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*Not What I Had Planned*

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Like many others, I was a child of U.S. foreign policy. During the Second World War my mother, while a teenager, found work as a civilian secretary for the Army to help support her invalid father. After the war, once she turned 21, the Army sent her to work at bases in occupied Japan and Okinawa. Returning to the West Coast, she met and married a carrier pilot who flew F9Fs off the USS *Essex* during the Korean War. He went into the reserves after that war and they moved to Texas. They then both met other people, divorced, and remarried, but Texas is where I stayed, taking the last name of my adoptive father.

Growing up in Houston, I was a runty, bespectacled kid, a bookworm reading a lot of history, historical fiction, and related adventure stories. I followed current events and politics. Other than trips to Mexico, my first big foreign experience came when I was 14. To toughen me up a bit, my parents sent me off to school by myself at a little program in Israel, at an agricultural school near Ashkelon, right on the coast road near Gaza. This was 1968-1969, the war of attrition with Egypt was muttering along, so it was always easy to hitch a ride on army trucks that could run me into Tel Aviv, where I could watch a movie in Dizengoff Square and find a bookstore. My parents brought me home early, in February 1969, when the situation in the region heated up a bit, but it was an educational experience.

Back home, I was a cadet in the Civil Air Patrol. Although one look would tell anyone I would never be able to pilot anything, I could compete on the drill team. With my small size, I was perfect for a drill in which the formation reverses course and I, the doofus, keep marching the other way. The leader calls a halt. We all freeze. He shouts to the formation, "Get that man!" I would then be fetched, picked up bodily, and carried, rigidly in marching form, back to be deposited again in formation, when we could then swing off again.

Aided by this sort of high intellectual polish, I was an indifferent student in high school, rescued during my junior year by a charismatic high school debate coach, David Johnson. He got me engaged with that activity and the society of the oddball, argumentative kids involved in it. It did reinforce my acquaintance with public policy issues.

Naturally, we knew the drama kids. A friend drew me into my sole acting experience. She was directing a one-act play, a new antiwar satire by Joseph Heller (the author of a novel I'd already read, *Catch-22*) called, "We Bombed in New Haven." Dennis Quaid, a really gifted actor who would later become famous in Hollywood, played the lead. With my drill team experience, my friend had cast me for the part (non-speaking) of playing "An Idiot." I was perfect for it.

I stayed in my hometown for college, going to the University of Houston. I could get admitted on the strength of my SAT; they had an excellent debate program; and it was cheap. I registered for the draft, had a low lottery number, but they were not calling up undergrads, so I missed Vietnam. In college, I remained an undisciplined, mediocre student, majoring in history and minoring in political science. I rose to the challenge, though, posed by a superb professor who taught courses in

American and diplomatic history, a specialist in Texas history, Stanley Siegel—one of those professors who are little known for their scholarship but touch the minds of generations of students.

Although I did well in intercollegiate debate, transferring to a Southern California school in my senior year as a kind of debate mercenary, I had no career direction. Debate, as practiced back then anyway, was a consuming, arcane activity, not really fit for viewing by the uninitiated, calling upon skill in high-speed, aggressive articulation, with some bits of useful experience in policy research and analysis.

I received my B.A. and wrote a senior thesis on the history of the Egyptian-Israeli arms competition. Law school was sort of the default. In the 1970s, law was not yet as glutted with budding lawyers as it later became. I was about to take a job coaching high school debate in California when, at the last minute (you could do that back then) I went ahead and applied, and got in, to the University of Houston's law school—again, mainly on the strength of my LSAT, not my weak grades. It was also cheap, and I could borrow a little money and work my way through school.

I had a great experience in law school. My grades shaped up and it turned out I had a talent both in moot court (mock appellate work, briefs, and argument) and mock trial, winning various competitions at the school and even nationally. I was on the law review too, publishing an article that was eventually cited by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in the Supreme Court case that decided my issue (a particular death penalty problem). In my third year, in the fall of 1978, I worked as a TA in a legal research and writing class being taught by a new professor named Elizabeth Warren (yes, that one).

Although I took classes in international law (from Jordan Paust) and did well in international law moot court competitions, my main interests back then were in criminal and civil rights work. I worked for a Title VII firm bringing plaintiffs' class actions to remedy employment discrimination, suing railroads and unions, for example. And I worked for the U.S. Attorney's office in Houston, in both its civil rights and appellate divisions. After finishing school, I clerked for a judge on the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals (the high court for criminal cases in Texas) and then went to work for a lawyer named David Berg.

