort in the city and stockpiling of supplies began. It was becoming clear that the airlift could sustain Berlin indefinitely and the counterblockade, which was initiated by the western allies and eventually cut off the flow of steel, chemicals and manufactured goods from Western Europe to the Soviet control areas, was taking its toll.¹¹ The Soviets began lifting the blockade in April and on 12 May 1949, both blockades were lifted. Operation VITTLES entered history as a shining example of American determination, ingenuity and goodwill. It was a decisive U.S. victory in the Cold War and Truman called it one of his proudest decisions – the success of which likely contributed to his slim reelection in November 1948.¹²

“Get Them in the Air, Now”

On 12 October 1973, President Richard M. Nixon faced a situation at least as serious as that faced by President Truman in June 1948. Six days earlier, Egypt and Syria (with assistance from Iraq, Jordan and Libya) launched surprise attacks on two fronts against Israel. The attacks, launched on the Israeli holy day Yom Kippur, achieved almost complete strategic surprise, forcing Israeli forces to fall back from positions established after the 1967 Arab Israeli War. Before the war began, Israel calculated that it had equipment and supplies for about three weeks of war. This estimate however was based on the country’s triumphant experience during the 1967 war, when preemptive strikes allowed Israel to quickly and decisively defeat Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Six years later, caught off guard by Arab armies recently reequipped with new Soviet armaments, the Israelis were expending ammunition and losing tanks and planes at a far greater rate than in 1967.

Nixon was already aware that Israeli supplies were getting perilously low when on 12 October, he received a confidential letter from Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir stating that Israel’s survival was at risk. Nixon had already authorized a resupply of Israel on 9 October and tasked his Secretary of State/National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger with managing the logistics (and politics) of the resupply.¹³ After being appointed Secretary of State on 22 September, Kissinger maintained his position as National Security Advisor, thus becoming the only official in U.S. history to hold both titles simultaneously. Due in part to the dual distractions of Vice President Spiro Agnew’s resignation (11 October) and an escalating Watergate investigation, Kissinger had been basically running the show since the beginning of the crisis. However, while Nixon’s other concerns ensured Kissinger was the central figure in the crisis, the president remained involved throughout – making crucial decisions, including the final order to the military to initiate the resupply.

Since the war began, Kissinger struggled desperately to balance a confounding mix of U.S. interests. Early in the crisis, he arranged for the Israelis to pick up supplies in the U.S. in unmarked El Al planes. However, Israel’s national airline could not handle the required tonnage. An effort was then made to enlist the U.S. civilian airline industry in the resupply effort. That effort also failed, in part because no insurance company would cover the planes flying into a war zone.¹⁴ The president could have compelled the civilian airlines to play ball under the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program if he declared a national emergency, but that would have defeated the point. Kissinger’s attempt to coordinate a resupply without obvious U.S. government

involvement was aimed at not offending Israel's Middle Eastern enemies, particularly Saudi Arabia and Iran, whose influence in global petroleum markets had recently become stronger than ever.

However, on 10 October the Soviets began to resupply Egypt and Syria. That move proved to be critical. The possibility of the Soviets achieving a proxy victory over US-allied Israel (emphasized by Mier's letter and a desperate phone call to Kissinger by Israel's ambassador to the U.S. at 1:45 a.m. the day before)¹⁵ prompted Nixon to step in on 12 October and order the U.S. Air Force to initiate the resupply immediately. Nixon made it clear that he was aware of the potential consequences of offending Arab nations and was willing to risk them. In his memoirs, Nixon recalls a conversation with Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, who was the administration official most concerned about the effects of an oil embargo.

I called Schlesinger and told him that I understood his concern and appreciated his caution. I assured him that I was fully aware of the gravity of my decision and that I would accept complete personal responsibility if, as a result, we alienated the Arabs and had our oil supplies cut off. I said if we could not get the private planes, we should use our own military transports. "Whichever way we have to do it, get them in the air, now."¹⁶

The decision was made and Operation NICKEL GRASS began. The U.S. Air Force Military Airlift Command had been preparing for the airlift by positioning materiel at several locations in the eastern United States. When Nixon's order came the supplies were loaded onto C-141 Starlifters and C-5 Galaxies. Within nine hours of Nixon's decisions the aircraft were ready to depart. Last minute complications included bad weather at Dover AFB, where the first C-5s would depart, and some high level diplomacy to convince Portugal to allow the aircraft to make stopovers at Lajes Airfield in the Azores (no other European countries would allow stopovers or overflights). The first C-5 landed at Lod/Ben-Gurion air complex in Tel Aviv on 13 October. It unloaded 97 tons of 105 mm howitzer shells, which were quickly delivered to the Israeli army. Within the next 24 hours U.S. military aircraft would deliver another 829 tons.¹⁷ That same day, Israeli counterattacks, which actually commenced before the first U.S. aircraft landed, began to make significant gains on both fronts.

