

The after effects of world war ii assignment

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President Kennedy found remedy in the maintenance of open channels of external communication, while regarding the international domino effect of each action, and exhibiting constant skepticism in pursuit of a peaceful resolution. German sociologist Max Weber wrote of the Great War, “ this war, with all its ghastliness, is nevertheless grand and wonderful. It is worth experiencing’ (PEP 768). Embellishing the heroism of warfare, Weber reflects a common acceptance of war in the early twentieth century as one of sport and necessity.

However, with the development of nuclear arms came a paradigm shift concerning war and its role amid international powers. Acknowledging the destructive potential of nuclear warfare, Kennedy adamantly stated, “ We were not going to misjudge or challenge the Other side needlessly, or precipitously push our adversaries into a course of action that was not intended” (75). Using historical precedent as his guide, President Kennedy acts upon the belief that war is rarely intentional, while also recognizing the evolving dynamic of war as one of an arms struggle.

The application of this lesson exists in Kennedy’s resolution to utilize urinate as opposed to armed conflict at the Soviets union’s initial threat. Foreign ships given orders to retreat would be afforded such an opportunity, any vessel refusing to stop would have its rudders disabled to avoid loss of life, and ships not belonging to the Soviet union were the first and only to be boarded, as to not incite a military response. Executing such action demonstrates the President’s clear understanding of past misjudgment, and the paradigm shift that now characterized war as something not of sport, but of mass destruction.

Robert Kennedy reaffirms such in declaring, “ If we erred, we erred not only for ourselves and our country, but for the lives of those who had never been given an opportunity to play a role” (81). This statement epitomizes the overwhelming burden of nuclear war, and the cognizance necessary to avoid it. Vital to the avoidance of miscalculation and the development of a mutual understanding were open channels of communication during the Cuban Crisis. President Kennedy recognized the importance of consistent communication to evade impulsive action, and promote logically sound decision-making.

Such an example exists in Robert Kennedy’s *Thirteen Days* in which Soviet Chairman Khrushchev and President Kennedy exchange messages outlining the guidelines towards peaceful resolution. “ We must not succumb to petty passions, or to transient things, but should realize that if indeed war should break out, then it would not be in our power to stop it, for such is the logic of war” (66). Stated by Khrushchev in pursuit of mutual amity, such communication demonstrates the importance of clarity and transparency under desperate circumstances.

This quotation further exhibits recognition of the warped nature of warfare, and acknowledges history wrongdoings that provoked destruction. President Kennedy concluded deliberations in stating, “ the effect of such a settlement on easing world tensions would enable us to work towards a more general arrangement the United States is very much interested in reducing tensions and halting the arms race” (79). The clear and concise nature of this exchange lends praise to the diplomatic nature of Kennedy’s tactics,

providing both the United States and Soviet Union with the opportunity to ultimately avoid nuclear holocaust.

The snowball effect exhibited through the First World War demonstrates the danger of tumbling into conflict through allied obligation and diplomatic tepidity. President Kennedy's ability to tactfully neutralize the Cuban Crisis demonstrates an awareness of that danger, and an appreciation for the international domino effect that warfare would generate between nations. Strongly stated by Robert Kennedy, " we had to be aware of this responsibility at all times, aware that we were deciding for the United States, the Soviet Union, NATO, and for all of mankind" (75).

Such concern for the global repercussion of warfare can be observed in President Kennedy's constant scrutiny Of military recommendations and their effect upon the entire western hemisphere. Seeking alternative solutions to war as well as the approval of global powers, Robert Kennedy further states, " we were able to establish a firm legal foundation for our action under the AS charter, and our position around the world was unanimously supported for a quarantine" (40).

This diplomatic strategy, founded upon the support of strong European and American allies, aided the United States in considering the implications of all possible courses of action as to ensure a promise of peace for themselves and the global community. A final strategy, central to the diplomatic triumph of the Cuban Missile Crisis, refers to the establishment and success of Kennedy's Executive Committee of the National Security Council. While each

proposed solution held inherent weaknesses, this committee would allow for constant deliberation, argument, and debate.

The ability to scrutinize each proposal reinforced a reasonable decision-making process, thereby diminishing the risk of the impulsive miscalculation or misjudgment that had prompted war only decades earlier. Embodying the significance of the Executive Committee, Robert Kennedy declares, “everyone had an equal opportunity to express himself and to be heard directly. It was a tremendously advantageous procedure that does not frequently occur within the executive branch” (36).

Furthermore, President Kennedy is reported to have gone through “considerable lengths to ensure that he was not insulated from individuals or points of view because of rank or position” (89). While such an arrangement seems idealistic, President Kennedy’s recognition of all available viewpoints provided an extremely broad base of knowledge upon which to draw conclusions. It was this open-minded and reasonable approach that was heavily lacking prior to the Great Wars of the early twentieth century, thereby adding to global disasters that may have been averted under more logical circumstances.

The measures taken by President Kennedy, as presented through Robert Kennedy’s *Thirteen Days*, lend overwhelming praise to his diplomatic triumph during the Cuban Missile Crisis. His success is reported as being founded upon the miscalculations of history, and a correction of those past errors in pursuit of peaceful relations. However, the idealistic manner in

which the President's actions are portrayed reek of both brotherly admiration and posthumous praise. Such a utopian presentation only serves to diminish

President Kennedy's heroic role amidst the crisis, and leads the reader to question how pivotal his leadership actually was. A personal memoir of Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days* must be read with a grain of salt to properly assess its validity as a historical record. While the President certainly acknowledged the socio-technological paradigm shift of modern warfare in addition to the stupidity from which the First World War emerged, *Thirteen Days* most obviously dismisses crucial events preceding the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Bay Of Pigs Invasion, an unsuccessful attempt by American-trained

Cuban refugees to overthrow the government of Fidel Castro, completely contradicts President Kennedy's supposed concern of the dangers of nuclear war and impulsive military action. The failed invasion, initiated only three months after President Kennedy's inauguration, humiliated the Administration and made communist nations distrustful of the United States. In addition, John F. Kennedy is consistently praised throughout his brother's memoir for welcoming the viewpoints of not just government administrators, but regular people. For example, "he wanted the advice of his Cabinet officers, but he also wished to hear from Tommy Thompson" (89).

However, not once throughout Kennedy's memoir does he mention speaking to field soldiers or their names. The generic label of Tommy Thompson reduces the author's faith in such sources, and President Kennedy is even

shown to mock military fig rest in stating they “lacked the ability to look beyond the limited military field” (90). Such evidence cannot be overlooked in determining the validity of President Kennedy’s success, and reduces the objectivity of this historical source. However, the ultimate success of President Kennedy’s satirical reflections and peace-seeking measures cannot be denied.