Berg would later become best-known as a very successful and effective plaintiff's trial lawyer. But back then we were relatively poor lawyers doing criminal and civil rights trial work, with the occasional ugly divorce case or civil suit thrown in. I also handled the appellate side. The late 1970s and early 1980s were a rough period for criminal violence in Texas (inspiring fiction like *No Country for Old Men*) and my work, and my visits to various jails and prisons, gave me a deeper appreciation for how thin and precious the veneer of civilization can be, and how hard and vital it was to sustain the rule of law.

Trial work can be valuable in learning how to make public choices or in writing accounts of important choices. Any good litigator or appellate lawyer must learn to pay rigorous attention to details about the factual situation and the relevant reasoning. In criminal work, for example, painstaking reconstruction of details and analysis of witnesses or evidence are routine.

Any good litigator, or appellate lawyer, can also persuasively make the other side's arguments, citing the other side's best evidence. This is a kind of empathy, a clinical empathy that enables a dispassionate appraisal and better preparation. The same skills can be quite useful in diplomacy and, therefore also, in accounts of diplomacy.

In 1980-1981, I was involved in two nationally publicized cases, both of which prefigured some later interests. One was an unusual First Amendment case to force the University of Houston's PBS station to show a docudrama about the execution of a Saudi princess. That outlet, and one in Alabama, had refused to show the program. In the Houston case the University (a state entity) had the openly political motive of not wanting to offend the Kingdom. We won the case at trial and I

eventually argued the appeal to the last *en banc* sitting of the 24 judges of the old Fifth Circuit (before it was broken into two circuits). It was a difficult issue, since there were First Amendment claims on both sides.<sup>1</sup>

The other case, even more resonant today, was one where we joined with Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center to help stem an early major outbreak of white nationalist terrorism. Louis Beam and a core of embittered Vietnam veterans had built up paramilitary training camps to organize a militia movement that was harassing Vietnamese-origin shrimpers on the Texas Gulf coast. Representing the Vietnamese Fishermen's Association (pro bono), we were able to shut down the group's dangerous activities and paramilitary training in Texas.<sup>2</sup>

That precedent turned out to be useful. Most recently, I suggested using it again to shut down the militias who had organized the 2017 violence in Charlottesville. An excellent group, led by former Department of Justice official Mary McCord, supported by city authorities, successfully obtained the injunctive relief.<sup>3</sup>

While doing this legal work, I had also been maintaining an interest in history, taking a couple of graduate seminars at the University of Houston. By the end of 1981, I had the bright idea of exploring the possibility of going back to graduate school the next year, to explore the possibility of going to work in the world of foreign policy.

As time has passed, it is hard for me to reconstruct why I did such a thing. I had never met anyone who actually worked on foreign policy. I had never even attended a live talk given by such a person. I had no idea, beyond their catalog claims, what schools could do to train people for such work. I applied to a few; one admitted me. That was the Fletcher School, at Tufts University.

My fiancée, Paige, who had become engaged to a promising young lawyer, was somehow willing to put up with this bait and switch. She ended up working to help pay my way through school. My boss was also tolerant, willing to take me back if, a couple of years later, this turned out to be a hare-brained scheme. He funneled appellate work to me that earned money on the side and I sat second chair in a murder trial during my 1982-1983 holiday from school.

My experience at the Fletcher School clicked. I was at the top of my first-year class, tied with a young Navy officer, Jim Stavridis, who later became the school's dean after his very distinguished career. I designed a strong curriculum for myself, cross-registering at Harvard and MIT as well. Among a number of good classes, standouts were two semesters at MIT of work on force planning (a semester on nuclear, a semester on general purpose forces) with William Kaufmann. Kaufmann,

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<sup>1</sup> The case was *Barnstone v. University of Houston*, 514 F. Supp. 670 (S.D. Tex. 1980), rev'd, 688 F.2d 1033 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir., en banc), cert. denied, 446 U.S. 1318 (1982). The range of opinions in the Fifth Circuit's en banc decision illustrate the complexity of the constitutional problem, which the Supreme Court declined to engage, perhaps hoping this was an idiosyncratic case.