The Oil Weapon

On 15 October, the decision to initiate the resupply became public. The next day, oil ministers of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries meeting in Kuwait City announced that they would raise the price of oil 70 percent. The day after that, 17 October, the oil ministers agreed to cut production by five percent from September levels and continue cutting by five percent each month until the U.S. reduced its support for Israel, thus pushing the price of oil even higher. On 18 October, Arab nations, led by Saudi Arabia, threatened to cut off all oil shipments to countries supporting Israel if the U.S. resupply wasn't halted immediately. On 20 October, that is exactly what they did.¹⁸

That same day Kissinger landed in the Soviet Union to begin talks that would eventually lead to a ceasefire. Though an American-Soviet cease-fire proposal was approved by the United Nations

on 22 October, fighting continued until 24 October with the Israelis the obvious victor on the battlefield.¹⁹ Interestingly, in his recent book, Kissinger states that following the ceasefire declaration, the “United States had achieved its strategic objectives: (1) it had fulfilled its obligations to Israel; (2) it had reduced the Soviet role in the Middle East... and (3) it had maintained friendly relations with the Arab world.”²⁰

But had *all* of America’s strategic goals really been met? During the following months, as the effects of the embargo set in, gasoline prices in the U.S. rose 40 percent and lines at gas stations grew to previously unimagined lengths as drivers feared there might be none available the next day. The embargo quickly pushed the country into a recession. If the U.S. had indeed “maintained friendly relations with the Arab world,” Americans waiting in lines at gas stations hardly noticed.

Nixon’s Knowns, Unclears and Presumed

To better understand the calculations that resulted in the initiation of Operation NICKEL GRASS we turn again to Neustadt and May. Though there is no indication that Nixon or Kissinger listed out the *knowns*, *unclears*, and *presumed*, a review of the crisis history does indicate that they had a solid grasp of most of them nonetheless. Clearly, by 12 October, Nixon and Kissinger were well aware of the possibility that the Arab oil producing nations might unleash the oil weapon, a *known*. Nixon’s statement to Schlesinger demonstrates as much. On that same day, he also received a letter from the chairmen of the American oil companies operating in Saudi Arabia warning him that continued support for Israel would evoke retaliation from the Arab oil producing nations “that would produce a major petroleum supply crisis.” The exploration of other options for supplying Israel was a somewhat haphazard attempt to avoid such a crisis.²¹

Two big *unclears* on that fateful day were: 1) Would the Arab nations actually make good on their threat to initiate an embargo, and 2) would Israel survive without immediate U.S. assistance? As indicated above, Nixon and Kissinger likely believed the answer to the first question was yes and the second one no. There is a subtle distinction here between the *known* – the threat of an oil embargo – and the *unclear* – whether or not the Arab countries would actually go through with the embargo. This left room for hope that they would not, but as former boss of mine was fond of saying, “Hope, is not a plan.”

When deciding *what to do* and *how to do it*, Nixon and Kissinger therefore chose to subordinate the goal of preventing an oil embargo in favor of the mutually supporting goals of saving Israel and stemming Soviet influence in the Middle East. Kissinger states as much in his recent book:

“... all American policy makers were agreed that we should do our utmost to prevent a confrontation with the Arab world... though not to the point of impairing American strategic interests.”²²

Why prevention of the oil embargo was subordinated to their other objectives can be explained by a closer examination of Nixon and Kissinger’s *presumptions*. Before the surprise attack against Israel, the administration had been struggling to

maintain support for détente with the Soviet Union. Their most difficult task in doing so was to demonstrate that it was in America's interest to improve relations with a country, the Soviet Union, which "treats its people in a way distasteful to most Americans."²³ Specifically, they were attempting to secure so-called Most Favored Nation status for the Soviet Union as a sign of goodwill. There was no shortage of opponents to détente in Congress and throughout the country. So Nixon and Kissinger *presumed* that a Soviet proxy victory against US-allied Israel would not only kill the MFN initiative, but the entire policy of détente. Furthermore, strong support for Israel in Congress made Nixon more inclined to support Israel for domestic political reasons. Though Nixon never had much support from the American Jewish community, he knew with the Watergate investigation heating up he might need all the support, particularly in Congress, that he could get.

