

Richard Reeves's Study of the Kennedy Presidency: Implications for Studying Economics and the History of Economic Thought

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This book is, of course, strictly speaking a book on neither economics nor the history of economic thought. It is an account of the presidency of John F. Kennedy (Reeves 1993; all page references are to this book).

It is the story -- or, hermeneutically or discursively speaking, *a* story -- of Cuba (the Bay of Pigs and the Missile Crisis), the Berlin Wall, relations between the U.S. and its Cold War Allies (the multivalence issue of separate Germanies and French policies under Charles de Gaulle), the civil rights movement in the U.S., relations between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. over nuclear testing, Viet Nam, the complex relations between Kennedy and the Congress, and the politics and decision-making of re-election positioning. It is the drama of how, like all other administrations, the Kennedy Administration, in the terminology of C. E. Lindblom, "muddled through" a great many policy crises.¹ It is the story of how game theory and experience defined and nourished the policy of deterrence in the nuclear age (pp. 188, 197, 229, 231, 552 and passim). It is a story of how fiscal policy and civil rights policies were conducted within the perceived pressures and perceptions of other considerations. It is the story of how a self-portrayed man of courage could dither and hesitate about civil rights, eventually pushed both by his brother the attorney general and his vice president (and eventual successor) and by events, always worrying about the price, measured in terms of the failures of his congressional initiatives, he would have to pay. It is the story of hypocrisy and the misuse of government power (of some of the same types but by no means as grievous and dangerous as that of his successor plus one (see pp. 301-302)). It is the story of hypocrisy in the marriage at the center of Camelot. And it concludes with irony: one of the last principal activities of Kennedy prior to his assassination concerned the renewal of the CIA effort to assassinate Fidel Castro.

It is one of the best books I have read, a masterpiece of historical research and a gem of judicious interpretation. One is tempted to say that the narrative is as close to having the facts speak for themselves as can be, but one knows better: While the book is meticulously grounded on a variety of sources, we know that different sources and/or different interpretations could have been given about a great many topics. Still, Reeves's account is seemingly unvarnished and has the ring of descriptive accuracy without manifestly catering to or advancing any ideology or party position. Both the interpretive nature of the story and its reliance on sources taken as data are clear.

So it is a book on neither economics nor the history of economic thought, even though it has evidence for those interested in the history of economists in public service. But the book with its manifold stories has insights if not lessons of putative value to the historian of economic thought.

Section 1 examines the multiplicity of interpretive bases and meanings of the war in Viet Nam. Section 2 examines the comparable situation with regard to the meaning of the Kennedy presidency. Sections 3 and 4 examine two topics which enter into both economic theory and the history of economic thought but remain perhaps not adequately considered:

uncertainty and hypocrisy in the manufacture of public opinion and consent, both of which relate quite fundamentally to the problem of a multiplicity of interpretive bases and meanings. Section 5 presents a conclusionary summing up.

Let it be understood that no position on either the Vietnamese war or the Kennedy presidency is intended. The argument made here is consistent with any particular view of the war or Kennedy. The point has to do with the problem of the meaning assigned to the war and to his administration, which antecedes determinations/judgments of what was right and wrong.

1. Multiplicity of Interpretive Bases and Meanings of the War in Viet Nam

The chief point is hermeneutic: Phenomena can be given multiple interpretations and have multiple meanings. The same object of study, or the same historical episode, can not only be approached from different angles (as in the story of the blind men and the elephant) but the object or episode itself can be multivalenced, having multiple facets of significance and therefore providing multiple interpretations and multiple meanings. Which facet, base or meaning becomes important is both a matter of history and subjectivity; which becomes important depends on subsequent events and *their* subjective interpretation. One implication is the lesson urged by John R. Hicks that no one theory can tell us everything we might want to know about the object of inquiry. The object of study by economists can be approached in different ways because that object has multiple interpretive facets and therefore multiple possible meanings. Which one becomes salient or is treated as interesting is problematic. Which one becomes salient depends on how things work out, or how things are interpreted. The same lesson applies to the history of economic thought. The ideas of a particular individual or school can be approached (e.g., rationally reconstructed) in different ways because those ideas have multiple interpretive facets and therefore multiple possible meanings.

Before considering how this is demonstrated/illustrated in Reeves's study of the Kennedy presidency, let me illustrate by using a poignant and, I would think, noncontroversial example. In the 17 April 1995 edition of the *New York Times* (p. B9), an article by Jere Longman discusses Tegla Loroupe of Kenya, the winner of the November 1994 New York City Marathon. Her story, as it were, has at least eight (possibly somewhat overlapping) facets of meaning: (1) Her personal place in the history of marathon running. (2) Her strategy in running (running the second half faster than the first). (3) Her becoming the first black African woman to win a major marathon. (4) Her serving as a potentially controversial role model for female opportunity and independence in a male-dominated society. (5) Her personal success (prize and bonus money and a Mercedes Benz from the marathon organizers and cattle and sheep from her villagers). (6) Her membership in the Bokot tribe, whereas most of the great Kenyan runners have come from the Nandi tribe. (7) Her overcoming adversity in the form of early health problems. (8) Her treatment in the politics of sports (early ill-treatment by the Kenyan sports federation, for which they later apologized).

Which of these is important? The answer depends on one's interest and on the relative saliency in whatever history is relevant of these eight facets. The meaning of her story, while always stemming from her success in marathoning, will vary depending upon which facet comes to the fore: Kenyan tribal history; male/female relations; running strategy; politics of sports; and courage in the face of adversity; and so on.

Now consider the Vietnamese War and the Kennedy administration which, like its successor administrations, had to contend with conflicting interpretations of what it was all about and what it meant/should be taken to mean. Whatever one's personal view of that tragic war, surely the following constitute the multiplicity of interpretive contexts or bases and multiplicity of meanings of that conflict. It was precisely this multiplicity, coupled with the

relative freedom of action by the administration (and conflicts within it as to how and to what end to exercise that freedom of action) to choose which interpretive base or meaning on which to act, which bedevilled Kennedy and his advisors and successors. (The story told by Reeves must be supplemented, for example, with the dramatic retrospective account and *mea culpa* provided by Robert S. McNamara; McNamara 1995.) I use the phrases "could be interpreted (comprehended) as" and "one facet of meaning" interchangeably.

1. Decolonization: The situation in Viet Nam can be understood in terms of the effort of an indigenous population endeavoring to escape from colonialism. In this regard the U.S. could be seen as taking over, as it were, from the French -- with the same consequences.² Surely this is one facet of meaningfulness of the war. Absent the U.S.-U.S.S.R. conflict, this could very much have become the story of the war as part of a world-historical struggle.

Alternatively, and granted that the U.S.-U.S.S.R. conflict captured the imagination, it is possible to glimpse an idea of the U.S. as making a bid for superpower status so as to impose its view on the world, perhaps a different and more ambitious form of colonization/imperialism, though perhaps only reactive to the Soviet threat.³ For example, in a National Security Council meeting on 22 January 1963 Kennedy is recorded as saying, relative to de Gaulle, that "By strengthening the multilateral concept, it strengthens NATO and increases their dependence on us. This strengthens our influence in Europe and gives us the power to guide Europe and keep it strong . . ." (pp. 454-455).

2. Civil War: Given the division of Viet Nam into North and South by the Geneva conference of 1954, the conflict could be comprehended as a civil war and/or an effect to determine whether and on whose terms the country would be reunited.

3. Cold War: The situation in Viet Nam could be understood, and eventually did largely come to be seen, in terms of the conflict between the United States-Western Europe and the Soviet Union-China.⁴ The war was or could be seen to be in one respect a proxy for the larger struggle; in another respect, one episode of communist expansion versus western containment. In this regard the domino theory held sway, representing the fear that if Viet Nam fell to the communists, the rest of Southeast Asia, hitherto the Indo-China peninsula, would also fall. The domino theory was a derivative of the policy of containment. This perception clearly drove the increasing U.S. involvement -- or as George Washington might have expressed it, entanglement -- in the affairs of the Vietnamese people. That the North Vietnamese success in 1975 in driving out the U.S. and conquering the South did not have a domino effect, does not negate the viability of interpreting the situation in Cold War terms, or as a hot-war component of the Cold War.

4. Market versus planned economy (capitalism versus socialism): Although from the standpoint of 1995, two decades after the North Vietnamese victory and one decade after the replacement of central planning with a market economy in Viet Nam, the issue seems moot; and although it is uncertain how many people on either side of the war believed that the conflict was between market and planned economies, that surely was one facet of meaning. Whatever the salience or historical significance of U.S. versus U.S.S.R., the mode of organization and control of the economy was certainly one basis of interpretation of events and of meaning. The irony -- or Hegelian cunning of history, if you will -- of communist military victory turning into market/capitalist system may suggest (with the wisdom of hindsight, of course) that this way in which the conflict was posed did not, or did not permanently, serve as proxies for market versus planned economy. Indeed, it is probably not too much to say that with Marxism the only viable perceived alternative to capitalist imperialism/colonialism, capitalism's market economy had ideologically to be juxtaposed to central planning. (The irony with regard to Marx is that he believed revolution and socialism had to follow mature capitalism, and Viet Nam hardly qualified.) Only later did the equation of market economy with colonial economy break down. But history and its interpretation

(which interpretation is subject to the principal argument being made here) notwithstanding, market versus central planning was one coefficient or basis of interpretation and meaning of the war.

5. Domestic U.S. politics: The situation could be understood in terms of several dimensions of domestic politics in the United States. One dimension was that of how to counter the perceived threat from communist aggression in a contest understood as being conducted for the control of the world. A second dimension was the perennial conflict between two mentalities: between those who are willing if not eager to resort to military action to overcome perceived antagonisms and those who were more pacific, between those who would pursue military and those who would pursue diplomatic solutions. A third dimension was straightforward nationalism, now taking the form of anticommunism, which sanctioned the extension of national will abroad. A correlative to nationalism was imperialism. Because the U.S. response to events in Viet Nam, largely commencing in the 1950s and 1960s, had to be worked out through domestic politics (including that situation as a potential part of the Cold War response), this facet of meaningfulness was inevitable.

6. Buddhist versus Catholic: An overwhelming proportion of Vietnamese were Buddhist but the rulers were largely Catholic, both a result and a vestige of French colonization. One feature of the situation, especially notable during the Kennedy presidency, was the series of self-immolations by Buddhist monks in protest of Diem government actions against the Buddhists. The basis of meaning could readily have taken religious terms.

7. Medieval versus modern state formations: The South Vietnamese government under President Diem (Dinh Diem Ngo) was for most if not all practical purposes a mediaeval-like regime in which a ruling family dominated society, polity and economy (which were not significantly differentiated) and treated the system and its people as their private fiefdom (a situation not unlike Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, among others).⁵ The situation in Viet Nam could therefore be comprehended as a process of conflict over whether or not the mediaeval-like regime would be replaced by some version of a modern state in which individuals were citizens with independent rights and not merely subjects and in which the government was an institution of collective choice and not the means of familial domination. (From the point of view of the mediaeval-like ruling family, any sharing of power would appear to constitute communism.)

The point that I am trying to make with regard to multiple facets, interpretations and meanings is underscored by recognition of the role of selective perception consequent to different preoccupations and preconceptions, and this in turn is illustrated by the continuous conflicts among those sent by Kennedy to report on what was going on and being accomplished in Viet Nam. Reeves reports accordingly:

What the President was hearing from his people, more often than not, were contradictions--not only contradicting what he had just heard from Mansfield but internal contradictions about the U.S. involvement itself in report after report. The President knew the details of the effort in Vietnam . . . but he could not choose between optimistic Defense Department data and pessimistic counterinformation from the State Department and the missions he was sending out every month or so. (P. 443; cf. 607 and passim)

On another occasion, having heard conflicting reports from members of an investigative mission to Viet Nam, Kennedy is reporting as responding, "Did you two gentlemen visit the same country?" (p. 595; cf. 596: Kennedy's inability to distinguish who was a fool and who was a liar).

2. Multiplicity of Interpretive Bases and Meanings of the Kennedy Presidency

The historic meaning of the Kennedy presidency⁶ itself could have turned on a number of different bases. Which one came to dominate, if indeed one were to dominate, would depend on the vagaries of history and of interpretation, fueled in part by domestic political and ideological struggles in the process of defining the past so as to influence the social construction of the future.⁷ The several relevant and by no means mutually exclusive interpretive bases included: (1) its conduct of the cold war in general; (2) its conduct of the situation in Viet Nam/Southeast Asia; (3) its conduct with regard to (a) Berlin and/or (b) Cuba; (4) the space program; (5) domestic macroeconomic policies; (6) its response to the civil rights movement; (7) its domestic socioeconomic reform agenda; and so on. All of these involved elements of selective perception, for example, of ends and of means-ends relations. Among the day-to-day facets of the Kennedy presidency were judgments made as to the relative priority of tax reform, tax cuts, civil rights actions, and other measures. These judgments were made contextually, within such considerations as relationship with the Congress and re-election. The vaunted idealism⁸ of the Kennedy presidency is shown, in Reeves's book and elsewhere, to have been quite different from the reality of working out positions amid the network of pressures of multiple issues and considerations, and in this respect to have been no different from any other administration (though he perhaps had an unusual number of crises). The point relevant here is that the meaning rendered the Kennedy presidency involves selective perception and application of the multiple dimensions and multiple interpretive bases and meanings of its activities.

3. Uncertainty and Radical Indeterminacy

One of the principal features of economic life with which substantially all economists have had consciously to come to grips, especially since John Maynard Keynes, is uncertainty. By that I mean profound rather than simple ignorance. Simple ignorance relates to ignorance of information that is in principle knowable. Profound ignorance is due to the situation of radical indeterminacy, the fact that we cannot know the future because the future will not exist until it has been created by human action, in part by our efforts to apprehend it. This is the meaning of uncertainty advanced by George Shackle. But mainstream economists are wedded to the production of unique determinate optimal equilibrium solutions and therefore in recent years have tended to try to evade or finesse the problem of radical indeterminacy/uncertainty by assuming that both economic actors and economists can effectively and correctly model the future of the economy by forming rational expectations.

The history of the Kennedy administration recorded by Reeves provides ample evidence, if indeed more were needed, of the relevance to governance/politics of uncertainty due to radical indeterminacy. Both domestic and international affairs exhibited a frustrating intransigence and resistance to control. Some of this was due to the division of power in the world and in the open society of the U.S. (see pp. 108, 179, 266, 285, 304, 306, 404-405, 424, 456-457, 488 and *passim*), but much was due to the fact that the future was being socially constructed in part through the actions of the Kennedy administration itself. In no areas were this more evident than in the fields of civil rights in the U.S. and nuclear war in the world.

4. Hypocrisy and the Manufacture of Public Opinion: The Conduct of Politics in a Democracy

Consider George Tucker and Vilfredo Pareto. George Tucker was appointed by Thomas Jefferson to be professor of political economy at the University of Virginia. Prior

thereto he had been a member of the Virginia legislature. As a politician he understood his situation in terms of the predicament of democratic politics: Whether to represent the wishes of his constituents in the making of policy, or to more or less simultaneously vote his independent conscience and work to educate his constituents as to what their preferences should be; both conducted under the stipulation that he would run for reelection and require a majority of voter support. Tucker had to choose on a number of issues and opted to vote his constituents' and not his own preference in matters of slavery but voted his own beliefs on matters of protectionism versus free trade. By any reckoning, providing support for policies with which one disagrees for the purpose of reelection constitutes hypocrisy (Snively 1964).

Vilfredo Pareto, in his work in political sociology, argued that at bottom society was ruled by various mixtures of force and fraud. By force he referred to the willingness to resort to physical violence. By fraud he referred to the practice of political hypocrisy, consisting of the telling of lies in order to mask or deny the truth and in that and in various other ways to manufacture public opinion in the process of manufacturing consent for policies chosen by the administration in the name of the people. Pareto understood the manipulation of psychology by power players through contrivances which would present matters in idealized form and not as they are in reality (Samuels 1974).

Assume scarcity: It follows that choices have to be made, that the making of choices will help constitute the social construction of the future, that conflict between interests will result, and that choices necessitate the incurrence of significant opportunity costs. While the mainstream of economics -- while emphasizing scarcity yet under the influence of beliefs in prereconciled harmony, naturalism, mechanism, unique determinate optimal equilibrium solutions, and so on -- generally presents a picture of relative beneficence, the implications from scarcity of the necessity of choice, conflict and opportunity cost are, it seems, unequivocal. But given these results, the political and valuational processes in a democratic society must seek consent, or the imagery of consent, and politicians thus seek to convince/educate (read: form) public opinion along supportive lines -- particularly in a context of positioning for reelection. This readily takes one or another form of disingenuity or hypocrisy -- in emphasizing benefits and obfuscating and minimizing costs -- as well as other forms not morally objectionable.

Politics is literally the art of the possible, of adjusting competing interests and of working things out; and of determining -- in the senses both of learning and of educating others -- what is indeed possible. The exigencies of political pluralism and political expediency make compromisers of all decision makers. Failure to appreciate or to publicly acknowledge the fact and necessity of incurring opportunity costs and especially the practice of obfuscating in order to maintain public postures is part of what decision making -- politics -- is all about.

As such politics goes, so the future is in part determined; and part of that process is, as Pareto understood it, the mutual manipulation of definitions of reality and values and of political psychology, in part through the deployment of what can be called hypocrisy.

One implication of this is that one cannot conclusively rely on stated objectives to adequately and accurately represent the objective function of a president. And this has implications for the putative power of the principle of unintended and unforeseen consequences. As powerful a theory as it is, one has to be wary of preconceptions as to precisely what are the "unintended" versus "intended" consequences of a policy or program. If the argument of this article is correct, the principle must be understood within the domain of multiple interpretive bases and meanings, which implies multiple specifications of intended consequences. What seems logical and accurate in one context may not be so in another.

Reeves's account of the Kennedy administration manifests precisely these processes and phenomena. In the case of the Kennedy presidency this involved macroeconomic policy (tax reform and tax cuts), the civil rights movement, and the war in Viet Nam itself.⁹

5. A Conclusionary Summing Up

The argument made here with regard to multi-dimensionality, the multiplicity of interpretive bases and meanings, and the process of selection by which one or another of these otherwise problematic bases and meanings rises to the foreground, is an extension of two themes: first, social construction of the future polity and economy, and second, the relative open-endedness of that construction with regard to those multiplicities. The argument also both gives effect to and supports the dual insights that facts are value- and theory-laden and that theory is formed on the basis of selective interpretation of facts. The argument also maintains that whichever dimension, base and meaning is chosen must ultimately be comprehended in the context of the entirety of the array of dimensions, bases and meanings.

The argument suggests that any change or development has multiple and heterogeneous effects. One of the foundations, therefore, of the principle of unintended and unforeseen consequences is that given the multiplicity of interpretive bases and meanings, it is impossible in advance to ascertain which base and which meaning, of the array of problematic ones, will become salient.¹⁰ Reeves makes the point by insisting on the importance of irony, "things are never what they seem" (p. 19). The reason for that is that "things" can be understood in different ways, and which becomes salient cannot be entirely predicted (by that I mean, for example, that while the Cold War was likely to have greater world-historical prominence than the Buddhist-Catholic conflict, the latter may be interpreted as a derivative of another world-historical development, the fall of traditional colonialism/imperialism, and one could not have seen nor can one now see whether in terms of overall world-history the Cold War or the fall of colonialism will a century from now be more salient; such will be grist for the historians' mill).

The most interesting instance of the principle of unintended consequences coupled nonetheless with prescience relates to Kennedy's recognition of how economically successful, suburbanizing Democrats, once they reached some level of income, would begin to vote Republican, signifying a new kind of politics and a new kind of country (p. 657). An example seemingly without the prescience was the turning point brought about by civil rights activities in Birmingham, "compelling," writes Reeves, "the Kennedys to take the side of civil rights once and for all." He quotes an interview with Larry O'Brien, who said that "Civil rights became a commitment of the Democratic party, and twenty-five years later it had realigned the parties" (p. 730).

What aspects of Adam Smith's work, or of Knut Wicksell's work, or Pareto's, or Karl Marx's, or Alfred Marshall's, or Irving Fisher's, or John R. Hicks's . . . is taken up and developed by later economic theorists and historians of economic thought? What aspect of the economy or the polity is taken up and developed by economists and political scientists? If freedom requires some facilitative system of control and if control always yields some system or structure of freedom, etc., what aspect(s) of freedom and/or control are taken up by theorists and by ideologues? What is kept and what is filtered out, and by what mechanisms? These are among the questions which historians of economics should be asking. All aspects of the history of economics, as well as the conduct of economic theorizing, involve the necessity of choice with regard to the multiplicity of interpretive bases (or contexts) and therefore of meaning.

At bottom is the working out -- the writing -- of the history of the economy and of the history of economic thought and thereby the social construction of the future of both. What is true of marathoners and of Kennedy is true of economics and the history of economic thought.

One further matter: It should be clear that any particular retrospective focus on one facet, one interpretation or one meaning implicitly misrepresents the complexity and completeness of the phenomenon or object in question. If the object is X and it has X1, X2 . .

. XN facets of meaning, the fact that the regnant or salient meaning is X7 should not be taken as definitive of what X was/is all about. X7 is but one meaning. Hermeneutic analysis cautions us to look for others and for the process by which X7 has emerged as salient.

I conclude with emphasis upon the process of working things out, the process of determining which facet of meaning become salient. That such is the product of high drama, the crawl of incremental effects, and, in the instance, unimaginable chance bordering on tragicomedy, is illustrated by a situation described by Reeves at the heart of the Cuban missile crisis:

The Soviet ambassador had no reliable telephone or telegraph link with the Kremlin. He wrote a summary of Robert Kennedy's warnings and pleadings and called Western Union. A young Negro came by on a bicycle to pick up the telegram. Dobrynin watched him pedal away, figuring that if he stopped for a Coca-Cola or to see his girlfriend, the world might blow up. (P. 420)

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Notes

- ¹ It is clear that despite Kennedy's association with liberal ideology his approach to government was, or was forced to be, one of crisis management (pp. 19, 480), always conducted with a view to political costs and implications, especially regarding re-election.
- ² Reeves quotes Edmund Gullion, a young American consular official, telling Congressman Kennedy in 1951 what he had learned in Vietnam: "That in twenty years there will be no more colonies . . . We're going nowhere out here. The French have lost. If we come in here and do the same thing we will lose, too, for the same reason. There's no will or support for this kind of war back in Paris. The homefront is lost. The same thing would happen to us." (P. 254; re Gullion, see 526). Charles de Gaulle said the same thing to President Kennedy in 1962 (p. 149) as did John Kenneth Galbraith ("This could expand step by step into a major, long-drawn-out indecisive military involvement. There is consequent danger we shall replace the French as the colonial force in the area and bleed as the French did" (p. 311)).
- ³ On 26 September 1962, Kennedy told an audience at the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City that "We did not seek to become a world power. This position was thrust upon us by events. But we became one just the same and I am proud that we did" (p. 606; cf. 38: "the job of remaking the world in America's image").
- ⁴ "There was no question in Kennedy's mind, and little argument from anyone else, that the struggle with communism would be the focus of the history of his times." P. 278.
- ⁵ Henry Cabot Lodge is reported to have told Kennedy that the government of South Viet Nam under Diem was "essentially a medieval, Oriental despotism of the classic family type, who understand few, if any, of the arts of popular government. They cannot talk to the people; they cannot cultivate the press; they cannot delegate authority or inspire trust; they cannot comprehend the idea of government as the servant of the people." P. 590; cf. 257, 592.
- ⁶ As distinct from Kennedy personally: He is portrayed as a man of enormous ambition (p. 15); as having "a certain love for chaos, the kind that kept other men off-balance" (p. 18); as "living his life as if it were a race against boredom" (p. 19); as one who hated to lose in games played ostensibly for fun (p. 89); as someone who could identify his success or failure with that of the country (p. 297); as someone who "seemed to think he was a man born too late: He believed there were no great problems to be solved, no great dragons to slay, no great compromises to be made" (p. 321) — an amazing statement when one recalls Kennedy's involvement in the civil rights controversy and major events of the Cold War (Berlin, Cuba, Viet Nam, nuclear gamesmanship and disarmament, etc.); and so on. The point is that our view of Kennedy the man is subject to the same argument made in the text regarding Viet Nam: it is a matter of multiple facets, multiple interpretive bases, and multiple meanings.

- ⁷ Kennedy was very much concerned with the place and meaning he and his administration would be given in history and made deliberate efforts to influence the treatment that would be accorded him. On the manipulation of image in both current news and historical perception, see pp. 27, 139, 282, 427, 441, 490, 586, 596, 636, 647, 650 and passim; for example, the focus not on events but on preparing explanations, intended for both manipulation of current news and the historical record. The Kennedy period was the first in which television played a major role.
- ⁸ Kennedy frequently would have to be reminded that his own rhetoric was fueling the civil rights movement; pp. 126, 357 and passim.
- ⁹ The Kennedy administration engaged in the practice of "plausible deniability" (pp. 19, 85, 473, 563 and passim) and engaged in deception, deceit and lying (pp. 19, 24, 37, 85, 230, 264, 279, 282, 283, 302, 310, 337, 367, 383, 391, 398, 473, 510, 586, 647 and passim).
- ¹⁰ Kennedy, in Reeves's telling, did not want to move fast on civil rights and did not relish it as a major political issue (it would lose him votes, especially in the South) but his own rhetoric emboldened and reinforced organized agitation (demonstrations, bus rides, sit-ins, etc.), surely a dramatic case of unintended if not unforeseen consequences.

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