<sup>2</sup> A good book about this episode, this case, and its relation to the return of white nationalist terrorism in the United States during the 1980s, will be Kirk W. Johnson, *The Fishermen and the Dragon: Two Dreams at War off the Texas Coast* (New York: Viking, 2021). The case was *Vietnamese Fishermen's Association v. Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*, 543 F. Supp. 198 (S.D. Tex., 1982). In this case, as in *Barnstone*, we were fortunate to try our cases in front of Gabrielle McDonald, a gifted jurist who, after her retirement, served on the U.S.-Iran claims tribunal in The Hague. After the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995, Dees and I reunited to call for further action to check private militias. Morris Dees & Philip Zelikow, "Ban Private Military Groups," *New York Times*, 7 May 1995, p. E15.

<sup>3</sup> My essay is "The Domestic Terrorism Danger: Focus on Unauthorized Private Military Groups," *Lawfare*, 15 August 2017, at <https://www.lawfareblog.com/domestic-terrorism-danger-focus-unauthorized-private-military-groups>. For the subsequent litigation, see Mary McCord, "New Approach After Charlottesville Violence Protects Public Safety While Preserving Rights," *Just Security*, 2 January 2019, at <https://www.justsecurity.org/62056/approach-charlottesville-violence-protects-public-safety-preserving-rights/>.

who started out as a historian, was most notable for his teaching of methods, rigorously relating ends, means, and costs, in alternative, quite detailed, designs.

This is a good point to notice something distinctive about my generation, going right back to my start as a sort of child of U.S. foreign policy. Like all Americans my age, I had lived most of my life in the constant memory and shadow of major war, just past, ongoing, or perhaps around the corner.

For most people this was not a matter for constant thought. It was just a feature of life and culture, including the antiwar culture. But it was a constant topic. It was therefore natural that, in the academic world, ever since the First World War, more teachers were hired to teach about big problems of war and peace, and more students enrolled who were interested in such problems.

This whole era and its preoccupations have been fading for some time, a process that has been accelerating since 1990. Taking its place are the preoccupations of a different age of national and world history. It is also therefore natural that this too will be reflected in the academic world.

There are still large problems that need to be addressed, however. And the academic disciplines—including history—are not as interested as they once were in answering questions about practical ways to understand and address public problems.

My master's thesis at Fletcher was on the British suppression of the Arab revolt in Palestine (1936-39). This was based on work at the Public Record Office (now the UK National Archives) and the Imperial War Museum while I was interning in the summer of 1983 at the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS). My main interest, building on some of my legal experience, was to understand how democracies, tethered to some sort of rule of law, attempt to find a sustainable balance of security, law, and justice in intelligence, policing, and courts, while coping with the extreme stresses that accompany internal war.

I graduated with a master's degree and passed the comps fields to be ABD for a Fletcher Ph.D. My plan was to extend my Master's thesis into a dissertation that also analyzed the Filipino and American approaches to the Huk revolt (1946-1954). I interviewed the aged former U.S. counterrevolutionary adviser, Edward Lansdale. Though I tracked relevant work in comparative politics, the most useful disciplinary scholarship seemed to be in law or history. Throughout graduate school, I had become convinced that the most interesting material was whatever could take me deeply enough into the circumstances and choices surrounding the problems at hand, historical or contemporary.

There is a good deal of merit to the old belief that the best training for international service is in history, international law, international business, or other professional work in foreign lands. Just as international law is too important to be left just to the agency lawyers, international economics is too important to be hived off just on the agency economists.

No one worries about undue reliance on an agency's historians! Relevant historical knowledge is assumed to be universally understood or readily knowable, though neither of those assumptions is true.

Leaving Fletcher in 1984, I was able to get a job teaching for the Navy at the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey. But I had also taken the Foreign Service exam and, in 1985, was offered entrance to the Service. At age 30, I was around the median age for my entering cohort.

My career in the Foreign Service was unusual. One of my old Harvard professors had been on leave from the Service. That diplomat, Robert Blackwill, pulled me in to work for him at the arms control talks in Vienna during my first tour (doing my consular duties when the talks were not in session). In 1986 Mikhail Gorbachev transformed those sleepy talks into a breathtakingly ambitious effort to control all conventional forces between the Atlantic and the Urals. Later that year, and in 1987, now working for the new ambassador to those talks, Steve Ledogar, I became the political adviser to this new delegation, working on the design for such an arms control agreement, which evolved into the 1990 CFE Treaty.

In 1988, I was broken out of my Vienna assignment to come back to State to work in the Department's round-the-clock operations center; then broken out of that assignment to work on the Secretariat Staff, a kind of nerve center to move paperwork to and from the Department's principals. George Shultz was the Secretary of State. At the end of 1988 I was detailed to aid the transition for the incoming secretary, James Baker.