These presumptions were matters of domestic and international politics – two areas in which Nixon and Kissinger, respectively, were experienced authorities. However, another important set of presumptions, related to the effects of a potential oil embargo, entered the realm of international economics – a subject with which both had considerably less experience. Significantly, the official who was most apprehensive about the airlift was Schlesinger – a former economics professor at Harvard. In contrast, Kissinger – himself, a former history professor at Harvard – is said to have told his aides a few months after the embargo began, "Don't talk to me about barrels of oil. They might as well be bottles of Coca Cola. I don't understand!"²⁴ Economics was not Kissinger's game.

Kissinger did however know his history. He knew, for example, that the U.S. secretly supplied Israelis during the Six Day War.²⁵ And he surely knew that Arab nations also imposed an oil embargo during that war. That embargo almost immediately removed six million barrels of oil per day (bbl/d) from the world market – the 1973 embargo removed only five. Yet the price of oil did not quadruple, gas lines didn't emerge and western economies weren't thrown into recession. One significant difference between 1967 and 1973 was that the conditions in the international petroleum market had changed dramatically both in terms of supply and demand. On the demand side, worldwide oil consumption increased from 36 million bbl/d in 1967 to 56 million bbl/d in 1973. Consumption in the U.S. alone rose from 12.5 million bbl/d to 17.3 million bbl/d over the same period.²⁶ On the supply side, changes were even more significant. From 1957 to 1962 the U.S. maintained a surplus capacity in domestic production of about four million bbl/d; by 1970 it was down to one million bbl/d.²⁷ Furthermore, U.S. production capacity reached its peak in 1970 at about 11.2 million bbl/d – and began decreasing steadily after that. Meanwhile, production in the Middle East rose from 26 percent of total global production in 1967 to 36 percent in 1973.²⁸ The combination of increased production in the Middle East, increased consumption throughout the developed world, and a corresponding decrease in U.S. production gave the oil weapon its newfound potency in 1973.

Lessons Learned

Whether Nixon and Kissinger grasped the changing dynamic in the international petroleum market *during* the crisis is not as relevant as it may seem. Even if they had comprehended America's vulnerability to the embargo, it would not have done them much good after 6 October 1973. It is likely Nixon still would have chosen to suffer the embargo in order to save Israel and defeat the Soviets. A real solution could only have been set in motion well before the war began.

One of the key differences between Operations VITTLES and NICKEL GRASS is that events occurring between January and June 1948 allowed the Truman Administration to become familiar with the crucial issues related to a blockade. The 1973 crisis emerged unexpectedly, prompting Kissinger's frantic search for acceptable options to resupply Israel. Additionally the 1973 crisis arose at the worst possible time (think: Agnew, Watergate, and growing Middle East oil dependency). Based on these differences we come to our first strategic lesson learned:

Crises become more difficult to deal with once they occur; therefore, if possible, identify potential crises in advance and start to deal with what you will do and how you will ???check quote??? do it before a crisis arises.

Other than having better timing though, what could have warned Nixon and Kissinger of the country's vulnerability and the perilous situation America faced in the Middle East? Certainly part of the answer relates to a greater appreciation for economics. Nixon was certainly not unaware of America's growing energy dilemma in the early 1970s. He had imposed price controls on oil in 1971 and given a major Presidential address on energy in April 1973, during which he announced the elimination of petroleum import quotas.²⁹ The real shortfall though was a failure to link the new energy environment to national security. Economics is a means of national power – along with political (diplomatic) and military power – for the U.S. as well as other countries. Used aggressively, economic weapons can have effects almost as devastating as military weapons: the disruption of industries, unemployment, starvation, social upheaval and capital flight. This is probably truer today, amid the most highly integrated global economy in history, than it was thirty years ago. So our second lesson is:

Appreciate economics as a strategic factor that can be used as a weapon; not only by the United States, but against it as well.