Blackwill then called on me again, this time to come over to the George H.W. Bush White House, to work for him and Brent Scowcroft, and look after European security (and UK) issues on the National Security Council (NSC) staff. I started work at the beginning of February 1989, arriving the same week as my new colleague handling Soviet issues, Condoleezza Rice.

The NSC staff was much smaller then. Scowcroft and his deputy, Bob Gates, also thought the NSC staff was no place to train someone who was new to government. "No rookies," was the phrase I heard. Nor did anyone seem to care much about political affiliation. No one ever even asked me who I had ever supported or voted for. By the time I left the staff, in the spring of 1991, I had become an ardent supporter of Bush and his team, and I worked hard for his reelection in 1992. But that was a result of what I had observed on the job.

In 1991, my original plan was to do what the Service wanted me to do and get back out overseas. I was set to become the political-military officer in Tel Aviv.

But folks at the Harvard Kennedy School then recruited me to apply for a teaching job there (Blackwill was back there again; Ash Carter chaired the faculty search committee; Graham Allison called Paige to tell her that she should talk me into doing this.) This turned my head.

I apparently did well enough with my job talk and I was hired, at least to teach about Europe and help with the School's core curriculum. I was initially on leave from the Service but, a year later, had to resign since the Service would not extend my leave for another year. Paige and I liked the Foreign Service, but I was determined to finish the book manuscript I was writing and so decided to take my chances with academia.

Soon I was chairing the 'qualitative' part of the Kennedy School's core curriculum and was also co-teaching with Ernest May and Richard Neustadt courses about 'reasoning from history' and 'assessing other governments.' May and Neustadt became very close friends; May and I later began writing together.

Harvard offered me the choice of either becoming a 'lecturer' or a starting assistant professor. I chose the latter and rapidly completed my Fletcher Ph.D. dissertation. This, however, was now a work of international history.

Before I left government, one of Baker's top aides, Bob Zoellick, had invited me to write a history of the diplomacy of German unification, with full access to State's documents. The NSC agreed as well. This I did, but only after figuring out how to do it on an unclassified basis, using a prepublication review process rather than a declassification process.

I also decided that the story would only work as an international history, since the U.S. part of the picture was not enough. I had or accumulated everything on this available in German, which included most of the early Soviet memoirs (published in German, not Russian, because only the German publishers could pay). The resulting thesis was done by 1993 and promptly accepted as a book manuscript by Harvard University Press.

After Harvard University Press accepted the book, I recruited my old colleague, Condi Rice, to help improve it, since she could read Russian sources, greatly improve analysis of the Soviet dimension, and generally make the book better. By this time, partly with Condi's help, Gorbachev had deposited a significant portion of his papers at Stanford. The Press was ok

with my addition of this co-author. Condi was back at Stanford, becoming provost there. We worked hard on the book in 1993 and 1994 and it came out in 1995.<sup>4</sup>

The transition from practice to teaching forced me to think a lot about both. My practice experience had been intense. I had been taught by, or participated in, the work of the most skilled group of practitioners of that age of American foreign and military policy. Baker and his team were, as I later came to appreciate even more, in the top group of the three or four most effective teams in the history of American foreign relations.

Scholars, like citizens, prefer to orient their study of American policies or ideas around figureheads. Most actual accomplishments in governments are done by teams, often with a core group of, say, five to ten people.

The alchemy of converting ideas to action and the choices among alternative policy designs are essentially mysterious to most citizens, and to most scholars. An eight-year-old child usually learns, after the first stray baseball, that it is much easier to break things than to build them. Adults can usually be humbled when they learn what is involved in building the average house. Why should they assume that constructing public policies is simpler than homebuilding?

Preparing for and working in government, my particular interest had been to understand the relation of ideas to action; I took pride in trying to understand how to get things done, not just write a good report. While at Harvard, I ran for and was elected to office on my town's school board, a position citizens really cared about in my Massachusetts town. That was a different kind of experience in learning how to get things done.

This sort of perspective made me more critically reflective about qualities in scholarship, teaching, and government practice. I tried to develop more rigorous ways to think about "policy engineering." I worked hard on my part of the Kennedy School's core curriculum and became a leader of a large faction in the school's faculty, including some founding faculty like May and Neustadt, who were disturbed by the standard paradigm being taught. I watched the gradual deterioration of policy work in government, as certain valuable informal cultures and practices built up during the mid-twentieth century eroded and disappeared.<sup>5</sup>

This sort of thinking also influenced my approach to scholarship. Many parents have probably encountered David Macaulay's marvelous illustrated book on *The Way Things Work* and its successors, which use exploded pictures of objects to help children (and their parents) understand them. My interest in policymaking is, in that sense, a bit Macaulayesque. Since most of the policies available for that level of dissection and pathological examination are in the past, historical scholarship is a natural avenue to such understanding.

I was still involved in current events and spent much of 1993 helping Ash Carter at the Pentagon in the new Clinton administration, mainly in very secret work related to North Korea. I had also maintained my interest in terrorism and internal defense, authoring a set of case studies on "Policing Northern Ireland," partly based on research in Belfast and

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<sup>4</sup> Zelikow and Condoleezza Rice, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: A Study in Statecraft* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup> To see the development of these ideas, compare my article, "Foreign Policy Engineering: From Theory to Practice and Back Again," *International Security* 18:4 (1994): 143-171 with my article, "To Regain Policy Competence: The Software of American Public Problem Solving," *Texas National Security Review* 2:4 (2019): 110-27.

London.<sup>6</sup> Later in the 1990s and 2000s I became very involved in government work on terrorism and counterterrorism methods. I had been thinking about these problems for a long time.

But my scholarly work was mainly historical, and I occasionally also taught in ‘the Yard’ to Harvard history students. May and I also used history to teach foreign assessment for policy work, both at Harvard and in an unclassified CIA-sponsored program at Harvard for intelligence analysts. I became more and more interested in exploring the microhistory of key episodes, which I have come to think are often not very well understood.

With my government experience, sometimes the records of these episodes would be more legible to me. I also took more of an interest in the substance of the policy analysis. One early example was the pivotal Foreign Ministers’ meeting in Moscow in March-April 1947, which marked the effective end of great power cooperation over Germany and led to the Marshall Plan effort. I had noticed some puzzlingly tense exchanges, in the most secret cables between President Harry Truman and Secretary of State George Marshall, which did not fit into the standard accounts. Those accounts, when I looked closer, did not quite seem to grasp what Marshall was trying to do, partly because this turned on an understanding of the complex issues surrounding German reparations and the interpersonal dynamics in his delegation. I judged that the standard explanation of this important story was mistaken and offered my version of it.<sup>7</sup>

While at Harvard, I also began trying to extend myself to have a much better understanding of economic issues, starting by writing a monograph on American economic intelligence, and have since moved on from there. The economic historians produce some very high-quality work, but it is not always well integrated into mainstream policy stories. Again, economic issues are much too important to be left just to the professional economists.<sup>8</sup>

My next major project was, in effect, a microhistory of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Ernest May and I endeavored to explain, annotate, and include transcripts of the recently declassified secret recordings that President John F. Kennedy made of meetings throughout the crisis. This was the most studied crisis in modern American history. Yet we found, in the course of this very close examination with this remarkable source material, that it too was misunderstood in a number of important ways.<sup>9</sup> Our work, originally published in 1997, and my explorations in evolving theories about decision-making and

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<sup>6</sup> Zelikow, “Policing Northern Ireland (A): A Question of Primacy;” “Policing Northern Ireland (B): A Question of Balance;” Policing Northern Ireland: Teaching Note,” Cases C16-93-1229, 1230, 1230.2, Harvard Kennedy School (1993).

<sup>7</sup> Zelikow, “George C. Marshall and the Moscow CFM Meeting of 1947,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 8:2 (1997): 97-124.

<sup>8</sup> The monograph is Zelikow, “American Intelligence and the World Economy,” published in *In From the Cold: Report of the Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Future of U.S. Intelligence* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1996): 134-262. I then oversaw some case studies on international financial crises and co-authored (with Kirsten Lundberg) one on “Treasury and the Mexican Shock,” Case C15-98-1422.0 (1998).

<sup>9</sup> Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (orig. Harvard University Press, 1997, now in a revised and more concise edition from W.W. Norton, published in 2002). The later edition was prepared with the aid of the Miller Center team gathered for further work on the Kennedy, LBJ, and Nixon tapes.