Certainly, economic concerns need to be balanced with other strategic considerations. American interests in the Middle East have been conflicted, ironically, ever since Truman recognized Israel just before the Berlin Blockade in May 1948. What should have raised red flags in 1973, as opposed to 1967, were the emerging dynamics of the international oil market. While solving the Middle East dilemma itself seems to be a little too much to expect, certainly something more could have been done. Had Kissinger approached Saudi Arabia's King Faisal before the crisis to address the king's concerns – Faisal tried desperately throughout 1973 to warn Nixon that if America failed to deconflict its Middle East interests, it would be "extremely difficult for [Saudi Arabia] to continue to supply the United States with oil" – a deal to prevent the embargo could likely have been reached.³⁰ Instead, Egypt's President Anwar Sadat convinced the reluctant king to cooperate with the surprise attack by using the oil weapon against Israel's allies.³¹ Here we see

another difference between the two crises: though all of America's strategic concerns relating Berlin in 1948 were consistent, in 1973 the country's strategic interests in the Middle East were tragically conflicted. Our third lesson emerges from this difference while also building upon the first two:

U.S. policymakers should identify potential conflicts where America has contradictory interests; pay close attention to those potential conflicts where one player might wield economic leverage against America and deal with those conflicts before true crises arise.

While it is true America's interest in the Middle East may still be conflicted, it is also important to note there are several other areas where this lesson may apply. Ongoing tensions between Taiwan and China, Pakistan and India, Georgia and Russia are the most apparent. In each case the U.S. has strong strategic ties with the first country, while its economic ties with the second country are significant and growing. While it would be inappropriate here to delve into the economic and related political dynamics of each of these situations, it certainly would be appropriate – in light of the lessons learned above – for the current U.S. administration to do so in Washington.

Notes

1. Neustadt and May refer to the *Known, Unknown, and Presumed* “mini-method” throughout their book, but concept is introduced on pages 37-38. Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*, (New York: The Free Press, 1986)

12. David McCullough, *Truman*, (New York: Touchstone, 1992), 630

13. USAFE Berlin Airlift Website. Retrieved on 9 November 2003, <http://www.usafe.af.mil/berlin/quickfax.htm>

14. Truman, Harry S., *Memoirs, Volume II* (Garden City, NY, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), pp. 121-22

15. Smith, Jean Edward, editor, *The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany, 1945 - 1949* (Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1974), pp. 699-704

16. D.M. Giangreco and Robert E. Griffin *Airbridge to Berlin --- The Berlin Crisis of 1948, Its Origins and Aftermath* (Ballentine Books, 1988), 91

17. For Truman's views on possible use of the atomic bomb again, see McCullough, 649-50

18. McCullough, 649-50

19. Giangreco and Griffin, 97

110. Truman doubled the number of C-54 Skymasters, which carried about 10 tons compared to the C-47's 2.5 tons, available for the airlift.
111. Giangreco and Griffin, 175
112. McCullough, 631
113. Richard Milhouse Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 923
114. Robertson, Kenneth K. Jr, *Operation Nickel Grass: The Airlift to Israel and Coronation of the C-5 Galaxy, October-November 1973*. 2nd ed., (Dover, Del.: AMC Museum Foundation, Inc, 2000), 22
115. Kissinger provides the transcript of this and numerous other conversations in his recent book, *Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 144
116. Nixon, 926-7
117. Walter Boyne, "Operation Nickel Grass," *Air Force Magazine* December 1998, Vol. 81, No. 12
118. Daniel Yergin, *The Prize*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p 607-8. Also see front page stories from the *New York Times* 16 –21 October, 1973
119. Ian J. Bickerton and Carla L. Klausner, *A Concise History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2002), 175
120. Kissinger, 305
121. Yergin, 604
122. Strategic interests here relating primarily to the Soviets, but significantly, not including oil price stability. Kissinger, 159
123. Bernard Gwertzman, "Détente and Mideast: High U.S. Aides still Hopeful, but Critics of Stronger Soviet Ties Are Bolstered," *The New York Times*, October 18, 1973, p 19
124. Yergin, 613
125. Kissinger mentioned this to Schlesinger on 7 October 1973. See Kissinger, 94
126. BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2002. Retrieved at www.bp.com
127. Yergin, 567

128. BP Statistical Review of World Energy June 2002. Retrieved at www.bp.com

129. The quota, originally imposed by President Eisenhower, allowed only a set level of America's oil supply to be imported and thus kept the domestic price artificially higher than the market would naturally dictate. See Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 42-47.

130. After the airlift began, Kissinger tried to open channels to both Faisal and the Shah of Iran. But both efforts were in vain. See Kissinger, 249

131. Yergin, *The Prize*, 595

Contributor

Justin Giovannettone is a 1st Lieutenant in the United States Air Force. He received his master's degree in International Commerce and Policy at George Mason University in May 2004. This article was adapted from a paper Lt Giovannettone wrote for the Military Operations Other than War class at GMU. The views expressed in this article are his alone, written in an academic context, and do not represent the views of the Air Force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

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