The most authoritative version of this material is now in volumes 2 and 3 in the JFK series of reference volumes for the presidential recordings, which May and I edited with Timothy Naftali, aided by the rest of our Miller Center team. *The Presidential Recordings -- John F. Kennedy: The Great Crises*, vols. 2 & 3 (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); transcript aficionados may also check, “Updates: The Cuban Missile Crisis Transcripts,” (2006), at <https://millercenter.org/great-crises-errata>. Recordings discussing the concluding phase of crisis negotiations, from October 29 through November 20, 1962, are in David Coleman, ed., *The Presidential Recordings -- John F. Kennedy: The Winds of Change*, vols. 4 & 5 (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016).

organizational behavior, then led me to offer to work with Graham Allison to draft a rewrite of the classic text, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. That rewritten edition came out in 1999.<sup>10</sup>

May and I also embarked on a very ambitious multinational, multi-archival project to reconstruct the evolving assessments, at different phases of a major crisis, from the point of view of all of the countries involved. We picked the six major participants in the Suez crisis and war of 1956. It was, and I think still is, methodologically unique. I recently was able to complete that work, reuniting some of our old Harvard Suez team.<sup>11</sup>

While I was at Harvard, teaching about ‘reasoning from history’ and helping to rewrite a political science text, I spent a good deal of time thinking and reading in the little subfields of ‘philosophy of history’ and ‘philosophy of social science.’ I tried to work out, philosophically, the validity and utility of developing ‘scientific generalizations’ for international policy. I wrote a monograph on that which I never published, though in the late 1990s it circulated for a little while around Harvard as a sort of *samizdat* document. But I eventually did publish a smaller essay many years later with my take on “The Nature of History’s Lessons.”<sup>12</sup>

I must confess that what I like most about the microhistories, and also some macro historical work, is the chance to notice, then tackle, puzzles that strike me as being exceptionally interesting and important. There are a number of major puzzles that, to me, have never been adequately explained—even including some major policy episodes in which I later took part.

Some historians share this preoccupation with puzzles, which seems healthy for a scholarly discipline. But it seems that many, perhaps the majority, do not.

My next book, in fact, will be on a puzzle that I think is the most interesting and consequential one I’ve ever encountered, which was the failure of the German, American, and British efforts to end the First World War in 1916-17, and avoid the widening of the war and revolutionary spirals that began in the spring of 1917. Few scholars are even aware that there is a puzzle there. It follows up on some leads that May and I first began noticing and working on, not long before my friend passed away in 2009.<sup>13</sup>

My experience is that the closer one looks at some of these episodes, the stranger things get. It is like pushing past the world of gross anatomy to discover the weird world of germs, viruses, and other peculiar creatures. Thus, part of the puzzle solving is to reconstruct the foreign worlds in which these people try to solve their problems (and all historical worlds are foreign).

In the summer of 1998, I left Harvard for the University of Virginia. I was happy at Harvard and my prospects for getting tenure there seemed good. But at Virginia I was offered the chance to do some institution building, taking over the Miller

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<sup>10</sup> Graham T. Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: Longman, rev. ed., 1999).

<sup>11</sup> Zelikow, Ernest May, and the Harvard Suez Team, *Suez Deconstructed: An Interactive Study in Crisis, War, and Peacemaking* (Washington: Brookings Institution, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Zelikow, “The Nature of History’s Lessons,” in Hal Brands & Jeremi Suri, eds., *The Power of the Past: History and Statecraft* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2016), 281-309.

<sup>13</sup> The book will be Zelikow, *The Road Less Traveled: The Secret Struggle to End the Great War* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2021).

Center, a research center that had great potential—since realized—to initiate major new research projects on American history, through the lens of the presidencies.<sup>14</sup> I also took up my current chair in the history department at Virginia.

My work since 1998 has been interesting, sometimes very stressful, and occasionally useful. But that work goes beyond the scope of this essay, which is supposed to be about “learning the scholar’s craft.” My life has not turned out the way I planned. But, as in most cases, there was not much of a plan there to start with. Except for staying with Paige.

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<sup>14</sup> My first main project was to create the Presidential Recordings Program, which so far has published six reference letterpress volumes in the JFK series, eight reference letterpress volumes in the LBJ series, and a series of ‘born-digital’ transcript volumes published by Rotunda, the UVA press digital imprint. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/secret-white-house-tapes/about>. My second research project for the Center was to reestablish and expand the Presidential Oral History Program, to go beyond good initial work that had been done on the Carter administration. It now includes oral history holdings for the Reagan, Bush 41, Clinton, and Bush 43 administrations, as well as a project on the life and work of Senator Edward Kennedy. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories>