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Presidential Beliefs, Advisors' Capacities, and the Formulation of Intervention Policy

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Political Science

by

Soumitra Chatterjee

2019

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Presidential Beliefs, Advisors' Capacities, and the Formulation of American Intervention Policy

by

Soumitra Chatterjee

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Deborah Larson, Chair

ABSTRACT: This dissertation investigates the psychological and rational factors that undergird American presidents' foreign intervention decisions. While conventional international relations scholarship generally overlooks micro-level variables, decades of psychologically-based research into leaders' foreign policy decision-making has proven a rich area of study. Even though the psychological approach has enriched International Relations scholarship, it often does so without considering the rational factors that also affect decision-making. This dissertation seeks to bridge that divide by exploring the psychological and rational dynamics within a "foreign policy team," comprised of an American president and his/her chosen advisors, that influence a president's decisions of whether and how to intervene in foreign crises. I introduce a new theory which forwards that intervention decisions emerge from the interactions between a president's beliefs about a particular intervention and a foreign policy team's relevant expertise and their ability to learn from and adapt to a conflict as it evolves. In pursuit I conduct a quantitative study of

president's predilections towards conflict initiation based on their personal experiences of wars and two qualitative comparative case studies which examine Presidents George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton's handling the civil war in Bosnia and humanitarian intervention in Somalia.

The dissertation of Soumitra Chatterjee is approved.

Rose McDermott

Arthur Stein

Marc Trachtenberg

Deborah Larson, Chair

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2019

For My Family

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I am also grateful for the comments I received from discussants at the 2016 and 2017 Midwestern Political Science Association Conference. Their feedback helped shape the empirical work in this study.

No scholar can get to this point without the benefit of impactful mentors. I first became interested in studying political psychology during my Master's program in International Relations and Public Diplomacy at Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. Jørgen Johansen, my conflict resolution professor and friend, was incredibly generous in connecting me with his contacts in the Basque Country, Spain for my ethnographical research there. During my interviews with pacifists and other activists, I began to ask my first serious questions about social identities and conflict. My advisors at Maxwell, Dr. G. Matthew

Bonham and Dr. Michael Schneider also helped nurture my interest. When studying in Washington DC for my final semester, Mike helped connect me with Dr. Stephen P. Cohen of the Brookings Institution who was looking for research assistants for what would become his 2013 book, *Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum*. My research on Steve's "paired minority conflicts" theory sparked an interest in psychology, belief formation, decision-making, and conflict that has carried me through this dissertation. These men encouraged me to apply to doctoral programs, helped with the preparation of my application materials, and wrote numerous letters of recommendation. Each challenged me intellectually and showed me, by their examples, how to mentor and encourage others. I am grateful to all of these men for their instruction, kindness, support, and guidance.

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and intellectual insights continue to shape the way I think. Likewise, I am appreciative of my relationship with Marc Trachtenberg. Throughout my doctoral studies, Marc has shown me kindness and personal and professional encouragement. He has always been generous with his time, insights, and support. He has done everything I have ever asked of him to help me professionally and offered his help even when I didn't know I needed it. He has provided me with a model for how I can support my own students in the future. For all of these things, I am grateful. Rose McDermott has become a friend and advisor whose empathy and strength of character have inspired me throughout the time I have known her. She has supported every one of my endeavors (no matter how far afield they appeared) and given me constant and valuable feedback on my work. Rose has shown me how to think broadly and specifically in ways I certainly would not have otherwise known. More than anything, I am appreciative of her constancy and honesty.

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As is the case with all dissertations, all mistakes and errors herein are my own.

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Introduction: This dissertation investigates the psychological and rational factors that undergird American presidents' foreign intervention decisions. While conventional international relations scholarship generally overlooks micro-level variables, decades of psychologically-based research into social and cognitive biases and the ideational drivers of leaders' foreign policy decisions have proven a rich area of study. Even though the psychological approach has enriched International relations (IR) scholarship, it often does so without considering the rational factors that also affect decision-making.¹ This dissertation seeks to bridge that divide by exploring the psychological and rational dynamics within a "foreign policy team," comprised of an American president and his/her chosen advisors, that influence a president's decisions of whether and how to intervene in foreign crises. I argue that intervention decisions emerge from the interactions between a president's beliefs about a particular intervention and a foreign policy team's relevant expertise and their ability to learn from and adapt to a conflict as it evolves.

Why Investigate American Presidents?

Much of IR is rooted in the causes and effects of individual and group decisions.² And within the international system, modern American presidents have outsized power and remarkable latitude to in choosing whether and how to wield it.³ As evidence, consider that since

¹ Waltz (1959 and 2010) notably gives leaders short shrift in his seminal works (*Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis*, Columbia University Press and *Theory of International Politics*, Long Grove: Waveland Press). For broad overviews of psychological and individual-level approaches, see Goldgeier and Tetlock (2001) and Kertzer and Tingley (2018) in the Annual Review of Political Science.

² Valerie M. Hudson. 2005. "Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1(1): 1–30.

³ Arthur Schlesinger, *Imperial Presidency*. 1973. Houghton Mifflin Company; William G. Howell, and Jon C. Pevehouse. 2007. "Trends in Military Deployments" in *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*: pp. 53-74.; Richard N. Haass. 2009. *War of Necessity, War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars*. Simon and Schuster.; Elizabeth N. Saunders. 2011. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*. Cornell University Press.; Paul E. Peterson. 1994. "The President's Dominance in Foreign Policy Making." *Political Science Quarterly* 109(2): 215-234.

World War II, Presidents of the United States have unilaterally pursued intervention policies that include, but are not limited to: undeclared wars, aid delivery, covert operations, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, regime change, counterinsurgency, nation building, and many forms of diplomacy.⁴ Similarly, they have acted unilaterally in deciding to abstain from American involvement in numerous potential interventions.⁵ They have helped create and lead international organizations and institutions and acted through and with them when advantageous and circumvented them when disadvantageous.⁶

Why do Presidents' Beliefs Matter?

These dynamics, vis-à-vis presidential power, naturally elicit the following question: ‘What drives their intervention decisions?’ The theoretical chapter of this dissertation (Chapter 1) reviews the broad scope of the literature that has investigated this question. While scholars have considered numerous rational and psychological inducers and constraints surrounding such decisions, American presidents’ tremendous power and autonomy suggests that their choices are at least in part affected by their intervention beliefs. When deliberating intervention (in-)action, leaders’ beliefs serve as both a guide and gauge about the nature of the relevant conflict and the causes and effects of various (non-)intervention options.⁷ There is historical evidence to suggest

⁴ Jennifer K. Elsea and Matthew C. Weed. 2014. "Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications," *Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress*; Louis Fisher. 1995. "The Korean War: On What Legal Basis Did Truman Act?" *American Journal of International Law* 89(1): 21-39; Garance Franke-Ruta, "All the Previous Declarations of War," *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 31, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/08/all-the-previous-declarations-of-war/279246/>.

⁵ For example, Chapter 4 of this dissertation addresses President George H.W. Bush’s decision not to intervene in the Yugoslav Civil or the genocide in Bosnia during the latter half of his term in office.

⁶ John G. Ikenberry. 2003. "Is American Multilateralism in Decline?" *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3): 533-550; Also, Chapter 3 of this dissertation discusses why George H.W. Bush chose to act alongside but not with the United Nations in delivering aid to Somalia in 1992.

⁷ Nathan C. Leites. 1951. *The Operational Code of the Politburo*. New York: McGraw-Hill.; Alexander L. George. 1969. "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-making." *International Studies Quarterly* 23:190-222.; Alexander L. George. 1980. *Presidential Decision-Making in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, Westview Press; Robert Jervis. 2006. "Understanding Beliefs," *Political Psychology* 27(5): 641-663.

that beliefs vary by intervention as there is no such thing as a constantly interventionist/hawkish or noninterventionist/dovish president.⁸ In practice, the articulation of a president's intervention beliefs has an important agenda setting function for the foreign policy team. Given that presidents are the ultimate decision makers, their beliefs set boundaries on what policies advisors will consider. Presidents' intervention beliefs can change, however, as a conflict evolves and a team learns from it.

Experiences of War as a Driver of Intervention Beliefs

When making interventions decisions, presidents' may be influenced by beliefs derived from their previous experiences.⁹ Jervis (1976) identifies four critical variables that "influence the degree to which an event affects later perceptual predispositions." They are: 1) "whether or not the person experienced the event firsthand; 2) whether it occurred early in his adult life or career; 3) whether it had important consequences for him or his nation; and 4) whether he is familiar with a range of international events that facilitate alternative perceptions."¹⁰ Such events can include the salient experiences of the most recent war or intervention, a generation's experience with a prominent foreign policy event (e.g. the Vietnam War or the attacks of September 11, 2001), and a leader's most-recent foreign policy success amongst others. Jervis specifically discusses the experience of war—in participant or observational capacities—as a particularly impactful event. He writes, "Some events— like wars— leave such an impression that equally dramatic developments are required to displace them."¹¹

⁸ For example, President George W. Bush is considered an interventionist president because of his initiation of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But he did not intervene in North Korea despite the burgeoning nuclear threat there.

⁹ For example, Chapter 6 of Robert Jervis. 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press.

¹⁰ Jervis. 1976. pp. 239.

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 217.

Following Jervis, a president's prior war experience (whether in combat, non-combat, and non-serving capacities) may be influential when making intervention decisions because of the potential connection between the lessons a leader may have learned and the prospects of deploying American troops into potential danger.¹² For example, Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, forward that leaders with combat experience, having lived the horrors of war, are less likely to initiate militarized disputes than their non-combat counterparts.¹³ However, there has not been empirical investigation of this potential correlation vis-à-vis American presidents.¹⁴ Chapter 2 of this dissertation employs quantitative analysis to explore the relationship between presidents' experiences of war in combat, non-combat, and non-serving capacities and finds no clear connection. This negative finding suggests that presidents' foreign policy beliefs about interventions may be related to their personal experiences of wars, but are not fully explained by it. Theories connecting these experiences with intervention decisions must incorporate other beliefs and the impact of the decision-making process.

Advisors, Expertise, Learning, and the Decision-Making Process:

When deliberating intervention policies, a foreign policy team enters into a dynamic, deliberative process that eventually yields a policy choice. This process has three governing factors: a president's extant foreign policy beliefs, a team's overall expertise, and its ability to learn from conflict as it evolves and integrate new conflict information into their deliberations.

Advisors serve a vital support role for presidents. Presidents choose their advisors, who in turn provide a commander in chief with relevant information as well as emotional and

¹² Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. 2015. *Why Leaders Fight*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 134-140.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation explores the ideational and war experience literature.

logistical support. They must calibrate their advisory role to ensure that the decision a president makes should increase political legitimacy domestically and abroad. Similarly, they must adjust their advice and support to a president's needs and intervention beliefs as they might change.

Just as a president may be guided past experiences, members of a foreign policy team are guided by their relevant prior experiences. Presidents and advisors with prior intervention management experience are more likely to avoid cognitive biases and exhibit rational decision making. Experienced presidents are also better personnel managers and are better able to compensate for advisors' biases. However, experienced advisors may be unable to compensate for the errors in judgement an inexperienced president is likely to make. Even though expertise lends itself to a more rational process, experts do not necessarily hold an advantage in predictions and forecasting. Similarly, over-reliance on prior experience can lead to insufficient engagement with information about a conflict and inadequate learning. Learning represents acts of engagement with a conflict as it changes. Good learning is demonstrated by testing intervention beliefs and their justifications and underlying assumptions against that new information. Teams that do not engage in the learning process, are more likely to favor policy options that will decrease political legitimacy.

The Puzzle and Plan of the Dissertation:

This study asks two central questions: 1) What are the intra-administration factors that shape presidential decisions about foreign interventions? 2) How are a president's psychological propensities and intervention beliefs mediated by advisers during the intervention management and decision-making process? In pursuit of these questions, the dissertation proceeds as follows.

In Chapter 1, I draw from political science and psychology literature to forward my theory of intra-administration intervention decision-making. In Chapter 2, following extant theories on military experience and inclinations towards conflict, I calculate the proportion of military disputes initiated during president's tenure that involve troop deployment with the intent to use force and abstention from acting. Finding no clear relationship between any different category of war experience and predilections towards dispute initiation furthers Chapter 1's argument about the intervening role of the decision-making process. In Chapters 3 and 4, I conduct two comparative case studies of Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton's handling the civil war in Bosnia and humanitarian intervention in Somalia. I have selected these cases for four reasons:

1. These cases occurred in the period between the end of the Cold War and before the global war on terror. This period should, theoretically, have offered president's maximum latitude in exercising their intervention beliefs;
2. They offer a direct comparison of foreign policy teams' expertise. Bush and his team were very experienced and Clinton and his team were not;
3. The differences in expertise allow for clear examination of the teams' engagement with and learning from the two conflicts;
4. Only recently have declassified intra-administration national security documents become declassified.

In pursuit of this qualitative analysis, I employ Alexander George's method of process tracing (1979) as outlined in Marc Trachtenberg's *The Craft of International History* (2006) and Alexander George and Andrew Bennett's *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. I utilize declassified national security documents, contemporary journalistic accounts, an elite interview, and scholarly assessments to track both presidents' foreign policy teams' handlings of the two crises.¹⁵

¹⁵ Alexander George. 1979. "The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-making Behavior: The 'Operational Code' Belief System." In L. Falkowski (Ed.). *Psychological Models in International Politics* (pp. 95-124). Boulder: Westview Press; Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory*

Chapter 1: Towards a Theory of American Presidential Intervention Decision-Making

“As a professor, I tended to think of history as run by impersonal forces. But when you see it in practice, you see the difference personalities make.”

National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger (1974)¹⁶

What are the intra-administration factors that shape presidential decisions about foreign interventions? How are a president’s psychological propensities and intervention beliefs mediated by advisers during the intervention management and decision-making process?

Introduction:

Before 1945, the United States of America largely practiced nonintervention in other countries’ crises.¹⁷ By contrast, the period following World War II (WWII) saw corresponding increases in both American involvement in foreign interventions as well as presidential prerogative in managing those interventions.¹⁸ These changes have made presidential management of foreign interventions central to modern American foreign policy. Nowhere is this more evident than in combat troop deployment. Since 1945, presidents have sent hundreds of thousands of combat troops into dozens of interventions without a single declaration of war and just 11 Congressional authorizations to use force.¹⁹ The expansion of presidential power is

Development in the Social Sciences. MIT Press; Trachtenberg, Marc. 2006. *The Craft of International History* Princeton University Press

¹⁶ Walter Issacson, "Kissinger." (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 13.

¹⁷ Evidential of noninterventionism’s centrality to American foreign policy, President Lincoln’s Secretary of States William H. Seward called it, “...straight [and] absolute,” adding it, “has thus become a traditional one which could not be abandoned without the most urgent occasion, amounting to a manifest necessity.” Cited in John W. Davis, "The Permanent Bases of American Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* 10, no. 1 (1931): 1-12. Davis (193) further illustrates the centrality of nonintervention.

¹⁸ See Arthur Schlesinger, *Imperial Presidency*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973; William G. Howell, and Jon C. Pevehouse, "Trends in Military Deployments" in *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*, pp. 53-74. Princeton University Press, 2007, and Lindsay, James M. "Congress and foreign policy: Why the Hill matters." *Political Science Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (1992): 607-628

¹⁹ Jennifer K. Elsea and Matthew C. Weed, "Declarations of War and Authorizations for the Use of Military Force: Historical Background and Legal Implications," Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, 2014; Louis

further evidenced by the panoply of intervention policies they pursued that are short of what are commonly considered war. A non-exhaustive and nonexclusive list includes unilateral and multilateral aid, covert operations, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, regime change, counterinsurgency, nation building, and many forms of diplomacy amongst others. Presidential prerogative and power are similarly demonstrated by the numerous decision points at which they chose nonintervention.²⁰

Presidential (non-) intervention decisions, however, do not emanate out of isolation. Rather, presidents consider interventions already psychologically-influenced by their salient life experiences and extant beliefs about interventions. Notably, when weighing decisions to send troops abroad, presidents draw on their own experiences of interventions which originate out of their experience of interventions as either soldiers or civilians.²¹ Given the variability in how they might have been impacted by interventions prior to ascending to the presidency, the lessons learned and policy preferences arising from those experiences vary at the individual level. More broadly, the experience-effect speaks to presidents' extant beliefs about interventions prior to managing interventions.²² These beliefs, manifested as policy preferences vary by predilections

Fisher, "The Korean War: On What Legal Basis Did Truman Act?" *American Journal of International Law* 89, no. 1 (1995): 21-39. Garance Franke-Ruta, "All the Previous Declarations of War," *The Atlantic Monthly*, August 31, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/08/all-the-previous-declarations-of-war/279246/>

²⁰ For a comprehensive list of American troop deployments abroad see: Barbara Salazar Torreon, 2016, "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798 2016" R42738, Congressional Research Service.

²¹ On military experience see, for example, Horowitz, Michael C., Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. *Why Leaders Fight*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. On lessons of wars, see Chapter 6 of Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press, 1976 and Roskin, Michael. "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: Shifting generational paradigms and foreign policy." *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 3 (1974): 563-588."

²² See Alexander L. George, "The Causal Nexus Between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The 'Operational Code' Belief System." *Psychological models in international politics* (1979): 95-124 and Elizabeth N. Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*, 2011, Cornell University Press.

towards nonintervention/intervention and on how to intervene, serve the vital function of setting an initial agenda of intervention policies to be considered.²³

Once the agenda is set, a president's and his/her advisors enter into a dynamic process of information gathering and debate to gauge the viability and implications of a president's initial policy preference. Advisors give the president information, advice, and support. In this way, they serve an executive's psychological and rational-informational needs throughout the decision-making process.²⁴ This process may or may not yield a policy decision that is different from the president's initial policy preference.

Broadly speaking, political scientists treat psychological and organizational approaches to decision-making described above as mutually exclusive. Those taking the psychological approach tend to treat decisions as the president's alone while disagreeing on their causal factors. Those taking the organizational approach tend to adopt the view that "personnel is policy" and view advisors as the central actors who shape processes and decisions to their preferences.²⁵ Thus, they view policy outcomes not as presidents' choices, but as those of his/her most-influential advisor(s). Rather than treating the two approaches as parallel, I view them as complementary and contend that they ought to be viewed together as both needed to offer a more precise theory of intervention decision-making.

The Argument:

²³ Jentelson calls this agenda setting "an administration's basic propensities." Bruce W. Jentelson, "Discrepant responses to falling dictators: Presidential belief systems and the mediating effects of the senior advisory process." *Political Psychology* (1990) pp.: 354.

²⁴ Alexander L. George, 1980. *Presidential Decision-Making in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*. Westview Press, pp. 81.

²⁵ See, for example, David E. Lewis, "Personnel is Policy: George W. Bush's Managerial Presidency." In *President George W. Bush's Influence over Bureaucracy and Policy*, pp. 19-40. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009.

I argue that intervention decisions emerge from presidents' psychological propensities which manifest as initial intervention policy preferences. Those preferences are informed by a president's salient experiences, like military service or lack thereof, and his/her beliefs about intervention. Intervention beliefs can be informed by a number of factors (e.g. those salient experiences, domestic politics, or generational paradigms vis-à-vis (non-) intervention).²⁶ Presidents' psychological propensities are based on their salient experiences of interventions and extant intervention beliefs. Both propensities vary by individual-president and, by extension, intervention. Preferred policies may be mediated by deliberations within a foreign policy team, comprised of a president and his/her chosen senior advisors. A team's decision-making process is dictated by its overall capacities of expertise (prior intervention management experience) and learning (ability to integrate relevant information into deliberations as an intervention evolves).²⁷ In this way, the dependent variable (presidential intervention decisions) is explained by the independent variable (a president's psychological propensities) but can be mediated by an intervening variable (the decision-making process, which governed by expertise and learning).

The corresponding hypotheses are as follows: (H1) In the high-capacities foreign policy team scenario, the mediating effect will be weak, (H2) in the low-capacity foreign policy team scenario, the mediating effect will be strong and the key decisions will be at variance from what would have been predicted based strictly on a president's initial policy preferences. The magnitude of mediation is explained foremost by the viability of a president's preferred policy. Experienced foreign policy presidents are more likely to have viable initial policy preferences.

²⁶ For a review of domestic influences on foreign policy see Fearon, James D. "Domestic politics, foreign policy, and theories of international relations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1, no. 1 (1998): 289-313. For foreign policy choices made because of the generational foreign intervention paradigm of the time see, "Roskin, Michael. "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: Shifting generational paradigms and foreign policy." *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 3 (1974): 563-588."

²⁷ Jentelso (1990) takes a similar approach but views the mediating variable as advisor's (dis-) unity.

More broadly, experienced foreign policy teams are already familiar with extant intervention apparatuses and their capabilities and limitations better-equipped to gauge the viability of a president's initial policy preferences. In contrast, inexperienced teams have to gain these competencies and are less capable of mitigating inviable policy options. If advisors have an experience and informational advantage over a president, the mediation effect is likely to be great unless the president has not already selected a policy that advisors support.

Expertise alone does not fully explain mediating effects as (potential) foreign interventions are dynamic events which demand policy assessment prior to and during their implementation. Therefore, good-functioning teams demonstrate effective learning through close monitoring of an intervention, including consistent policy (re-)evaluation. Teams do this by testing potential policies (including the president's initial preferred policy) against historical lessons and integrating new and relevant information into policy deliberations as the team gains a greater understanding of what an intervention is and what it might become. Relevant information includes public opinion polling, popular news stories, prominent opinion pieces, intelligence reports, military assessment, diplomatic reports and communiqués, think tank reports, and academic assessments amongst others.

High capacity teams, those that demonstrate learning through effective information integration into the assessment process and have extensive intervention expertise, are more effective because of their ability to morph to a president's needs as an advisory structure and a (potential) intervention change.²⁸ Low capacity teams are inclined towards considering, implementing, and inconsistent managing of inviable policies and will demonstrate inconsistent policy commitment issues.

²⁸ Roger B. Porter, "Advising the President," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 19(4) (1986): 867-869.

In the sections that follow, I review relevant scholarly literature and further explicate my theory of presidential intervention management.

Rational and Psychological Approaches to Presidential Foreign Policy Decision Making:

As presidential management of international crises became a central feature of modern American foreign policy, scholars followed suit in their investigation of the influences on presidents' intervention decisions. Broadly, scholars taking up this research agenda can be divided into those taking rational and psychological approaches. Rationalists can be further subdivided into two groups: those that investigate extra-White House forces on the President and those that examine intra-White House systems and activities.

Those examining extra-White House forces considered the roles of Congress, the legislative bargaining process, public opinion, repercussions for leaders when they back down from intervention-commitments (audience costs), and bureaucratic politics within and without the executive branch amongst others.²⁹ In general, this approach offers important insights into domestic constraints, consequences, and structural factors that, under certain circumstances, might affect a President's policy choices. However, this approach does little illuminate policy ideation.

²⁹ While initially focused on the extra-White House bureaucratic factors, newer literature has expanded its focus to include study of the influence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's influence, often within executive branch deliberations. For Congress's role in the foreign policy making process see James M. Lindsay, *Congress and the Politics of US Foreign Policy*, Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994 and Howell and Pevehouse, 2007. For the role of public opinion see: John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*, New York: Wiley, 1973, and John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press, 1992. For audience costs, see James D. Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review*, 88 (3), 1994: 577-592. For bureaucratic politics, see Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin. "Bureaucratic politics: A paradigm and some policy implications," *World politics* 24(S1): 40-79, 1972, Morton H. Halperin and Priscilla Clapp, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, Brookings Institution Press, 2007, and Pfiffner, James P. 2005. *The modern presidency*. 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Those examining intra-White House processes investigate factors like advisors' group behavior and groupthink, leadership style, leaders' personalities' effects on decision-making processes, advisory systems and their structures, and presidents' personal effectiveness amongst others.³⁰ Still, other rationalists take up examination of single-conflict case studies.³¹ As Lowi notes this approach minimizes the role of a president's psychology writing, "this rationalist-intuitionalist approach does not deny the relevance of individual psychology but treats it as marginal in the context of the tremendous historical forces lodged in the laws, traditions, and commitments of institution."³²

Scholars taking a psychological approach have pursued a rich and varied research agenda, often focusing on micro-level analysis. A brief and broad overview of this scholarship includes the study of leaders' operational codes, perception and misperception, personalities, resolve, personal characteristics,³³ cognitive biases and prospect theory, shame and humiliation, leaders' age, prospects for losing office, views of foreign threats, and even birth order within leaders' families.³⁴ Among those examining correlations between leaders' biographical elements

³⁰ Note: Topically, there is some overlap here with scholars who take a psychological approach. For groupthink see Irving Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, Mass., 1972; For leadership style and group behavior see Schafer, Mark, and Scott Crichlow, "Antecedents of Groupthink: A Quantitative Study." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 40, no. 3 (1996): 415-35. For leaders' personalities and a comparative analysis of good and bad processes see Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow, *Groupthink Versus High-quality Decision Making in International Relations*, Columbia University Press, 2010. For advisory systems, see George, Alexander L. 1972, "The case for multiple advocacy in making foreign policy," *American Political Science Review* 66(3): 751-85 and George, Alexander L. 1980. *Presidential decision making in foreign policy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. For advisory systems' structures see Richard Tanner Johnson, 1974, *Managing the White House*, New York: Harper and Row. For presidents' power and personal effectiveness, see Neustadt, Richard, 1990, *Presidential power and the modern presidents*, New York: Free Press.

³¹ For example, Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of decision: Explaining the Cuban missile crisis*. Vol. 327, no. 729.1. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971.

³² Lowi, Theodore J. *The personal president: Power invested, promise unfulfilled*. Cornell University Press, 1986.

³³ These include a leader's beliefs, motive, decision style, and interpersonal style.

³⁴ For operational codes, see Nathan C. Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo*, 1951, New York: McGraw-Hill, and Alexander L George. "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-making." *International Studies Quarterly* 23: 190-222, 1969. For perception and misperception, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press, 1976.; For leaders' personalities, see Margaret G. Hermann, *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders*, 1977, New York: Free Press; For leaders' resolve, see Lloyd S. Etheredge, *A World of Men: The Private Sources of American Foreign*

and their foreign policy decision-making, the role of intervention-experience through military experience (or lack thereof) emerged as a valuable area of study that brings together the psychological, rational, and historical.

Military Experience and Combined Rational-Psychological approaches:

Throughout the history of the United States, veterans have featured prominently amongst its presidents. Of the 45 American Presidents, 31 had military experience and 18 of those saw combat (Appendix A—Table 1). The 2012 American presidential election was the first one in the post-World War II era in which neither major political party nominated a candidate who had any prior military experience.³⁵ Until that election, in just 7 of the 57 US presidential elections did all major parties nominate non-veterans and all of those occurred between 1884-1944.³⁶

Despite their political prominence, evidence linking military service and intervention policy preferences is mixed. Research into the role of veteran-legislators in foreign policy

Policy. MIT Press, 1978.; For personal characteristics, see Margaret G. Hermann, "Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders." *International Studies Quarterly* 24(1): 7-46, 1980; For cognitive biases, see Deborah W. Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*, Princeton University Press, 1985, and Deborah W. Larson, "The Role of Belief Systems and Schemas in Foreign Policy Decision-Making," *Political Psychology*, 15(1), 17-33, 1994; For prospect theory, see: Rose McDermott, *Risk-taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. For shame and humiliation, see: Blema S. Steinberg, *Shame and Humiliation: Presidential Decision Making on Vietnam*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996; For leaders' age, see: Michael Horowitz, Rose McDermott, and Allan C. Stam. "Leader age, regime type, and violent international relations." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(5), 2005 (pp: 661-685); For prospects of leaders losing power, see Giacomo Chiozza and Hein Erich Goemans, *Leaders and international Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, 2011; For American presidents' threat perception, see Elizabeth N. Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*, 2011, Cornell University Press; For birth order, see Louis Stewart, "Birth Order and Political Leadership," In M. G. Hermann (Ed.), *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders* (pp. 205-236). 1977 New York: Free Press and Rudy B. Andeweg and Steef B. Berg. 2003. "Linking Birth Order to Political Leadership: the Impact of Parents or Sibling Interaction?" *Political Psychology* 24(3): 605-623.

³⁵ Harbaugh, Ken. "There Should Be a Veteran Running for President." *TIME Magazine*. 18 Mar 2015.

³⁶ Those election years are 1884, 1908, 1920, 1924, 1928, 1932, and 1944. 1884 is somewhat anomalous because Grover Cleveland avoided military service by legally paying a substitute \$300 to take his place, earning himself the reputation as a "slacker"—a reputation that was difficult to overcome (Miller Center). The other elections suggest a cohort effect. Specifically, that the decreasing population of soldiers within the general population between the Civil War and World War I led to a corresponding representation drop of veterans in the presidency (Appendix A: Table 1 & Figure 2).

formulation shows that representatives' vote choices do not vary significantly from non-veteran representatives.³⁷ This research agenda, however, like most political scientists treat all military experience uniformly, without any qualitative disaggregation.³⁸ In *Why Leaders Fight* (2015), Horowitz, Stam and Ellis, performed a quantitative study of every nations' head of government (1875-2004) to uncover relationships between leaders' military service (combat, non-combat, and no-service) and conflict initiation predilections. The authors forward that noncombat veterans are more likely to initiate conflicts than either combat veteran or non-serving leaders because noncombat veterans seek to remedy a perceived gallantry-deficit in their military service through successful conflict leadership. Additionally, they forward that combat veteran leaders, having seen war's horrors firsthand, are more reluctant to commit troops to existential danger.³⁹

Following *Why Leaders Fight*, Chatterjee (2017 and Chapter 1 of this dissertation), undertook a quantitative study of military experience and American presidents conflict initiation predilections. Using the same statistical method but extending out the population of interest to include all presidents and American conflicts from 1816-2010, Chatterjee found little difference in presidents' propensity for armed conflict relative to noncombat, combat, and no military service. Chatterjee also found inconclusive results when examining presidential predilections to choose no militarized response based on military service.

³⁷ Bianco, William T., and Jamie Markham. 2001. "The Vanishing Veterans." In *Soldiers and Civilians*, ed. Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press; Lupton, Danielle. "Military Experience and Congressional Oversight of the Iraq War: Does Military Service Matter?" Presented at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington DC.

³⁸ Holsti, Ole. 1998. "A Widening Gap between the Us Military and Civilian Society? Some Evidence, 1976-96." *International Security* 23(3): 5-42; Feaver, Peter D., and Richard H. Kohn. 2000. "The Gap: Soldiers, Civilians, and Their Mutual Misunderstanding." *The National Interest* (Fall):29-37; Gelpi, Christopher and Peter Feaver. 2004. *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. Princeton University Press.

³⁹ Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*. Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 134-140.

Other scholars examining the relationship between experiences of the Vietnam War and intervention preferences also found conflicting results. In a twin study in which one sibling saw combat in Vietnam and the other did not serve, Koenen et al (2003) found combat veteran twins were showed a greater proclivity for acts of violence.⁴⁰ Jennings, Markus, and Niemi (1991), comparing attitudes towards military intervention, found that Vietnam veterans were more hesitant about interventions than soldiers deployed in other interventions. Their findings suggest that it is not the type of service but rather the conflict in which a soldier was deployed that affects intervention preferences.⁴¹ DiCicco and Fordham (2018), examining the (non-) intervention preferences of Vietnam veterans who became foreign policy elites, find that skepticism about the efficacy of American interventions faded after the end of the Cold War.⁴² These findings suggest that elite's military experience-based intervention preferences are viewed not in any psychologically, but rather viewed more broadly and are placed given rational assessment within the context of American foreign policy goals. Thus, DiCicco and Fordham's findings run counter to Roskin (1974) who argues that intervention-nonintervention preferences stem from the salient generational intervention experience (i.e. the WWII/Pearl Harbor generation was interventionist and the Vietnam generation was noninterventionist).⁴³

⁴⁰ Koenen, Karestan C., Michael J. Lyons, Jack Goldberg, John Simpson, Wesley M. Williams, Rosemary Toomey, Seth A. Eisen, William True, and Ming T. Tsuang. 2003. "Co-twin control study of relationships among combat exposure, combat-related PTSD, and other mental disorders." *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 16(5): 433-438.

⁴¹ M. Kent Jennings, Gregory B. Markus, and Richard G. Niemi. 1991. *Youth-parent Socialization Panel Study, 1965-1982: Three Waves Combined*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political Social Research.

⁴² Jonathan M. DiCicco, and Benjamin O. Fordham. "The Things They Carried: Generational Effects of the Vietnam War on Elite Opinion." *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2018): 131-144.

⁴³ On military experience see, for example, Horowitz, Michael C., Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. *Why Leaders Fight*. Cambridge University Press, 2015. On lessons of wars, see Chapter 6 of Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press, 1976 and Roskin, Michael. "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: Shifting generational paradigms and foreign policy." *Political Science Quarterly* 89, no. 3 (1974): 563-588."

In Chapter 6 of *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, entitled “How Decision-Makers Learn from History,” Jervis makes a comprehensive case for the psychological impact a nation’s military interventions can have on leaders.⁴⁴ He argues that wars, especially when experienced firsthand, can have several lasting impacts on leaders including making them impervious to new information, leaving disproportionate impressions, and creating predispositions that can lead to misperceptions.⁴⁵ Jervis cites Churchill’s mishandling of naval operations in World War II because he could only view battle through the lens of his combat experience as a soldier in land wars. In addition to military experience, Jervis cites war-experiences in early adulthood, generational effects, and events important to one’s state as events that psychologically impact leaders’ perceptions of wars.⁴⁶ The variety of ways in which the many experiences of war can affect leaders’ beliefs about interventions suggest a salient, charged psychological effect but not necessarily a uniform one. Beliefs can be informed by a number of factors including those salient life experiences, domestic politics, and generational paradigms amongst others.

Leaders Beliefs:

Politics is largely grounded in the causes and effects of leaders’ decisions.⁴⁷ As such leaders’ beliefs, as an influence on those decisions, have long been a driver of scholarly inquiry. Among political scientists influenced by and employing social and cognitive psychological theories, Leites (1951) and George (1969) are notable forerunners in this field for their work on

⁴⁴ Jervis, Robert. 1976. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press.

⁴⁵ Hudson, Valerie M. 2005, “Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1(1): 1–30.; Jervis, 1976, pp. 218, 240, & 244.

⁴⁶ Jervis, 1976, pp. 252.

⁴⁷ Valerie M. Hudson. 2005. “Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1(1): 1–30.

operational codes.⁴⁸ George, summarizing, decontextualizing, and generalizing Leites, defines the operational code as, "...a prism that influences the actor's perceptions and diagnoses of the flow of political events, his definitions, and estimates of particular situations."⁴⁹ George highlights the importance of beliefs in an individuals' diagnostic and choice propensities saying, "[beliefs] provide norms, standards, and guidelines that influence the actor's choice of strategy and tactics, his structuring and weighing of alternative courses of action." Despite beliefs' importance in a leaders' foreign policy decision making process, George stresses that beliefs are not a decision's sole determinant.⁵⁰ Later, George (1980) argues that international relations are shaped by, "[leaders'] beliefs about the nature of conflict within the international system."⁵¹

Jervis (2006), concurring on beliefs' importance, instead frames them as, "the sense of what people think about causes and effects."⁵² In explicating this definition further, Jervis points to beliefs' multiple meanings as evidence of, "...the inextricable role of emotion in sensible thought."⁵³ Jervis says that beliefs, "can refer to inner states as well as outer realities" and beliefs and belief systems tend to be durable because they have, "a strong element of commitment and faith."⁵⁴ Their resilience and general stability speak to their observability and value as a variable for analysis. Similarly, Renshon (2008) argues that in order to maintain internal cognitive consistency, leaders, like all individuals, "tend to filter new information through their pre-

⁴⁸ Leites, Nathan C. 1951. *The Operational Code of the Politburo*. New York: McGraw-Hill.; George, Alexander L. 1969. The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-making. *International Studies Quarterly* 23: 190-222.

⁴⁹ George, 1969, pp.191.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ George, Alexander L. 1980. *Presidential Decision-Making in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*. Westview Press, pp. 55.

⁵² Robert Jervis, "Understanding Beliefs," *Political Psychology* 27(5), 2006: 641-663, pp: 642.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

existing beliefs in such a manner as to maintain the consistency of their beliefs.”⁵⁵ In this way, leaders operate in “an objective reality but to a subjective reality that is filtered through their belief system.”⁵⁶

Saunders (2011), examining when and how Presidents of the United States choose to intervene in international crises, views the critical variable as, “the degree to which [Presidents] believe that the internal...characteristics of other states are the ultimate source of threats.”⁵⁷ Thus, Saunders divides presidents into “internally focused types” who are more likely to intervene militarily in a target country if they believe a threat originates from its domestic social/political composition and “externally focused types” who diagnose foreign threats based on a target state’s foreign policy.⁵⁸ Internally focused types are more inclined towards “transformative” interventions, in which the American goal is to reorder the state’s domestic order and institutions.⁵⁹ Externally focused types are more inclined towards “nontransformative” interventions, in which the United States “aims to resolve an international or civil conflict or crisis, or restrain or roll back a foreign policy action, without the explicit intention to alter domestic institutions within the target states.”⁶⁰

While Saunders follows the work of Leites, George, and Jervis in forwarding the importance and psychological charge associated with a president’s foreign policy beliefs, there are ambiguities in her definitions and categorizations and, by extension, their connection between to leaders’ beliefs and policy choices. Saunders concedes that any military intervention

⁵⁵ Jonathan Renshon, “Stability and Change in Belief Systems: The Operational Code of George W. Bush,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52, no. 6 (2008): 820-849, pp: 822.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Saunders, Elizabeth N. 2011. *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*. Cornell University Press, pp. 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid,

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 23.

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 22.

taking place in a target state will likely have serious domestic consequences which may result in massive changes in a target state's internal politics. This allows for the real effect that nontransformative interventions within a target state may have massive transformative effects. In effect then, the crucial distinction between her dependent variables (transformative and nontransformative interventions) resides in a president's a priori declaration of intention to change regime as a goal of the intervention and a post hoc assessment of the changes on a target state's internal political composition. Furthermore, many of the presidents (Truman, H.W. Bush, and Clinton) Saunders considers sought both transformative and nontransformative interventions.

Additionally, there is ambiguity between her independent variables (internally focused and external focused types) in the case of Eisenhower and Johnson in Indochina/Vietnam. Saunders cites both Eisenhower and Johnson as externally focused types and categorizes their approaches to Indochina/Vietnam as nonintervention and nontransformative intervention respectively.⁶¹ Beschloss (discussed below) shows that Eisenhower wanted to intervene to help the French maintain the political order in Indochina/Vietnam but was restrained by American domestic political forces. This means that Eisenhower's beliefs were reflective of an internally-focused type and was interventionist. In Johnson's case, he did not want to intervene but was ultimately compelled to do so by American domestic political pressures, not perceived external threat that could have emerged from the Vietnamese Civil War. Furthermore, it is unclear how the internally focused category could apply to a country in civil war whose political order had already dissolved. Moreover, Johnson's public discussion of domino theories and Vietnam's geostrategic value might be reasonably viewed as post hoc rationalization for a decision spurred by American-domestic forces.

⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 18.

I contend that beliefs surrounding threat perception and their corresponding “types” and policy choices, as broadly discussed by Saunders, may affect presidents’ decisions (and the environment surrounding those decisions) to intervene but are ultimately subsumable under the rubric of presidential belief about how to intervene. Continuing to operate on the George-Jervis view of beliefs as durable psychological entities that influence both foreign policies-considered and -chosen, when a president faces an intervention decision point, his/her beliefs can vary according to each conflict. In other words, beliefs vary by conflict for each president.⁶² In this way, a presidents’ beliefs about how to intervene serve an agenda setting function.

Connecting Intervention Experience Effects and Intervention Beliefs to Policy Preferences:

In *Presidents at War*, historian Michael Beschloss draws from archival and declassified data sources to illuminate American Presidents’ intervention decision making processes. In *Presidents*, Beschloss shows that a president’s past military experience and intervention beliefs may have an effect on the starting point of the intervention management process. But, they are not sufficiently determinative of policy choices.

Beschloss argues that American presidents with military backgrounds are better “war presidents.” For this assessment, he cites 2 reasons: 1) having lived the mortal endeavor of war, veteran presidents have greater empathy and practice heightened circumspection when considering committing to soldiers to battle and 2) veteran-presidents understand the strategic limits of tactical military advice in intervention management.⁶³ As examples, Beschloss cites President Eisenhower as a paragon of “a good war president” for keeping the United States out

⁶² Saunders, in fact, argues this (in brief) when describing George W. Bush’s beliefs after the attacks of September 11, 2001

⁶³ Preet Bharara, “Stay tuned with Preet: How to Assess a Presidency (with Michael Beschloss),” *Stay Tuned with Preet*, National Public Radio, November 15, 2018.

of Vietnam (1954-1961) and President Johnson as “a bad war president” for escalating the war in Vietnam after a staged, nonexistent attack on American ships at the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964.⁶⁴

Beschloss’s own historical investigation their Vietnam-management, however, shows that his view of military service’s effect is not necessarily directly observable in policy choices and that a president’s extant intervention beliefs and policy preferences and are insufficiently determinative of policy choices. According to Beschloss, in April 1954, with French control over Vietnam collapsing, President Eisenhower sought discretionary authority to use air and sea power from then-Senate Minority Leader Lyndon Johnson and longtime Chairman of the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Senator Richard Russell.⁶⁵ They denied his request, counselling him against American unilateral action in Vietnam out of the strong likelihood of protracted entanglement there. Eisenhower, having been advised and dissuaded from military intervention chose instead to furnish South Vietnam with military assistance and \$1.65 billion in financial aid.⁶⁶

In November 1963, a newly sworn-in President Lyndon Johnson inherited an already-intractable Vietnam conflict. Under combat veteran President John F. Kennedy, American involvement expanded to include covert operations and thousands of American military advisors. In December 1963, Johnson, like Eisenhower, sought out Russell’s counsel who, again, urged nonintervention and recalled for Johnson their conversation with President Eisenhower saying, “I tried my best to keep them from going into Laos and Vietnam...Said we’d never get out—be in

⁶⁴ Similarly, Beschloss cites Presidents Polk and McKinley as examples of bad war presidents for also using phantom attacks to lead the country into wars (the Mexican-American War of the 1840s and the Spanish-American War of the 1890s respectively). All 4 presidents (1 good and 3 bad) were all veterans. Eisenhower and Polk were noncombat veterans and Johnson and McKinley saw combat in the WWII and the Civil War respectively.

⁶⁵ Michael Beschloss, *Presidents of War*, Random House Publishing, 2018, pp. 501-502.

⁶⁶ Michael E. Latham, "Redirecting the revolution? The USA and the failure of nation-building in South Vietnam." *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (2006): 27-41.

there fifty years from now.”⁶⁷ Over the next 6 months, as conditions in Vietnam worsened, Johnson’s foreign policy advisors, led by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, pushed him harder and harder towards military intervention and (unbeknownst to Johnson) even prepared drafts of a congressional authorization to use force. In addition, Johnson’s opponent in the 1964 presidential campaign, Senator Barry Goldwater, made the President’s Vietnam-management a major campaign issue, accusing Johnson of dithering.⁶⁸ In June 1964, 10 years after telling Eisenhower to avoid American intervention in Vietnam, with pressure mounting on him from within and without the White House, Johnson’s position changed as did Russell’s advice for him. Russell told him, “I didn’t ever want to get messed up down there...But as a practical matter, we’re in there, and I don’t know how the hell to tell the American people you’re coming out...I think I’ve got to say that ‘I didn’t get you in here,’ but we’re in here by treaty, and our national honor’s at stake.”⁶⁹ In August 1964, Johnson found Vietnam-entrée with the Gulf of Tonkin “attacks.”

When viewing Presidents Eisenhower and Johnson’s handling of the Vietnam conflict, we see that neither behaved as either Horowitz et al or Beschloss would have predicted. Horowitz et al would have expected non-combat veteran Eisenhower to escalate in Vietnam (which he wanted to) but ultimately did not. Both would have predicted that combat veteran Johnson would have exercised intervention reticence—which he did before ultimately deciding to escalate (under dubious circumstances). Beschloss would have expected both veteran presidents to avoid escalation even though Eisenhower wanted to escalate and Johnson ultimately did.

⁶⁷ Quoted in Beschloss, pp. 501-502.

⁶⁸ Beschloss, pp. 492-521.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Beschloss, pp. 505. Johnson was similarly warned by other advisors that he was in serious danger of becoming the first president in American history to oversee an American defeat.

That these scholars' behavioral expectations were not met does not eliminate the impact of president's psychological predispositions. Instead, the decision-making process reveals the impact that advisors can have on policy choices. When viewed together, the 2 presidents' Vietnam intervention management show a remarkable similarity in process. Both presidents came to their Vietnam-management task equipped with beliefs and policy preferences about how to handle the conflict. Both were given information and advice from their chosen advisors. For Eisenhower, the decision-making process produced information (lack of congressional cooperation and concern about the Vietnam quagmire) that immediately yielded a policy different from his original preference (military intervention). Similarly, Johnson's Vietnam-process yielded a policy choice different than his original policy preference. However, for Johnson's the process produced a diametrical shift in policy preference (from staunch nonintervention to prosecutor of a massive undeclared war perpetrated under dubious circumstances).

In both cases, the role of advisors was crucial variable in influencing the presidents' choices. When considering advisors' impact process alongside the findings from the ongoing scholarly debate on the effects of military experience, there is evidence to suggest that presidents' intervention decisions may be related to their intervention experience, but are not fully explained by it. In this way, variance between a president's intervention experience and intervention beliefs and policy decisions is explained by the interactions between a leader and his/her intervention beliefs and those psychological-influences.

Advisors and the Foreign Policy Team:

William Galston, a professor of political science and advisor to President Bill Clinton remarked that the, "...first law of Presidencies is that every President gets the White House he deserves."⁷⁰ The scholarship on presidential advisors bares out Galston's law as presidents choose their foreign policy advisors and influence the advice they receive and how they receive it. Destler (1977) writes that, "Presidents determine the range and quality of advice that they get. They choose their principal officials. They decide day-by-day, personally or through chosen aides, which of these officials will get into the Oval Office, how often, and in what context."⁷¹ While the president is the "decider-in-chief," successful foreign policy depends on the positive relationship between leaders and their counselors.⁷²

George (1980) writes that presidents rely on advisors for information, advice, and support—all of which serve a leaders' psychological and rational needs in the decision-making process.⁷³ Goldhamer (1978) similarly forwards that advisers can fill various roles and personal needs for a president and that their functions (support, expert analyst, teacher, etc.) effect decision making.⁷⁴ Advisers satisfy a president's cognitive needs with information, furnish a leader with emotional support, give a president "understanding and support" for policies under consideration and whatever choice she/he ultimately makes, and offer counsel that should increase political legitimacy domestically and abroad.⁷⁵ While relationships and interactions are multifaceted, the team ultimately operates through "task-oriented relationships" in which

⁷⁰ William Galston, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/william-galston-oral-history-deputy-assistant-president>

⁷¹ I. M. Destler, "National Security Advice to US Presidents: Some Lessons from 30 Years." *World Politics* 39 (1977), 143.

⁷² See Strahman, 2018; Henry A. Kissinger, "The Policymaker and the Intellectual," in *The Presidential Advisory System*, Thomas E. Cronin and Sanford D. Greenberg, eds. (Washington, DC: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), 163; and Ivo Daalder and I.M. Destler, *In the Shadow of the Oval Office* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

⁷³ George, 1980.

⁷⁴ Goldhamer, Herbert. *The adviser*. Elsevier Publishing Company, 1978.

⁷⁵ George, 1980.

information and advice-processing are affected by the, “structure, internal processes, and management of... [those] tasks and relationships.”⁷⁶ It follows then that policy creation develops out of the relationships and interactions within a president’s foreign policy team and that successful policies more likely to emerge out of a positive working environment.⁷⁷

The presidential studies and foreign policy analysis literature, however, offers conflicting arguments and findings about the extent to which advisors’ influence policy outcomes.⁷⁸

Mitchell (2010) argues that variation in influence is based upon the issue under consideration and not the structure of the advisory system.⁷⁹ This is a break from traditional scholarship which holds that advisors and advisory systems are the key to influencing policy outcomes. In reviewing the advisory system literature, Mitchell (2005) identifies 2 types of advisory systems: formal and collegial. The former being structured and operating on strict rules and hierarchies and the latter being looser with advisors operating collaboratively as equals.⁸⁰ Mitchell argues that the collegial system has become the normative ideal because, “...of the way in which it allows for open discussion and the evaluation of a full range of options, both of which contribute to “better” policy outcomes.”⁸¹ Larson, on the other hand, identifies 4 types of presidential advisory systems (competitive, formal, collegial, and formal options) that vary in size, structure and personnel redundancies, animating philosophy on debate and advice, presidential role, and, by extension, advantages and disadvantages.⁸²

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 82.

⁷⁷ See as examples Henry A. Kissinger, “The Policymaker and the Intellectual,” in *The Presidential Advisory System*, Thomas E. Cronin and Sanford D. Greenberg, eds. (Washington, DC: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), 163; and Ivo Daalder and I.M. Destler, *In the Shadow of the Oval Office* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

⁷⁸ David Mitchell, "Centralizing advisory systems: Presidential influence and the US foreign policy decision-making process." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 1(2) (2005): 181-206.

⁷⁹ Mitchell, David. "Does Context Matter? Advisory Systems and the Management of the Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2010): 631-659.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid, pp. 632.

⁸² Deborah Larson, Political Science 120A: US Foreign Policy Lecture, 10/6/2015.

The ongoing debate on advisors' roles suggests that advisory systems have an impact on decision making but that policy outcome variance might stem from the animating competencies within those systems. While good functioning teams tend to operate in structured environments with clear communication lines and designations of responsibilities, expertise and learning, more than structure, dictates advisors' effectiveness for 2 reasons: (1) (Potential) interventions are dynamic events that can change and require monitoring, constant policy reassessment, and structural flexibility and (2) Advisory systems morph according to a president's needs. As political scientist and presidential advisor Roger Porter noted, "[an] advisory system shapes itself to fit [a president's] preferences more than he adjusts his style to fit with it."⁸³

Foreign Policy Expertise:

Within a foreign policy team's decision-making environment, prior foreign policy experience is a constant factor in its operation. Many scholars argue that foreign policy choices are chiefly guided by prior experiences.⁸⁴ Experienced leaders and advisors are more likely to avoid cognitive biases and exhibit (more-) rational decision making.⁸⁵ Even though expertise lends itself to "cleaner" processes, experts do not necessarily hold an advantage in successful predications and forecasting.⁸⁶ Amongst a team's foreign policy experience, Saunders (2017), argues that an experienced executive is the prevailing factor. She argues that experienced leaders are better managers of their advisors and are therefore more-skilled at mitigating advisors'

⁸³ Roger B. Porter, "Advising the President," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 19(4) (1986): 867-869.

⁸⁴ See Jervis, 1976; Michael Horowitz, Allen Stam, and Calli Ellis, *Why Leaders Fight*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015; Matthew Fuhrmann and Michael Horowitz, When Leaders Matter: Rebel Experience and Nuclear Proliferation, *Journal of Politics* 77, pp:72-87.

⁸⁵ Emilie Hafner-Burton, Alex Hughes, and David G. Victor, "The Cognitive Revolution and the Political Psychology of Elite Decision Making," *Perspectives on Politics* 11(2), 2013, pp. 368-386.

⁸⁶ Phillip Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good Is It? How Can We Know?*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

biases.⁸⁷ She also forwards that a foreign policy team's overall experience matters but that even, "a team of seasoned veterans *cannot* fully compensate for an inexperienced leader, and inexperience in a presidential principal may enable or underwrite risky behavior by advisers" and "deviations from rationality depend...[on] who is in charge."⁸⁸

Foreign policy teams operate in an arena marked by uncertainty which requires that a president exercise his/her judgement. Larson (2003) writes, "Uncertainty means that reasonable people may differ. When the president's advisors offer conflicting diagnoses of the interests at stake and recommendations for action, the president...may then have to use his own judgment in deciding whose advice to accept"⁸⁹ Jentelson (1990) argues that when advisors are unified in disagreement with the president, their policy preferences will win out over the executive's. When advisors are not unified, the president's policy preferences will be enacted without mediation. It follows, that good functioning team's advisors will find unity if a president's initial chosen policy is sound and viable.

Strathman (2018), argues that foreign policy-inexperienced-presidents have greater needs and so rely on their advisors more than their experienced peers. He writes:

Leaders with a limited background in foreign policy ask more of their advisors. The demand for advice is greater for leaders without prior experience. The need for information and direction allows advisors to participate. Experience also insulates leaders from persuasion. Leaders use policy experience to question their advisors and push them to justify their recommendations. Experienced decision-makers have less need for advice and become resistant to the recommendations they receive. Advisors are more involved – and have a greater effect – when leaders are novices.

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⁸⁷ Elizabeth N. Saunders, "No Substitute for Experience: Presidents, Advisers, and Information in Group Decision Making," *International Organization* 71(S1), 2017, pp. S219-S247.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, pp. S243-S244.

⁸⁹ Deborah Welch Larson, "Politics, Uncertainty, and Values," in *Good Judgment in Foreign Policy: Theory and Application*, Stanley Renshon and Deborah Welch Larson, eds. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 310.

⁹⁰ Brent Strathman, "Discounting Advice," Prepared for the *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, Boston, MA, August 31st, 2018.

Presidents, especially those with little intervention experience, may rely on the military's expertise when seeking intervention guidance. This advice depends on whether an intervention is underway or not. Before an intervention, these former soldiers urge restraint from sending troops into battle (or conservatism) when compared to their non-serving counterparts.⁹¹ After an intervention is underway, those same veterans strongly favor military actions that will yield decisive victory, including large troop deployments.⁹² According to rationalist military sociologists and political scientists, this is because veterans in the American foreign policy bureaucracy derive wisdom from their military experience and that the military mind is, "conservative, realistic, and pessimistic about human nature."⁹³ Therefore, their perspective is buttressed upon interest in: 1) the lives and well-being of other soldiers, 2) maintaining their hard-earned positions of power, and 3) serving as a counterbalance to civilian bureaucrats who might express unwarranted optimistic for and under-informed visions of successful military actions.⁹⁴ Despite differences on motivations, many scholars in this tradition see the soldiers' familiarity with the horrors of war as a psychological driver for conservatism and a psychological justification for the expectation that veteran policymakers will think and act differently than their civilian colleagues.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Samuel P. Huntington, 1957. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Morris Janowitz, 1960, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Military Portrait*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press; Richard K. Betts, 1991, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP; Holsti, Ole. 1998. "A Widening Gap between the Us Military and Civilian Society? Some Evidence, 1976-96." *International Security* 23(3): 5-42; Christopher Gelpi and Peter D. Feaver, 2002, "Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick: Veterans in the Political Elite and American Use of Force," *American Political Science Review* 96:779-92; Christopher Gelpi and Peter Feaver, 2004. *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*, Princeton University Press.

⁹² Betts, 1991.

⁹³ Cohen, Eliot A. "The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations/The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait." *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997): 220.

⁹⁴ Huntington, 1957; Betts, 1991; Janowitz, 1960.

⁹⁵ Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1960; William T. Bianco, "Last Post for "The Greatest Generation": The Policy Implications of the Decline of Military Experience in the US Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 30(1): 85-102: 2005.; Danielle L. Lupton, "Out of the service, into the house: Military experience and congressional war oversight." *Political Research Quarterly* 70(2): 327-339, 2017.

More broadly, when a leader is at an expertise disadvantage, policy outcomes can be overrun by more-experienced advisors. According to Preston (2010), McGeorge Bundy used his position as National Security Advisor and expertise-advantage over Presidents Kennedy and Johnson to persistently push a policy of Vietnam-intervention over the executives' reservations and objections.⁹⁶ A similar dynamic played out with President Trump and Afghanistan. Prior to ascending to the American presidency, political dilettante Donald Trump articulated a strong belief in ending American involvement in Afghanistan. He argued (forcefully) that the war there had gone on for too long and yielded neither a foreseeable terminus nor any benefit to the United States of America. Throughout his first term as president, America's Afghanistan policy status quo remained.⁹⁷ When asked why his Afghanistan-beliefs were not manifesting in policy, Trump responded, "We're there because virtually every expert that I have and speak to say if we don't go there, they're going to be fighting over here. And I've heard it over and over again."⁹⁸

Foreign Policy Learning:

Expertise-advantages do not have to mean an executive's beliefs have to be diminished. Boin, Hart, Stern, and Sundelius (2005) argue that, when good-functioning teams are faced with a potential intervention, individual team members' various strengths/advantages are not used to promote their chosen agendas. Instead, good-functioning teams are cohesive and demonstrate responsiveness, adapting as a (potential) intervention changes in order to find an optimal policy

⁹⁶ Andrew Preston. *The War Council*. Harvard University Press, 2010.

⁹⁷ This view is confirmed in Bob Woodward. *Fear: Trump in the White House*. Simon and Schuster, 2018 cited in Uri Friedman, "The Woodward Book Comes for James Mattis," <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/09/mattis-woodward-trump/569350/>.

⁹⁸ Aaron Blake, "President Trump's Full Washington Post Interview Transcript," November 27, 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/11/27/president-trumps-full-washington-post-interview-transcript-annotated/>

choice which *might* be different than the initial one.⁹⁹ Levy (1994) defines this responsiveness as learning, “a change of beliefs (or the degree of confidence in one's beliefs) or the development of new beliefs, skills, or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience.”¹⁰⁰ This definition allows for the constant possibility for the updating of intervention-beliefs predicated upon 1) the arrival of new information and 2) the active or passive acknowledgement and processing of this information.

Of course, team member's foreign policy beliefs (as resilient psychological entities) are not easily changed. Bar-Joseph and McDermott, in examining intelligence failures, forward a theory of learning that focuses on learning after failure. Their case selection for successful learning follows a pattern of failure followed by success and “assumes this temporal pattern is not accidental but perhaps causal in nature.”¹⁰¹ This suggests that for successful foreign policy learning to occur, it must be preceded by failure. If this causal relationship holds, then experienced and inexperienced leaders might need to fail in order to learn and update their beliefs. They also discuss unsuccessful cases of learning after failure. This suggests that a team's capacity to learn must be present if not latent before a failure occurs.

Conclusion:

A foreign policy team's choices emerge out of dynamic interactions between the leader's beliefs and the teams' overall capacities of expertise (experience dealing with previous interventions) and learning (ability to integrate new information as it evolves). Team members,

⁹⁹ Boin, Arjen, Eric Stern, and Bengt Sundelius. 2016. *The politics of crisis management: Public leadership under pressure*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁰ Jack S. Levy, “Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield” *International Organization* 48 (2), 1994, pp. 279-312.

¹⁰¹ Bar-Joseph, Uri, and Rose McDermott. *Intelligence success and failure: The human factor*. Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 27. Uri Bar-Joseph and Rose McDermott, “Change the Analyst and Not the System: A Different Approach to Intelligence Reform,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 2 (2008): 127-145.

in particular the president, with relevant expertise are better prepared to select and implement viable policy options based on their familiarity with the decision-making process and experience with extant foreign policy tools. For example, if a president wants to intervene with military action through an international organization (like NATO or the United Nations), a team with expertise will already be familiar with the organization's operating processes and capabilities can more adeptly focus on viable policies. In contrast, an inexperienced team has to learn such functionalities and will likely consider a broad range of policy options that includes unfeasible ones, including options that are more likely to fail and decrease political legitimacy. Successful decision-making processes must also learn. A team that effectively integrates new information into policy deliberations and update its beliefs is more likely to consider and select prudent policies as they gain greater understanding of what it is and what it might become. Thus, presidential intervention decisions emerge out of a dynamic decision-making environment in which the psychological propensities are tempered with rational analysis.

Chapter 2: Warriors in the White House: The War's Effects on American Presidents' Decisions to Deploy Troops

*"I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility, its stupidity."*¹⁰²

—General Dwight D. Eisenhower's Speech at Canadian Club (January 10, 1946)

*"And any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worth while, I think can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction: 'I served in the United States Navy.'"*¹⁰³

President John F. Kennedy, Naval Academy Commencement Speech (1963)

*"Some events—like wars—leave such an impression that equally dramatic developments are required to displace them. Because [statesmen] have overlearned from traumatic events, decision-makers often resemble bullets...in being insensitive to incoming information."*¹⁰⁴

—Robert Jervis, *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics* (1976)

Introduction:

In the 2012 American presidential election, voters faced an uncommon choice—neither major political party nominated a veteran.¹⁰⁵ As retired Lieutenant Colonel TC John Nagl, United States Military Academy professor and combat veteran and counterinsurgency expert, wrote in *The Washington Post* of the choice between President Obama and Governor Romney:

*"This is a dramatic change. The crucible of combat not only created these United States but has also given us many of our most successful presidents...Military service is not the only way to demonstrate dedication to country or capability for high office...Still, the choice to take the nation to war is the most important decision a president can make. A commander in chief who has actually served on the battlefield has peerless personal experience and can make that decision with greater empathy."*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1946, "*Speech at the Canadian Club*,"

https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/all_about_ike/speeches/pre_presidential_speeches.pdf

¹⁰³ John F. Kennedy, 1942-1963, *John F. Kennedy's Speeches*, March 21, 1963.

<https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/united-states-naval-academy-19630801>

¹⁰⁴ Robert Jervis, 1976, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton University Press.

¹⁰⁵ Ken Harbaugh, "There Should Be a Veteran Running for President," *TIME Magazine*, 18 Mar 2015.

¹⁰⁶ John Nagl, "Does Military Service Still Matter for the Presidency?" *Washington Post*, 25 May 2012.

Military service has been a regular fixture of the presidency. In total, 31 of 44 presidents had some military experience and 17 saw combat.¹⁰⁷ In the 58 American presidential elections, 47 featured a major party candidate who had served.¹⁰⁸ Military experience consistently rates as the “most valuable asset for a presidential candidate” and the scrutiny of candidates’ military bona fides (or lack thereof) has become a fixture of public debates over fitness to serve as commander-in-chief and ability to direct foreign policy.¹⁰⁹

While Nagl’s contention fits within the longstanding scholarly conversation about the gap in civil and military relations, it also advances a delineation between different kinds of military experience and their effects on presidents’ views on deploying troops into an intervention.¹¹⁰ The idea that leaders would draw upon past events, especially impactful and salient ones like

¹⁰⁷ While there have been 45 presidencies, there have been only 44 presidents because Grover Cleveland was both the 22nd and 24th president.

¹⁰⁸ Those elections took place in 1884, 1908, 1920, 1924, 1928, 1932, 1944, 2012, and 2016. 1884 is somewhat anomalous because Grover Cleveland (1884) was drafted. He avoided military service by legally paying a substitute \$300 to take his place, earning himself the reputation as a “slacker”—a reputation that was difficult to overcome (Miller Center). The 20th Century elections suggest an age cohort effect. Specifically, that the decreasing population of veterans within the general population between the Civil War and World War I led to a corresponding representation drop of veterans in the presidency. While it is possible that the 2016 election may only be the newest data point in a post-Cold War trend in which voters decreasingly connect candidates’ military service with ability to lead on foreign policy, it’s also possible that there’s a similar cohort effect stemming from the end of conscription and the time lapse from the last large-scale American troop deployment. Because every election from 1992-2008 has been won by “the candidate with the less distinguished military resumé” (Nagl, 2012), it is possible that there is currently a cohort effect at play that could explain this trend.

¹⁰⁹ Pew Research Center, “For 2016 Hopefuls, Washington Experience Could Do More Harm than Good Military Service Top Positive, Atheism Top Negative for Potential Candidates.” 19 May 2014; For example, in 2008, John McCain’s campaign highlighted his family’s extensive military service and his years spent as a prisoner of war in Vietnam as proof of patriotism and foreign policy credentials. In 2004, George W. Bush’s service in the Texas Air National Guard and its largely redacted records and John Kerry’s combat experience in the Vietnam War and the accompanying allegations of record fabrication were sources of intense public discussion. In 2000, Al Gore decision to enlist during the Vietnam War was contrasted with George W. Bush’s decision not to do so. In 1992 and 1996, Bill Clinton was frequently questioned about draft deferments in campaigns against World War II combat veterans George H.W. Bush and Bob Dole.

¹¹⁰ Samuel P. Huntington, 1957, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Morris, Janowitz, 1960, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Military Portrait*, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press; Ole Holsti, 1998, “A Widening Gap between the Us Military and Civilian Society? Some Evidence, 1976-96.” *International Security* 23(3): 5-42; Thomas S. Szayna, Kevin F. McCarthy, Jerry Sollinger, Linda J. Demaine, Jeff Marquis and Brett Steele. 2007. *The Civil-Military Gap in the United States: Does It Exist, Why, and Does It Matter?*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation; Gelpi, Christopher and Peter D. Feaver. 2002. “Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick: Veterans in the Political Elite and American Use of Force.” *American Political Science Review* 96:779– 92.; Szayna, Thomas S. 2001. *The Civil-military Gap in the United States: Does it Exist, Why, and Does it Matter?* Vol. 379. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.

experience in war, in assessing foreign policy choices is supported by both political science and psychology literature.¹¹¹ However, the assertion that non-serving (e.g. Franklin Roosevelt), non-combat veteran (e.g. President Eisenhower), and combat veteran (e.g. President Kennedy) would have fundamentally different approaches to conflict because of the differences in their military experiences (or lack thereof) is largely understudied. This proposition then invites the question: When faced with a potential intervention, do warrior presidents behave differently than presidents who served in non-combat capacities, or those who did not serve in the military?

In this chapter, I examine conflict management through the lens of military experience (or lack thereof) to determine proclivities to use force amongst non-serving, non-combat, and combat veteran American presidents. In order to do this, I build upon the biographical information extracted from the Leader Experience and Attribute Descriptions (LEAD) which contains “information about the personal lives and experiences of over 2,000 state leaders from 1875–2004” to include the military experiences of all presidents (1816-2016).¹¹² Then, using the biographical data from Presidents Madison through Obama, I also use the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data collection, “which provides information about conflicts in which one or more states threaten, display, or use force against one or more other states between 1816 and 2010.”¹¹³ In total, I compare the military experience of 37 American presidents over 372 militarized disputes.

¹¹¹ Tversky, Amos, and Daniel Kahneman. 1974. "Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases." *Science* 185.4157: 1124-1131; Jervis, 1976; Fredrickson, Barbara L., & Kahneman, Daniel. 1993. Duration Neglect in Retrospective Evaluations of Affective Episodes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 65(1):45-55.; Daniel Kahneman, 2011, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.; Michael C. Horowitz and Allan C. Stam. 2014. "How Prior Military Experience Influences the Future Militarized Behavior of Leaders." *International Organization* 68.03: 527-559.; Michael C. Horowitz, Allan C. Stam, and Cali M. Ellis. 2015. *Why Leaders Fight*. Cambridge University Press.

¹¹² Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, 2015.

¹¹³ Glenn Palmer, Vito D'Orazio, Michael Kenwick, and Matthew Lane, 2015, “The MID4 Data Set: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science*.

In this chapter's first section, I briefly review the political science and psychology literature on leaders in international relations, veterans in the foreign policy bureaucracy, how leaders learn (building upon the literature review in this dissertation's second chapter), and combat's varying effects (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder vs. Posttraumatic Growth). I use the chapter's second section to define combat and discuss its importance in light of the American presidency. In the third section, I discuss results. In the fourth section, I discuss the implications of this study.

Literature Review:

Leaders: Politics is grounded in the causes and effects of individual and group decisions.¹¹⁴ However, traditional IR scholars—those that do not take the psychological approach—have given only passing attention to the role of the individual (political leaders) in favor of systemic explanations.¹¹⁵ Over the last 18 years though, there has been a reemergence of literature on leaders.¹¹⁶ However, much this literature focuses on variations surrounding leaders than the leaders themselves.¹¹⁷ In focusing on the environment surrounding leaders, these authors, perhaps inadvertently, forward the notion that effects from variation on leadership are subsumable by institutional and domestic political factors. Some of the literature that does delve into nature and background of leaders offers limited generalizability because observations and

¹¹⁴ Hudson, 2005.

¹¹⁵ Waltz, 1959.

¹¹⁶ Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back in." *International Security* 25.4 (2001): 107-146.

¹¹⁷ Giacomo Chiozza and Hein E. Goemans, 2003, "Peace Through Insecurity: Tenure and International Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47 (4):443-67; Giacomo Chiozza and Hein E. Goemans. 2004. "International Conflict and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War Still Ex Post Inefficient?" *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (3):604-19.; Hein E. Goemans, 2008, "Which Way Out? The Manner and Consequences of Losing Office," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 52 (6):771-94.; Alexandre Debs and Hein E. Goemans, 2010, "Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders, and War" *American Political Science Review*, 104 (3):430-45.; Jessica Weeks, 2014, *Dictators at War and Peace*, Cornell University Press.

case studies are limited across time, geography, conflicts, and number of leaders.¹¹⁸ Other works avoid the above limitations by focusing on leaders' educational background. However, such a focus offers little in the way of direct foreign policy relevance.¹¹⁹

The notable exceptions to these limitations are Horowitz and Stam's article, "How Prior Military Experience Influences the Future Militarized Behavior of Leaders" (2014) and Horowitz, Stam and Ellis's subsequent book *Why Leaders Fight* (2015).¹²⁰ The authors draw from psychiatry, psychology, history—especially leaders' biographies, and many political science subfields to create the theoretical basis for their inquiry. They then utilize a novel dataset (LEAD) of around 2500¹²¹ heads of state between 1875 and 2004 from every country to test whether certain elements of leaders' backgrounds (e.g. age, gender, occupation prior to entering political life, non-serving vs. combat vs. non-combat leader) to uncover proclivities towards initiating militarized disputes (using the MID's dataset, 1816- 2014). They find that non-combat veterans who become heads of state are more likely to initiate militarized conflicts than their combat veteran and non-serving counterparts—frequently using non-combat veteran Ronald Reagan as an exemplar—because of a need to compensate for a perceived gallantry deficit vis-à-vis their combat veteran colleagues. They do not forward a theory or finding on non-serving leaders' proclivities despite including them in their quantitative analysis. These findings as well as the breadth of this cross-national findings invite similar study within a single nation.

¹¹⁸Elizabeth N. Saunders, 2011, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*, Cornell University Press; Elizabeth N. Saunders, 2015, "War and the Inner Circle: Democratic Elites and the Politics of Using Force," *Security Studies* 24(3), 466-501.

¹¹⁹ Timothy Besley and Marta Reynal-Querol, 2011, "Do Democracies Select More Educated Leaders?" *American Political Science Review* 105(3): 552-566.; Timothy Besley and Jose G. Montalvo, and Marta Reynal-Querol. 2011. "Do Educated Leaders Matter?" *The Economic Journal* 121.554: F205-227.

¹²⁰ The article (2014) serves as the basis for the book (2015) and the combat experience section in Chapter 4: The Experiences that Matter I: Military/Rebel Status, Age, and Education.

¹²¹ 2500 is the number of observations they report in the book. A perusal of their replication data indicates that the number of unique leader observations is 2966.

Veterans in the American Foreign Policy Bureaucracy:

Before an intervention, former soldiers in the foreign policy bureaucracy urge restraint from sending troops into battle (or military conservatism) when compared to their non-serving counterparts.¹²² After an intervention is underway, those same veterans strongly favor military actions that will yield decisive victory, including large troop deployments.¹²³ According to rationalist military sociologists and political scientists, this is because veterans in the American foreign policy bureaucracy derive wisdom from their military experience and that the military mind is, “conservative, realistic, and pessimistic about human nature.”¹²⁴ Therefore, their perspective is buttressed upon interest in: 1) the lives and well-being of other soldiers; 2) maintaining their hard-earned positions of power; and 3) serving as a counterbalance to civilian bureaucrats who might express unwarranted optimistic for and under-informed visions of successful military actions.¹²⁵ Despite differences on motivations, some scholars in this tradition see the soldiers’ familiarity with the horrors of war as a psychological driver for conservatism and a psychological justification for the expectation that veteran policymakers will think and act differently than their civilian colleagues.¹²⁶

¹²² Samuel P. Huntington, 1957. *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Morris Janowitz, 1960, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Military Portrait*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press; Richard K. Betts, 1991, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises*, McGill-Queen's Press-MQUP; Holsti, Ole. 1998. "A Widening Gap between the Us Military and Civilian Society? Some Evidence, 1976-96." *International Security* 23(3): 5-42; Christopher Gelpi and Peter D. Feaver, 2002, “Speak Softly and Carry a Big Stick: Veterans in the Political Elite and American Use of Force,” *American Political Science Review* 96:779–92; Christopher Gelpi and Peter Feaver, 2004. *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*, Princeton University Press.

¹²³ Betts, 1991.

¹²⁴ Eliot A. Choen, "The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations/The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait." *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (1997): 220.

¹²⁵ Huntington, 1957; Betts, 1991; Janowitz, 1960.

¹²⁶ Huntington, 1957; Janowitz, 1960; William T. Bianco, "Last Post for “The Greatest Generation”": The Policy Implications of the Decline of Military Experience in the US Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 30(1): 85-102: 2005.; Danielle L. Lupton, "Out of the service, into the house: Military experience and congressional war oversight." *Political Research Quarterly* 70(2): 327-339, 2017.

For veteran policymakers with combat experience, it follows that this distinction would appear to be even stronger.¹²⁷ However, studies of veterans with combat experience have yielded varying results. There is evidence that suggests that deployed Vietnam veterans are more likely to be skeptical of American foreign policy than those who were not deployed.¹²⁸ However, DiCicco and Fordham (2018), examining the (non-) intervention preferences of Vietnam veterans who became foreign policy elites, find that skepticism about the efficacy of American interventions faded after the end of the Cold War.¹²⁹ At the same time, in a twin study in which one sibling saw combat in Vietnam and the other did not serve, Koenen et al found that twins who experienced combat are more likely to engage in dangerous behavior including acts of violence.¹³⁰ While legislators face numerous constraints that affect their policy choices, instances of “high salience proposals,” like a veteran legislator voting on foreign policy bills, is more likely to, “ignore constituent demands...and vote according to other criteria.”¹³¹ In comparative studies, scholars have found that military experience makes legislators more responsive towards pro- military legislation and combat experience makes veterans more militarily hawkish.¹³²

These mixed results might be explained by institutional factors. Sechser (2004) discounts the psychological justification and instead argues that military conservatism is actually just the result of civilian oversight. By being accountable to civilians, military elites fear the loss of

¹²⁷ Bianco, 2005; Horowitz and Stam, 2014; Horowitz, Stam and Ellis, 2015; Lupton, 2015.

¹²⁸ M. Kent Jennings, Gregory B. Markus, and Richard G. Niemi, 1991, *Youth-parent Socialization Panel Study, 1965-1982: Three Waves Combined*. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political Social Research.

¹²⁹ Jonathan M. DiCicco, and Benjamin O. Fordham. "The Things They Carried: Generational Effects of the Vietnam War on Elite Opinion." *International Studies Quarterly* 62, no. 1 (2018): 131-144.

¹³⁰ Karestan C. Koenen, Michael J. Lyons, Jack Goldberg, John Simpson, Wesley M. Williams, Rosemary Toomey, Seth A. Eisen, William True, and Ming T. Tsuang, 2003, “Co-twin control study of relationships among combat exposure, combat-related PTSD, and other mental disorders,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 16(5): 433-438 cited in Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, 2015, pp. 38–39.

¹³¹ Bianco 2005, pp. 87.

¹³² David Stadelmann, Marco Portmann, and Reiner Eichenberger, 2015, “Military Careers of Politicians Matter for National Security Policy,” *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 116, 142-156.; Guy Grossman, Devorah Manekin, and Dan Miodownik. 2015, “The Political Legacies of Combat: Attitudes Toward War and Peace Among Israeli Ex-Combatants,” *International Organization* 69.04: 981-1009.

institutional support and hard-earned, high-status positions if they advocate for an ultimately failed military action. He finds that states with weaker civilian oversight are more likely to initiate military actions than states with it.¹³³

How Leaders Learn:

For decades, the study of individuals' characteristics has been a thriving subfield within foreign policy analysis. Heavily influenced (if not entirely guided) by social and cognitive psychological theories, a brief overview of this research area's catalog includes influential work on operational codes, perceptions and misperceptions, process-tracing, leaders' personalities, leaders' resolve, personal characteristics, cognitive biases, prospect theory, shame and humiliation, leaders' age, and even birth order within a family. Even though this list is wide-ranging, an exhaustive and comprehensive look at the entirety of the subfield would reveal very little work done specifically on the impactful experiences that shape politicians' behavior—like combat experience's effect on policy.¹³⁴

¹³³Todd S. Sechser, 2004 "Are Soldiers Less War-Prone Than Statesmen?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (5):746–74.

¹³⁴ For operational codes, see Nathan C. Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo*, 1951, New York: McGraw-Hill, and Alexander L. George. "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-making." *International Studies Quarterly* 23: 190-222, 1969. For perception and misperception, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton University Press, 1976.; For leaders' personalities, see Margaret G. Hermann, *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders*, 1977, New York: Free Press; For leaders' resolve, see Lloyd S. Etheredge, *A World of Men: The Private Sources of American Foreign Policy*. MIT Press, 1978.; For personal characteristics, see Margaret G. Hermann, "Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders." *International Studies Quarterly* 24(1): 7-46, 1980; For cognitive biases, see Deborah W. Larson, *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*, Princeton University Press, 1985, and Deborah W. Larson, "The Role of Belief Systems and Schemas in Foreign Policy Decision-Making," *Political Psychology*, 15(1), 17-33, 1994; For prospect theory, see: Rose McDermott, *Risk-taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. For shame and humiliation, see: Blema S. Steinberg, *Shame and Humiliation: Presidential Decision Making on Vietnam*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996; For leaders' age, see: Michael Horowitz, Rose McDermott, and Allan C. Stam. "Leader age, regime type, and violent international relations." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49(5), 2005 (pp: 661-685); For prospects of leaders losing power, see Giacomo Chiozza and Hein Erich Goemans, *Leaders and International Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, 2011; For American presidents' threat perception, see Elizabeth N. Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*, 2011, Cornell University Press; For birth order, see Louis Stewart, "Birth Order and Political Leadership," In M. G. Hermann (Ed.), *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders* (pp. 205-236). 1977 New York: Free Press and Rudy B.

One place within this literature that does address the potential policy implications of experiencing war is in Chapter 6 of Robert Jervis's classic work *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, entitled "How Decision-Makers Learn from History." Here, Jervis discusses the influence that impactful and traumatic events, like wars can have on decision makers. He argues that these kinds of events, especially when experienced firsthand, can make decision-makers impervious to new information, leave disproportionate impressions, and create predispositions that can lead to misperceptions. Jervis cites Churchill's mishandling of naval operations in the World War II because he could only see them through the lens of a soldier of land wars, one he acquired as a combat veteran in several colonial disputes.¹³⁵

Combat's Varving Effects:

Reactions to combat, as with any emotionally intense or even traumatic event, vary by individual. In recent years, psychological and psychiatric research has grown on the prevalence and effects of posttraumatic stress disorder and posttraumatic growth/resilience. This growth has coincided with the growing population of veterans from the Global War on Terror (GWOT).¹³⁶ The Department of Veterans Administration defines posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a, "mental health problem that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a life-threatening event, like combat, a natural disaster, a car accident, or sexual assault."¹³⁷ As with

Andeweg and Steef B. Berg. 2003. "Linking Birth Order to Political Leadership: the Impact of Parents or Sibling Interaction?" *Political Psychology* 24(3): 605-623.

¹³⁵ Jervis, 1976, pp. 217-287.

¹³⁶ Jenna Van Slyke, "Post-Traumatic Growth," Naval Center for Combat & Operational Stress Control.

¹³⁷ U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, June 2016, "Understanding PTSD and PTSD Treatment," http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/understanding_ptsd/booklet.pdf

Koenen et al.'s twin study, the PTSD literature indicates increased predilections towards aggression amongst combat veterans.¹³⁸

The prevalence and, therefore, the effects of PTSD on soldiers with combat experience remains an issue of ongoing debate.¹³⁹ While not all those who experience life-threatening events develop PTSD, a 2015 web survey of 23,200 returning GWOT veterans (94.8% of which served in combat zones) conducted by the Wounded Warriors Project, suggests significant portions of returning GWOT vets demonstrated symptoms of PTSD.

About two-thirds to about three-fourths of alumni had a military experience that was so frightening, horrible, or upsetting that they had not been able to escape from memories or the effects of it. For example, 66.4 percent had nightmares about the experience; 75.5 percent thought about the experience when they did not want to; and 76.1 percent were constantly on guard, watchful, or easily startled because of the experience...61.9 percent of alumni [reported] emotional problems interfered extremely, quite a bit, or moderately with normal social activities with family and friends.¹⁴⁰

Other surveys suggest that PTSD is only slightly higher among veterans than the general population. Although veterans with PTSD have higher rates of other psychiatric disorders relative to veterans without PTSD.¹⁴¹ The prevalence of post-combat PTSD remains unclear because only a minority of combat veterans seek diagnosis.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Erin P. Finley, Monty Baker, Mary Jo Pugh, and Alan Peterson, 2010, "Patterns and Perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence Committed by Returning Veterans with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder," *Journal of Family Violence* 25, no. 8: 737-743.

¹³⁹ Louis Fisher, 2007, "The Law: Presidential Inherent Power: The "Sole Organ" Doctrine," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 37.1: 139-152.

¹⁴⁰ Martha Franklin, April Fales, Bekzod Akramov, Wayne Hintze, Michael Hornbostel, Scott Smith, Richard Sigman, Helen Liu, Rebecca Noftsinger, Melissa Wilson, and Jacky Choi, 2015, "2015 Wounded Warrior Project Survey. Wounded Warrior Project,"

https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org/media/2118/2015_wwp_alumni_survey_full_report.pdf.

¹⁴¹ Blair E. Wisco, Brian P. Marx, Erika J. Wolf, Mark W. Miller, Steven M. Southwick, and Robert H. Pietrza, 2014, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the US Veteran Population: Results from the National Health and Resilience in Veterans Study," *The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry* 75(12), 1-478.

¹⁴² Charles W. Hoge, Carl A. Castro, Stephen C. Messer, Dennis McGurk, Dave I. Cotting, and Robert L. Koffman, 2004, "Combat Duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, Mental Health Problems, and Barriers to Care," *New England Journal of Medicine* 351(1): 13-22.

While distress is an expected and reasonable outcome for anyone coming out of a traumatic event, the disorientation of these experiences can also lead to resilience.¹⁴³ This outcome is known as post-traumatic growth (PTG) and it can result in positive changes in an individual's life including a greater appreciation of life, closer relationships, identification of new possibilities, increased personal strength, and positive spiritual change.¹⁴⁴ Rates of PTSD and PTG among veterans are difficult to ascertain because much of the research is based upon competing self-report surveys instead of clinical assessments. Similarly, there may be a diminishing effect of war's influence over time as shown Elder and Clipp 1989's study of Korean War veterans. They showed that heavy combat veterans, when compared to noncombatants and light combat veterans, had greater difficulties adjusting to postwar life and by midlife held ambivalent feelings towards military service.¹⁴⁵

The high variability in response to combat experience suggests that warriors who opt into political life are more likely to demonstrate resilience in coping with trauma than to suffer the most serious cases of PTSD. However, both responses suggest that trauma of war should influence a policymaker's preferences.

Defining Combat and the Presidency:

In defining combat experience, I follow the definition laid out in the Technical Appendix for *Why Leaders Fight*.¹⁴⁶ They define combat experience as:

¹⁴³ Van Slyke et al, 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Laura A. King and Joshua A. Hicks, 2009, "Detecting and Constructing Meaning in Life Events," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 4(5): 317-330.

¹⁴⁵ Glen Elder and Elizabeth Colerick Clipp, 1989, "Combat Experience and Emotional Health: Impairment and Resilience in Later Life," *Journal of Personality* 57(2):311-341.

¹⁴⁶ Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis compare leaders who participated in a rebel militias with those who participated in national armies. One president in my data set, President James Madison, was a non-combat participant in the Virginia Militia. Since my inquiry is not concerned with this type of military participation, Madison's entry does not bear any distinction from other non-combat veteran presidents

Deployment as part of a national military in what would generally be considered a war zone (absent evidence of nonparticipation), deployment/general participation in a battle, or affirmative evidence of direct combat. Note that this does not require affirmative evidence of a given person firing a weapon, but instead adopts a definition requiring the soldier to be deployed in a war zone facing the risk of death in general. In general, combat was coded 0 in the absence of affirmative evidence that a leader who served in the military had combat experience.¹⁴⁷

Following this definition, of the 31 presidents with documented military service, 17 saw combat. Of the 37 presidents in this study, 13 were combat veterans, 13 were non-combat-veterans, and 11 did not serve in the military.

The prevalence of combat veterans in the presidency in light of the office's vast war making powers suggests that combat experience may have had outsized influence on American foreign policy. According the Congressional Research Service's report entitled "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2016," the United States has only formally declared war 11 times in 5 wars while presidents have constitutionally authorized hundreds of undeclared international military engagements.¹⁴⁸ While most pre-World War II troop deployments were "brief Marine Corps or Navy actions to protect U.S. citizens or promote U.S. interests," since the passage of the War Powers Resolution of 1973, which vastly expanded the commander-in-chief's ability to unilaterally commence military action, Presidents have deployed troops nearly 200 times in scores of countries over dozens of conflicts.¹⁴⁹

Results and Conclusions:

¹⁴⁷ Calli Ellis, Michael C. Horowitz, and Allan C. Stam, "Technical Appendix for Why Leaders Fight," pp. 24-25. <http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/politics-international-relations/international-relations-and-international-organisations/why-leaders-fight>

¹⁴⁸ Barbara Salazar Torreon, 2016, "Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798 2016" R42738, Congressional Research Service; J. Terry Emerson, 1991, "Making War without a Declaration," *Journal of Legislation*: Vol. 17:1(3).

¹⁴⁹ Torreon, 2016.

In an initial test of presidents' proclivity to use military force abroad, I first coded each president's military experience as no military experience, non-combat service, and combat experience. Presidents whose terms do not fall within the MID's dataset's timeframe of 1816-2010 (Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison pre-1816, Obama post-2010, and Trump) and those who were not involved in any militarized disputes (W. Harrison, Taylor, and Garfield) are excluded from the analysis.

From the MID's dataset, I then calculated the proportion of military disputes in a president's tenure that involve troop deployment with the intent to use force and war.¹⁵⁰ Figure 1 plots this proportion for each president grouped by type of military experience. There appears to be little difference in a president's propensity for armed conflict relative to military experience. Whereas, 42% of non-serving presidents' (n=11) military disputes involved the deployment of troops to use force, the same was true for 30% of non-combat veterans presidents (n=13), and 38% combat veteran presidents (n=13). However, none of these differences reach any conventional level of statistical significance.

¹⁵⁰ The MID's data set categorizes "Hostility level" of incidents: 1 No militarized action, 2 Threat to use force, 3 Display use of force, 4 Use of force, and 5 War. The latter two categories constitute the deployment of troops with the expectation of combat. The threshold for War categorization is 1,000 battle-related deaths.

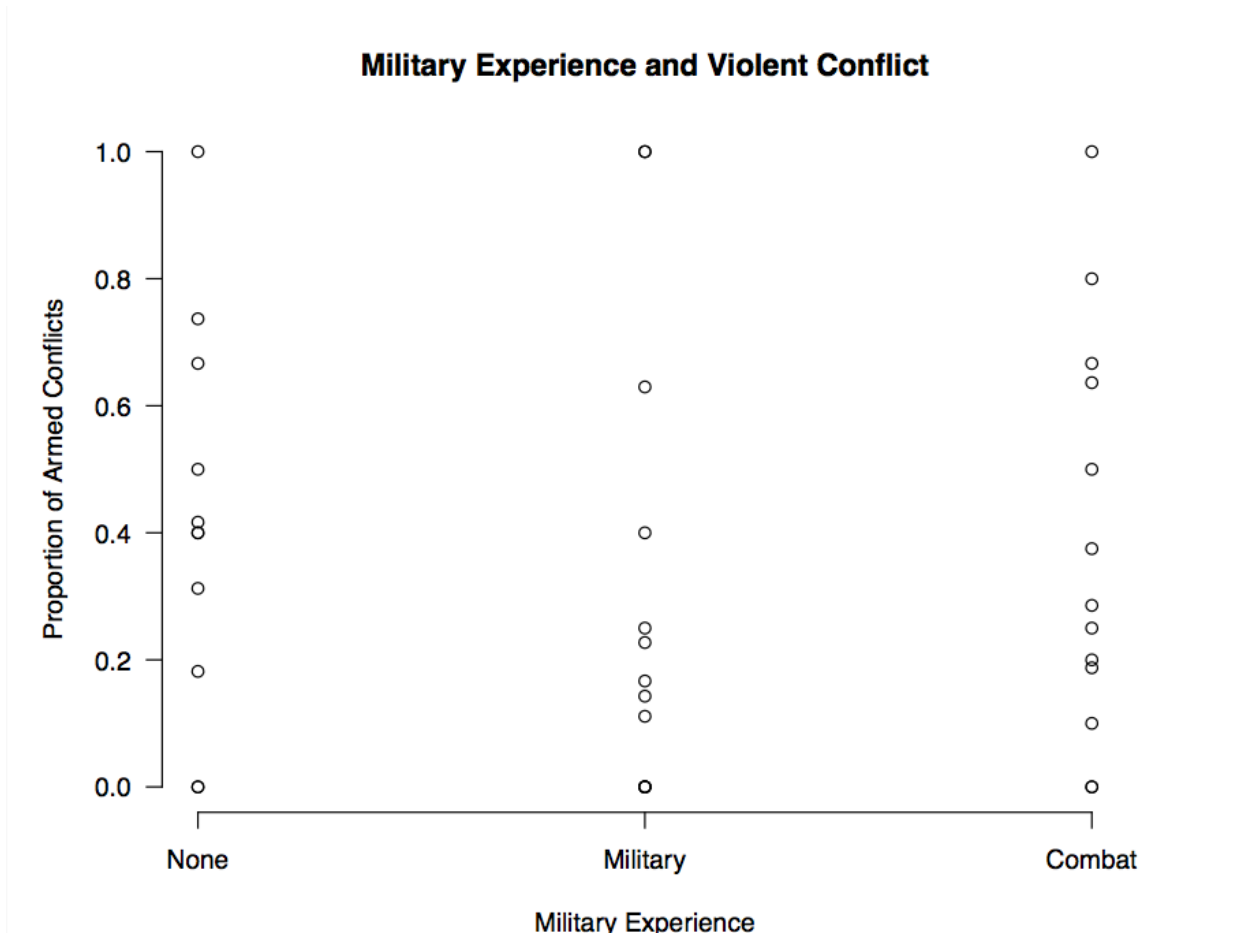
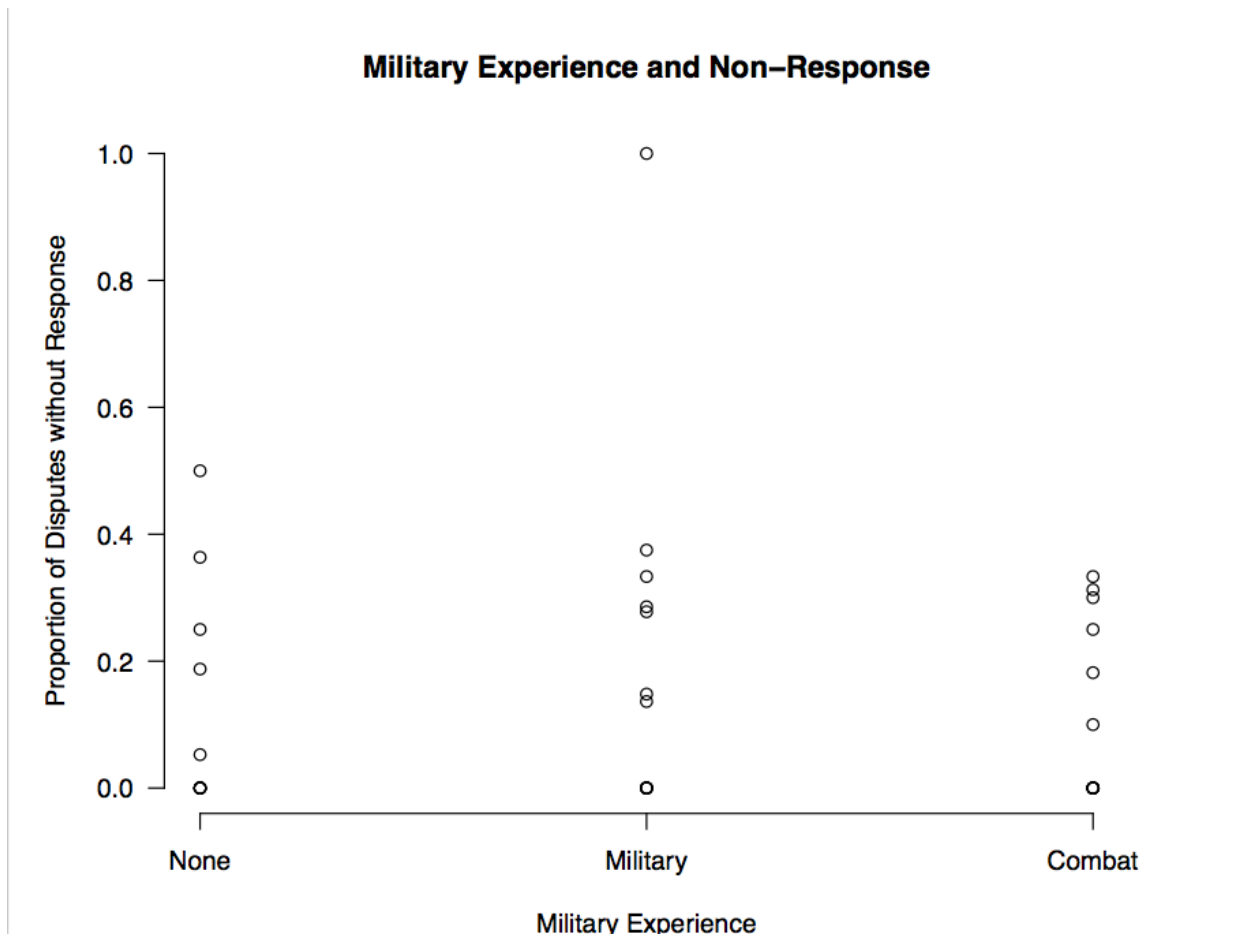


Figure 2 provides similarly inconclusive results. Rather than displaying the proportion of disputes involving violent force, this figure presents the proportion of “no militarized response” to disputes. Whereas the first figure involved the propensity for violence, this figure shows the non-violent compliment. Here, 12% of non-serving presidents’ military disputes involved no militarized response, the same was true for 20% of non-combat presidents and 11% of combat veteran presidents.



Discussion:

This chapter intended to more formally test the impact of combat experience on presidents’ propensity to respond to conflict with force. Unlike Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis’s results from *Why Leaders Fight*, the results provide little evidence that non-combat veterans are more or less likely to initiate militarized disputes in comparison to combat veterans and non-serving presidents. This suggests that Sechser’s (2004) finding that civilian and institutional oversight of the military might mitigate the potential for executives’ preferences to manifest themselves in use of force might be correct. Furthermore, these findings suggest that quantitative

analysis might not be ideal for revealing ideational preferences or decisions that are heavily reliant on context.

Additionally, while the MIDs data collection offers a spectrum of options available to leaders, the categorization of War, for example, does not match up with conventional American standards for what constitutes a war. For example, according to the MIDs dataset the bombing of Iraq under the Clinton administration (Operation Desert Fox) is categorized as a War while the Mexican-American War, a congressionally declared war initiated under President James K. Polk, is not. The Mexican-American War lasted from 1846-1848 and had 13,283 American deaths is listed as:

DispNum3	DispNum4	StAbb	ccode	StDay	StMon	StYear	EndDay	EndMon	EndYear
373	-9	USA	2	-9	1	1846	8	6	1846

*Downloaded from *MIDA_4.01.csv* (<http://cow.dss.ucdavis.edu/data-sets/MIDs>)

There is also the possibility of data incongruities exist between data sources. For example, the Congressional Research Service’s (Torreon 2016) catalog of *Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2016* lists several uses of troops abroad that are not counted in the MIDs dataset. Similarly, neither the CRS report nor MIDs comprehensively incorporates use of American troops in conflicts with Native Americans—a major source of conflict for the early United States.

Chapter 3: Somalia (1992-1993)

“United Nations peacekeeping operations are a pretty good buy, and we ought to recognize that...we have spent trillions of dollars to win the Cold War, and should be willing to spend millions of dollars to secure the peace”

Secretary of State James Baker¹⁵¹

“Both Presidents Bush and Clinton understood that the UN was not equipped to handle its expanding responsibilities. When I first arrived in New York [in January 1993], there were only about a dozen people assigned to manage peacekeeping”

US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright¹⁵²

I. Introduction: From 1988 until late 1992, a series of successive disasters unmade Somalia.

The small country on the horn of Africa was beset by state and economic collapse, civil war, and drought, becoming the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.¹⁵³ On November 25, 1992, 3 weeks after losing his reelection bid to Arkansas Governor William (Bill) Jefferson Clinton, President George H.W. Bush ordered 28,000 American troops under Operation Restore Hope (ORH) to create a secure environment for aid delivery and then relinquish leadership to the United Nations’ (UN) parallel mission, United Task Force (UNITAF).¹⁵⁴ By Clinton’s first full week in office, ORH’s mission had been accomplished. They saved tens of thousands of Somalis and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) told the new President that, “[The] war is over, we won; time to come home.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ James Baker in testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, March 3, 1992 cited in Sarah Sewell “Peace Operations: A Department of Defense Perspective Sewall,” SAIS Review, Winter 1995 15 (1), pp. 3.

¹⁵² Madeleine Albright, Bill Woodward, and Lisbeth Warburg, *Madam Secretary*, New York: Miramax books, 2003, pp. 147

¹⁵³ “United Nations Operations in Somalia I,” <http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unosomi.htm>.

¹⁵⁴ Walter S. Poole, *The Effort to Save Somalia: August 1992-March 1994*, Washington, DC: Joint History Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2005, pp. 16-19.

¹⁵⁵ The number of Somalis saved varies depending on the source. However, most estimates place the number of lives saved at over 100,000 while others place the number at more than 1,000,000. See Dominic Tierney, “Black Hawk Up: The Forgotten American Success Story in Somalia,” *The Atlantic*, December 2, 2010, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2010/12/black-hawkup-the-forgotten-american-success-story-in-somalia/67305/> for a discussion of the varying estimates.; Robert Johnston, “Commander’s Assessment of Operation Restore Hope,” January 28, 1993, OA/ID 502.

The Clinton Administration set aside this recommendation. Instead, they chose to support an unprecedented UN-led effort to rebuild Somalia into a modern democratic nation state.¹⁵⁶ By early May 1993, the American presence was reduced to 4,000 troops and the UN assumed leadership under the United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II).¹⁵⁷ However, with neither American leadership nor its preponderant military presence, a civil war faction led by Mohammed Farah Aideed began attacking UN and US troops in country's capital Mogadishu. Violence between American and Aideed's forces escalated in the months that followed culminating on October 3, 1993, when 18 American soldiers were killed in the infamous Black Hawk Down incident, "the bloodiest battle of any U.N. peacekeeping operation."¹⁵⁸ On October 7, 1993, Clinton announced that troops would leave Somalis within 6 months.¹⁵⁹

What explains realist George H.W. Bush's decision to pursue a humanitarian intervention in Somalia when there were no American security or economic interests? What accounts for President Clinton's decision to support an unprecedented United Nations-led (UN) nation-building endeavor? Existing assessments of these Presidents' Somalia conflict management has yielded a variety of explanations for process and outcomes based on elements of their biographies, ideologies, personality traits, and the role public opinion.¹⁶⁰ Within these

¹⁵⁶ Thomas L. Friedman, "Rethinking Foreign Affairs: Are They Still a U.S. Affair," *New York Times*, February 7, 1992; Madeline Albright, "United Nations Security Council Speech," March 26, 1993.

¹⁵⁷ Glenn M. Harned, *Stability Operations in Somalia 1992-1993: A Case Study*, Army War College-Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, Carlisle, PA United States, 2016, pp. 117.

¹⁵⁸ Kenneth Allard, 1995. *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*. National Defense University. Washington DC.

¹⁵⁹ William J. Clinton: "Address to the Nation on Somalia," October 7, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=47180>.

¹⁶⁰ John Bolton and Richard Haass (separately) avoid exploring Bush's motivations, choosing instead to praise his realistic approach and criticize Clinton's imprudent deviation from it. John Bolton, "Wrong Turn in Somalia Author" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (Jan. - Feb., 1994) and Richard Haass in (Renshon and Larson, 2003, p. 253). It should be noted that both were officials in the George H.W. Bush Administration. Other Clinton criticisms speak directly to his image as a draft dodger and its manifestation in conflict mismanagement (For example, Sara Fritz. 1993. "Deaths in Somalia Spark Food of Opposition in U.S." *Los Angeles Times*, Oct 17, 1993.) Yarhi-Milo argues that Clinton was a high self-monitor and argued for mission continuation after Black Hawk Down in order to maintain American reputation. (Keren Yarhi-Milo, *Who Fights for Reputation: The Psychology of Leaders in International Conflict*. Vol. 156. Princeton University Press, 2018, pp. 224). Baum maintains that both Bush and

assessments, both the rationalist and psychological approaches, only go so far in their explanatory power. I argue, however, that Somalia policy is best explained by the interaction of the psychological and rational. Specifically, both Presidents' Somalia policies emerged out of the interaction of their beliefs (the psychological) with their respective administrations' capacities (the rational)— in particular, capacities of policy relevant expertise and ability to learn from the policy environment.

Through the use of process tracing and data drawn from primary documents, media reports, secondary sources, and an elite interview, I find that both Presidents shared similar beliefs on what US foreign policy in the post-Cold War world should be. Freed from the Cold War's existential threats and bipolar constraints, both saw limitations for unilateral American military action and promise in multilateral interventions to ensure the international order. Both wanted to help Somalia and then turn over the mission to the United Nations (UN)—Bush in the form a UN peacekeeping operation and Clinton by supporting UN-led nation building. I find then that the variance in policy aims stems from capacities within their respective Administration's policy-making processes.

Clinton were proactive on Somalia when public attentiveness was low and were constrained when it was high (Matthew A. Baum, "How public opinion constrains the use of force: The case of Operation Restore Hope." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2004): 187-226). Western even argues that Bush reacting to a wave of "liberal humanitarianism" went against his realist beliefs in the hopes that a Somalia intervention would preempt a Clinton-led intervention into Bosnia (Jon Western, "Sources of Humanitarian Intervention: Beliefs, Information, and Advocacy in the US Decisions on Somalia and Bosnia." *International Security* 26, no. 4 (2002): 112-142.). Saunders, cites the importance of presidential leadership in the Somalia case but, because of a paucity of primary documentary evidence at the time of writing, does not make a definitive assessment on the driver of either's leader's motivations Elizabeth Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions*, Cornell University Press, 2011. Halberstam (2001), in a piece that is long form journalism, presents evidence supporting all of these arguments and others but does not take a stance himself. (David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*, Simon and Schuster, 2001, pp. 248-266.)

Presidents Bush and Clinton’s Backgrounds: In this section I briefly discuss both Presidents’ foreign policy experience and bona fides.

President Bush: On the day that George H.W. Bush graduated from high school, he enlisted in the navy, becoming its youngest pilot.¹⁶¹ He flew dozens of combat missions in the Pacific during World War II, was shot down on one mission, and won the Aid Medal and the Distinguished Flying Cross.¹⁶² He served as a member of the House of representatives for 2 terms, President Nixon’s Ambassador to the United Nations (1971-1973), first U.S. liaison office in the People’s Republic of China after the reestablishment of diplomatic relations (1974–75), and President Ford’s Director of the CIA (1976-1977). From 1980-1989, he served as President Ronald Reagan’s Vice President.¹⁶³

President Clinton: Prior to ascending to the presidency, Clinton, a trained lawyer, had very little foreign policy experience. His political career was spent as the Attorney General and then Governor of Arkansas.¹⁶⁴ During that time he made 4 foreign trade missions: 1 to Japan, Taiwan and other East Asian nations, 2 to Western Europe and 1 to the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁵ During the Vietnam War, Clinton did not serve. During the 1992 campaign allegations emerged that Clinton had manipulated the draft process to keep him out of service without appearing to be “dodging the draft.”¹⁶⁶ While he maintained an objection to the war had influenced his foreign policy

¹⁶¹ David Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*, Simon and Schuster, 2001, pp. 144-145.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Bruce W. Jentleson, *American Foreign Policy: the Dynamics of Choice in the 21st Century*, New York: Norton, 2004, pp. 42.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, “Looking Abroad: Clinton and Foreign Policy/A special report.; Clinton's Foreign-Policy Agenda Reaches Across Broad Spectrum,” *New York Times*, October 4, 1992: A.1

¹⁶⁶ Halberstam, 2001, pp. 112-117.

outlook and had not dissuaded him from the power of using American force abroad.¹⁶⁷ During the campaign, Clinton's foreign policy views did not appear to differ substantially from Bush's.¹⁶⁸ Where he did differ, his views were not entirely coherent. For example, he criticized Bush for too much internationalism while also criticizing him for not intervening more substantially in places like Somalia. Clinton espoused support for fostering democracies but did not offer much in the way of explanation for this belief.¹⁶⁹

The United States and Somalia (1977-1991): After Somalia fell out of favor with the Soviet Union in 1977, the United States became its primary benefactor. Over the course of their Cold War relationship, the United States offered Barre direct military and economic aid, helped Somalia obtain World Bank loans, served as an advocate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and dispatched American agricultural experts to address the country's frequent food issues.¹⁷⁰ In exchange, the United States gained a significant military presence on the horn of Africa, taking over Soviet-built military installations on Gulf of Aden. Across the Cold War Presidencies of Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush, the actual function of the Somali state was never the primary concern of the United States as Barre was never offered more "military aid than was essential to maintain internal security."¹⁷¹ As Bush's Assistant Secretary

¹⁶⁷ Friedman, 1992.

¹⁶⁸ Don Oberdorfer, "On Global Matters, Two Candidates' Positions Are Mostly in Sync," Washington Post, September 29, 1992.

¹⁶⁹ Friedman, 1992.

¹⁷⁰ See Helen Chapin Metz, *Somalia, a Country Study*. Headquarters, Dept. of the Army, 1993; Oberdorfer, Don. "U.S. Offers Arms Aid to Somalia as Counter to Russia." *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 27, 1977.

¹⁷¹ Metz, 1993, pp. 46.; Walter S. Poole. 2005. *The Effort to Save Somalia*, August 1992-March 1994. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Washington DC Joint History Office; Michael A. Hiltzik. "Somalia is Racked by Insurgency Fighting Tests Aging Leader in Strategic Horn of Africa." *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1988;

of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen said, “during the Cold War, it was really non-African issues that dominated African policy. We wanted a base in Somalia...”¹⁷²

As Somalia’s Cold War strategic value ebbed throughout 1980s, so too did American support and Barre’s domestic control over the country he had dominated, often brutally, since 1969. Aid dropped from \$80,000,000 in 1982 to \$8,700,000 in 1987.¹⁷³ American arms and financial aid were the Barre regime’s lifeblood as he used both to suppress domestic dissent and their reduction contributed to instability that exploded into fighting within Somalia in 1988.¹⁷⁴ By Bush’s inauguration in January 1989, fighting had claimed more than 50,000 lives and forced 400,000 Somalis to seek refuge outside their country.¹⁷⁵ Without any foreign intervention to curb the violence, fighting continued throughout 1990 and less than a month into 1991, Barre fell from power, launching the country into full blown civil war. Bush evacuated the few remaining American personnel just weeks earlier.¹⁷⁶ By November 1991, under untenable instability, the United Nations evacuated most of their staff too, leaving only inexperienced junior staff and no relief experts to accurately assess the scope of the burgeoning humanitarian disaster.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷² Thomas L. Friedman, “Rethinking Foreign Affairs: Are They Still a U.S. Affair,” *New York Times*, February 7, 1992.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ John L. Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope*, 1995, pp. 3-16; See Michael A. Hiltzik 1988. "Somalia is Racked by Insurgency Fighting Tests Aging Leader in Strategic Horn of Africa." *Los Angeles Times* (Pre-1997 Fulltext), Jul 20, 13; Glenn M. Harned, *Stability Operations in Somalia 1992-1993: A Case Study*, Army War College-Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute Carlisle United States, 2016, pp. 8; The insurgents, members of a northern Somali clan that had been politically disenfranchised by Barre and had been fighting for Ethiopia against Somalia over the disputed Ogaden region. See David. D. Laitin in Steven L. Burg, David Chandler, Jason Forrester, Gilbert M. Khadiagala, Chetan Kumar, David D. Laitin, Kwaku Nuamah, Eric Schwartz, John Steinbruner, and I. William Zartman. *Military Intervention: Cases in Context for the Twenty-First Century*, 2004, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

¹⁷⁵ Mary Battiata, “Somalia Fights Charges of Human Rights Abuses” *The Washington Post*, Jan 25, 1989.

¹⁷⁶ Neil Henry. *Washington Post*, Foreign Service. "Massacre in Somalia Spurred Shift in U. S. Policy." *The Washington Post*, Feb 19, 1990. Martin Doornbos, “Somalia: Alternative Scenarios for Political Reconstruction.” *African Affairs* 101, no. 402 (2002): 93-107, pp: 95.

¹⁷⁷ Maryann K. Cusiman, 1995.

The chaos was further exacerbated by a serious drought in late-1991. With Somalia's politics shattered, its economy stopped and food became the "principle source of wealth and currency and exchange" which in turn spurred even greater violence as, "roving gangs of gunmen robbed and pillaged farms and villages, taking livestock, crops, and whatever else they."¹⁷⁸ As Andrew Natsios, Bush's overseas relief chief for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and special coordinator for Somalian relief aid, "When relief agencies pass out food, someone shoots them dead on the street and steals the food they have. We have seen this repeated over and over again."¹⁷⁹ By November 1991, under untenable instability, the United Nations evacuated most of their staff, leaving only inexperienced junior staff and no relief experts to accurately assess the scope of the burgeoning humanitarian disaster.¹⁸⁰

Despite regular media coverage of Somalia's implosion during the course of the first 3 years of his presidency, Bush's foreign policy focus was largely elsewhere.¹⁸¹ During this period democracies replaced communist regimes throughout central and eastern Europe, the Berlin Wall fell, China experienced the Tiananmen Square massacre, the US toppled Noriega in Panama, Bush and Gorbachev met several times to discuss arms reduction, Germany reunified, Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the entire Gulf War unfolded.¹⁸² On Christmas Day 1991, the entire orientation of American foreign policy changed with the fall of the Soviet Union.

¹⁷⁸ Maryann K. Cusimano, *Operation Restore Hope: The Bush Administration's Decision to Intervene in Somalia*, Pew Case Studies in International Affairs, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy Publications, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington DC., 1995, pp. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Don Oberdorfer, "Bush Orders Airlift to Combat Somali Famine." *New York Times*, October 4, 1992, p. A1.

¹⁸⁰ Maryann K. Cusiman, 1995.

¹⁸¹ Examples of Somalia media coverage include but are not limited to: Neil Henry, "Massacre in Somalia Spurred Shift in U. S. Policy." *The Washington Post*, Feb 19, 1990; Almami Cyllah and John Prendergast. "Genocide in the Horn of Africa," *The Washington Post*, Jul 01, 1990.

¹⁸² The Miller Center, "George H.W. Bush-Key Events," University of Virginia.
<https://millercenter.org/president/george-h-w-bush/key-events>

Bush, Intervention, and the Decision-making Environment (1992-1993):

Belief in a New World Order and UN Peacekeeping: With the Cold War won, Bush stood capable influencing the international order as no other American president could. Remarking on that unique moment in history, Bush said, “When citizens pulled down the hammer and sickle 10 days ago and hauled up a new tricolor of freedom over the Kremlin, the Soviet Union ceased to exist, and the prospect of a new world opened before us.”¹⁸³ Bush used the phrase “new world order” in (at least) 92 public statements through the course of his presidency to broadly his vision of a post-Cold War world. In his 1991 State of the Union address, he described the new world order as an international environment “where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind—peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law.”¹⁸⁴ According to Frederick McClure, Bush’s Assistant for Legislative Affairs and CEO of George Bush Presidential Library Foundation, Bush while fully aware of the uncertainties of new world order (emerging issues, diversifying geopolitical power centers, and continuing conflict), was confident in American leadership going forward.¹⁸⁵

President Bush sought to use UN peacekeeping as an enforcement mechanism of the new world order.¹⁸⁶ At that time, United Nations peacekeeping had a positive reputation after its successful monitoring of the demilitarized zone in the Gulf War.¹⁸⁷ At a 1991 Gulf War press conference President Bush said, “...that world order is only going to be enhanced if this newly-

¹⁸³ George Bush: "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session with the Singapore Lecture Group," January 4, 1992. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=20412>.

¹⁸⁴ Sewell, 2000, pp. 6; George Bush: “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union,” January 29, 1991. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19253>.

¹⁸⁵ I conducted a telephone interview with Frederick McClure on Wednesday, March 28, 2018.

¹⁸⁶ Sewell, 2000, pp. 4

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

activated peacekeeping function of the United Nations proves to be effective. That is the only way the new world order will be enhanced.”¹⁸⁸ Former US Ambassador to Somalia and UN Special Envoy to Somalia under Presidents Bush and Clinton said the new world order was, “a feeling that maybe now the Security Council can actually do what Franklin Roosevelt thought he could do. What Woodrow Wilson thought the League of Nations could do. [To] be sort of the guarantor of world order and also do something about these small conflicts. Stop them before they get started. Certainly, stop them after they get started”¹⁸⁹

Throughout 1992, this belief was reiterated. In his January 31st 1992 address to the United Nations Security Council, Bush lamented how Cold War politics had sidetracked UN priorities as “polemics displaced peacekeeping,” adding, “and the end of the Cold War [will] breathe new life into the United Nations.” In this address, he explicitly delineated his vision of the relationship between the United States and UN peacekeeping operations in the new world order:

For decades, the American military has served as a stabilizing presence around the globe. I want to draw on our extensive experience in winning wars and keeping the peace to support U.N. peacekeeping. I have directed the United States Secretary of Defense to place a new emphasis on peacekeeping. Because of peacekeeping's growing importance as a mission for the United States military, we will emphasize training of combat, engineering, and logistical units for the full range of peacekeeping and humanitarian activities. We will work with the United Nations to best employ our considerable lift, logistics, communications, and intelligence capabilities to support peacekeeping operations. We will offer our capabilities for joint simulations and peacekeeping exercises to strengthen our ability to undertake joint peacekeeping operations. There is room for all countries, large and small, and I hope all will play a part...I have further directed the establishment of a permanent peacekeeping curriculum in U.S. military schools...the United States will review how we fund peacekeeping and explore new ways to ensure adequate American financial support for U.N. peacekeeping and U.N. humanitarian activities. I do

¹⁸⁸ George Bush: "The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Crisis," January 9, 1991. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19202>.

¹⁸⁹ PBS Frontline, “Ambush in Mogadishu Program,” Episode #1704, Air date: November 1, 2001

believe that we must think differently about how we ensure and pay for our security in this new era.¹⁹⁰

In September 1992, Bush reiterated his beliefs, this time mentioning Somalia by name at the UN. He said, “As we see daily in Bosnia and Somalia and Cambodia, everywhere conflict claims innocent lives. The need for enhanced peacekeeping capabilities has never been greater, the conflicts we must deal with more intractable, the costs of conflict higher...as much as the United Nations has done, it can do much more.”¹⁹¹ 3 months later, in a speech at the Oxford Union, former President Ronald Reagan argued for putting “weapons behind our words to help get food to starving Somalis.”¹⁹² He even went so far as to call for a standing United Nations military force arguing for “an army of conscience that is fully equipped and prepared to carve out human sanctuaries through force if necessary.”¹⁹³

In ostensibly implementing his beliefs, Bush ordered the American foreign policy apparatus to plan greater involvement in and support of UN peacekeeping operations. In the summer of 1992, Bush ordered a review of American policy towards UN peacekeeping. That November, the review yielded National Security Directive (NSD) 74, a directive providing “guidance for U.S. support of United Nations peacekeeping and emergency humanitarian relief activities.”¹⁹⁴ NSD 74 touted United Nations future capacities to “...prevent, contain, and resolve conflict.” It said:

The need for enhanced peacekeeping and emergency humanitarian relief capabilities has never been greater. Strengthened peacekeeping capabilities can help buttress diplomatic efforts. As much as the United Nations has played a central

¹⁹⁰ George Bush: "Remarks to the United Nations Security Council in New York City," January 31, 1992. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=20555>.

¹⁹¹ George Bush: "Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 21, 1992. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=21478>.

¹⁹² Reagan: "‘Evil Still Stalks the Planet’." 1992. The Washington Post (1974-Current File), 05 Dec 1992: A19.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ National Security Directive (NSD) 74: <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/nsd/nsd74.pdf>

role in preventing conflicts, it can do more. The need for monitoring and preventive peacekeeping, putting people on the ground before the fighting starts, may become critical in volatile regions

It argued for the US to be a more active and forceful organizer of international support for UN peacekeeping operations without actually obligating the US to further funding or troop pledges for those missions. For example, NSD 74 promised a review of peacekeeping funding, as Bush discussed in his September UN speech, and “new ways to ensure adequate American financial support for United Nations peacekeeping and United Nations humanitarian activities” but failed to make any commitments or plans to do so.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, Bush’s final National Security Strategy (NSS-1993) supported UN peacekeeping calling the UN a “key instrument of collective security,” arguing for the creation of a “Fund for Peace” for UN peacekeeping missions, “taking an active role in the full spectrum of U.N. peacekeeping and humanitarian relief planning and support,” and suggesting greater intelligence support, without any specific discussion of implementation.¹⁹⁶

Bush’s Intervention Reluctance (January 1992-July1992): As Bush raised the UN peacekeeping’s public profile, the UN’s new Secretary General (UNSG) Boutros Boutros-Ghali pushed his organization’s efforts to mitigate the Somali Civil War. On January 23, 1992, the UN Security Council Resolution 733. It called on Boutros-Ghali to increase humanitarian aid, ask all parties in the Somali Civil War to abide by a ceasefire, and seek a political resolution to their differences. One week later, in accordance with UNSCR 733, Boutros-Ghali called for all Somali civil war factions to participate in peace talks. Those talks, held February 12-14, 1992, resulted

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ National Security Strategy of the United States, Jan 01, 1993, White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1993.pdf>

in a preliminary ceasefire which Mahdi and Aideed was signed on March 3, 1992. This agreement paved the way for United Nations Security Council resolution 746, which sent a team to monitor the ceasefire and deliver humanitarian aid from March 23-April 1, 1992. On April 24, 1992, the Security Council adopted UNSCR 751, creating UNOSOM I which approved the assignment 50 UN observers and a 500-person armed peacekeeping force to Somalia.¹⁹⁷ Boutros-Ghali appointed Algerian Mohammed Sahnoun to be his Special Representative in Somalia and administer UNSCR 751.¹⁹⁸ By May, as UN efforts were slowly implemented, Barre was forced into exile in Kenya and Boutros-Ghali approached Bush directly about Somalia asking, “Can't we do something about Somalia?” By the end of Spring 1992 however, Bush was not (yet) ready to implement his beliefs vis-a-vis Somalia.¹⁹⁹

Some of Bush's reluctance might be explained by mixed domestic preferences on Somalia and UN peacekeeping. On January 3rd 1992, Senators Nancy Kassebaum (Republican-Kansas) and Paul Simon (Democrat-Illinois) published a *New York Times* op-ed entitled, “Save Somalia from Itself.” The Senators, both members of the Senate Subcommittee of African Affairs, called on Boutros-Ghali to “appoint a full-time special envoy to Somalia,” implored the UN Security Council to adopt a cease-fire resolution, and establish a “immediate arms embargo.”²⁰⁰ After Kassebaum returned from a July 1992 visit to Somalia, she and Simon demanded action from Bush, co-sponsoring Senate resolutions for Somalia action. One resolution called for the deployment of UN troops and passed both the House and Senate.²⁰¹ However, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that “if fully implemented, the President's proposals

¹⁹⁷ Harned, 2016, 12-14.

¹⁹⁸ Natsios, 1996, pp. 74; Laitin, 2001, pp. 2.

¹⁹⁹ Don Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention: A Massive Tragedy 'We Could Do Something About,’” *The Washington Post*, 06 Dec 1992: A1; cited in Baum, 2004, pp. 200.

²⁰⁰ Paul Simon and Nancy Kassebaum, “Save Somalia from Itself,” *New York Times*, January 2, 1992.

²⁰¹ Baum, 2004, pp. 200.

would profoundly change Washington's relationship with U.N. peacekeeping forces" and raised questions of Bush seriousness given America's hundreds of millions of dollars in UN arrears.²⁰² Meanwhile, Congress rejected Bush's request for a UN peacekeeping assessment contingency fund.²⁰³

Kassebaum and Simon's actions were part of a growing chorus of voices raising the Somalia crisis's American profile in 1992. Throughout the year, Bush's Somalia relief coordinator Andrew Natsios called the Somalia crisis, "the most acute humanitarian tragedy in the world today" adding, "It bothers me a lot that these things happen, and I am ultimately responsible for this and I sit a lot and say, 'What could I have done differently over the last year,' because it weighs on me a lot...I don't know what else we could have tried."²⁰⁴ In March, Herman Cohen, Bush's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, declared Somalia to be in a state of disaster.²⁰⁵ In April, as UNOSOM I was underway with only 50 troops, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organizations John Bolton publicly urged Somalia's Muslim neighbors to fit UNOSOM I's \$22,000,000 security bill.²⁰⁶ For its part, *The New York Times* took the Bush Administration to task for what it viewed as Somalia-insufficiency. An April 1992 *New York Times* editorial board op-ed entitled "Uncle Pygmy Pleads Poverty" was found in the files of Nancy Bearg Dyke, Bush's Director of International Programs and Public Diplomacy on the NSC.²⁰⁷

²⁰² Norman Kempster, "Improve Forces, Bush Urges U.N.: Peacekeeping: President promises a larger U.S. role in international operations to prevent war." *Los Angeles Times* 22 Sep 1992: WA1 quoted in Sewell, 2000, pp. 7.

²⁰³ Sewell, 2000, pp. 8.

²⁰⁴ Don Oberdorfer, "U.S. Took Slow Approach to Somali Crisis; Delay in Action Attributed to Civil War, Other Global Problems, Lack of Media Attention," *The Washington Post*, A13, pp. August 24, 1992.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Cusimano, 1995, pp. 463.

²⁰⁷ *The New York Times*, "Uncle Pygmy Pleads Poverty" 28 Apr 1992: A22.

In May, the Office of U.S. Disaster Assistance began reporting U.N. estimated, “that 4.5 million people in Somalia are facing the threat of starvation due to the effects of civil strife out of a total population of 6.5 million Somalis.”²⁰⁸ On June 30, 1992, dozens of Democratic members of Congress sent a letter to Bush to, “urge the Administration to devote the highest priority this humanitarian disaster [in Somalia].”²⁰⁹ In July, Cohen reiterated his concerns in House subcommittee testimony saying, “experienced humanitarian workers say they have never seen worse conditions.”²¹⁰ *The New York Times* reported that during the first 7 months of 1992, the ICRC and UN together had delivered more than 110,000 tons of food to Somalia (≈15,000 tons/month); according to Gregoire Tavernier, ICRC head of Somalia operations, Mogadishu’s 1,000,000 inhabitants alone required 15,000-20,000 tons of food aid per month.²¹¹

During the first 6 months of 1992, Bush’s belief in a new world order and UN peacekeeping appear to have been mitigated by rational considerations. Because the UN was unprepared to help Somalia in any meaningful way and the overall domestic view was ambivalent, the Bush Administration demonstrated good learning from the policy making environment and expertise in being restrained in their implementation of his beliefs.

Bush and the Decision to Act in Somalia (July 1992): The same month that Cohen testified before Congress, Bush’s thinking on Somalia reached a turning point. On July 10th 1992, Bush’s most-trusted foreign policy aid, National Security Advisor and (ret.) Lieutenant General Brent

²⁰⁸ Don Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach to Somali Crisis; Delay in Action Attributed to Civil War, Other Global Problems, Lack of Media Attention,” *The Washington Post*, A13, pp. August 24, 1992.

²⁰⁹ Letter found in the files of Nancy Bearg Dyke CF01437-015.

²¹⁰ “Putting Somalia in the Spotlight,” *Chicago Tribune*, Jul 29, 1992.

²¹¹ Michael Gordon, ““With U.N.’s Help, U.S. Will Airlift Food to Somalia,” *The New York Times*, 15 Aug 1992, A1.

Scowcroft, hand delivered a State Department cable to the President entitled, “A Day in Hell.”²¹² It was written by Smith Hempstone, Bush’s Ambassador to Kenya, and it recounted his trip to a drought ravaged area of northeastern Kenya, on the border with Somalia.²¹³ While the cable should have been a recounting of his delivery of aid to various organizations (including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF), and a Catholic mission), it became a testimonial on a place struggling to maintain life.

Hempstone recounted a refugee camp’s sole doctor’s somber estimate that, “for every 10,000 children under [the age of] 5, 10 die every night.” An ICRC worker told him that 2,000 bags of maize were stolen by armed Somali bandits the previous week to feed their starving clans remarking, “hungry people will eat the stolen maize...Clans that have lost too many men to fighting and drought, and those that have [too] few guns, will go hungry. In the northeast [of Kenya], the Kalashnikov is king.” Ali Amin, a member of Kenyan parliament, told Hempstone that within a month there wouldn’t be any more water in the region. Hempstone concluded his cable by saying:

“My one-day visit to hell is over. The U.S. government has allocated \$4.17 million in humanitarian aid to northeastern Kenya, most of it for children in the drought area. That is well and good, but more is needed now and even more will be needed in the future...If the world averts its eyes and the rains do not come, the human suffering in the northeast will be on a scale unknown in Kenya's history.”²¹⁴

In the margins of his copy of “A Day in Hell,” Bush wrote, “This is very, very upsetting. I want more information” and, “this is a terribly moving situation. Let’s do everything we can to help.”

²¹² Baum, 2004, pp. 200; *The Washington Post* published a slightly abridged version one month after Bush received it.

²¹³ While a copy of that cable is unavailable, on August 23, 1992, *The Washington Post* reprinted a slightly abridged version under the title “Dispatch from a Place Near Hell: The Killing Drought in Kenya, As Witnessed by the U.S. Ambassador.” This is the slightly abridged version received at the State Department’s Africa desk.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ After reading it, Bush also reportedly urged Larry Eagleburger, his Deputy Secretary of State—the second ranking officer in the Department, to be “‘forward leaning on Somalia,’ with an eye to airlifting supplies.”²¹⁶

While Bush learned more about Somalia and his views turned, the bureaucracy remained conflicted and the UN’s slow-moving disorder vis-à-vis Somalia became increasingly apparent. On June 23, 1992, 3 months after their approval, UN Chief Military Observer Brigadier General Imtiaz Shaheen of Pakistan and 45 (of the allotted 50) unarmed UNOSOM I military observers finally arrived in Mogadishu to monitor the ceasefire. A month later, on July 22, Boutros-Ghali told the Security Council that UN initiatives were insufficient to remedy Somalia’s crises and more support was needed.²¹⁷ On July 23, 6 months after UNSCR 733, Mohammed Sahnoun estimated that “1.5 million Somalis [still] faced imminent starvation.”²¹⁸ At the same time, Andrew Natsios reported that the ICRC was failing in its relief efforts, “because the death rates were going up, not down.”²¹⁹ On July 27, based on Boutros-Ghali’s July 22 report, the UNSC approved Resolution 767 which urged greater Somali and international cooperation.²²⁰

Despite this unevenness, Somalia’s purgatory status would not last long as reports of the humanitarian crises began mobilizing the US foreign policy apparatus—from the top down. The alarm sounded by Sahnoun, Natsios and prominent newspaper reporters like Don Oberdorfer of *The New York Times* included details of clan violence disrupting food distribution. According to Baum, Boutros-Ghali’s initiatives and UNSCR 767, “precipitated the first stage of a major U.S.

²¹⁵ Warren P. Strobel. 1997. Late breaking foreign policy. Washington, DC: USIP Press, pp. 132 in Baum, 2004, pp. 200; Don Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach to Somali Crisis” *The Washington Post*, 24 Aug 1992: A13.

²¹⁶ Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention...”

²¹⁷ Harned, 2016, pp. 14-15.

²¹⁸ Poole, 2005, pp. 6.

²¹⁹ Don Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach to Somali Crisis; Delay in Action Attributed to Civil War, Other Global Problems, Lack of Media Attention” *Washington Post*, A13, August 24, 1992.

²²⁰ Harned, 2016, “Appendix H: United Nations Security Council Resolution 767 (July 27, 1992),” pp. 140-144.

involvement in Somalia, in the form of a 24,000-ton food commitment.”²²¹ The Administration also upped its UNOSOM support by “accelerating the delivery of relief supplies, promoting national reconciliation, and transporting the 500-man Pakistani security force to Mogadishu.”²²² Soon thereafter, though, the State Department reached consensus that the US, and no one else, could help save hundreds of thousands of Somali lives but remained concerned about the costs of an airlift.²²³ In contrast, the Joint Chiefs of Staff “considered Somalia, ‘a bottomless pit’ for U.S. involvement.”²²⁴

As the machinery warmed up, Smith Hempstone authored a very different cable entitled, “Think Three Times Before You Embrace the Somali Tarbaby.”²²⁵ In his cable, Hempstone was unsympathetic to the prospect of intervention, writing, “I must confess that I have been bemused, confused, and alarmed at the Gadarene haste with which USG [US Government] seemingly has sought to embrace the Somali tarbaby... Statecraft, it seems to me, is better made with the head than the heart...” On the Somali people, he was ruthless:

Somalis, as the Italians and British discovered to their discomfiture, are natural-born guerrillas. They will mine the roads. They will lay ambushes. They will launch hit and run attacks. They will not be able to stop the convoys from getting through. But they will inflict—and take—casualties. Things will be quiet for a day or two, and then a Somali kid will roll a grenade into a cafe frequented by American troops. There will be an abduction or two. A sniper occasionally will knock off one of our sentries. If you liked Beirut, you'll love Mogadishu... The Somali is treacherous. The Somali is a killer. The Somali is as tough as his country, and just as unforgiving... In the old days, Somalis raided for camels, women, and slaves. Today the Somali raids for camels, women, slaves, and food.

On an intervention’s outcomes he was equally tough, but perhaps also prescient:

²²¹ Baum, 2004, pp. 200.

²²² Harned, 2016, pp. 17.

²²³ Laitin, 2001, pp. 11; Don Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention: A Massive Tragedy We Could Do Something About,” *Washington Post*, December 6, 1992

²²⁴ Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention...”

²²⁵ An excerpted version of the cable was printed in *U.S. News & World Report*: Smith Hempstone, “An Ambassador’s Warning: Think Three Times Before You Embrace the Somali Tarbaby,” *U.S. News & World Report* December 14, 1992 (Vol. 113, No. 23; Pg. 30)

To what end? To keep tens of thousands of Somali kids from starving to death in 1993 who, in all probability, will starve in 1994 (unless we are prepared to remain through 1994)? Just how long are we prepared remain in Somalia and what are we prepared to do: Provide food, guard and distribute food, hunt guerillas, establish a judicial system, form a police force, create an army, encourage the formation of political parties, hold free and fair multi-party elections? I have heard estimates that it will take five years to get Somalia not on its feet but just on its knees... The one “beneficial” effect a major American intrusion into Somalia is likely to have may be to reunite the Somali nation: against us...who may have fed their children but also killed their young men...The sad fact is that no outside intervention can prevent a people intent on destroying themselves from succeeding if they so insist.²²⁶

Hempstone’s recommendation for Somalia was equally depressing, writing, “Encourage the Somalis who want peace. Leave them alone, in short, to work out their own destiny, brutal as it may be...Inshallah, think once, twice and three times before you embrace the Somali tarbaby. Regards Hempstone.”²²⁷ Frank G. Wisner, Bush’s newly-appointed Under Secretary of State for International Security Affairs to whom the cable was sent, rejected Hempstone’s advice. In response, Hempstone cabled back, vouching public support of the Administration’s Somalia policies but concluded, “Good luck. We’ll need it. Welcome to jihad.”²²⁸

Later in 1992, after “Tarbaby” was published in U.S. News and World Report, the Administration disregarded Hempstone’s warnings. Eagleburger, then Secretary of State, told *The Washington Post* that, “most administration officials believe Hempstone ‘probably exaggerated things substantially.’” Defense Secretary Cheney claimed (incorrectly) Hempstone was even against airlifting aid to Somalis.²²⁹ An unnamed Administration regional expert cast

²²⁶ Hempstone, “Think Three Times...”; The last portion of this quote was cited in Poole, 2005, pp. 8 from the original cable. The other quotes come from *US News and World Report*.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Smith Hempstone, *Rogue Ambassador: An African Memoir*, University of South Press, 1997, pp: 230.

²²⁹ Katherine Sawyer, “U.S. Officials Estimate Cost, Length of Somalia Mission; Humanitarian Operation Seen Taking 2 to 3 Months” *The Washington Post*, December 7, 1992.

aside Hempstone's warnings in *The New York Times*, saying, "The warlords will fade away and wait us out. Then when we leave, they will go back and the burden will fall on the U.N. peacekeepers."²³⁰ It is unclear whether or not Bush ever heard of "Tarbaby..." warnings. However, Wisner and Cheney's responses show the Administration's learning failure.

Ultimately, Hempstone's warnings in "Tarbaby" were trumped by appeals in "Day in Hell," as the Administration mobilized to help Somalia with an airlift. The same day (July 30, 1992) that Wisner received "Tarbaby," the White House-coordinated Somalia Working Group (SWG) convened under the direction of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Robert Houdek and began weighing airlift cost estimates. Though the National Security Council (NSC) Principals did not meet to discuss Somalia until November, President Bush showed policy engagement kept abreast of lower level meetings like this one which marked the beginning of movement towards intervention. For example, Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) present at the next SWG meeting (August 5, 1992), reported that their concerns about cost and risk were losing out to humanitarian interests.

In beginning to implement Bush's beliefs, the Administration demonstrated their expertise and generally good learning. While ignoring Hempstone's second cable shows a failure to incorporate contrary information into the policy making process, listening to differing perspectives from the State Department and JCS shows a functioning system.

Bush Orders an Airlift and Abandons any Prospect of Somalia Nation Building (August

1992-September 1992): On August 12, airlift momentum accelerated. That day, at an Oval Office meeting attended by Bush, Cheney, and Secretary of State Jim Baker, the three decided in

²³⁰ Michael Gordon, "Mission to Somalia; Envoy Asserts Intervention in Somalia Is Risky and Not in Interests of US," *New York Times*, 06 Dec 1992: A.14.

principle to enact an airlift for northern Kenya and areas in Somalia's interior—not ports nor Mogadishu—to push for a UNSCR authorizing more UN aid, and a Somali peace conference to be held under UN auspices. At the Policy Coordinating Committee (PCC) meeting the same day, Herman Cohen pushed humanitarian concerns, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Affairs Robert Wolthuis told JCS representatives that, “something would be done [about Somalia]; the only question was how much,” and an NSC spokesman informed attendees that the White House wanted to be seen as taking the lead on Somali relief. Throughout this process, JCS representatives urged restraint on Somalia, frequently quoting Hempstone's “Tarbaby” in their reports. These warnings went unheeded as NSC Deputies decided on August 14 to pursue a DoD-operated emergency food airlift. That same day the White House announced the airlift under the name Operation Provide Relief (OPR). The statement said, in part, “The United States will take a leading role with other nations and international organizations to overcome the obstacles and ensure that food reaches those who so desperately need it.”²³¹

Initial responses from those meant to carry out the airlift was confusion. While DoD announced that it would airlift 145,000 tons of aid within a month of Bush's announcement, it was unprepared to disclose any mission details as the OPR's announcement preceded substantive logistical planning.²³² The Kenyan government was similarly unprepared—troubling as supplies meant for Somalians were meant to leave from Kenya.²³³ American officials in Kenya were similarly unprepared, learning about the mission on the news—concerning because USAID in Kenya was responsible for organizing relief supplies and the acquisition of planes.²³⁴ One

²³¹ Don Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach to Somali Crisis; Delay in Action Attributed to Civil War,” *The Washington Post*, August 24, 1992, PAGE A13

²³² Jane Perlez, “U.S. Encounters Snags in Airlift to Aid Somalia,” *The New York Times*, 22 Aug 1992: 1.1.; Michael Gordon, ““With U.N.'s Help, U.S. Will Airlift Food to Somalia,” *The New York Times*, 15 Aug 1992, A1.

²³³ Michael, Hiltzik, “U.S. Effort to Help Somalia Off to a Shaky Start Foreign aid” *The Los Angeles Times* 21 Aug 1992.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

American official in Nairobi questioned Bush's decision to announce an airlift on August 14, 3 days before the Republican National Convention. The official said, "It was a good week to do something. The White House figured they couldn't gain votes by acting in Somalia but their image could be tarnished if they didn't do anything." Prior to OPR's launch, JCS staff warned that on its current trajectory, "we set ourselves up for a long-term commitment of resources in a no-win situation" and "the longer US operations in Somalia continued, the less incentive there would be for the UN to implement its own program."²³⁵ The ICRC criticized Bush's overdue and hasty response saying, "We alerted the world community to this eight months ago... To do it in a hurry [now] is dangerous from a security point of view. If you drop these things in Somalia, you know in whose hands they get."²³⁶

As the ICRC suggested, food security, not aid acquisition or delivery, proved to be OPR's foremost challenge. Supplies from the first airlift were taken by warlords and gangs.²³⁷ Marlin Fitzwater, Bush's Press Secretary, conceded that food security was OPR's biggest impediment saying, "because armed bands are stealing and hoarding food as well as attacking international relief workers, the primary challenge that the international community faces is the delivery of relief supplies."²³⁸ The challenge of food security worsened because both NGOs and the US government failed to assess the scope of loose arms and the extent to which any group, whether warlord, militia or humanitarian organization, needed the protection from local armed forces and the economy of food-looting and warlords' protection rackets.²³⁹ To increase aid delivery security, NSC Deputies at an August 20 meeting yielded an agreement to increase

²³⁵ Poole, 2005, pp. 10.

²³⁶ Jane Perlez, "U.S. Encounters Snags in Airlift to Aid Somalia," *The New York Times*, 22 Aug 1992: 1.1.

²³⁷ Harned, 2016, pp. 17.

²³⁸ Michael Gordon, "'With U.N.'s Help, U.S. Will Airlift Food to Somalia," *The New York Times*, 15 Aug 1992, A1.

²³⁹ Andrew S. Natsios, "Humanitarian Relief Interventions in Somalia: The Economics of Chaos," *International Peacekeeping* 3, no. 1, (1996), pp. 77.

“points of security” under UN authority and coordination with the UN and private relief organizations.²⁴⁰ Despite these challenges, Deputies still aimed to complete Operation Provide Relief by December 31, 1992.²⁴¹

Still, with US support behind OPR, UN mobilization hastened even as the mission faltered. Building upon UNOSOM troop increases from early August, UNSG Boutros-Ghali proposed increasing UN troops by another 750 soldiers on August 24. On August 28 as the first OPR supplies arrived, the UNSC approved Resolution 775, authorizing 3000 additional UNOSOM troops. On September 8, the UNSC approved the deployment of 3 more logistical units, bringing UNOSOM’s approved presence to 4219 soldiers. The pace of actual UN troop deployment still lagged as the 500 troops approved under UNSCR 751 finally arrived in Somalia on September 14—6 months after their initial approval.²⁴² According to Baum, these troop increases and further American involvement were driven by the initial ineffectiveness of OPR, in particular Administration officials’ frustration with Aideed’s forces. Increasing American support continued even though crisis peaked in the Fall of 1992.²⁴³ Part of the reason for ameliorating conditions may have been, according to Natsios, because warlords began releasing food their stockpiles for fear that the airlift would depreciate its value. He also argued that the airlift did not increase the amount of aid coming into Somalia, “as it merely replaced an airlift being run by the ICRC and World Food Program.”²⁴⁴ Despite the dubious effects of the airlift, publicly and privately, Bush stood by the UN and their partnership in Somalia. On September

²⁴⁰ Michael Gordon, ““With U.N.'s Help, U.S. Will Airlift Food to Somalia,” The New York Times, 15 Aug 1992, A1..

²⁴¹ Report found in declassified Buch Library NSC files.

²⁴² Harned, 2016, pp. 15-16.

²⁴³ Baum, 2004, pp. 200-201.

²⁴⁴ Andrew S. Natsios, "Humanitarian Relief Interventions in Somalia: The Economics of Chaos," *International Peacekeeping* 3, no. 1, (1996), pp. 76.

before Bush's UNGA peacekeeping speech, Bush met with Boutros-Ghali and the two had the following exchange:

Boutros-Ghali: Once troops are on the spot in Somalia, the UN will be better able to diffuse the complicated disputes among the various feuding factions. Greater security for the humanitarian workers will permit wider distribution of food, which should in turn further reduce tensions. Then I want to launch international negotiations for a political settlement...

The President: ... We strongly support UN peacekeeping. (U).²⁴⁵

However, at the sub-principals-level, there was a different view on the future of Somalia. A declassified September 25th memo from John Ordway to Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Jonathan T. Howe shows that at deputies were preparing an American drawdown in Somalia. The memo, which detailed the agenda items for the September 28th NSCD meeting. They were, 1) Confirm interagency consensus on reducing the DoD airlift responsibilities by October 15, 2) Agree on an interagency contingency planning process that can help improve the UN's efforts and 3) Focus senior level attention on other potential humanitarian problems looming in Africa.²⁴⁶ On the first point the memos added the following caveat "...however, the principals and the President must be comfortable with any reduction in USAF activity during this particularly sensitive period."

A declassified September 28, 1992 NSCD report reveals that American policymakers actually had a limited view of the UN's capabilities and was, in fact, intent on restoring Somalian democracy. Entitled "Long Term Political Strategy for Somalia," the report showed that the Bush Administration was fully aware of the challenges in Somalia, the limitations and role of the UN in Somalia's future, and fully intended on nation-building while maintaining the public

²⁴⁵ MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION, "SUBJECT: Meeting with UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali," <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1992-09-21--Boutros-Ghali.pdf>

²⁴⁶ Memo from John Ordway to Jonathan Howe, "RE: Deputies meeting on Somalia," 9/25/1992, OA/IS Number: CF1437

image of humanitarian assistance. The report delineated 5 phases for a potential Somalia nation-building project: Phase 1—Cooperation on Relief Efforts, Phase 2—Peace/Reconciliation, Phase 3—Regional Administration, Phase 4—Interim Administration, and Phase 5—Restoration of Democracy. The background section began with this blunt assessment, “No amount of emergency aid can succeed in stopping starvation unless it is backed by a political solution that will restore order to the totally destroyed Somali society. The only alternative to long term UN military presence, which is clearly not a viable option, is to get the Somalis to negotiate peace and begin to reconstruct their country.”²⁴⁷ The memo also discussed the UN’s role as vehicle for peacemaking while beginning the nation-building process:

“We must keep the UN at the forefront of the reconciliation process, while providing unambiguous, public US support for that process. The re-establishment of democracy remains our long-term goal. The difficult steps of (1) garnering Somali cooperation for unimpeded relief efforts, (2) achieving peace, (3) restoring some semblance of regional administrative structures and (4) installing an interim national government put the goal a long way off. We can be most effective by ensuring that the US is seen as focused on Somalia, and intent on bringing humanitarian relief and peace to that country. Our actions over the past two weeks have gone a long way in providing short-term relief and creating the correct visuals. As a next step, our special envoy [Robert Oakley] should develop a position of confidence and trust with [Mohammed] Sahnoun, so that the UN Special Representative will not perceive us as a rival. Indeed, we want to bolster his current level of respect among Somali leaders. We want to avoid the problems which have arisen with the UN in other areas of the world.”²⁴⁸

The memo concluded with a sanguine, if not underinformed assessment: “Our efforts on peace would not be risky or produce costs beyond those already caused by humanitarian assistance actions.”²⁴⁹

The Bush Administration’s diplomatic plans took a severe setback in October 1992 when Mohammed Sahnoun resigned his post. Just a few weeks earlier, on September 18, Scowcroft

²⁴⁷ Declassified Bush NSC files, “Long Term Political Strategy for Somalia,” 9/28/1992.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

wrote a memo to Bush (Vice President Quayle and Chief of Staff Jim Baker were carbon copied) urging the President to write Sahnoun a letter of commendation. Scowcroft wrote, “All our people who deal with Somalia describe Sahnoun as the most effective and promising player on the scene. He has also been forthright in praising the U.S. humanitarian airlift for turning around the situation and galvanizing an international response.”²⁵⁰ Despite American-backing, he resigned after Boutros-Ghali undercut his authority and his mission’s neutrality by allowing “a Russian plane with UN markings to deliver shipments to Mahdi” and increased UN troops to 3000 while Sahnoun was still negotiating factional acceptance of the original 500 troops mandated under UNSCR 751.²⁵¹ His departure marked an end to any peaceful political settlement without an American intervention.

Shortly after Sahnoun’s resignation, UNSC President André Erdős wrote to Bush to tell him that Aideed said he would no longer tolerate UNOSOM troops “on the streets of Mogadishu” as well as several UN Somalia mission personnel changes.²⁵² Boutros-Ghali replaced Sahnoun with an ineffective Ismat Kittani of Iraq as the U.N. Special Representative for Somalia; he did not arrive in Somalia until November 3, 1992, the day President Bush lost to Governor Clinton in the American elections.

1 week after Clinton’s victory, on November 10, the Acting National Intelligence Officer (within the office of the Director of Central Intelligence) delivered a report to the PCC that casted doubt on the UN’s capacity to carry out their humanitarian mission. Entitled, “Can United Nations Forces Successfully Carry Out Their Mission in Somalia?” stated unequivocally that the

²⁵⁰ The memo along with a letter from evangelist Douglas Coe was found in several NSC staffers’ files. The President saw the memo on 9/21/1992.

²⁵¹ Laitin, 2001, pp. 7-8; Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach to Somali Crisis; Delay in Action Attributed to Civil War, Other Global Problems, Lack of Media Attention.

²⁵² André Erdős, “Letter to President Bush,” 11/24/1992.

UN needed more than their allotted 3,500 troops; 3,000 soldiers alone would be needed to secure Mogadishu's airport and port. The report also conjectured that Aideed, who outgunned under-equipped UN troops, was likely to disrupt aid deliveries to his perceived enemies, the UN lacked the capacity to even successfully insert their troops, and if somehow successfully inserted, UN troops would likely need assistance or even evacuation.²⁵³

Throughout the Fall of 1992, the Administration showed engagement and responsiveness to new events and views in the policy making arena. Even though the airlift began in a haphazard manor and its effectiveness is debatable, the Bush Administration never strayed far outside the mainstream of his experts' recommendations or the President's beliefs. Sahnoun's departure from the peace process clearly ended any aspirations for nation building or involvement in a Somali political reconciliation—effectively capping the scope of any American intervention in Somalia. Again, even though multiple views on Somalia were held within the Administration, good learning and expertise were demonstrated through their measured approach to Somalia.

The Decision to Intervene (October 1992-January 1993): With a Presidential campaign ongoing throughout 1992, the American public was generally unconcerned with the Somalia crisis. According to Baum, 2 weeks before the launch Operation Provide Relief, “11 percent of respondents claiming to be following Somalia “very closely,” compared to 33 percent who claimed to be following Somalia “not at all closely.” In the same survey, only 2 percent identified Somalia as the story they had followed most closely during the past month.”²⁵⁴

Despite the substantive internal work on Somalia, Bush made very little mention of the crisis or

²⁵³ National Intelligence Council Memorandum, 11/101/992 “Can United Nations Forces Successfully Carry Out Their Mission in Somalia?”

²⁵⁴ Baum, 2004, pp. 2006.

American actions during the campaign. Clinton, a foreign policy neophyte, campaigned on a down-economy stating as late as October that his top foreign policy priority was the American economy and that Bush cared more about the well-being of foreigners than Americans.²⁵⁵

Clinton said, “In this new era our first foreign priority and our domestic priority are one and the same: reviving our economy. This has been the Administration's most glaring foreign policy failure. An anemic, debt-laden economy undermines our diplomacy, makes it harder for us to secure favorable trade agreements and compromises our ability to finance essential military actions.”²⁵⁶ This stylistic tack may have proved tactically beneficial as Clinton demonstrated little difference from Bush on substantive foreign policy issues.²⁵⁷

While Clinton’s “America first” foreign policy message may have resonated with the American electorate, his victory had the paradoxical ancillary effect of freeing the Administration to be more active on Somalia. At a November 21 NSC Deputies meeting, Somalia policy reached a “turning point.”²⁵⁸ At this meeting, the JCS J5 representatives offered a 120-day timeline for American intervention to mission handover to UN Peacekeeping forces.²⁵⁹ A declassified report from that meeting shows that Deputies presented Scowcroft with 3 Somalia interventions options ahead of a November 25 NSC Principals meeting. The 3 options were:

Option 1 “Expanded UN effort:” A continued airlift with the approved 3,500 UN peacekeepers (3000 authorized but not-yet-deployed troops authorized in UNCSR Resolution 775 and the 500 troops on the ground authorized under UNSCR 751). This option did not have a proposed timeline. Bottom line: \$250,000,000 for a 6-month operation and 3,500 UN troops.

²⁵⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, “Looking Abroad: Clinton and Foreign Policy/A special report.; Clinton's Foreign-Policy Agenda Reaches Across Broad Spectrum,” New York Times, October 4, 1992: A.1

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Don Oberdorfer, “On Global Matters, Two Candidates’ Positions Are Mostly in Sync,” Washington Post, September 29, 1992.

²⁵⁸ Don Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention: A Massive Tragedy ‘We Could Do Something About’ *The Washington Post*, 06 Dec 1992: A1.

²⁵⁹ JCS Timeline found in the declassified files of John Ordway, 11/21/1992, OA/IS Number: CF1437

Option 2 “Aggressive UN Coalition with Active US Assistance:” The US would take a leadership role in building an international coalition of 15,000 or more troops that would operate under UN auspices to secure ports and interior distribution centers. The coalition wouldn’t require factional approval and could use force. The US provide combat troops; those would have to come from coalition members, likely other Muslim and African states. The coalition force would optimally conclude within 4-6 months and the US would work closely with the UN on reconstructing Somalia’s civil administration. Bottom line: \$250,000,000 for a 6-month operation and 15,000 UN troops.

Option 3 “US-Led Military Coalition:” A new UNSCR would permit the US to create, lead, and contribute the bulk of a coalition force of at least 15,000 troops (including combat units) that would operate under UN authority, but the US would retain command. UN PKO forces would provide security for aid operations. This mission envisioned a 6-month timeline and a hand-off to a “adequately-sized” UN PKO which would give way to a UN guard force which would give way to an indigenous police force. Bottom line: \$600,000,000 for a 6-month operation, \$1,000,000,000 for a full year and 15,000 UN troops.

The report was forthright in the necessity of the UN and UNSCRs in all options and pushing UN Peacekeepers into unprecedented situations and danger. It said:

Under all three options, we would urge the UN to take a more aggressive role in providing security for delivery of relief aid. At a minimum, this would involve an unprecedented UN decision to deploy forces in a non-permissive environment, over the objections of local warlords... Each option in the paper envisions an aggressive peacemaking effort followed by traditional peacekeeping once stable, secure conditions have been established.²⁶⁰

In evaluating these three options on November 24, ahead of the November 25 NSC Principals meeting, the JCS deemed Option 1 was insufficient for Somalia’s “non-permissive environment,” Option 2 was “conceptually sound” but practically implausible given its reliance on international contributions, and Option 3 was “promising, doable, and could be quick” but warned it would be tremendously costly, any violence would play poorly with the public, and would likely lead to a longer-term commitment. Further JCS deemed that Option 3 severely understated force size, forcing a revised estimate on November 25 of 28,000 to 32,000 troops.

²⁶⁰ John Ordway, “Principals Meeting on Somalia,” Declassified Bush NSC files, 11/24/1992. OA/IS Number: CF1437

JCS's final recommendation was to continue to more aggressively pursue diplomatic avenues rather than increase American military presence; failing this, preparations for Option 3 could be made under incoming President Clinton.²⁶¹ Vice Chairman of the JCS, David E. Jeremiah told the Deputies, "if you think U.S. forces are needed [on the ground] we can do the job."²⁶²

At the November 25 9:00 AM Principals' meeting on Somalia, President Bush selected Option 3. Having discussed all options with their advisors and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Central Command (USCINCCENT), CJCS Powell and General Joseph P. Hoar, Commander of US Central Command, said that if the Administration was determined to act in Somalia Option 3 was the best option.²⁶³ However, General Powell warned Bush that "it would be foolish not to anticipate taking on the full spectrum of Somalia's problems...other consequences would follow and getting out would be difficult."²⁶⁴ In short, President Bush selected Option 3 with the understanding that it could lead to violence "confronting the warlords and disarming the factions."²⁶⁵ Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney confirmed that he and Powell gave Bush and Option 3 their reluctant support. Cheney later said, "I was always reluctant. You had to have a damned good reason to commit the force and you always had the feeling—I suppose General Powell was even somewhat more conservative than I was...[But] It would be very hard for a President to override the advice he was getting from the Secretary and the Chairman."²⁶⁶

²⁶¹ Poole, 2005, pp. 17-18.

²⁶² Poole, 2005, pp 20.

²⁶³ Poole, 2005, pp. 19.

²⁶⁴ Harned, 2016, pp. 26.

²⁶⁵ Harned, 2016, pp. 26.

²⁶⁶ Miller Center, "Richard B. Cheney Oral History," Secretary of Defense, Interview Dates: March 16, 2000 March 17, 2000, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/richard-b-cheney-oral-history-secretary-defense>

Principals also discussed mission termination. A meeting preparation memo from John Ordway to Brent Scowcroft indicated that transitioning from a US-led peacemaking force to a UN peacekeeping force could occur when 3 criteria were met:

- 1) Stable security has been established around the ports, warehouses, and feeding areas and food convoys are delivering the commodities at the desired level;
- 2) We have reasonable expectation that the replacing force will provide adequate security for humanitarian operations;
- 3) The peacekeeping force has been fully deployed and is operational.²⁶⁷

At that meeting, Scowcroft also pushed for all American troops to be out of Somalia by Clinton's inauguration (January 20, 1993), but Powell and Cheney told him that this was likely not possible.²⁶⁸ In his autobiography, Clinton confirmed Scowcroft's inauguration-Day withdrawal claim (made to Sandy Berger, then-Assistant Transition Director for National Security and later-Clinton's National Security Advisor). Clinton also said Bush informed of the decision to intervene in Somalia in December 1992—at minimum 6 days after Bush and the principals made that decision.²⁶⁹

A December 3 Scowcroft-authored NSC memo for principals' meeting on the same day showed a lack of clarity about potential combat in Somalia. While the memo (found in the declassified files of Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs Walter H. Kansteiner III) focuses on the mission's humanitarian parameters and projected conclusion within 30-180 days from initiation, it left unclear interactions what to do about disarming warlords. Scowcroft wrote:

We may, however, want to corral and guard some of the heavy weapons. It may be possible to do that peacefully through negotiation with faction leaders. If there is not cooperation, we may after sufficient warning need to destroy heavy weapons within a defined area. Such destruction could provoke a reaction would prolong our

²⁶⁷ John Ordway, "Principals Meeting on Somalia," Declassified Bush NSC files, 11/24/1992. OA/IS Number: CF1437

²⁶⁸ Harned, 2016, pp. 26.

²⁶⁹ Bill Clinton, *My Life*, Random House, 2010, pp. 550.

stay. On the other hand, if heavy weapons simply disappear from the area of operation they could pose a threat to the UN peacekeeping force that takes the place of the coalition. Thus, much will depend on our message to the faction leaders, their willingness to comply with it, and the parameters of our response.²⁷⁰

At that December 3 meeting, on the eve of President Bush's address to the nation on Somalia, there was minimal discussion of potential violence in Somalia and the role of UN peacekeepers.²⁷¹ Bush informed the principals that 28,000-30,000 American troops would deploy to Somalia under UNSCR 794 (approved later that day) for a "unknown period of time" with the hope that withdrawal could begin with 40 days. To Bush's approval, Attorney General Barr said the deployment did not need authorization under the War Powers Act because Somalia was no longer a country and "we're operating against brigands." However, President Bush and other principals were ready to launch the mission without a clear sense of the UN's role:

Bush: I wish we were more sure about getting out quickly. If the operation goes smoothly, why will we need many peacekeepers?

Eagleburger: UN Peacekeepers will be needed because there will still be no central government. There are juvenile delinquents running the place. The problem is manageable, however, we can do it.

Bush: I feel good about this. It is low risk for us. There is no as clean an ending as we'd like to see, though.

...

Eagleburger: If we don't have peacekeeping commitments lined up, then we're in trouble. We should enlist them now.

Bush: We need to tell the American people that peacekeepers will step in once a secure environment is established.

Baker: We need to nail down the commitments of the peacekeepers.

Similarly, Principals were unclear about the mission's fundamental parameters:

Eagleburger: Is our mission statement to establish a secure environment or to feed people?

Baker: It is a secure environment for humanitarian relief.

²⁷⁰ Brent Scowcroft, "Meeting on Somalia," December 3, 1992, Oval Office, 1:15pm-2:45pm, Walter Kansteiner Files Somalia—1992 [OA/ID CF01770]

²⁷¹ President Bush, Vice President Quayle, Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger, Defense Secretary Cheney, CIA Director Bob Gates, JCS representatives Powell and Hoar, White House Chief of Staff Jim Baker, Press Secretary Martin Fitzwater, NSA Scowcroft, NSC advisors Jonathan Howe and Richard Clarke, Office of Management and Budget Director Richard Darman, and Attorney General Bill Barr attended the meeting.

Scowcroft: It should only be a secure environment for humanitarian relief.

Baker: We need to see the UN Security Council Resolution.

Quayle: We should say that in 30 days we anticipate beginning the withdrawal of US forces.

Scowcroft: We could say in X weeks, we might be able to anticipate beginning the withdrawal.

Bush: The troops' families need to know that we are thinking of getting the troops out. Check on the resolution and check on the status of the peacekeepers. We need to say something publicly after the Congressional briefing.

As Bush publicly announced the new mission, Operation Restore Hope (ORH), and gave USCENTCOM authorization to take “whatever means necessary” to safeguard American and Somali lives, inconsistencies in mission aims amongst key American policymakers emerged.²⁷² Powell, initially advocated for disarming forces that interfered with the humanitarian mission before reversing course and supporting USCINCCENT’s mission was strictly “to secure air and seaports, ground routes and major relief centers; provide a secure environment, and protect and assist UN and non-government humanitarian and relief organizations.”²⁷³ In a December 4 letter to Boutros-Ghali, Bush specified the scope of the American mission saying, “...the mission of the coalition is limited and specific: to create security conditions which will permit the feeding of the starving Somali people and allow the transfer of this security function to the UN peacekeeping force.”²⁷⁴ And in a phone call on the same day, he reiterated the limited scope of the American mission saying, “I was asked about restoring order to the country, and I said that is not our mission it is in your hands.”²⁷⁵ However, in that same conversation, Bush appeared to contradict himself vis-a-vis the geographic scope of the mission to humanitarian disaster areas in the south saying, “We are aware of the problems in the north...The initial effort will be in the south, but we

²⁷² Harned, 2016, pp. 109.

²⁷³ Poole, 2005, pp. 23.

²⁷⁴ George H.W. Bush, *All the Best, George Bush: My Life in Letters and Other Writings*, Simon and Schuster, 2014, pp. 579.

²⁷⁵ Telcon with Boutros-Boutros-Ghali, December 4, 1992 12:10pm-12:14pm EST, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1992-12-04--Boutros-Ghali.pdf>

will not forget and we will help all areas. I will get some criticism, I know.”²⁷⁶ 4 days later, in a December 8 follow-up phone call, Boutros-Ghali again readdressed expanding the American mission to the north Bush then backtracked, saying such a change in mission scope would be kept “under consideration” and changed the subject. Bush raised the possibility of violence saying, “I hope there will be no confrontations. We are not going in for a fight, but hope there will be understanding in the world community if we do what we have to do to protect the mission.” In response, Boutros-Ghali pushed Bush on disarming gangs to which Bush was non-committal saying, “I agree it is important. But we have not made it part of our mission statement. The world may turn on us if we don’t do what we said we would do. We need peacekeepers coming in quickly behind us.”²⁷⁷ It is not clear why Bush was insistent on peacekeepers “quick arrival” and non-committal on weapons disarming, given Administration officials had agreed on a policy. A December 4 memo to Scowcroft, called for a [weapons disarming] strategy of “‘remove now, seize later’...to avoid the possibility of a mistaken clash during our landings. Later, when we have thought it through better and have more muscle on the ground, we can start demanding the surrender of the weapons and seize (or destroy) those that are not surrendered.” The “remove now” strategy called for restricting heavy weapons to “cantons” from which warlords could not remove them; confining them to cantons would make future removal easier.²⁷⁸ This policy, while effective for short term pacification had broader implications for the intervention. As Susan Rosegrant wrote in *A “Seamless” Transition: United States and United Nations Operations in Somalia—1992-1993*, “The fact that weapons were cantoned and then not

²⁷⁶ Ibid; Poole, 2005, pp. 23.

²⁷⁷ Telcon with Boutros-Boutros-Ghali, December 8, 1992 12:22pm-12:29pm EST, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1992-12-08--Boutros-Ghali.pdf>

²⁷⁸ Rear Admiral Jonathan Howe, “Subject: Somalia Heavy Weapons,” December 4, 1992 [OA/ID 21359]

destroyed probably sent quite a message of comfort to the warlords that, well, yeah, we're just temporarily on hold while these guys are here.”²⁷⁹

As ORH’s parameters were debated, successful mission implementation moved far faster than American military projections. Before ORH’s launch, USCENTCOM prepared a “slow-paced” 240-days mission timeline in anticipation of warlord resistance. But, ORH troops moved into Somalia without any such opposition from Aideed or other warlords, achieving some 90-180-day goals within 15 days.²⁸⁰ By December 7, 12 countries had committed 13,650 troops for the U.S.-led peacemaking mission, 14 others were negotiating their troop commitments, and 5 countries had offered 5,653 troops for UNOSOM peacekeeping duties.²⁸¹ On December 9, troops arrived in Somalia, beginning the United Task Force for Somalia (UNITAF).²⁸² On the December 11, Robert B. Johnston, Commanding General of the Marine Expeditionary Force, and Ambassador Robert Oakley, Bush’s Special Envoy to Somalia, got Mahdi and Aidid to sign a formal ceasefire agreement and accept the heavy weapons “cantonment policy.”²⁸³ Building on these successes, the Administration began planning an even stronger mandate for UNOSOM II, considering as many as 15,000 more troops, expanded rules for engaging hostiles and corresponding weaponry decided to push Boutros-Ghali for greater UNSC support, the destruction of heavy weapons, and the authority to establish a Somali police force as the first step towards restoring sovereignty. However, the question of who would do the disarming

²⁷⁹ Susan Rosegrant (1996) "A 'Seamless' Transition: United States and United Nations Operations in Somalia--1992-1993" Case Program, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, CO9-96-1324.0 (Part A), pp. 26-28, cited in Laitin, 2001, pp. 9.

²⁸⁰ Poole, 2005, pp. 23-26; Michael Gordon, “Mission to Somalia; TV Army on the Beach Took U.S. by Surprise,” The New York Times, December 10, 1992, Page A18.

²⁸¹ Poole, 2005, pp. 23-25;

²⁸² Michael Gordon, “Mission to Somalia; TV Army on the Beach Took U.S. by Surprise,” The New York Times, December 10, 1992, Page A18.

²⁸³ Harned, 2016, pp. 50.

remained a philosophical one.²⁸⁴ By the end of December, ORH successes were great enough that President Bush brought in the new year in Somalia.²⁸⁵

However, de-classified CIA assessments from Somalia painted a dimmer view. One December 7 report projected that Marines would have to withdraw to do excessive monetary costs of the mission and that the Somali government would have to be internally decided. It also said that, “the Somalian terrorists have rudimentary weaponry, it is effective” and that the northern area that Boutros-Ghali and Bush discussed “is the most volatile now. Terrorism and gun fire [sic] are high there.”²⁸⁶ A December 18 assessment, 9 days after OPR troops arrived, reported “dismal” conditions, that “only the internal government can change conditions... Somalia will have [sic] to change their own country,” and that Somalia was a “no win situation for the US.”²⁸⁷

In a previously-classified notes from December 9 conversation with Jan Eliasson, Swedish Ambassador to the United Nations, Scowcroft said that, “the days of unilateralism were over.” Scowcroft also suggested that a 4th Option for Somalia “may have been doable under non-[Presidential-]transition circumstances.” While Scowcroft conceded that the Administration was worried about warlords and gangs attacking peacekeepers after American withdrawal, he said that the UN needs a “cultural change that allows UN peacekeepers to have a more aggressive role.” Scowcroft remained insistent that the United States had no intention of “trying to rearrange

²⁸⁴ Poole, 2005, pp.25-26.

²⁸⁵ Harned, 2016, pp. 112.

²⁸⁶ CIA SESSION INFORMATION. TASK/TARGET NO: 92-132-T. SESSION NO: 01. RV-079, ESDN: CIA-RDP96-00789R002300220001-2, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP96-00789R002300220001-2.pdf>

²⁸⁷ CIA SESSION INFORMATION. TASK/TARGET NO: 92-138-P. SESSION NO: 01. RV-079, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP96-00789R002300130001-2.pdf>

Somali power relationships” and the two agreed that the UN should lead the way on seeking a diplomatic political resolution in Somalia.²⁸⁸

The UN’s first post-intervention attempt at diplomatic political reconciliation took place during the closing days of the Bush Administration. From January 4-15, representatives from 14 Somali factions met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia for a preliminary political reconciliation conference, agreeing that all militias should camp outside cities and disarm by March 1. Factions also agreed to cease all hostile propaganda “full and unrestrained cooperation” with international relief efforts. These terms were ratified at an UN-held conference in Addis Ababa (March 15-27) and factions agreed to end the Civil War, form a new government central by March 1995, full disarmament within 90 days, and full cooperation with UNITAF and UNOSOM I troop disarmament.²⁸⁹

Even as the UN ostensibly progressed, actions in Somalia showed that the Civil War, particularly between Mahdi and Aideed continued. At a January 5 NSC Deputies meeting, Admiral William Studeman, Director of the National Security Agency, told the assembled group (which included Ambassador Oakley) that “violent crime remains a serious problem in Mogadishu and elsewhere. Aideed has order surveillance of US personnel at the airport, port, and Embassy...Mahdi's forces have also placed material in one cantonment, but continue to hold back weapons.” He also reported the discovery of a new unmarked mass grave near Kisamayo (a port city south of Mogadishu). Oakley spoke with great trepidation at the prospect of disarming and disbanding Somali forces saying, “The practical implications are horrendous...It creates a confrontation with these people, and it is difficult to do by force of arms.”²⁹⁰ Oakley preferred

²⁸⁸ Hand written notes taken by Nancy Bearg Dyke CF01437-015

²⁸⁹ Harned, 2016, pp. 50-53.

²⁹⁰ Declassified Bush NSC files, “NSC Deputies Committee Meeting”, 11:09 AM-12:10PM, 1/5/1993, White House Situation Room.

working diplomatically within Somalia, encouraging the appointment of governors and women in local councils and pushing Bush to allow for the creation of local police forces—expanding his mission beyond its mandate. Boutros-Ghali refused to allow UNOSOM troops to engage in these police or civic programs, ensuring an even more difficult mission handoff.²⁹¹

The following day saw the first fire fight between General Aideed’s forces when his troops, stationed at 2 authorized weapons storage sites, fired on a UNITAF convoy. The next day, US Marines attacked Aideed’s troops, taking control of the sites and all of the weapons. On January 12, Private First-Class Domingo Arroyo, an American Marine, was killed when his security patrol was ambushed near the Mogadishu airport.²⁹² That same day, Oakley pleaded with the State Department for the institution of a domestic police force as its absence created problems “rapidly reaching crisis proportions” as UNITAF troops and Somali civilians were increasingly the victims of street crimes. He also warned the State Department that outside of Mogadishu, UN operations were “in a state of catastrophic weakness and disorganization” and that without a stronger UN presence with greater nation-building capacity, Somalia revert into chaos when American troops departed.²⁹³

In assessing Bush’s handling of the Somalia intervention, key officials independently and unanimously agreed the Bush’s humanitarian motivations and the mission’s intentions and parameters. Secretary of State Eagleburger said, “There was no one in the Bush administration who thought of this as anything other than fundamentally a humanitarian mission...we were prepared to concede that once we fed people and left, it could turn into a mess again. But we consciously were unprepared to try to solve the political mess.”²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Laitin, 2001, pp.9.

²⁹² Harney, 2016, pp. 113.

²⁹³ Poole, 2005, pp. 31-32

²⁹⁴ Laitin, 2001, pp. 11.

Robert Oakley echoed this view, stressing the humanitarian impetus and UN limitations.

He said:

I think President Bush had a strong moral commitment to do something about this situation in Somalia. Since television was on to it...you saw hundreds of thousands of people dying slowly of starvation disease caused by a combination of famine, drought and civil war. The United Nations had been trying to do something about it in a very slow, as it turned out, ineffectual way. The time came when [during] internal deliberations within the United States government, the Pentagon came forward and said to the White House, 'Look if you want to save another 300,000-500,000 people dying slowly of starvation over the next six months, it's going to take a large military operation along with a humanitarian operation, and the United States are the only ones to put it together quickly enough to do the job. The United Nations just doesn't operate that way. We don't want to do this, but we will do it if you deem it advisable.' And the president said 'Let's do it, let's round up some allies and see what we can do. Let's have the UN endorse it and let's go,' and so they went.²⁹⁵

Bush's CIA Director Robert (Bob) Gates stressed the humanitarian impetus as well, but added a caveat about election pressures. He said, "I don't think that if it been a non-election year and if there had been no CNN pictures, that we would have ever gone into Somalia."²⁹⁶ Even with potential public pressure, Gates stressed strict mission parameters saying:

[All senior Administration officials had] strong views about limiting the mission...toward the end of the Bush administration there were plans in place to begin withdrawing the US forces and having them replaced by UN people who would basically continue the anti-famine effort. There was never any illusion, I think, in the Bush administration, and we probably helped from CIA, about nation building in Somalia, because we knew there was no nation there at that point.²⁹⁷

According to Admiral David E. Jeremiah, who briefed Clinton and his top national security advisors on Somalia during the transition and served as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Bush (and Clinton) speculated on Bush's motivations saying, "With

²⁹⁵ PBS, 2001.

²⁹⁶ The election-incentive argument falls a little flat because Bush waited 3 weeks after losing the election to intervene. Baum (2004) argues that Bush was inhibited from acting earlier for fear of domestic backlash and its effect on the election.

²⁹⁷ University of Virginia, "Presidential Oral Histories—Robert M. Gates," <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/robert-m-gates-deputy-director-central>

someone like President Bush it was just not possible, I don't think, for him to stand back and see people die when we could do something about it." Jeremiah reiterated that the Administration always had a clear exit strategy, saying, "The exit strategy was get out of Dodge as quickly as we can so we can handle the transfer to Clinton as a completely finished project or nearly so. The way to do that was pass the banana to the United Nations, and there was every reason at that stage of the game where you would expect they would be happy to take it. Turns out that they weren't."²⁹⁸

In choosing to intervene as they did, with a militarily preponderant force, clear objectives to create a secure environment for aid delivery and then hand over the mission to the UN, the Bush Administration effectively implemented the President's beliefs. Their policies show an appropriate understanding of the capabilities. Also, they created a mission that left minimal need for new management strategies from the incoming Clinton Administration.

Clinton and the Road to Withdrawal (1992-1993):

Clinton's Multilateral Beliefs and Administration Inexperience (January 1993-March

1993): During the Presidential campaign, Clinton's purported foreign policy views were strikingly similar to Bush's. Clinton criticized Bush's foreign policy for insufficient activism while proposing little deviation from either Bush's Somalia policy or the new world order. For example, in the summer of 1992, then-Governor Bill Clinton criticized Bush's inaction in Somalia and accused him of abdicating international leadership.²⁹⁹ However, mirroring Bush's

²⁹⁸ University of Virginia, "Presidential Oral Histories—David Jeremiah, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/david-jeremiah-oral-history-commander-pacific-fleet-vice>

²⁹⁹ Steve F. Hammer, "World's Attention Turns to Somalia," *The Indianapolis Recorder*, September 05, 1992.

public statements on UN peacekeeping throughout 1992, Clinton advocated for greater UN action saying, "...multilateral action holds promise as never before, and the UN deserves full and appropriate contributions from all major powers."³⁰⁰ On the UN's role in Somalia, Clinton said, "I think the UN needs to do whatever it can to alleviate the suffering there...I support the decision by the United Nations Security Council to expand its relief efforts to reach victims throughout Somalia and to provide security for relief workers and supplies."³⁰¹ As *The Washington Post's* Don Oberdorfer, who had been covering Somalia since the 1970s, noted 1 month before the election, "The United States is likely to pursue an activist U.S. foreign policy in keeping with the alliances and global responsibilities of recent decades whether President Bush or Gov. Bill Clinton is elected in November... Rather than define a new role for the United States, Clinton charged last month [that] Bush's policy has been 'rudderless, reactive and erratic.'"³⁰²

Ironic as Clinton's assertion would prove to be, his national security personnel choices did little to elicit calm or confidence. During the transition, Secretary of Defense-designate Les Aspin, in a moment indicative of coming Administration-discord, disabused the public of a unified view on Somalia policy when he said, "there's more of a national interest at stake in Bosnia than there is in Somalia."³⁰³ Many senior national security officials in the new Administration had not served in the foreign policy bureaucracy since the Carter administration (e.g. Tony Lake), if at all (e.g. Director for International Organizations and Peacekeeping Susan Rice).³⁰⁴ Those who had prior experience had not served in senior positions and were not fully

³⁰⁰ Gwen Ifill, "Baker's Role, Clinton's Vision," *The New York Times*, Aug 14, 1992.

³⁰¹ Barnett Wright, "Clinton Urges UN Action in Somalia," *The Philadelphia Tribune*, 14 Aug 1992, pp. 8-A.

³⁰² Don Oberdorfer, "On Global Matters, Two Candidates' Positions Are Mostly in Sync," *Washington Post*, September 29, 1992.

³⁰³ Melissa Healy, "Aspin States His Case for Use of Force in Bosnia" *The Los Angeles Times*, January 08, 199, http://articles.latimes.com/1993-01-08/news/mn-977_1_aspin-states.

³⁰⁴ Robert Oakley in *PBS Frontline*, 2001

prepared to inherit a full slate of international crises.³⁰⁵ As James (Jim) Steinberg, who held several positions within the Clinton Administration, said of their early personnel challenges:

The problem is you have...very small number of people, and very few who are confirmed, and a bunch of crises on your plate...Somalia wasn't a big problem initially, but it turned into one fairly quickly and in the first six months before you had people in place. You want to do some long-term, bigger policy analysis, but the reality is that these crises take up all your time.³⁰⁶

As Congress slowly confirmed Clinton's appointees, many were perceived to prefer the State Department's pro-development arguments on Somalia rather than measured assessments of the military.³⁰⁷ Adding to uncertainty was the perception that the new Administration was overly idealistic about the United Nations.³⁰⁸ Ambassador Robert Oakley, US Special Envoy to Somalia under both Presidents Bush and Clinton, summed up the fears and uncertainties about the new Administration saying:

The principal officials had not served in the U.S. government or any other government position for at least 12 years, if at all. They were full of enthusiasm and idealism, which is nice, and Somalia appeared to be going well; therefore, it appeared to be sort of the epitome of what they would like to see the United Nations do. On the surface it looked like it was going to be success.

An assessment from October 9 1993, 6 days after battle of Mogadishu, found in the files of George Tenet, Clinton's Senior Director for Intelligence at the NSC, shows the Clinton Administration's insufficient understanding of Somalia was constant from the transition all the way through Black Hawk Down. That day, Tenet received a report entitled, "Old Wine in New Bottles in Somalia and Other Notes" written by Samuel J. Hamrick, a former State Department Foreign Service Officer who served in embassies in Lebanon, Congo, Somalia and Ethiopia. In

³⁰⁵ Halberstam, David. 2001. *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

³⁰⁶ National Security Council Project, "The Clinton Administration," Oral History Roundtables, September 27, 2000, <http://www.cissmdev.devcloud.acquia-sites.com/sites/default/files/papers/clinton.pdf>

³⁰⁷ Richard, Weitz (ed.), *Project on National Security Reform: Case Studies Volume I*, Project on National Security Reform Center for the Study of the Presidency, Washington, D.C., 2008, pp. 332-333.

³⁰⁸ Robert Oakley in PBS Frontline, 2001

the report, Hamrick warned that any peace making/nation building action in Somalia was fundamentally ahistorical and fatalistically doomed. He wrote:

Clan warfare, murder, too many guns and too few peacekeepers have plagued any power or group of powers trying to establish and maintain political order since the early 1900s...What should be obvious to anyone who knows anything about Somalia is that it was unrealistic from the very beginning to believe the various Somali clans or factions could be disarmed or would disarm voluntarily. Yet, Boutros-Ghali has insisted on Somali disarmament since November 1992...He wanted to guarantee UNOSOM's peacekeeping success, but given Somalia's hostility to foreigners, what he was doing was ensuring its failures...To ask Somali clans and factions to yield their own security for the sake of an authority yet undefined is just as much a fantasy, as alien to Somali tradition as yielding their weaponry to foreigners. It simply wouldn't work.³⁰⁹

Regarding the UN and Boutros-Ghali, he was explicitly condemnatory, writing, "...the instrument of change was UNOSOM and the UN or its people, not so much Washington." In "Old Wine..." Hamrick recounted that he had warned of these pitfalls and several others in a paper he wrote for Clinton's transition team. He cautioned that Operation Restore Hope was a serious mistake but, because it would become Clinton's operation, "[the new President should] make certain that Bush's original mandate wasn't altered by one word. Clinton's Somali operation should be seen as a continuing humanitarian mission as defined by Bush, a bipartisan US effort, nothing more." Hamrick counselled that any deviation would make Somalia entirely his burden and might prove disastrous because, "Somalia was the worst place in the world to first test an incoming administration's foreign policy principles."³¹⁰

Senior Defense officials held a similar assessment. According to David E. Jeremiah, who advised Clinton during the transition and throughout 1993, said:

I spent the worst week in my life daily in the White House doing foreign policy 101 in the Roosevelt Room with the newbies in the administration. People would come in and offer advice from time to time who knew nothing and then they'd go on

³⁰⁹ Samuel J. Hamrick, "Old Wine in New Bottles in Somalia and Other Notes," found in the files of George Tenet, Somalia Report, OA/ID 2481.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

about their business and check in on us every three or four days...I believe they never really were engaged until...after the Black Hawk Down. They expected to kind of muddle through. They had way too much faith in the UN, and that was across the board. The new White House staff was way over enthusiastic about what they could expect out of the UN. They thought we would all get together and kumbaya, and that wasn't going to happen at all...³¹¹

Insufficient Presidential attention comingled with the ill-formed intra-Administration desire to bootstrap the UN into the US's place without sufficient consideration of its repercussions. A January 1993 draft of a then-unnamed UN resolution found in the files of Richard Clarke, Clinton's Executive Officer for NSC Global Issues & Multilateral Affairs, showed initiatives during the earliest days of the Clinton Administration towards supporting UN nation-building in Somalia. The draft called for, among other things, the establishment of an indigenous police force, the repatriation of refugees, the reestablishment of public services, the rehabilitation of the economy, creation of records of humanitarian violations, and the establishment of democratic institutions. This January draft was nearly identical to final resolution (UNSCR 814) which was unanimously approved on March 26.³¹²

Meanwhile in January 1993, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, still operating under their Bush mission mandate were ready to leave Somalia. A January 28 JCS report (found in the files of Clinton's NSC African Affairs aide John Ordway) authored by Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston, the commander of the Operation Restore Hope's First Marine Expeditionary Force, said, "[The] war is over, we won; time to come home." The report, entitled, "Commander's Assessment of Operation Restore Hope," went on to say that:

"...the Peace Enforcement Mission is completed and UNITAF is ready to commence the Peacekeeping Mission by moving into Phase IV, transition of command and control to UNOSOM II. Over twenty nations are now participating in the operation with more indicating a willingness to join. The vast majority of

³¹¹ Bryan Craig, "Presidential Transition: Somalia," Published: December 8, 2016,

<https://www.millercenter.org/issues-policy/foreign-policy/presidential-transition-somalia>

³¹² Ricard Clarke, "Subject: Draft text of New UNSC Somalia Resolution," Transnational Threats, OA/ID 2986

these will remain for UNOSOM II and those already here are in assigned areas they could retain under the UN phase.”

These views were so firm in the eyes of JCS that the report was to be shared with the UN the following week.³¹³

USAID, for its part, advocated strongly for the American military to remain in Somalia. A January 21 report entitled, “Somalia: From Relief to Recovery” forcefully advocated against decreasing the US military footprint and pointed to UN inadequacies. It argued that several million Somalis remained at risk and that whatever security and aid delivery existed was sustained by the American military. The report claimed that pre-intervention security risks were dormant (not deterred) and only less visible in major population centers because of their extant American military presence. It lamented the lack of support for the establishment an indigenous political structure and civil administration—especially a national police force. The report was bearish on, “the very slow progress on political reconciliation,” and the lack of, “attention on medium-term recovery, let alone long-term development” without a strong American military presence. Key to USAID’s appeal to maintain American military presence was its skepticism of UN capabilities saying, “Further complicating the current situation—and deeply frustrating the international donor community—is the mixed performance of the UN in the whole Somali political, military, and relief equation political reconciliation.” In short, USAID supported the ORH/UNITAF-status quo in Somalia, not UN-led nation building.³¹⁴

Meanwhile, ORH extended beyond its mission parameters. By the end of January, Ambassador Oakley, building upon extra-mission initiatives, began creating local councils and mediation. Brigadier General Anthony Zinni (UNITAF Deputy for Operations) said, “We did

³¹³ Robert Johnston, “Commander’s Assessment of Operation Restore Hope,” January 28, 1993, OA/ID 502.

³¹⁴ “Somalia: From Relief to Recovery,” Transnational Threats, Richard Clarke, Somalia Folder [2] OA/ID 2986

creep outside our mission a lot...I think we went as far as we could go given what we were.” In February 1993, newly-formed police forces were operating in dozens of towns and courts were being established.

With 3 policy paths before the Administration: 1) to support nascent nation-building through the UN, 2) to fully withdraw troops and turn Somalia over the UN and 3) continue the ORH/UNITAF-status quo, the Clinton Administration chose the first option while still formalizing its vision for multilateral action in the post-Cold War world. On February 15, NSC principals (except the President) reviewed a Lake-authored proposal, Policy Review Document (PRD) 13. It called for a, “a zero-based review of the issues involved in the creation of a US policy on [multilateral] peacekeeping and to identify options leading to Presidential decisions.”

³¹⁵ Using Bush’s NSD 74 as a base, PRD 13 added the possibility of direct U.S. troop deployment to support UN actions. Early policy discussion involved the creation of a UN army (like Reagan proposed in Oxford). However, this suggestion was nixed by Defense officials before the February 15th formal meeting.³¹⁶ While PRD 13 was in keeping with the post-Cold War aspirations of the previous two Administrations, it parted with their view of American troop deployment.

With a clear Somalia policy path emerging, the Administration’s continued scrambling to actualize its UN-led Somalia nation building vision. A March 9 strategy paper sent from National Security Advisor Anthony Lake to Marcia L. Hale, President Clinton's Assistant to the President and Director of Scheduling and Advance, highlighted 7 aspirational and vague policy points:

1. The UN and the international community, including the US, must work towards a realistic objective in Somalia...The goal at the end of three years should be a

³¹⁵ Anthony Lake, “Policy Review Document (PRD) 13,” February 15, 1993.

³¹⁶ Sewell, 2000, pp. 22

- decentralized and relatively democratic Somalia, which enjoys relative stability with limited outside humanitarian and economic intervention.
2. The UN and the international community must outline the actions to be taken for Somalia to reach this goal.
 3. Any strategy to resolve the Somalia situation must combine three inextricably linked components of military security operations, humanitarian/rehabilitation actions, and political/diplomatic efforts
 4. The USG must energize the UN to take necessary action. The USG has neither the resources, nor vital interests at stake to justify unilateral action.
 5. Our purpose in Somalia is to avert further humanitarian catastrophe, make the UN peacekeeping effort successful, and facilitate regional stability in the Horn.
 6. UNITAF has provided a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief in south central Somalia, and mass starvation has subsided. Yet, security is fragile, humanitarian needs are great, and faction leaders, who crave personal power, continue to vie for political roles.
 7. Progress in security and humanitarian relief is changing the Somali environment, but the political "leg" is lagging behind. A "bottom-up" approach has worked reasonably well to improve local security conditions and to provide emergency relief to those most at risk in Somalia. However, continued progress is contingent upon reaching a degree of political consensus at the local, regional, and national levels. All three must be worked simultaneously while focusing in the short term on local and regional political organization.³¹⁷

On all three “legs,” Lake’s proposal called for the UN to take over in Somalia by summer 1993.

Similarly, a March 16 conversation with Vice President Albert (Al) Gore and Ambassador Oakley showed his eagerness to hand off the mission to UN. Oakley, now corroborating the JCS view, told Gore that the original mission goals, as laid out by Powell and Cheney in December 1992, had been achieved. The coming phases, creating an environment for national reconstruction and “plucking the warlords feathers,” would be the UN’s responsibility—and they were lagging. Oakley assured Gore that, “After early May [1993], the UN is in the lead, and we are in a supporting role.”³¹⁸

Despite growing Administration unanimity on an UN-handoff, internal Administration dysfunction emerged. A March 17 memo from Richard Clarke to Tony Lake and his Deputy

³¹⁷ Anthony Lake, “Strategy for Somalia,” Global Issues and Multilateral Affairs, OA/ID 1408

³¹⁸ Memorandum for the Record on Discussions with Ambassador Oakley, March 16, 1993, Susan Rice, “Somalia, 1993 [10]” [OA/ID 277]

Samuel (Sandy) Berger entitled, “Somalia, State Needs to Pay Attention [sic],” Clarke admonished the State Department's disorganization on Somalia. The memo noted that State disestablished its Task Force on Somalia and had not made clear who or what group was its replacement. As a result, the UN resolution (which would become United Nations Security Council Resolution 814) still had not passed the Security Council despite weeks of promises to the President otherwise. In short, no one at State appeared to be in charge on Somalia despite a shift in policy that would require their involvement and leadership more than ever before.³¹⁹

A week later (on March 24), the Administration, coming to terms with UN limitations, discussed a curious way to support its nation building efforts in Somalia—the creation of a new team of “superstars” that would somehow “expand staff effectiveness by 500% in one month.” In an “Eyes Only” memo for Richard Clarke, Susan Rice wrote, “the organization, structure, and management of UNOSOM is not adequate to conduct the limited operation of its current mandate.” Even though UNOSOM I was slated to be replaced by UNOSOM II with a broader, more demanding mission that would cover the entire nation, nation building responsibilities, and full responsibilities of national security, Rice suggested the superstar team would “not require a lot of people for a long time” because the challenge could be met, “by a handful of innovative, creative, quick-study problem solvers (the real super stars of the past or future) [who] can make a tremendous difference to this nascent operation.” Needless to say, her memo was long on jargon and desperately short on details of actual team responsibilities or structure.³²⁰

2 days later, in spite of these internal doubts and disorganization, a nearly identical version of the January draft on Somali nation building unanimously passed the Security Council (as UNSCR 814) with full-throated American support from Madeleine Albright, the new US

³¹⁹ Richard Clarke, “Somalia, State Needs to Pay Atten,” C-A-L [Christopher-Aspin-Lake] Lunches [OA/ID 1455]

³²⁰ Susan Rice, “Somalia, 1993 [6]” [OA/ID 277]

Ambassador to the UN. UNSCR 814 called for full disarmament within Somalia within 90 days and nation-building including the establishment of police forces. In approbatory speech, Albright said, “By adopting this resolution, we will embark on an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country as a proud, functioning and viable member of the community of nations.” While Albright sought to signal the end of American leadership in Somalia, her speech’s closing words sent a confused signal about American commitment, “...by today’s action the Security Council will commit the United Nations to what is probably the toughest coordination challenge of its history. It is difficult to overstate the importance of its success or the costs of its failure. Let us commit to its success.”³²¹ Albright’s words are even more curious when placed in the context of her views of UN capacities. In her autobiography, she wrote, “Both Presidents Bush and Clinton understood that the UN was not equipped to handle its expanding responsibilities. When I first arrived in New York, there were only about a dozen people assigned to manage peacekeeping.”³²²

During its first months, the Clinton Administration demonstrated a remarkable adherence to a belief in multilateralism and Somalia nation building. However, the beliefs were anachronistic vis-à-vis nation building and all of the Bush Administration’s deliberations from July 1992 onwards. That they set aside intra- and extra-governmental recommendations that were not in keeping with Clinton’s beliefs does not itself demonstrate bad learning. However, that they chose a policy path that relied more on the UN without a sense of its capabilities, demonstrates bad learning. However, a focus on long-term multilateral operation planning seems prudent and keeping with the post-Cold War status quo and Clinton’s beliefs.

³²¹ Madeline Albright, “United Nations Security Council Speech,” March 26, 1993.

³²² Albright, Woodward, and Warburg, 2003, pp. 147.

Failure to learn and Inaction Lead to Tragedy (April 1993-October 1993):

Despite the positive public perception of Somalia, internally the Administration made moves to limit its involvement in UNOSOM II. In the press, Somalia was largely viewed as a successful operation with conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer calling it, “a relatively painless relative success” in *The Washington Post*.³²³ Clinton under PDD/NSC-6, ordered American forces which included 2,600 logistical support troops and (reluctantly) 1,400 ground-based quick reaction forces (QRF) remain in Somalia.³²⁴ The Administration preferred to offer only logistical support but was forced to concede on QRF in order to mollify the French who threatened to withdraw their forces if American QRF were removed.³²⁵ Additionally, QRF forces remained under the operational control of USCENTCOM, not UNOSOM II, under the US Forces Somalia (USFORSOM).³²⁶ Following Powell’s recommendations for PDD/NSC-6, American troop commitment (including QRF) drawdown was to begin on President Clinton’s order in August 1993 leveling off at 1,4000 troops by January 31, 1994.³²⁷ Despite the light footprint, Clinton permitted American troops to assist in heavy weapons collection and the creation of regional and national Somali police forces.³²⁸

The transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II was uneven as troop contributions came in slowly. On the takeover date (May 4), UNOSOM II had 57% of its 28,000 troops and 22% of its 300 logistical personnel in place.³²⁹ With UNOSOM II woefully understaffed, “US QRF forces

³²³ Charles Krauthammer, “Bosnian Analogies; Pick Your History, Pick Your Policy,” *The Washington Post*, May 7, 1993, A23.

³²⁴ Richard Winship Stewart, *United States Army in Somalia, 1992-1994*. Government Printing Office, 2003, pp. 15-16.

³²⁵ Harned, 2016, pp. 82.

³²⁶ Harned, 2016, pp. 69.

³²⁷ Harned, 2016, pp 120; Poole, 2005, pp. 37-38.

³²⁸ Harned, 2016, pp. 69.

³²⁹ Harned, 2016, pp. 75.

constituted UNOSOM's teeth and US logistic support units made up its tail."³³⁰ Even though the Clinton Administration privately lacked confidence in the UN's ability to implement UNSCR 814's mandate they maintained slivers of hope that it might succeed—especially in public.³³¹

This hope was ill-placed, as UNOSOM II operations proved disorganized. Troops entering Somalia did so without clear chain of command or uniform rules of engagement. As a result, troops were accountable to their home governments and sought guidance there instead of the UN. The Italian contingency, for example, operated so far outside of UN direction that it attempted peace negotiations with Aideed after UNSC ordered his capture. In addition, the US-led Civilian-Military Operations Center (CMOC), which coordinated security for the dozens of aid organizations operating in Somalia, went away with the end of UNITAF. Without CMOC coordination and UNOSOM II's expanding relief map, aid workers became susceptible to attack.³³²

With American troops out of the way and UN operations in disorder, General Aideed began testing UNOSOM II. On May 6, his southern ally Colonel Jess engaged in a 2-day fire fight with UNOSOM II forces in an attempt to wrest control of the city of Kismayo.³³³ Internecine fighting continued through May and culminated on June 5. The day before, UNOSOM II command informed Aideed that the following day Pakistani troops would inventory his Mogadishu weapons storage facilities, including one that housed his radio station. Fearing that the Pakistanis might attempt to take his transmitter, Aideed's troops waited until after the inspection's completion before carrying out a "a carefully prepared three-sided ambush." 24 Pakistani peacekeepers were killed and 57 were injured. At the same time as that

³³⁰ Poole, 2005, pp. 3.

³³¹ Stewart, 2003, pp. 77.

³³² Laitin, 2001.

³³³ Harned, 2016, pp. 75.

ambush, Aideed's forces carried out several concurrent, coordinated attacks occurred in Mogadishu.³³⁴

The response to these attacks was swift and hard, but strategically shortsighted. On June 6, UNSC unanimously passed Resolution 837 with strong American support. It called on UNOSOM forces:

...to take all necessary measures against all those responsible for the armed attacks...including against those responsible for publicly inciting such attacks, to establish the effective authority of UNOSOM II throughout Somalia, including to secure the investigation of their actions and their arrest and detention for prosecution, trial and punishment.³³⁵

The following day, following General Hoar's request, JCS furnished UNOSOM II with air support, in part, for strikes against Aideed. Flights over Mogadishu targeted Aideed's weapons storage facilities, vehicle compounds, and radio station.³³⁶ The State Department and NSC, over JCS objections, agreed that targeting Aideed was the proper strategy and would make "all the difference" going forward.³³⁷

UN Special Envoy Jonathan Howe agreed with this view. On June 13, between 8 and 20 Somali protesters were shot by sniper fire during an otherwise peaceful protest. Howe, who had replaced Kittani in March and previously served as a National Security Council Deputy to Bush, operating on solid intelligence, believed that Aideed's forces carried out the attack. He concluded that "if this man would kill his own people in order to accomplish his goals, he really ought to come off the streets, he ought to be detained. He needed to go through the legal process."³³⁸ On June 17, after discussions with Kofi Annan, Assistant Secretary-General for

³³⁴ Poole, 2005, pp. 41.

³³⁵ United Nations Security Council Resolution 837 (Somalia), June 6, 1993, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/837>

³³⁶ Stewart, 2003, pp. 16.

³³⁷ Poole, 2005, pp. 33

³³⁸ Gary J. Ohls, *Somalia...From the Sea*. Naval War College Newport Papers (34), 2009. Newport, RI, pp. 138-140.

Peacekeeping, Boutros-Ghali, and other Somalia specialists at the UN, Howe issued an arrest order for General Aideed along with an \$25 million reward.³³⁹

Rather than ameliorate tensions, the moves against Aideed intensified violence, increasing intractability and jeopardizing the peace won under ORH/UNITAF. For example, in mid-June, Moroccan forces took “heavy casualties in an [otherwise routine] sweep of Aideed’s headquarters.”³⁴⁰ Immediately after a July 12 QRF helicopter gunship attack on a major Aideed compound, a crowd “near the compound killed 4 western journalists covering the action, displaying their bodies for the world to see.”³⁴¹ The unrest that followed UNSCR 837’s passage also had a depressing effect on coalition forces’ willingness to conduct peace keeping operations necessary to maintain a secure environment, forcing QRF troops to preserve security around American facilities.³⁴² Aideed began distributing propaganda which called for attacks on American compounds and Americans all over the world. An-Aideed pamphlet acquired by Reuters news service and viewed by the National Security Council entitled, “We Kill Americans,” said, “We appeal to all countries of the multinational force to stay far from the American sites in Mogadishu. We are going to launch an attack to the American compounds in Mogadishu. We also appeal to all Muslim countries in the world to kill Americans in their countries.”³⁴³ In short, the UN and the United States had become combatants in the Somali Civil War.³⁴⁴

³³⁹ Ibid; Harned, 2016, pp. 75.

³⁴⁰ Directorate of Intelligence: Office of African and Latin Affairs Analysis, "Somalia, Dealing with Aideed," Declassified Clinton NSC files, July 12, 1993, pp. 5.

³⁴¹ Stewart, 2003, pp. 9.

³⁴² Harned, 2016, pp. 76.

³⁴³ Reuters Wire report, “We Kill Americans,” found in the National Security Council files of Sean Darragh, “Global Issues and Multilateral Affairs, Somalia Files (1993-1994), Somalia 1993 [2], July 14, 1993, OA/ID 274.

³⁴⁴ Harned, 2016, pp. 76.

On the same day the journalists were killed, the CIA gave the NSC a bleak Somalia assessment in a report entitled, "Somalia: Dealing with Aideed." The report said that while Aideed had been hurt by UNOSOM's offensives, his 300-500 fighters in Mogadishu could "bleed" UN forces with guerrilla tactics and sniper attacks, functionally stopping UN operations in the capital. They warned that successful attacks on the UN diminished its authority among other Somali groups and that the anti-Aideed offensive had the unanticipated consequence of legitimizing other warlords' roles in the civil war by "signaling [sic] victory for their quest to seize power by force."³⁴⁵ The report cautioned that while Aideed's arrest represented the "best opportunity to restore credibility to the UN peacemaking mission in Somalia...if UN troops are forced into a bloody firefight during detention operations or appear ineffective by allowing him to slip through a high-visibility manhunt, popular support for his anti-UN campaign might swell significantly."³⁴⁶ The report's conclusion, entitled, "UNOSOM: Building the Tower of Babel," further confirmed UN command discontinuity. It said, that despite 2 months of leading international efforts in Somalia, the UN still had not yet created a command structure, calling it "cumbersome and unwieldy" adding that, "military planning has been hindered by national rivalries and recriminations."³⁴⁷

Meanwhile, the Clinton Administration began applying long term multilateral peacekeeping strategy to missions before such a policy had been finalized. A July 26 State Department Memorandum shows that PRD-13, which did not become settled policy until May 1994 as Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25), was already being applied to weigh a potential American intervention into the Rwandan Civil War. The memorandum shows several

³⁴⁵ "Somalia, Dealing with Aideed," 1993, pp 6.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 4.

³⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 5.

criteria for weighing intervention including Rwanda's threat to international peace and security, the viability of an international community of interest for dealing with the problem on a multilateral basis, potential mission objectives, and means available before ultimately deciding not to intervene.³⁴⁸ While no conclusion was reached on Rwanda in July 1993, the memo was generally positive on the outlook for intervention and is further evidence of the Clinton Administration's disconnected foreign policy.

Similarly, the State Department remained committed to the disorganized and increasingly dangerous mission in Somalia. A July 26th State Department report written for the NSC argued that American troops remained in Somalia after UNITAF specifically to assist in UN nation building and that this was in keeping with the new norm of American responses to "a growing number of conflicts where a multilateral military response is most appropriate."³⁴⁹ However, the report could not point to any progress against Aideed, choosing instead to highlight "measurable progress toward reconciliation [sic] taking place outside the capital" in the form of district council creation.³⁵⁰ Additionally, the report discussed that outside of Democrats Senate Pro Tempore Robert Byrd and Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman John Murtha, there was little push back on Somalia from Congress and even less from in media because (ironically), "most major US news organizations have withdrawn their reporters out of concern for their safety."³⁵¹

In August 1993, public inattention broke as the Administration was forced to confront Aideed's strategy: to attack Americans until the will to stay in Somalia was shattered. In early

³⁴⁸ Flavia Gasbarri. "Revisiting the Linkage: PDD 25, Genocide in Rwanda and the US Peacekeeping Experience of the 1990s." *The International History Review* 40, no. 4 (2018): 792-813.

³⁴⁹ Declassified Clinton NSC files, "Memorandum for William H. Itoh, Somalia: Papers on U.S. Policy and a Strategy for Communicating It," *African Affairs: Ordway, John, Jeff, Dennis, Ward, Jennifer, Steinberg, Donald, Somalia June-December 1993* [5], July 26, 1993 [OA/ID 502], pp. 1.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 2.

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, pp. 5-8.

August, a vehicle carrying 2 American contractors was attacked. On August 9, 4 American military policemen were killed by remote controlled mine.³⁵² On August 19, another mine attack wounded 4 more Americans. On August 22, yet another mine attack wounded 6 more Americans.³⁵³ As Ambassador Oakley noted, “The United States became public enemy number one for all the Somalis who supported Aideed.”³⁵⁴ Ambassador Albright took to the pages of *The New York Times* to defend the Administration in an op-ed entitled “Yes, There Is a Reason to Be in Somalia.” She said, “President Clinton has said we have no choice but to protect our soldiers and make sure the mission succeeds.”³⁵⁵ She went on to say, “The decision we must make is whether to pull up stakes and allow Somalia to fall back into the abyss or to stay the course and help lift the country and its people from the category of a failed state into that of an emerging democracy. For Somalia's sake, and ours, we must persevere.”³⁵⁶

With Aideed’s August attacks ongoing, the US upped its Somalia military commitments. Powell, in consultation with Lake, Hoar and Aspin, recommended the deployment of 400-450 US Special Operations Forces (SOF) to assist in the capture of Aideed and his 6 top aids.³⁵⁷ They were deployed under the name Task Force Ranger.³⁵⁸ Powell told Aspin, “We have to do something or we are going to be nibbled to death.”³⁵⁹ In an August 27 address at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin said that these SOF and other QRF forces could not be removed until Mogadishu was secure, warlords were disarmed of heavy weapons, and credible police forces in major population centers were established. He went

³⁵² Ohls, 2009, pp. 138-139.

³⁵³ Poole, 2005, p. 48.

³⁵⁴ Ohls, 2009, pp. 139.

³⁵⁵ Madeleine K. Albright, “Yes, There Is a Reason to Be in Somalia,” *The New York Times*, August 10, 1993, A19.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid. The number of QRF forces differs by source. 400-450 represents the full range of forces cited from various sources.

³⁵⁸ Ohls, 2009, pp. 139-140; Poole, 2005, p. 48.

³⁵⁹ Poole, 2005, p. 48.

on to say, “President Clinton has given us clear direction to stay the course with other nations to help Somalia again provide for its people. This is what the new world asks of American leadership and American partnership.”³⁶⁰

While the Clinton Administration had unified voice and vision at August’s end, the month that followed left a jumble of opinions as domestic support for Somalia cracked. After August’s attacks on Americans, Congressional pressure mounted on the Administration to withdraw from Somalia. On September 4, Howe proposed a 48-hour ceasefire with Aideed, who responded to the offer the following the day with an attack that killed 7 Nigerians.³⁶¹ On September 8, in preparation for a meeting with a bipartisan group of Congressional Leadership, Tony Lake prepared talking points for Clinton. On Somalia, Lake directed him to fully support extant nation building objectives and say:

I’m very concerned about amendments to force our withdrawal from Somalia. US forces will remain there only until they have completed their mission. To force a premature withdrawal undercuts our ability to achieve our objectives--establishing security throughout the country, standing up a credible police force and judicial system, and achieving real progress towards political reconciliation.³⁶²

On September 11, NSC deputies abruptly changed course, proposing abandonment of nation building in favor of the apprehension of Aideed and his lieutenants and making peace amongst the other Somali warlords.³⁶³ On September 16, NSC principals met to discuss PRD-13 which was re-drafted in part because Congressional criticism of peacekeeping policy.³⁶⁴ On September 18, Clinton defended UN nation building efforts a publicly floated a vague “political initiative”

³⁶⁰ Les Aspin, Remarks Prepared for Delivery at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 27, 1993

³⁶¹ Poole, 2005, pp. 49.

³⁶² Declassified Clinton NSC files, “Memorandum for the President, National Security Talking Points for Bipartisan Congressional Leadership Meeting on Wednesday September 8,” African Affairs: Ordway, John, Jeff, Dennis, Ward, Jennifer, Steinberg, Donald, Somalia June-December 1993 [5], September 8, 1993 [OA/ID 502], pp. 1.

³⁶³ Poole, 2005, pp. 51.

³⁶⁴ Flavia Gasbarri, “Revisiting the Linkage: PDD 25, Genocide in Rwanda and the US Peacekeeping Experience of the 1990s,” *The International History Review* 40, no. 4 (2018): 792-813.

that would help in Somalia without further American troop commitments. The same day, Howe contradicted Clinton telling PBS that, “There plainly was never intended to be nor could there be some ultimate military solution to Somalia,” that as many as 5,000 more troops were needed, and ultimately, “the rebirth of Somalia is in the hands of Somalis.”³⁶⁵ On September 20, Warren Christopher gave Boutros-Ghali “a non-paper” telling him that 1) American domestic support was crumbling, 2) going forward UNOSOM II should seek a ceasefire with Aideed and persuade him to leave Somalia, 3) create a central government, and QRF/SOF would leave Somalia as soon as Aideed was gone.³⁶⁶ On September 21, Democratic Representative Jack Reed and member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and a former Army Ranger, sent the George Tenet a 19-page assessment based recounting an August 1993 trip to Somalia which concluded that for the US and UN to save face, “[We should] get Aideed and get out.”³⁶⁷ On September 27, the State Department sent the White House a memo entitled, “Memorandum of Justification for a Presidential Determination to Draw Down DoD Commodities and Services and to Set Aside Legal Restrictions on Providing Assistance to Somalia” whose purpose was to shift American resources towards the rapid development of a Somali police force so that the US could decrease its Somalia military commitments.³⁶⁸ Meanwhile on September 27, Clinton gave his full throated supported to UN nation building on the floor of the General Assembly saying:

In Somalia, the United States and the United Nations have worked together to achieve a stunning humanitarian rescue, saving literally hundreds of thousands of lives and restoring the conditions of security for almost the entire country. U.N. peacekeepers from over two dozen nations remain in Somalia today. And some, including brave Americans, have lost their lives to ensure that we complete our

³⁶⁵ Gwen Ifill, “President Defends American Presence in Somalia.” The New York Times, Sep 18, 1993.

³⁶⁶ Poole, 2005, pp. 53.

³⁶⁷ Jack Reed, "Operations in Somalia, August 1993," Found in the files of George Tenet, NSC Files, Intelligence Programs, Somalia, [OA/ID 2481]

³⁶⁸ Declassified Clinton NSC files, “Memorandum of Justification for a presidential Determination to Draw Down DoD Commodities and Services and to Set Aside Legal Restrictions on Providing Assistance to Somalia” 9/27/1993.

mission and to ensure that anarchy and starvation do not return just as quickly as they were abolished.³⁶⁹

On September 28, the House of Representatives, mirroring earlier action taken by the Senate, passed a resolution (406-26) calling on the Administration to, “justify the Somalia mission by the middle of next month, and then, within another month, to seek Congressional authorization for continuing the mission.”³⁷⁰ On September 29, Clinton publicly retreated from 9 months of his Somali policy saying that the United Nations should reconsider its nation building policy and consider a policy “that puts the affairs of Somalia back in the hands of Somalis.” He also signaled that UN Peacekeepers might be better used elsewhere because, “there's so many other peacekeeping operations in the world that have to be considered.” That same day, Boutros-Ghali sent Secretary of State Warren Christopher a letter saying that he would travel to Somalia in mid-October and solicit greater troop commitments from other east African countries.³⁷¹ Between September 22-30, in light of escalating attacks on Americans, Powell asked Aspin 3 times to supply QRF with “four M-1 tanks, a mechanized company with fourteen M-2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, and an artillery battery of six 105 mm howitzers.”³⁷² All three times, Aspin declined his request out of for fear of Congressional reprisal saying, “the trend is going the other way.”³⁷³

On his retirement day, October 1, 1993—2 days before the battle of Mogadishu, Colin Powell urged Clinton to withdraw from Somalia. Powell told Clinton that the US “could not substitute our version of democracy for hundreds of years of tribalism” and, “We can't make a

³⁶⁹ William J. Clinton: "Remarks to the 48th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 27, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=47119>.

³⁷⁰ Thomas E Ricks and Robert S. Greenberger, "Clinton Seeks Graceful Exit from Somalia--President Says U.N. should Try another Approach to Help Restore Order," Wall Street Journal, Sep 29, 1993, A3.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Ohls, 2009, pp. 140; Poole, 2005, pp. 55-56.

³⁷³ Ibid.

country out of that place. We've got to find a way to get out, and soon," the President conceded that he had not focused sufficiently on Somalia and that going along with the UN after it moved against Aideed had "complicated the whole nature of our involvement."³⁷⁴

On October 3rd 1993, a week after President Clinton's UN speech, American soldiers from Task Force Ranger attempting to apprehend Aideed ended up in "the bloodiest battle of any U.N. peacekeeping operation."³⁷⁵ In total, 18 American soldiers from Task Force Ranger were killed, 75 were wounded, and 1 more was taken hostage trying to apprehend Aideed.³⁷⁶ That they went ahead with an apprehension mission after the President had made public statements suggesting a mission change and the Administration had begun planning for negotiations with Aideed speaks directly to the White House's dysfunction.

On October 7, 1993, 5 months after declaring mission accomplished, President Clinton, in a very different televised address, announced American withdrawal from Somalia saying:

...We came to Somalia to rescue innocent people in a burning house. We've nearly put the fire out, but some smoldering embers remain. If we leave them now, those embers will reignite into flames, and people will die again. If we stay a short while longer and do the right things, we've got a reasonable chance of cooling off the embers and getting other firefighters to take our place...It is my judgment and that of my military advisers that we may need up to 6 months to complete these steps and to conduct an orderly withdrawal.³⁷⁷

Ultimately, American troops remained in Somalia until March 31, 1995—a full year past Clinton's 6-month deadline.

The Clinton Administration's insufficient engagement on Somalia is perhaps mostly concretely evidenced in October 19, 1993 report written for Tony Lake by Nancy Soderberg,

³⁷⁴ Powell and Persico. *My American Journey*. Random House, 1996, pp. 588.

³⁷⁵ Kenneth Allard, 1995. *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*. National Defense University. Washington DC.

³⁷⁶ Kenneth Allard, 1995. *Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*. National Defense University. Washington DC.

³⁷⁷ William J. Clinton: "Address to the Nation on Somalia," October 7, 1993. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=47180>.

Clinton's Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Soderberg, who had been Clinton's foreign policy advisor throughout the Presidential campaign, was asked to compile a summary of Deputies Committee (DC) and Principals meetings on ongoing foreign policy crises (Bosnia, Haiti, Somalia, etc.) since the inauguration. Over those 9 months, Principals met 30 times and DC met 60 times. On Somalia specifically, the principals never met and DC only met 9 times. The closest thing to a Principals meeting on Somalia with the President did not occur until after Black Hawk Down (October 5 and 6) and those were informal meetings. After the June attacks on Pakistani peacekeepers, DC did not meet until July 14. In total, Soderberg said Clinton received 75 memos on Somalia—most of which were from “Congressional [members], heads of state and other correspondence, a number of them updated the President on Somalia policy”—not the members of the Administration.³⁷⁸

From its earliest days through Black Hawk Down and beyond, remained committed to creating a sweeping, long-term vision of US involvement in UN peacekeeping without a solid sense of what it would be before they started implementing it. Throughout 1993, principals discussed PRD-13 and what would eventually become PDD-25. While the final version of PDD-25 shows a measured approach saying that multilateral peacekeeping would be, “a part of our national security strategy, not the centerpiece,” early drafts went so far as to consider “a standing U.N. army and the placing of U.S. forces under United Nations’ command.”³⁷⁹ While it can be argued that coming to a prudent policy, the process by which it arrived shows a profound lack of engagement on the part of the Clinton Administration.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁸ Nancy Soderberg, “Crisis Management,” Declassified Clinton NSC files, October 19, 1993.

³⁷⁹ PDD-25 - U.S. Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations, 5/3/1994

<https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/127499>; Ohls, 2009, pp. 200; Boys, James D. "A Lost Opportunity: The Flawed Implementation of Assertive Multilateralism (1991-1993)." *European journal of American studies* 7, no. 7-1 (2012).

³⁸⁰ James Terry, "The Evolving U.S. Policy for Peace Operations," Southern Illinois University Law

Conclusion: In assessing the interaction of the psychological (beliefs) and rational (expertise and learning), I find that variance in policy choices are largely governed by rational elements. In implementing President Bush's beliefs, his administration drew strict humanitarian parameters with the intention of relinquishing Somalia-leadership to the UN once a secure environment for aid delivery had been established. His advisors, many of whom had served together for several presidential administrations, were very experienced. Having overseen American victory in the Cold War, they had expertise relevant to their decision-making environment and learned the UN's potential as well as its limitations over the course of their careers. Clinton and his team were, inexperienced and lacked ideological coherence or consistency. Once in office, lack of expertise manifested in dysfunction and disorganization. As a result of this internal disorder, they did not show a capacity to learn as dynamics in Somalia changed. In short, they never updated their belief in turning Somalia into a fully functioning democratic nation state. President Clinton and National Security Council (NSC) principals and deputies appear to have been barely attentive to the Somalia policy process. In this way, the entire venture of assessing Clinton's learning is somewhat negated because he was simply unengaged and did not opt into an environment in which his belief in Somalia nation building could be updated. This is consistent with the argument that decisions are better when the president is involved in the policy process and listens to a variety of views.

Journal 19, no. 1 (Fall 1994): 119-130; Alexander Wolf, "US interventions abroad: a renaissance of the Powell Doctrine?," Strategic Studies Quarterly 3, no. 4 (2009): 125-139.

Chapter 4: Yugoslavia and Bosnia (1989-1995)

Introduction:

While the years surrounding the end of the Cold War saw the births and deaths of several European states, Yugoslavia's dissolution into six new countries stood apart for two reasons. First, the scale and brutality of the violence in the breakaway republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina was reminiscent of the continent's World War II atrocities and drew public attention around the world.³⁸¹ Second, the fighting there threatened to extend into North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and thus posed the first serious challenge Western order and institutions that had been at the heart of Euro-Atlantic Cold War aims and accomplishments.³⁸²

In the face of these challenges, Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton both voiced strong commitments to preserving European allies' security and a desire to avoid American intervention or troop commitment in the Balkans. To these ends, both presidents preferred to support international organizations' (IOs) like the United Nations (UN), NATO, European Commission (EC), Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)

³⁸¹ Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Rape, Genocide, and Women's Human Rights," *Harvard Women's Law Journal* 17 (1994): 5-16; Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and international intervention*, ME Sharpe, 1999.; Roeder, Philip G. "Peoples and States After 1989: The Political Costs of Incomplete National Revolutions." *Slavic Review* 58(4) (1999): 854-882.; Krishan Kumar, "The Revolutions of 1989: Socialism, Capitalism, and Democracy." *Theory and Society* 21(03) (1992): 309-356; Yehudith Auerbach and Yaeli Bloch-Elkon. "Media framing and foreign policy: The elite press vis-a-vis US policy in Bosnia, 1992-95." *Journal of Peace Research* 42, no. 1 (2005): 83-99.

³⁸² Thomas Cushman and Stjepan Mestrovic (eds.), *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia*, NYU Press, 1996; William J. Durch and James A. Shear, "Faultlines: UN Operations in the Former Yugoslavia," in Durch, William J., ed. *UN Peacekeeping, American Politics, and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990s*. London: Macmillan, 1997; Charles-Philippe David, "A Strategy of 'Circumvention': American Policy Towards the Yugoslav Crisis." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 3, no. 4 (1995): 195-214.; Opening remarks from John Gannon, President Clinton CIA's Director of European Analysis in, "Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency," Clinton Presidential Center, Oct 2, 2013, <https://vimeo.com/75959093>.

efforts in managing the conflict in the Balkans. However, despite these shared views, the two presidents chose different policy paths.³⁸³

Bush made public statements condemnatory of the fighting while refusing to consider or forward any moderating policy actions. Even as reports of genocide emerged, Bush chose not to employ the consensus and coalition building expertise that he and his skilled advisors demonstrated during the Gulf War in 1991.³⁸⁴ Clinton similarly expressed disapproval. However, he went further than Bush and voiced intentions to act.³⁸⁵ But, for the first two and a half years of his presidency, the Clinton administration waffled and dithered in search of a policy that would mitigate intra-Balkan fighting without requiring American troop commitment. Then, in the summer of 1995, after a significant escalation in violence in Bosnia, Clinton, with allied support, employed NATO airstrikes that halted the fighting and then orchestrated a peace agreement—the Dayton Accords which created a durable and lasting peace in Bosnia.³⁸⁶

Despite their shared views, what then accounts for Bush and Clinton’s policy differences?

Scholars examining presidential actions during this period offer diverse perspectives. Historian Carole Rogel argues that Bush’s nonintervention policy was informed by domestic politics. She forwards that by the time genocidal acts occurred in Bosnia, Bush was focused on trying to win reelection and so he opted to “let the natives kill each other until they were tired of the slaughter.”³⁸⁷ Omestad does not consider domestic politics and instead forwards a

³⁸³ Bush, George HW, and Brent Scowcroft. *A World Transformed*. Vintage, 2011; Clinton, William Jefferson, *My Life*, Random House, 2010.

³⁸⁴ Thomas Omestad, "Why Bush Lost," *Foreign Policy* 89 (1992): 70-81.

³⁸⁵ Thomas L. Friedman, "The New Presidency; Clinton Backs Raid but Muses about a New Start." *New York Times*, Jan 14, 1993

³⁸⁶ Stephen M. Walt, "Two cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* 79 (2000), pp. 63-79

³⁸⁷ Rogel, Carole, *The breakup of Yugoslavia and the War in Bosnia*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998, pp. 61-62.

psychological explanation. He says that Bush's policy choices flowed from his reactive disposition, which ruled out anticipatory actions like preventative diplomacy.³⁸⁸ Mearsheimer argues that President Bush acted in line with realist expectations by avoiding intervention in a place which held no American interests.³⁸⁹

James Boys argues that both Bush and Clinton practiced assertive multilateralism, a foreign policy that promotes American international engagement should focus on burden sharing with agreeable countries parties and multilateral institutions.³⁹⁰ Jennifer Sterling-Folker argues that the turning point on American Bosnia policy came with the failure of assertive multilateralism.³⁹¹ Sterling-Folker posits that by August 1995, assertive multilateralism's consistent failure to produce conflict resolution in the Balkans united the congress, military, public, and media against which forced Clinton to pursue a new policy path.³⁹² However, Charles-Philippe David disagrees that assertive multilateralism was ever applied to Yugoslavia. Instead, he argues that Bush and Clinton both pursued a policy of "circumvention," which meant knowingly deferring to allies and international organizations until the conflict required greater American action.³⁹³ Following David's logic, that turning point would have come in the Summer of 1995.

Relatedly, Steven Burg argues that the decision to pursue NATO bombings was born out a fear that if conflict in the Balkans escalated, the United States would have to deploy troops. He

³⁸⁸ Omestad, 1992.

³⁸⁹ John Mearsheimer, "Why we will soon miss the Cold War." *The Atlantic Monthly* 266, no. 2 (1990): 35-50.

³⁹⁰ James D. Boys, "A Lost Opportunity: The Flawed Implementation of Assertive Multilateralism (1991-1993)" *European journal of American studies* 7, no. 7-1 (2012).; Madeleine Albright, *Madame Secretary, A Memoir*, London: Macmillan Press, 2003, pp: 176; Durch, 1997, pp. 327.

³⁹¹ Jennifer Sterling-Folker, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Assertive Multilateralism and Post-Cold War U.S. Foreign Policy Making," in James Scott (ed.), *After the End: Making US Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War World*. Duke University Press, 1998, pp. 290-295.

³⁹² Sterling-Folker, 1998, pp. 295.

³⁹³ David, Charles-Philippe. "A Strategy of 'Circumvention': American Policy Towards the Yugoslav Crisis." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 3, no. 4 (1995): 195-214.

also argues that domestic politics influenced Clinton's decision. With the 1996 presidential campaign already ongoing, Clinton needed to act decisively on Bosnia in order to improve his prospects against his opponent, Senator Bob Dole, who had long advocated for stronger American action in the Balkans.³⁹⁴

While these approaches offer valuable assessments of American presidential decision making vis-à-vis Yugoslavia and the subsequent Bosnian civil war, declassified national security documents from the Bush and Clinton administrations' reveal different dynamics at work in the policy creation processes. These sources show that policy choices during these periods are best explained by and were derived from the coherence of presidential beliefs and his advisors' understanding of how to implement them. The constraining nature of those beliefs dictated advisors' engagement with the conflict which was dictated by their extant foreign policy expertise and ability to learn.

For Bush (1989-1993), his beliefs were clear: throughout the Cold War, the United States never intervened in Yugoslavia's domestic politics because it would not have served American interests. Accordingly, even with ongoing state failure and genocide, without clear American interests at stake or an exit strategy, Yugoslavia's dissolution and subsequent civil war were problems better left to Europe IOs. Bush's beliefs were so strong and clearly within his administration that it functionally stifled his expert advisors from considering alternative policies or meaningfully learning from the conflict as it escalated.

For Clinton and his administration, the problem was much muddier because the executive was driven by a desire to help Muslims in the breakaway republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina but was unwilling to act unilaterally. Furthermore, he and his advisors were too inexperienced to

³⁹⁴ Steven Burg, "Bosnia and Kosovo," in Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin (eds.) *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy*, US Institute of Peace Press, 2003.

lead allies towards an ameliorating policy. Thus, for the first two and a half years of his presidency, Clinton and his advisors floundered on Bosnia, seeking half measures to improve conditions there. Once these efforts, Clinton was returned to the Bush (1991-1993) status quo: deferral to European and IOs' prerogatives and policy preferences which changed little in the Balkans except to contain the conflict within the former Yugoslavia's borders.

Paradoxically though, ineffectual action during this time presented both Clinton and his inexperienced advisors with sufficient opportunity to learn and eventually lead on a policy of successful coercive diplomacy and negotiated peace. Because Clinton and his advisors were able to successfully learn from their failures, they could then move the international community to coalesce around a policy of NATO bombings and negotiated settlement (the Dayton Accords). In further irony, the Clinton administration's years of Bosnia policy's failings allowed a conflict that was marginal to American foreign policy under Bush to metastasize into a central challenge to America's international leadership and, as a result, demanded decisive executive action.

Examining presidential decision-making on the Balkans conflict through this rubric shows that American posture towards Yugoslavia and its successor states had roughly 4 policy phases:

- 1) Maintaining the Cold War Status Quo (1989-1990)
- 2) Inaction on State Disintegration and Avoiding American Involvement (1991-93)
- 3) Chaotic Learning (1993-May 1995)
- 4) Abandoning Incrementalism, Embracing Decisive Action (June-December 1995)

American Policy and Yugoslavia (1945-1988):

Throughout the Cold War, America's Yugoslavia's policy was grounded in realpolitik considerations.³⁹⁵ Warren Zimmermann, a career officer in US Foreign Service and George H.W.

³⁹⁵ Walter Zimmermann, "Yugoslavia: 1986-1996," in Jeremy R. Azrael and Emil A. Payin. *US and Russian Policymaking with Respect to the Use of Force*. Rand Corporation, 1996, pp. 177-200.

Bush's Ambassador to Yugoslavia (1989-1992), summarized the policy as, "independence, unity, [and] territorial integrity," which were "a code for saying that we wanted to see Yugoslavia remain free of Soviet control or influence and that preservation of her unity was the best way to assure this."³⁹⁶ In service of these aims, the US furnished Yugoslavia with billions of dollars in military and economic aid, practiced "calculated ambiguity" which meant creating the impression that it would come to Yugoslavia's defense in response to Soviet aggression, and did not become involved in Yugoslavia's domestic politics.³⁹⁷ Keeping Yugoslavia extant also served the strategic purpose of denying the Soviets access to Yugoslavia's Adriatic coast—efforts supported by and for Greece and Italy, both Adriatic NATO nations. Yugoslavia was also given access to the Western capital markets, making the ability to accrue debt an economic boon denied other eastern bloc communist countries throughout the Cold War.³⁹⁸

While American and Western support helped maintain Yugoslavia's independence and territorial integrity, its domestic unity ran through its communist autocratic leader, President Joseph Broz Tito. Halberstam, recounting Yugoslavia under Tito's 35-year reign wrote that it was, "an uneasy composite of smaller, tribal factions rather than one true nation; it had survived as a nation...largely because of its unusual geopolitical location and the unique talents of its leader" adding that it, "had six republics, five nations, four languages, three religions, two alphabets, and one political party."³⁹⁹ Tito maintained domestic order by both suppressing ethnic nationalism (often violently) and also institutionalizing ethnic identity through power sharing,

³⁹⁶ Ibid, pp. 178.

³⁹⁷ For greater discussion of American-Yugoslav Cold War relations and aid see Henry W. Brands Jr, "Redefining the Cold War: American Policy toward Yugoslavia, 1948–60." *Diplomatic History* 11, no. 1 (1987): 41-53 and Josip Mocnik. "United States-Yugoslav Relations, 1961-80: The Twilight of Tito's Era and the Role of Ambassadorial Diplomacy in the Making of America's Yugoslav Policy." PhD diss., Bowling Green State University, 2008.

³⁹⁸ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan tragedy: Chaos and dissolution after the Cold War*. Brookings Institution Press, 1995, pp.4-5.

³⁹⁹ Halberstam, David. *War in a time of peace: Bush, Clinton, and the generals*. Vol. 34. Simon and Schuster, 2001, pp. 76.

overlapping sovereignties, and granting near political autonomy to the republics, each of which had a dominant ethnic group.⁴⁰⁰ However, a 1972 CIA memo noted the “large problem inherent in the Tito-ist emphasis on nationalism,” observing that, “there are other kinds of nationalism—Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian, etc.—which flourish in Yugoslavia, and they are directed essentially against one another and against Belgrade.”⁴⁰¹ Still, Tito moved to institutionalize social and political balance through Yugoslavia’s 1974 constitution which ensured that he would not have a dictatorial successor; instead, Yugoslavia would be governed by a collective presidency.⁴⁰² The result, however, was that Yugoslavia would become, “constitutionally the weakest in Europe.”⁴⁰³

After Tito’s death in 1980, Yugoslavia’s nationalisms came to the country’s political fore and the fragility of its governability were exposed. Throughout the decade that followed, Muslim Albanians, dissatisfied with poor living conditions in the Kosovo region, called for their republic’s independence.⁴⁰⁴ The Kosovo independence movement inflamed tensions with Orthodox Serbs (the most-populous group in Yugoslavia) who valued Kosovo for its religious history and objected to Tito’s suppression of Serb hegemony. Serbs, in turn, began to rally for their own independence behind Slobodan Milosevic who used Serbian language media to extol national separatism and revanchism.⁴⁰⁵ Many of his speeches in the late 1980’s featured themes

⁴⁰⁰ See suppression see Zimmermann, 1996. For institutionalization see Woodward, 1995.

⁴⁰¹ Memo, “Tito’s Time of Troubles” (17 November 1972), in NIC 2006-004, 489. Cited in Gregory F. Treverton and Renanah Miles. “Unheeded warning of war: why policymakers ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia estimate.” *Intelligence and National Security* 32, no. 4 (2017): 506-522.

⁴⁰² Zimmermann, 1996, pp. 177-179.

⁴⁰³ Walter Zimmermann quoted in Thomas W. Shreeve, “The Intelligence Community Case Method Program: A National Intelligence Estimate on Yugoslavia” in *Intelligence and the National Security Strategist*, edited by Roger Z. George and Robert D. Kline, 327–340. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006, pp. 329.

⁴⁰⁴ Pedro Ramet, 1985. “Apocalypse culture and social change in Yugoslavia”. In *Yugoslavia in the 1980s*. (ed.) P. Ramet. Boulder: Westview. 3-26.

⁴⁰⁵ Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *The improbable survivor: Yugoslavia and its problems, 1918-1988*. C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 1988.

of Serbian suppression under Tito, likened their political status to genocide, and called for “ethnic purification” of Kosovo.⁴⁰⁶ Against this backdrop, a 1986 *New York Times* report on post-Tito Yugoslavia observed that the country had become one defined by expanding social cleavages and political dysfunction. It said, “Yugoslavia today is a daunting landscape of competing nationalisms, of resurgent religion, of economic disorder, of bureaucratic paralysis, of pluralists who would dismantle the one-party state and neo-Stalinists who would suppress them.”⁴⁰⁷

With domestic tensions increasing, the country’s economy and its polity’s faith in Yugoslavian federalism declined.⁴⁰⁸ Under Tito, the debt Yugoslavia acquired from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) allowed the country to develop faster than its Eastern European, Soviet-aligned neighbors. In the 1980s, those debts triggered austerity and market privatization reforms. These reforms undermined the central government’s power in managing Tito’s redistributive economic policies that were crucial to maintaining order. This pushed both wealthy contributor republics (like Slovenia and Croatia) and poor beneficiary republics (like Kosovo) alike to move towards independence. As Susan Woodward wrote about Yugoslavia’s economic problems of the 1980s and 1990s, “without a stable civil and legal order, the social conditions that are created [are]...large-scale unemployment...demobilized soldiers...thriving conditions for black market activities and crime” adding that, “a sense of community under these circumstances is highly prized.”⁴⁰⁹ In the face of swelling adversity, Yugoslav Prime Minister Branko Mikulic cited the country’s, “\$21 billion foreign debt, 15 percent unemployment and

⁴⁰⁶ Agneza Bozic. "The Rhetoric of Slobodan Milosevic and war on the territory of Yugoslavia." (1992).

⁴⁰⁷ Fergus M. Bordewich (1986, Apr 13). YUGOSLAVIA SINCE TITO. New York Times New York, N.Y. [New York, N.Y.]13 Apr 1986: SM54.

⁴⁰⁸ Pavlowitch, 1988.

⁴⁰⁹ Woodward, 1995, pp. 17.

annual inflation of 250 percent,” when he and his cabinet resigned their posts on New Year’s Eve 1988.⁴¹⁰

Despite growing rifts within Yugoslav society and the unity the United States had helped preserve for 40 years, the Reagan Administration did little to change America’s Cold War Yugoslavia policy. A senior administration official with expertise in Yugoslav affairs told the *New York Times* in October of 1988, “We don’t like what is happening with the nationalist elements...” but that “American policy makers are looking to the opponents of Mr. Milosevic to ‘speak out more and show that there are limits.’” Furthermore, the administration viewed Yugoslavia’s problems as “driven primarily by economic factors,” not as political or ethnic challenges with existential implications.⁴¹¹

George H.W. Bush and Yugoslavia (1989-1993):

1989-1990— Maintaining the Cold War status quo:

George HW Bush ascended to the presidency with little reason to alter American support for Yugoslavia’s independence, unity, and territorial integrity. In early 1989, its strategic value was unchanged and it was “the most open and liberal society in the region, the socialist country with the region’s highest per capita income, and deemed most likely to join the European Community.”⁴¹² In assessing how the United States should treat Yugoslavia, Bush had several experienced advisors with expertise in European and Yugoslavian politics and they did not advocate for significant policy deviation. Among Bush’s key Yugoslavia advisors were:

- 1) Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger who had served eight years in the country including four as ambassador and was regarded as one of the foremost American Balkan experts;

⁴¹⁰ The New York Times, “Belgrade Cabinet Quits in Dispute,” Dec. 31, 1988.

⁴¹¹ David Binder, “U.S. aides express concern over Yugoslav crisis.” *New York Times*. 12 Oct 1988: A.7.

⁴¹² V.P.(Chip) Gagnon Jr, “Yugoslavia in 1989 and after.” *Nationalities Papers* 38, no. 1 (2010): 23-39

- 2) National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, who served as an Assistant Air Attaché in the embassy in Belgrade;
- 3) NSC Director of European Affairs Robert Hutchings, who had extensive knowledge of European affairs, having previously served on Reagan's National Intelligence Council as Assistant National Intelligence Officer for Europe (1986-1989) and as the Deputy Director for Radio Free Europe in Munich from (1979-1985).

Bush's Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmermann, also served two foreign service tours in Yugoslavia.⁴¹³

For the first two years of his presidency, Bush's advisors monitored Yugoslavia as its unity came further and further undone. Slobodan Milosevic, now Serbia's president, "took advantage of the vacuum created by a progressively weakening central state and brutally deployed the use of Serbian ultra-nationalism to fan the flames of conflict in the other republics and gain legitimacy at home."⁴¹⁴ He used force to incorporate the autonomous regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina into Serbia by stripping their political autonomy guaranteed under Tito. While Milosevic consolidated Serbian power, the republics of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina declared their independence from the central government in Belgrade.⁴¹⁵ While some members of congress (e.g. Senator Bob Dole, Senator Alphonse D'Amato, Representative Tom Lantos, and Representative Joseph Dioguardi) voiced concerns with the White House and the public over Milosevic's machinations as minority rights deprivation and human rights issues, there was little policy movement.⁴¹⁶

For its part, the central government in Belgrade was more concerned with Yugoslavia's economic woes than its potential disintegration. At a September 9, 1989 meeting with Yugoslavia's President Janez Drnovsek in the Grand Foyer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

⁴¹³ Ibid, pp. 182.

⁴¹⁴ US Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1989–1992—Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe," <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/fall-of-communism>.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Zimmermann, 1996, pp. 280.

in New York City, President Bush, guided by Eagleburger and Scowcroft's "special desire to have strong ties with [Yugoslavia]," asked his counterpart about Yugoslavia's domestic challenges. Bush said, "Are these [problems] on the financial side or the political?" to which Drnovsek responded:

We try to do our best on the economic side but face real difficulties. We want a market-oriented economy, but the problem is that inflation is running at 30% per month. We are putting more emphasis on the private sector, introducing a stock exchange, and completely reforming the financial institutions. It is difficult to do everything, especially with so many social problems... Can the Brady Plan be applied to Yugoslavia [to reduce the amount of debt and interest owed to commercial banks]?⁴¹⁷

Shortly after this meeting, against the backdrop of 1989's anti-communist revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe, the Bush administration underwent a strategic policy reassessment of the United States' role in Eastern Europe. In a December 16, 1989 memo from Hutchings to Brent Scowcroft entitled, "United States Policy toward Eastern Europe," Hutchings wrote that, "more has changed in Eastern Europe in the last three months than in the preceding three decades."⁴¹⁸ He added, "If events continue moving as they have been, there will be an enormous vacuum of power and influence in Eastern Europe... It invites a return to the cyclical pattern of Russo-German conflict and condominium that bedeviled Europe from 1870 to 1945."⁴¹⁹ In the pass-through of Hutchings' memo from Scowcroft to Bush, Scowcroft advocated that American Eastern European policy going forward should flow through international institutions and that the president's personal diplomacy would be key. He wrote:

Agenda for 1990: Within the Alliance, your personal relationship with Kohl, Thatcher, Mitterrand, and others will be as important in 1990 as they were in 1989. There are several institutions competing to coordinate Western approaches toward

⁴¹⁷ Memocon, George Bush conversation with Janez Drnovsek, September 9, 1989, "United States Policy toward Eastern Europe" Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴¹⁸ Memo, Robert Hutchings to Brent Scowcroft, December 16, 1989, "United States Policy toward Eastern Europe" Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

Eastern Europe, and your personal ties will be essential in promoting NATO's political role, building on the progress we have made with the EC and ensuring that Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and G-24 evolve in ways that strengthen US leadership.⁴²⁰

While Yugoslavia was not mentioned, much less singled out as a potential concern, these memos indicated the outlines for an inchoate post-communist Eastern Europe policy: limit direct American involvement and work through international organizations (IO). As Daalder noted, in choosing to act through and behind IOs, the Bush administration “effectively deferred the design of Western policy to the Europeans” who were not easily moved.⁴²¹ For example, in the summer of 1990, the Bush administration attempted to organize a coordinated response with Western European allies if intra-Yugoslavian tensions turned violent, but allies “maintained a wait-and-see attitude.”⁴²² Contributing to Western European hesitance was a lack of concern. As Thomas Shreeve observed, “few Western European observers appeared to share the growing sense of urgency in Washington regarding the future of Yugoslavia and its implications for Europe, it was difficult, according to a number of present and former U.S. policymakers, to figure out what to do.”⁴²³

As Shreeve indicated, American policymakers were more concerned than their European allies but, according to Ambassador Zimmermann, this concern was still insufficient to warrant actions in anticipation of a post-Yugoslav Balkans. Throughout 1990, Ambassador Zimmermann cabled Washington to inform policymakers of the growing nationalism and threats of interethnic violence. In April 1990, for example, Zimmermann warned that Yugoslavia would be

⁴²⁰ Memo, Brent Scowcroft to President Bush, January 17, 1989, “United States Policy toward Eastern Europe,” Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library

⁴²¹ Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: the Making of America's Bosnia Policy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2014, pp. 6.

⁴²² US Department of State, Office of the Historian, “The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992,” <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/breakup-yugoslavia>.

⁴²³ Shreeve, 2006, pp. 331

existentially imperiled if Slovenia and Croatia moved towards or declared independence. By September, his warnings grew starker, writing:

Kosovo may well prove to be the rock on which Yugoslavia founders. It is difficult to imagine a way in which Yugoslavia could be reconfigured to allow Serbs, Albanians, and Slovenes/Croats to want to live together voluntarily in the same country. Serbs are determined to pay any price to keep Kosovo within Serbia, in spite of the fact the province's population is less than 10 percent Serbian. Albanians seem equally determined not to remain voluntarily in any form of union with Serbia. Slovenes and Croats, for their part, have no interest in a Yugoslavia that employs the kinds of repressive measures that Serbia is using to work its will on the Kosovo Albanians.⁴²⁴

Zimmermann, however, did not recommend policy deviations in his cables. As the Ambassador later recalled, "It was my duty to carry out U.S. policy which was to favor continued unity, mainly, through trying to help [Yugoslav President] Marcovic...I foresaw violence if Yugoslavia fell apart, so I tried to focus on getting people not to give up on Yugoslavia, even though I know that the chances of peaceful transition were dwindling."⁴²⁵

Advisors' desire to maintain the status quo altered only by deference to the Europeans gave Bush and his advisors little reason to push for his own change Yugoslavia-policy. In a September 9, 1990 memo to Scowcroft, the NSC Director of European Affairs Hutchings reiterated a cautious approach, advocating for continued engagement with nationalist leaders in Yugoslavia without making any outreach official. He wrote:

While it is important to develop high-level contacts with the democratically elected leaderships in Croatia and Slovenia, a[n American] Presidential meeting with Tudjman, an ardent Croatian nationalist, would be seen in Belgrade as a sign of diminished U.S. support for Yugoslav unity and could hasten the country's disintegration.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁴ Ibid, pp. 336-337

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Memo, Robert Hutchings to Brent Scowcroft, September 9, 1990, "United States Policy toward Eastern Europe" Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

An October 1, 1990 meeting with Bush and Yugoslav President Borisav Jovic at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City further demonstrated commitment to non-involvement:

Bush: "Our position is for free elections and democracy in the republics and autonomous regions as well as at the federal level...But there is increasing concern about the violations of individual human rights. We are not talking about one group over another; that is not the business of the U.S...Is there more you would like us to do in supporting a united Yugoslavia? Have we been too quiet?"

Jovic: The U.S. spoke clearly about a unified Yugoslavia but didn't distinguish democratic processes and disintegrative processes. For example, in Kosovo, there is a distinction between human right and secession. We say yes to human rights, no to secession. In Slovenia, we say yes to democracy but not to secession.

Bush: I don't want you to think we are riding two different horses.

Jovic: One more thing: we do not believe in Yugoslavia's disintegration, because national groups are intermingled and it would be virtually impossible to delineate borders. It could lead to civil war in the Balkans, which no one wants. This is not in the interest of the Balkans, Europe, or the world.⁴²⁷

On October 12, 1990, NSC Deputies meeting presented a hands-off dual-track approach to maintaining Yugoslav unity: Track 1) urge republic-level democratization—especially in Serbia and Track 2) encourage all "groups within Yugoslavia to arrange their affairs within the context of a single state."⁴²⁸ The specifics of these arrangements would remain "for the peoples of Yugoslavia to determine." Deputies argued that Western aid should be tied to republics remaining in Yugoslavia and that force should only be used to preserve public safety. Any intervention or discussion of intervention into Yugoslavia would flow through the CSCE and only after consultation with NATO, the Soviets, and other key regional players.⁴²⁹

Meanwhile, on October 18, 1990, the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) issued National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), *Yugoslavia Transformed* (NIE 15-90), a stark assessment

⁴²⁷ Telcon, George Bush conversation with Borisav Jovic, October 1, 1990, Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library. <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1990-10-01--Jovic.pdf>

⁴²⁸ Memo National Security Council Deputies, "RE: Yugoslavia Policy," October 12, 1990.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

that indicated that there was little the US or its allies could do to stop Yugoslavia's dissolution.⁴³⁰ The report had four key findings:

1. Yugoslavia will cease to function as a federal state within one year, and will probably dissolve within two.
2. Economic reform will not stave off the breakup—Serbia will block Slovene and Croat attempts to form an all-Yugoslav confederation.
3. There will be a protracted armed uprising by Albanians in Kosovo. A full-scale, interrepublic war is unlikely, but serious intercommunal conflict will accompany the breakup and will continue afterward. The violence will be intractable and bitter.
4. There is little the United States and its European allies can do to preserve Yugoslav unity. Yugoslavs will see such efforts as contradictory to advocacy of democracy and self-determination.⁴³¹

While NIE 15-90 can be viewed retroactively as prescient, it had flaws that inhibited its uptake by policymakers. US officials, like Zimmermann and David Gompert (a senior member of Bush's National Security Staff), were already aware of Yugoslavia's problems the NIE cited and, given the constraints of Bush's non-intervention beliefs, they most they could do was hope that pulling levers of economic aid would slow the country's internal conflict. Second, senior policymakers hoped that slowing the disintegration would allow for an outcome beyond state failure—like a looser confederation of Yugoslav republics or extant Yugoslav leadership to regain control over the country as Tito had demonstrated was possible.⁴³² As Gompert recalled, "The NIE didn't electrify the policy world. It didn't affect the judgment of senior policymakers who were already concerned or of those at the cabinet level whose attitude was 'we don't want any of this right now.'"⁴³³

⁴³⁰ National Intelligence Estimate 15-90, *Yugoslavia Transformed* (18 October 1990), in NIC 2006-04, 669.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. iii.

⁴³² Shreeve, 2006, pp. 337-338.

⁴³³ Interview with David Gompert, former Senior Director for Europe and Eurasia, National Security Council, 2 July 2014. (Hereafter cited as "Gompert interview, 2014.") in Gregory F. Treverton and Renanah Miles. "Unheeded warning of war: why policymakers ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia estimate," *Intelligence and National Security* 32, no. 4 (2017): 506-522.

Treverton and Miles level several criticisms against the Bush administration for not acting on NIE-15-90. They argue that its experienced “Yugoslav hands” were “loath to hear that the country was falling apart” and that they discounted, “the new information presented in the NIE and the drastic policy changes it suggested were easier than modifying long-held convictions and beliefs about Yugoslavia and its stability.”⁴³⁴ This assessment speaks to policymakers’ flawed learning process: they sought and gained relevant information (as experienced policy makers would) but were never going to consider intervention.

Some administration officials pushed back against such criticisms saying intelligence assessments were neither compelling nor communicated properly. Hutchings, for example, argued that NIE-90 was not convincing. He said:

“should have been an additional analytical thrust...to get people to accept the that the US couldn’t keep Humpty Dumpty together any longer. This was a hard-enough sell, but might have been easier if followed by a second step...First, say Yugoslavia is going to fall apart. Second, present some scenarios for managing dissolution.”⁴³⁵

Similarly, Gompert argued that there was simply no action the United States could have taken. He said, “the Administration was stuck with an irresolvable dilemma: we couldn’t favor a breakup, and we couldn’t favor forced unity. We know that the status quo was unacceptable to the Slovenes and the Croats, and we told them, ‘If you declare independence unilaterally, you will start a war.’ Their response was, ‘So what?’”⁴³⁶ Again, such a defense is only viable in light of the executive’s beliefs in non-intervention.

Treverton and Miles also argue that the administration may have been blinded to Yugoslavia’s problems by their preoccupation with Cold War aims. Their position being that

⁴³⁴ Gregory F. Treverton and Renanah Miles. "Unheeded warning of war: why policymakers ignored the 1990 Yugoslavia estimate." *Intelligence and National Security* 32, no. 4 (2017): 506-522.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Shreeve, 2006, pp. 339.

with the status of Eastern Europe in flux, advisors relied on Cold War expertise and could not recommend policy deviation from the status quo because any such deviation would not advance the American Cold War interests.⁴³⁷ However, such arguments forward a dynamic in which policymakers had neither responsibility nor agency for doing anything to mitigate the violence in Balkans and potential state failure. Senior officials could have suggested (at least to Scowcroft) that he study military intervention options. Furthermore, such a position does not explain why passively allowing Yugoslavia's disintegration would possibly help American Cold War aims.

Analysis 1989-1990:

Through its first two years, the Bush administration's policy on Yugoslavia purportedly contained an interest in maintaining the country's unity. Yet, as that unity crumbled, policy was instead dictated by Bush's beliefs in nonintervention. Bush's advisors had substantial expertise but had little agency in expanding the field of policies considered as they were limited by the executive's beliefs. This dynamic, in a sense, forced all policymakers into becoming passive observers of the learning process instead of active participants who might test new information against extant policies. For example, in the case of the NIE, whatever its ostensible shortcomings, advisors could not change either policy discussions or actions to more actively maintain Yugoslav unity and/or mitigate the burgeoning civil war in the Balkans. Instead, the administration publicly claimed commitment to Yugoslav unity while internally deliberations only showed discussion of half-measures that very likely exacerbated the state's dissolution. Commitment to nonintervention also explains why the president and his advisors maintained antiquated, inapplicable Tito-era policies. Even with the status of Eastern Europe in flux,

⁴³⁷ Treverton and Miles, 2017, pp. 4.

advisors could not allow for the possibility that any diplomacy (coercive or otherwise) might abate tensions in the Balkans. Similarly, opting to work through the IOs (which functioned on consensus from numerous European states) essentially promised Western and American inaction on Yugoslavia.

Ultimately, the Bush administration's treatment of Yugoslavia during its first two years was one of informed inaction. That the administration never truly examined the possibility that their one Yugoslavia policy innovation (deferral to European-leadership) might increase the likelihood of intra-Balkan violence demonstrates a lack of learning which likely negated their substantial expertise. Furthermore, the administration chose a path that was insufficient to temper growing intra-ethnic tensions. It is possible that nonintervention was the wisest policy choice because 1) the administration did not necessarily have any real policy alternatives; 2) there was inadequate political will amongst the republics' leaders to maintain the federation; and 3) there was a very real desire among the republics for independence and war. However, that the administration treated such realities as immutable (if not fatalistically determined) whilst also ostensibly hoping for some unexpected and unlikely conflict mitigation shows that the executive's beliefs dictated policy considerations at senior levels of policy considerations.

1991-1993—Inaction on State Disintegration and Avoiding American Involvement:

At the outset of Bush's third year in office, the CIA and popular press regularly reported on Yugoslavia's dissolution. Throughout the late Winter and Spring of 1991 Slovenia and Croatia moved to separate themselves from the central government's authority.⁴³⁸ By mid-

⁴³⁸ Chicago Tribune wires. "Breakup of Yugoslavia is Nearer Croatia's Parliament Backs Slovenia Plan for Autonomy." *Chicago Tribune*, Feb 22, 1991; Central Intelligence Agency, "Yugoslavia—Key Points," (FOIA) /ESDN (CREST): 0000372339, Publication Date: February 5, 1991

March, President Borisov resigned his post after the collective presidency refused to impose martial law—an action he and the military argued were necessary to maintain the federation—and Serbia and Croatia mobilized their police and military reservists for potential civil war.⁴³⁹ Croatia even acquired 10,000 Hungarian-made Kalashnikovs rifles.⁴⁴⁰ By April, the most optimistic assessment the CIA could offer was to hope that the military would remain loyal to Prime Minister Ante Markovic.⁴⁴¹ The following month, the agency predicted that if Slovenia and Croatia were to declare independence, Serbs in every Yugoslav republic would react violently.⁴⁴² This came to pass and by early June Markovic lost control of the army, leaving the federation in tatters.⁴⁴³

During this same time, the Bush administration's inaction on Yugoslavia attracted increased attention from the public and congress. Early in 1991, Bush had to defend his administration's uneven approach to Yugoslavia in the press saying, "I have not lost interest; we have not lost interest in what's going on in Eastern Europe."⁴⁴⁴ In May, Congress, under the Nickels-Bentley amendment, briefly cut off American aid to Yugoslavia over Serbs' oppression of ethnic Albanians, which only served to inflame tensions there. The administration was unprepared for this congressional action and had to reinstate aid the following month even though Bush's advisors were no longer hopeful of Yugoslavia's prospects for survival nor was it optimistic the short supply of political will to steer republics away from violence. A senior

⁴³⁹ Engle, Jane. 1991. "In Review: The Week Gone By," *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Mar 19, 1991.

⁴⁴⁰ Peter, Maass. 1991. "Arms Sale to Croatia Causes Stir in Hungary; Opposition Accuses Budapest Government of Helping to Promote Breakup of Yugoslavia." *The Washington Post*, Mar 02, 1991.

⁴⁴¹ Central Intelligence Agency, "YUGOSLAVIA: IMPASSE OVER PRESIDENT CONTINUING," (FOIA) /ESDN (CREST): 0000372449 Publication Date: April 5, 1991

⁴⁴² Central Intelligence Agency, "YUGOSLAVIA: PROSPECTS FOR VIOLENCE (DELETED)," (FOIA) /ESDN (CREST): 0000372452 Publication Date: May 2, 1991

⁴⁴³ Central Intelligence Agency, "YUGOSLAVIA: PROSPECTS FOR THE CONFLICT" (FOIA) /ESDN (CREST): 0000372454, Publication Date: June 2, 1991

⁴⁴⁴ David Binder, Special to *The New York Times*. "U.S. Management Program for East Europe." *New York Times*, Feb 28, 1991, Late Edition (East Coast). <https://search.proquest.com/docview/427967761?accountid=14512>.

administration official summed up their approach to *The Christian Science Monitor* saying, “We have been urging the Yugoslavs to deal with their problems peacefully, and to be mindful of the benefits of integration. But it's a situation so mired in virulent nationalism it's hard for anyone else to influence.”⁴⁴⁵

Still, the administration made a last-ditch effort to try and maintain the federation while continuing to remain skeptical internally about the country's prospects. On June 22nd, Secretary of State James Baker went to Yugoslavia to try and broker a peace. He told the *New York Times*, “Everyone is interested in finding a way through dialogue to craft a new basis for unity of Yugoslavia and to find a way to see the devolution of additional authority and responsibility and sovereignty to the republics of Yugoslavia.”⁴⁴⁶ In a June 25 memo from Scowcroft to Bush, the NSA wrote, “Formulas exist for a new Yugoslavia...the situation is precarious but not yet hopeless. Our aim is continue working with our European partners to head off major violence or precipitous actions that would preclude dialogue.”⁴⁴⁷ However, a report that month from the Director of National Intelligence entitled “Slobodan Milosevic: Out for Himself and Serbia—And No One Else” warned (again) that Yugoslavia was existentially imperiled and that Milosevic would seek to “maximize his power and to create a greater Serbia at all costs...will use any means at his disposal, including manipulation, repression, and intimidation, to maintain control” and that “Milosevic perceives no reason to moderate his policy of tearing the federation apart.”⁴⁴⁸ Perhaps, Bush felt compelled to try some diplomatic measure because Prime Minister Markovic told Bush that Yugoslavia was still salvageable. Markovic said, “The situation is

⁴⁴⁵ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Bush Hopes Aid Will Promote Yugoslav Unity Dissolution of the Yugoslav Confederacy could Set Precedent for Soviet Breakup.” Jun 05, 1991.

⁴⁴⁶ Thomas L. Friedman, “Baker Urges End to Yugoslav Rift,” *The New York Times*, June 22, 1991.

⁴⁴⁷ Memo, Brent Scowcroft to George Bush, June 25, 1991, “Yugoslavia—Croatian and Slovenian Independence Declarations” Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁴⁸ Directorate of National Intelligence, “Slobodan Milosevic: Out for Himself and Serbia—And No One Else,” June 4, 1991.

difficult, but it is under control. The Parliament is still working, and the Government is functioning. We have control over all movements in the country. The Minister of Defense has complete control.”⁴⁴⁹

The administration’s hopes for a unified Western response and a slow-moving conflict in Yugoslavia were further dashed after Slovenia’s and Croatia’s independence declarations on June 25, 1991.⁴⁵⁰ Shortly thereafter, German and Austrian leaders said they were considering recognizing the two new countries and that they expected the remaining Yugoslav republics to similarly declare independence.⁴⁵¹ At a meeting the following day, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), of which the United States was a member, agreed to send a diplomatic mission to Belgrade in hopes of abating tensions there and the European Commission (EC) followed with threats to cease all aid to Yugoslavia.⁴⁵² On July 6th, Eagleburger told *CNN* that “I think there is a real danger of a civil war with a lot of people—innocent people—being killed, and we must do everything we can to prevent that,” adding that the use of force by the Yugoslav national army (JNA) in Slovenia last week, “is reprehensible and must be condemned.”⁴⁵³ By mid-July, the administration began planning American and NATO responses to escalating violence.⁴⁵⁴ By August, incipient European efforts at peacemaking and peacekeeping faltered as Serbian violence spread throughout the country and the Bush administration again sought new policy options that would continue to keep the United States out

⁴⁴⁹ Memcon, George Bush conversation with Ante Markovic, May 5, 1991, Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁵⁰ US Department of State, Office of the Historian, “The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992,” <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/breakup-yugoslavia>.

⁴⁵¹ David Binder, “West Now Split on Yugoslavia,” *The New York Times*, Jul 03, 1991.

⁴⁵² Norman Kempster, “U.S. Condemns use of Force to Preserve Unity,” *Los Angeles Times*, Jul 03, 1991.

⁴⁵³ Quoted in David Binder, “Conflict in Yugoslavia; United Yugoslavia is U.S. Policy’s Aim,” *New York Times*, Jul 01, 1991.

⁴⁵⁴ Memo, Robert Hutchings/Tony Wayne to David Gompert, July 17, 1991, “Yugoslavia: Contingency Planning” Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

of direct intervention in Yugoslavia. For example, Gompert, in an August 5 memo to Scowcroft, gave the National Security Advisor 2 policy options: 1) internationalize Yugoslavia through the introduction of a large peacekeeping force either through the CSCE or the British, French, and Dutch; or 2) to let the conflict play out and leave its fallout to the Europeans. However, Gompert warned that the latter would certainly damage American standing the administration's plans for post-Cold War Europe.⁴⁵⁵

Throughout 1991's remainder, conditions worsened in Yugoslavia and international organizations' incremental actions were insufficient to stem the growing tide of violence in the Balkans and may have allowed further escalation. Western governments and IOs tolerated the bombing of Dubrovnik and Vukovar which emboldened Milosevic to pursue a campaign of ethnic cleansing in furtherance of a Serbian state. At the same time, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic's repeated pleas for preventative troop deployments to deter Milosevic and the JNA's aggression went unheeded by those same western governments and IOs.⁴⁵⁶ Meanwhile, in early September, the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence, an international monitoring force was dispatched to its border with Serbia to report on the fighting and JNA aggression.⁴⁵⁷ On September 25, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 713, enacting an arms embargo on Yugoslavia and declaring support for EC peacekeeping efforts.⁴⁵⁸ On November 27th, the UNSC approved UNSCR 721, which reaffirmed UNSCR 713 but also pointed out that any UN peacekeeping

⁴⁵⁵ Memo, David Gompert to Brent Scowcroft, August 5, 1991, "Yugoslavia and American Leadership" Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁵⁶ Sharp, Jane MO. "Dayton report card." *International Security* 22, no. 3 (1998): 101-137.

⁴⁵⁷ US Department of State, Office of the Historian, "Milestones: 1989–1992—Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe," <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/fall-of-communism>.

⁴⁵⁸ United Nations Security Council Security Council Resolution 713 (full-text), Publication date: September 25, 1991, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/49/IMG/NR059649.pdf?OpenElementnia>

operation required the unanimous consent of all parties—something that the Serbs and Milosevic would not approve.⁴⁵⁹ On December 15, UNSCR 724 passed unanimously; it reinforced 713 and 721 and called for humanitarian aid delivery into Yugoslavia. During this time, UN special envoy Cyrus Vance and EU envoy Lord Carrington’s respective efforts to secure ceasefire agreements and consent for peacekeeping were regularly undermined by Serbs’ reactions European states’ (discussion of) recognizing breakaway republics.⁴⁶⁰

Even as IOs mobilized and put public pressure on Yugoslavs to stop fighting, the administration spent the last months of 1991 focused on reassessing its Yugoslavia policy position, but still undertook no significant change. A September 27th memo from Hutchings to Scowcroft finally conceded that the administration had misread Yugoslavian tensions. He wrote, “In retrospect, we underestimated the strength and persistence of national independence movements in Yugoslavia...we should avoid clinging rigidly to a status quo that may no longer be viable and pay more attention to conditions under which new arrangements can be made stable.”⁴⁶¹ In late-October, Hutchings and Gompert proposed that the US respond to criticism of its inactivity in Yugoslavia by increasing American pressure for a more aggressive EC action.⁴⁶² In early November, the EC imposed economic sanctions on Yugoslavia which were matched by the administration. However, Bush’s public comments showed that the administration was still unwilling to change its stance on Yugoslavia. He said, “I don't think anybody can predict with any accuracy that sanctions alone will solve the problems...we're not talking about force, we're talking about economic sanctions...We see in Yugoslavia how the proud name of nationalism

⁴⁵⁹ United Nations Security Council Security Council Resolution 713 (full-text), Publication date: November 37, 1991, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/57/IMG/NR059657.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴⁶⁰ Brune, 1998, pp. 88-91.

⁴⁶¹ Memo, Robert Hutchings to Brent Scowcroft, September 27, 1991, “Yugoslavia after the UNSC Resolution” Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁶² Memo, Robert Hutchings through David Gompert to Brent Scowcroft, October 24, 1991, “Enhanced U.S.-EC Cooperation on Yugoslavia,” Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

can splinter a country into bloody civil war.”⁴⁶³ During a November 7th conversation at a NATO summit, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and his senior foreign policy advisors agreed with Bush and his counterparts that western forces should continue cautiously on recognition of breakaway Yugoslav republics but not do so until after holding a pan-Yugoslav peace summit.⁴⁶⁴

The Cold War’s end on December 26, 1991, had little effect on Yugoslavia’s trajectory or the United States’ approach to it. On January 1, 1992, Cyrus Vance gained agreement between the Serbs and Yugoslavs for a ceasefire, the deployment of UN peacekeepers, and withdrawal of Serb forces from Croatia.⁴⁶⁵ Vance’s ceasefire, however, did not hold as soldiers were killed in Croatia within two weeks. Tensions worsened still as Serbs declared their own republic and Bosnia and Herzegovina considered doing the same as did ethnic Albanians in Macedonia, who sought to form their own state with Kosovo.⁴⁶⁶ By mid-January 1992, NSC deputies began to “brainstorm” the extent to which the US should engage in UN peacekeeping (vis-à-vis logistical support, intelligence sharing, communications, and cost sharing), recognize breakaway republics, and alter extant sanctions policies.⁴⁶⁷ Despite the violence and mounting European recognition of breakaway republics, on January 16, Deputy National Security Advisor Jonathan Howe recommended to NSC Deputies that the United States back Vance, Carrington, and the CSCE’s initiatives with a human rights focus on supporting safeguards for minorities’ rights—without a definitive direction on how to do so effectively.⁴⁶⁸ On February 1, 1992 with American support, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approved a protective force (1,200 troops which

⁴⁶³ Steven Greenhouse, "U.S. Goes Along with Sanctions on Yugoslavia." *New York Times*, Nov 10, 1991

⁴⁶⁴ Memcon, George Bush conversation with Helmut Kohl, November 7, 1991, Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁶⁵ *New York Times*, "U.S. Not Jumping on Bandwagon." Jan 16, 1992.

⁴⁶⁶ *New York Times*, "5 Killed in Croatia but Truce Largely Holds." *New York Times*, Jan 13, 1992.

⁴⁶⁷ Memo, Robert Hutchings through David Gompert to Admiral Jonathan T. Howe, January 16, 1992, DC Meeting on Yugoslavia," Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁶⁸ Remarks from Admiral Jonathan T. Howe to NSC Deputies, January 16, 1992, "DC Meeting on Yugoslavia," Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library

eventually arrived in Yugoslavia on April 4th).⁴⁶⁹ A memo on the same day from NSC member Jane Holl through Gompert to Scowcroft argued that supporting UN peacekeeping actions would provide the United States with the best path towards recognizing breakaway republics' independence.⁴⁷⁰ The administration's approach was buoyed by their accounting of congressional mail regarding over the previous several months—most of which was neutral and the most-prominent examples (e.g. a December 1991 bipartisan congressional letter) supported American action through international organizations.⁴⁷¹ However, as deaths mounted in Yugoslavia, the most UNSC could do it did through the issuance of Resolutions (UNSCRs 727, 740, 743, and 749) calling for less violence, Lord Carrington's and Vance's efforts to calm intra-Yugoslav tensions moved along without much sense that there was political will to stop fighting.⁴⁷²

Yugoslavia's dissolution and the administration's muddling continued throughout the Spring of 1992. In April, with 1,200 UN peacekeepers deployed, the EC recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina. Scowcroft advised Bush to recognize Bosnia as well as Croatia and Slovenia but that the President postpone recognizing Macedonia (even though the two nations operated as if were independent) until they were able to resolve their issues with the Greeks—who feared fighting there might spill over into Greece—and to lift sanctions on all breakaway republics after recognition.⁴⁷³ On April 7, the United States and EU recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina's

⁴⁶⁹ Lester H. Brune, 1998. *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions: Bush and Clinton in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia, 1992-1998* (No. 11). University of Indiana Press, pp. i.

⁴⁷⁰ Memo, Jane Holl through David Gompert to Brent Scowcroft, February 1, 1992, "Yugoslavia: Recognition Policy," Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁷¹ Quorum Presidential Mail System, "Mail on Yugoslavia (11/14/1991-1/28/1992).

⁴⁷² Brune, 1998, pp. 88-91; William Pfaff, 1992, *Los Angeles Times*. Yugoslavs see that war profited none of them. March 29, 1992.

⁴⁷³ On recognition see Memo, Brent Scowcroft to President Bush, April 2, 1992, "U.S. Action on Recognition of Yugoslav Republics," Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library; For issues with Greece and Macedonia see, Telcon, George Bush conversation with Constantine Mitsotakis, December 12, 1991, Bush

independence.⁴⁷⁴ Soon afterwards, Milosevic sent the JNA to seize Muslim areas in Croatia and Bosnia which, according to a cable from the American mission at the UN in New York, “make the Vance effort to arrange a ceasefire and stem the slide into dissolution futile and irrelevant without greater EC-US-CSCE support.”⁴⁷⁵ On April 27, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia formally ended with Serbia’s merger with Montenegro and was replaced by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.⁴⁷⁶ By April’s end, widespread fighting had functionally invalidated all existing ceasefires and violence was growing into a full civil war.⁴⁷⁷ In May, the UN recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Croatia and passed UNSCR 757 which imposed sanctions against the new state of Serbia and Montenegro.⁴⁷⁸

Throughout the summer and fall of 1992, the former Yugoslav republics slid further and further into civil war and the administration still maintained its position of working through IOs. By early June, the Directorate of National Intelligence reported that more than 1.7 million Yugoslavs had been displaced by fighting—only 300,000 of whom were able to leave the country.⁴⁷⁹ Another cease fire was erased in late June when UNPROFOR retreated after taking Serb fire while protecting the Sarajevo airport. Meanwhile, Croats continued to take territory claimed by the Serbs to the dismay and anger of Democratic Party president Radovan Karadzic. Croatia’s leader, Franjo Tudjman and his Bosnian counterpart, Alia Izetbegovic, signed a military agreement accord which further strengthened Croatia’s position.⁴⁸⁰ According to a

Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library. [https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1991-12-12--Mitsotakis%20\[3\].pdf](https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1991-12-12--Mitsotakis%20[3].pdf)

⁴⁷⁴ Brune, 1998, pp. i.

⁴⁷⁵ United States Mission to the United Nations in New York, “Stemming the Slide in Bosnia,” April 17, 1992.

⁴⁷⁶ John F. Burns, “Confirming Split, Last 2 Republics Proclaim a Small New Yugoslavia.” *New York Times*, Apr 28, 1992.

⁴⁷⁷ John F. Burns, “Truce Collapsing in Yugoslav Area,” *New York Times*, Apr 30, 1992.

⁴⁷⁸ United Nations, “Security Council Resolutions—1992,” <https://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1992/scres92.htm>

⁴⁷⁹ Directorate of National Intelligence, “Yugoslavia: Update on Trends in Population Displacements and Relief Efforts,” June 2, 1992.

⁴⁸⁰ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Bosnian Despair Deepens as UN Fails to Open Airport.” Jun 22,

Directorate of National Intelligence report sent the White House, Bosnia's prospects were still not improving. The stark assessment entitled, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Outlook for Survival Poor" said, "Barring a significant, long-term commitment for peacekeeping forces, however, the region almost certainly will remain unstable for years to come" and concluded that "Washington, therefore, would be certain to face pressure to contribute both money and manpower to any force."⁴⁸¹

Deliberations with allies similarly produced little hope of a policy advancement. During a July 5 conversation with France's President Francois Mitterrand, Bush and his counterpart argued over the role of NATO and CSCE in Yugoslavia for the better part of two hours without coming to any definitive conclusions, much less options to consider going forward.⁴⁸² A July CSCE summit in Helsinki also produced no measure to stop the mounting casualties which had already reached 22,000; instead, delegates compared the composition, purposes, and effectiveness of CSCE and NATO troops.⁴⁸³ For the UN's part, it moved forward with more resolutions granting automatic UN membership to former Yugoslav states and affirming their support for peacekeeping in Yugoslavia and UNPROFOR.⁴⁸⁴ Even as there were increasingly dire reports of ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims, the administration's position was summed in a Strategic Studies Institute report entitled, "Containing Serbia: An Indirect Approach." It said:

An independent Bosnia-Herzegovina has nothing to do with U.S. national interests...Fighting for Bosnian independence would mean a wrong-headed and nasty war that would merely bring greater instability to the region and more civilian casualties. An indirect approach of constraining the Serbs by putting political and

1992.

⁴⁸¹ Directorate of National Intelligence, "Bosnia-Herzegovina: Outlook for Survival Poor." June 23, 1992.

⁴⁸² Memcon, George Bush conversation with Francois Mitterrand, July 5, 1992, Bush Presidential Records, George Bush Presidential Library.

⁴⁸³ "Snatching Defeat from the Jaws of Victory," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 48, no. 8 (10, 1992): 24.

⁴⁸⁴ United Nations, "Security Council Resolutions—1992," <https://www.un.org/Docs/scres/1992/scres92.htm>

military pressure on Serbia's borders, on the other hand, would set an example of multilateral European and American commitment to security and stability.⁴⁸⁵

By the Winter of 1992-93, Bush, now a lame duck president, finally began to move more on Yugoslavia even though the conflict there was increasingly intractable and the indirect approach was not working. A December 16, 1992 report from the Directorate of Intelligence predicted that Serbia's, "domestic instability is likely to grow over time as economic sanctions and continued war weariness again begin to erode support for the Milosevic regime."⁴⁸⁶ In spite of that warning sanctions' potentially disruptive consequences, Bush and British Prime Minister John Major threatened Milosevic and Serbia with even more sanctions and called for the UN to further enforce its no-fly zone over Bosnia.⁴⁸⁷ Bush also included the US troops amongst a UN preventative force for Macedonia and suggested that US might use military force if Serbia pursued new attacks on Kosovo.⁴⁸⁸ However, still determined to keep the US out of direct military involvement and unwilling to lead any IO on more forceful diplomacy or intervention, Bush and his administration backed a plan forwarded by Vance and Lord Owen which would divide Bosnia into ten provinces in order to separate Serbs from Muslim Bosnians. As Bush prepared to leave office, Vance and Owen (V-O) were able to get Milosevic to agree (in principle) to their plan.⁴⁸⁹

Analysis 1989-1993:

⁴⁸⁵ Michael Roskin, Strategic Studies Institute, "Containing Serbia: An Indirect Approach," August 1992.

⁴⁸⁶ Directorate of National Intelligence, "Serbian Elections: Democracy Will Have to Wait," (FOIA) /ESDN (CREST): 0005451496, Publication Date: December 16, 1992.

⁴⁸⁷ Oberdorfer, Don. "Bush, Major Seek Action on Serbia." *The Washington Post*, Dec 21, 1992.

⁴⁸⁸ Art Pine, "Bush Warns Serbia Against Escalation." *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, Dec 29, 1992.

⁴⁸⁹ David Binder, "U.N. ENVOY WINS PLEDGE FROM SERB." *New York Times*, Jan 07, 1993.

If the policy options an administration will consider vis-à-vis a potential intervention, are initially limited by a president's beliefs, Bush's nonintervention beliefs in Yugoslavia limited his administration to 2 options: 1) "let them fight it out" and 2) rhetorical support for IO action. With the former politically inviable, the latter became the policy he and his administration pursued. What he had (perhaps) not anticipated was that in practice his beliefs would functionally negate his administration's abundant expertise by precluding their engagement with and ability to learn from the conflict as it unfolded.

Despite taking a more active posture during his final months in office, Bush's beliefs in nonintervention dominated policy considerations throughout his presidency. In practice, that beliefs constrained the administration to rhetorical concerns and tepid action. Additionally, commitment to nonintervention may have had an unanticipated limiting effect on his advisors vis-à-vis the learning process and engagement with the possibilities of what the Yugoslav conflict might become. As Dr. John Gannon, President Clinton CIA's Director of European Analysis (1992-1995) wrote, "The Bush Administration was determined to not intervene in the Balkans... [and so they] didn't really look at alternatives in any serious way."⁴⁹⁰ Acting in this way, they operated on the underlying (and perhaps unconsidered) assumption that the conflict there would remain within the failed state's former borders. As Gannon further observed, "There were issues of spillover that [the intelligence community] didn't look at. If we had left Yugoslavia alone, it would have had impact on the [rest of the region] ...at a time while we were dealing with the whole restructuring of the security architecture of Europe."⁴⁹¹ As another example, take Eagleburger's views of Milosevic. Eagleburger had known Milosevic for years

⁴⁹⁰ Passage excerpted from, "Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency," Clinton Presidential Center, Oct 2, 2013, <https://vimeo.com/75959093>

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

and were he not constrained by Bush's policy beliefs, he might have made some action to curb the Serb's burgeoning nationalist inclinations and willingness to commit acts of genocide.⁴⁹² Similarly, Zimmermann later questioned Bush's approach writing that, "the best time for the United States to have made its mark on the Bosnian war was during the Bush administration. By the time Clinton took office, the Serbs had consolidated their hold on some 70% of the country and had put Sarajevo under siege."⁴⁹³

The policy limiting-effect of Bush's beliefs are further evidenced by the ineffectiveness of IOs to quell ethnic tensions and violence in Yugoslavia. As R. Craig Nation wrote, "the Yugoslav disaster provided a convenient opportunity to test long dormant mechanisms for international conflict management."⁴⁹⁴ Those mechanisms were the international organizations that the United States helped create during the Cold War. When it was clear early on in the Yugoslav conflict that there was greater political will to fight than seek peaceful resolution, those IOs were unable to meaningfully mitigate the tensions or violence and clearly required American support and leadership to function as they were intended. By the time Yugoslavia had dissolved into several conflicts and the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions showed that they were "woefully unprepared" for this post-Cold War problem, the Bush administration could have, at a minimum, pushed European leaders to take more aggressive action.⁴⁹⁵ Failing to more fully support and engage with the CSCE, EC, NATO, and even the UN, could not possibly have enhanced these organizations' legitimacy going into the post-Cold War world.⁴⁹⁶ As Daalder wrote of the Bush approach and subsequent IO shortcomings, "In the end, it was a failure of the

⁴⁹² Halberstam, 2001.

⁴⁹³ Zimmermann, 1996, pp. 194.

⁴⁹⁴ Craig R. Nation, *War in the Balkans, 1991-2002*, ARMY WAR COLLEGE STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE CARLISLE BARRACKS PA, 2003, pp. xi.

⁴⁹⁵ Joyce P. Kaufman, *NATO and the Former Yugoslavia: Crisis, Conflict, and the Atlantic Alliance*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

United States, first in deferring to the Europeans while failing to back them up, and then in trying to intervene with half-measures designed more to limit risks than have any impact on the ground.”⁴⁹⁷ Thus, Bush’s beliefs in non-intervention was born out. But adherence to his beliefs served no other policy or political benefit and functionally forestalled his experienced advisors from learning from the conflict and, perhaps, crafting policies that might strengthen European and Euro-Atlantic IOs and abate civil war and genocide.

1993-1994—Chaotic Learning:

In December 1992, during the presidential transition, Leslie Gelb penned an op-ed in the *New York Times* in which he lauded the President-elect for “trying to replace the old hawk-dove divide by exploring new standards for U.S. military intervention” and “[searching] for a new American internationalism for a messy new world where threats are largely economic and foreign and domestic matters have become inseparable.”⁴⁹⁸ Later on in the piece, Gelb addressed the state of American policy towards Bosnia, writing, “President Bush will not order U.S. forces to the rescue. Forget it. Second, President-elect Clinton won't either—at least not for months. He shows little disposition to walk economics and chew foreign policy gum at the same time. He has barely begun to select his national security team.”⁴⁹⁹ Gelb’s disparate assessment—in which Clinton was somehow both shaping a new post-Cold War American grand strategy while operating without the requisite inclinations and capabilities to send troops into a dire but discretionary humanitarian crisis—spoke to both the unknown and predictable aspects of an

⁴⁹⁷ Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: the Making of America's Bosnia Policy*. Brookings Institution Press, 2014, pp. 2.

⁴⁹⁸ Leslie H. Gelb, "Foreign Affairs; Get Cracking on Bosnia." *New York Times*, Dec 03, 1992

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

initial Clinton foreign policy. Clinton was long on inspiration and short on international experience.

Because the Governor had scant foreign policy experience, advisors and their deliberative process would be more important to policy outcomes than in the previous administration. However, when advisors were selected, the most influential ones lacked expertise as they had not served in the foreign policy bureaucracy since the Carter administration (e.g. Samuel (Sandy) R. Berger, the deputy national security adviser-designate; Warren M. Christopher, the Secretary of State-designate; W. Anthony (Tony) Lake, the national security adviser-designate; the Secretary of Defense-designate; Congressman Les Aspin; and Madeleine Albright, the nominee for chief delegate to the United Nations) if at all (Vice President-elect Al Gore's chief foreign policy aide Leon Fuerth).⁵⁰⁰ Those who had prior foreign policy experience had never served in senior positions and were not fully prepared to guide a neophyte president on judging and shaping the shifting realities of the post-Cold War world.⁵⁰¹

This group of under-experienced advisors was also immediately thrust into managing several optional Bush-era foreign policy crises—ethnic cleansing in the Balkans chief amongst them.⁵⁰² His three primary national security advisors (Christopher, Lake, and Aspin) each had differing views on how to handle Bosnia: Christopher wanted nothing to do with it, Lake wanted to take strong action, and Christopher's stance evolved along with the conflict.⁵⁰³ Disparate views led to conflicting advice that created a chaotic decision making process that was described by one senior official as “group therapy” and “contributed to a division in the mind of a

⁵⁰⁰ Robert Oakley in PBS Frontline, 2001

⁵⁰¹ Halberstam, David. 2001. *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

⁵⁰² National Security Council Project, "The Clinton Administration," Oral History Roundtables, September 27, 2000, <http://cisismdev.devcloud.acquia-sites.com/sites/default/files/papers/clinton.pdf>, pp. 12.

⁵⁰³ Elizabeth Drew, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*, Simon and Schuster, 1994, pp. 142.

President who had few strong instincts on foreign policy questions.”⁵⁰⁴ Thus, that the incoming administration lacked both the drivers of extant executive foreign policy beliefs and intervention-relevant expertise essentially ensured that Clinton and his foreign policy team would have to develop those missing elements by learning from the policymaking environment as it evolved.

The incipency of Clinton’s Bosnia-beliefs was well-known from the outset of his presidency. During the campaign, he spoke out against the ongoing acts of violence but did not put forward any policy innovations that would significantly change extant IO or American actions. When he discussed the ongoing V-O talks, he did so in a confused and confusing way.⁵⁰⁵ A week before taking office, Clinton told the *New York Times*, “I am somewhat hopeful about the [Vance-Owen] peace conference even though I know some of it could just be maneuvering. Even if it is just maneuvering, there is something going on there, and there is a chance, just a chance that it will take on a life of its own and bring some resolution.”⁵⁰⁶ He added that if talks collapse, “there are some other things we can do if this process breaks down. There may be some things we can do militarily, short of the introduction of a large ground force, that would change the dynamics. I don’t want to rule any of those things out.”⁵⁰⁷ On the Serbs’ culpability, he said, “[The Serbs] are and should be getting concerned about being held responsible for a massive loss of life. The world community is outraged about the press reports of the rapes and cutting and torture.”⁵⁰⁸ On whether or not there should be formal institutional adjudication of Serbian war crimes, he said, “I think what has gone on there certainly constitutes a war crime under international law. I don’t think it is something we can let go. I think it is something that ought to

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 146&150.

⁵⁰⁵ Walter Zimmermann, “Yugoslavia: 1986-1996,” in Jeremy R. Azrael and Emil A. Payin. *US and Russian Policymaking with Respect to the Use of Force*. Rand Corporation, 1996, pp. 177-200.

⁵⁰⁶ Thomas L. Friedman, "The New Presidency; Clinton Backs Raid but Muses about a New Start." *New York Times*, Jan 14, 1993

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

be looked into. I think there needs to be an investigation of violations of international law.”⁵⁰⁹ He added, “Somehow the West really has got to say something and do something about the idea of ethnic cleansing.”⁵¹⁰ In sum, it was clear at the outset of his presidency, that Clinton believed in doing something about Bosnia but did not know what that would be. He did not believe in a large American military intervention. He also did not fully support Vance-Owen but could not clearly express why or propose a better alternative.

However, once in office, the Clinton administration operated as if V-O was still very much a viable policy option. On February 1, the EU had placed its full support behind the Vance-Owen initiative.⁵¹¹ The administration’s first foreign policy act was a comprehensive Bosnia policy review (Presidential Review Directive-1: U.S. Policy Regarding the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia) and it showed that no new policy path was imminent—neither was there a favored one that necessarily had to function apart from Vance-Owen.⁵¹² Similarly, a declassified February 1 CIA report showed a lack of policy direction as intelligence analysts prepared for every possible policy option and did not preclude support for Vance-Owen.⁵¹³ And, a declassified summary of the February 3, 1993 Principals Committee (PC) meeting (that included Lake, Christopher, Aspin, Albright, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell) showed that the Principals still considered V-O but had eliminated unilateral action or abandonment of Bosnia.⁵¹⁴ Importantly, Powell dismissed the viability of airstrikes and Albright

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Daalder, 2014, pp. 11.

⁵¹² PRD-1 - U.S. Policy Regarding the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/44141>

⁵¹³ Central Intelligence Agency, “BTF Assessment: “Yugoslavia” Policy Options: Likely Responses,” Feb 1, 1993, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80c993294098d5174da>

⁵¹⁴ BTF Memorandum RE: Principals Committee Meeting on Yugoslavia February 3, 1993,” *Clinton Digital Library*, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12306>.

told the group that European allies would pull out their peacekeeping troops if the 1991 arms embargo was abandoned.

Yet, the next day, the administration announced that they would not push Izetbegovic and the Bosnians to accept Vance-Owen. George Stephanopoulos, Clinton's spokesperson, told the *New York Times* that, "The President continues to work for a diplomatic solution and he does not specifically embrace or reject the Vance plan" and that a new "Clinton plan" would be announced "relatively soon."⁵¹⁵ In creating further confusion, the administration also said they would not object if Bosnian Muslims accepted Vance-Owen and that Clinton was open to working with Vance and Owen on a new plan. However, Izetbegovic resisted Vance-Owen because, in part, it lacked American support and he believed Clinton might offer him a better deal.⁵¹⁶ Curiously, in 2013, Clinton said that he abandoned Vance-Owen in February 1993 because the initiatives had myriad flaws, singling out his view that the plan empowered Serbs and punished Bosnians, and that other western leaders, like Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada, shared the same view.⁵¹⁷

Yet, at a February 5th PC meeting, Clinton made his first change to the US Bosnia policy; the President decided to increase American involvement in the V-O peace process. He told his advisors, "If the United States doesn't act in situations like this nothing will happen. A failure to do so would be to give up American leadership."⁵¹⁸ As a result, the administration decided that the United States would:

1. Become directly involved in humanitarian aid delivery (this led to U.S. airdrops of food into Muslim-held areas of Bosnia);

⁵¹⁵ Friedman, Thomas L. "U.S. WILL NOT PUSH MUSLIMS TO ACCEPT BOSNIA PEACE PLAN." *New York Times*, Feb 04, 1993

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Clinton, William Jefferson, "Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency," William J. Clinton Presidential Library, Little Rock, Arkansas, October 1, 2013.

⁵¹⁸ Cited in Elizabeth Drew, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*, Simon and Schuster, 1994, pp. 146.

2. Ask the UN for authorization of enforcement of the no-fly zone;
3. Seek a tightening of the economic sanctions;
4. Appoint an envoy (Reginald Bartholomew) to the talks being conducted by Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen;
5. Reiterate the Bush administration's warning to Serbia not to cause trouble in Kosovo;
6. Help enforce an agreement among the parties to stop fighting—provided all parties willingly signed the agreement.⁵¹⁹

Christopher, acting without coordinating with the other Principals, sowed confusion with his incorrect public statement that the United States was “prepared to use our military power.”⁵²⁰

Throughout the Winter of 1993, confusion and lack of consensus or executive direction (all derived from Clinton's lack of beliefs) dominated uneven administration actions. After much internal deliberation about their viability, Clinton announced Bosnia aid airdrops on February 26.⁵²¹ However, on March 2, Secretary Aspin told the press that airdrops had ceased because of their success and diminishing tensions in Bosnia. This was not true as Serb attacks had actually increased, airdrops never stopped, and both Clinton and Gore had to make corrective public statements.⁵²² Meanwhile, the administration had changed its position on Vance-Owen again and was now urging Izetbegovic to sign on. Bosnian Serbs, fearing that their opportunity to form a Serbian state was endangered by greater American involvement, were now resistant to V-O and escalated their attacks on Bosnian-Muslim enclaves like Srebrenica. Images of the Balkan tragedy were broadcast on American news outlets like CNN and spurred greater calls for Clinton to act from Congress (e.g. Senator Joseph Biden) and within the press.⁵²³

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Elaine Sciolino, “Conflict in the Balkans: U.S. Backs Bosnian Peace Plan, Dropping Threats to Use Force,” *The New York Times*, 11 February 1993; Interim Press Guidance, February 6, 1993, box 4 of 11, Europe and USSR Country File, National Security File, Clinton Presidential Records National Security Council, European Affairs, Drew, Nelson/Bremner, Sue, PC/DC Principals Committee/Deputies Committee] Meetings on Bosnia-Herzegovina, June 1995 [2] OA/ID 696

⁵²¹ Thomas L. Friedman, “CLINTON ANNOUNCES AIRDROPS TO BOSNIA WILL BEGIN SHORTLY.” *New York Times*, Feb 26, 1993

⁵²² Drew, 1994, pp. 147.

⁵²³ Daalder, 2014, pp. 12.

As the American public became increasingly aware of the Bosnian tragedy throughout the Spring of 1993, the Clinton Principals held several meetings each week before settling on a new policy: “lift and strike.” This policy meant lifting the 1991 arms embargo, supplying Bosnians with arms for self-defense, and threatening air strikes that would deter further Serb aggression. On May 1, Clinton sent Warren Christopher to several European capitals to try and convince their governments to support lift and strike but he was expectedly rebuffed as most of the peacekeeping troops were British and French. In fact, allies told the administration they would never accept lifting the arms embargo unless the US was also willing to commit ground troops. The administration also hoped that the threat of airstrikes would pressure Milosevic to accept V-O but the Serb negated this maneuver by deferring acceptance of the UN’s terms to the Serbian parliament. While Christopher was still in Europe, Clinton, having read more about the centuries of interethnic Balkan violence began to soften his support for lift and strike. When Christopher returned, he told Clinton and the Principals that neither lift nor strike was ever likely to gain allied support unless it was accompanied by a large American military commitment.

Christopher then moved to change the policy to containing the Bosnia conflict. The UN supplied him with an opportunity to do just that on May 6 when it passed a Security Council resolution which created six “safe areas.” France, Russia, and Britain, supported the UNSCR under a Joint Action Plan (JAP) which called for the safe areas’ military defense (the US would only supply air support if necessary), UN monitors on the border to report on Serb aggression, greater international presence in Macedonia and Kosovo, and the establishment of a war crimes tribunal. In the shuffle of shifting policies, the administration had also abandoned Vance-

Owen.⁵²⁴ While these measures ostensibly helped bring the US and allies together, it changed little on the ground for the Bosnians.

The failures of lift and strike and JAP in the Winter and Spring of 1993 to change Bosnian realities also portended eighteen uneven and ineffectual months of Clinton's Bosnia policy. In the summer of 1993, Clinton's anger at the Serbs' bombing of Sarajevo led to further deliberations with allies and an agreement to use NATO airstrikes contingent upon an UN process functionally controlled by the French and British—which prevented the implementation of airstrikes. In response, the Serbs pulled back temporarily; but by the end of 1993 they again attacked UN-protected “safe areas,” humanitarian aid convoys, and Sarajevo. The trend continued throughout the following year. In early 1994, as principals and allies still debated airstrikes' terms, the Serbs shelled a marketplace in Sarajevo, killing dozens and injuring hundreds. The marketplace attack led to the creation of an UN-controlled “safe zone” around Sarajevo in which Serbs had to turn over heavy weapons or face NATO airstrikes—which again would not be used because of allies' objections. In March, the administration successfully reached an agreement between the Croats and Bosnians to stop their fighting—this was the administration's first victory on Bosnia. Through the summer of 1994, the Russians convinced the Serbs to withdraw light weapons from Sarajevo and to cease attacks on the safe area of Gorazde.

A new negotiating block called the Contact Group (consisting of Russia, Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States), gave the Serbs two weeks to accept a new map derived from the Vance-Owen initiatives—which the Serbs deliberated before (predictably)

⁵²⁴ Drew, 1998, pp. 138-164 and Daalder, 2014, pp. 1-19.

rejecting it. In response, the Contact Group tightened economic sanctions on Milosevic and the Serbs but would still not arm the Bosnians.

In the fall of 1994, Clinton under pressure from an incoming Republican congress, pushed through some limited NATO airstrikes, only to reverse course shortly thereafter, under pressure from Lake, who told the president that continuing on this path might lead to the end of the NATO alliance. The administration then tried unsuccessfully to negotiate a 6-month ceasefire with the Serbs who preferred to talk to former President Jimmy Carter. He successfully negotiated a four-month ceasefire January 1 through April 30, 1995. By the end of 1994, Clinton, Lake, and principals because of 2 years of diplomatic and strategic blunders, again found themselves locked into the European position: contain the conflict to the Balkans and hope that it burns itself out.⁵²⁵

Analysis 1993-1994:

During the first two years of the Clinton administration, Bosnia policy was marked by cycles of the same internal dysfunction and ineffectual action. Reports of Serbs' violence shocked the President, who would urge his inexperienced advisors to "do something." The Principals would engage in numerous extensive policy discussions, sometimes with the President, that never yielded the one escalatory policy action that was acceptable to European allies: the introduction of American ground troops. Instead, advisors functionally deferred to allies and IOs prerogatives and preferences, which led to persistent and largely pointless discussions about arming the Bosnians, potential terms of airstrikes, and little real action to stop

⁵²⁵ For summaries of these events see Drew, 1998, pp. 273-284, 410-412, and 429-430, Daalder, 2014, pp. 19-36, and Vicki J. Rast and Dylan Lee Lehrke, *Interagency Paralysis: Stagnation in Bosnia and Kosovo*, Washington, DC: Project on National Security Reform, (n.d.), pp. 384-450.

violence and save lives. The Serbs, fully understanding that no forceful Western action was imminent, would engage in performative and temporary acts of cessation of aggression whilst never actually relenting from their goal of creating a Serbian state at the expense of Bosnian Muslims. In the shuffle, Clinton and his advisors would make public statements that were not always reflective of policy, deliberations, or aims, and frequently sowed confusion both domestically and abroad. As Daalder succinctly summarized the Clinton approach during these two years:

In early 1993 it rejected the Vance-Owen Peace Plan; in May 1993 it tried to sell a policy to lift the arms embargo and conduct air strikes while the Muslims were being armed; and in 1994 it had sought repeatedly to convince the allies to support strategic air strikes. Each time, the new policy was rejected or shelved, and an incremental, crisis management approach was once again substituted for a viable approach to end the war.⁵²⁶

The central problem and driver of ineffective action was the interaction between Clinton's half-formed belief in "doing something" to help Bosnia and lack of administration expertise to generate and enact a policy that stop civil war in the Balkans. As Zimmerman wrote, "strong presidential views were needed. But they were never forthcoming. Clinton himself seemed torn about what to do. His and his aides' rhetoric reflected the absence of strategy."⁵²⁷ Without the guidance and the agency derived from clear and consistent presidential beliefs, his advisors were never able to meaningfully carry out the best of Clinton's intentions for Bosnia. Instead, they were left with partial measures that did little to help the Bosnians and did much to create tension with allies.

⁵²⁶ Ivo Daalder, "Decision to Intervene: How the War in Bosnia Ended," *Foreign Service Journal*, December 1998, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/decision-to-intervene-how-the-war-in-bosnia-ended/>

⁵²⁷ Walter Zimmermann, "Yugoslavia: 1986-1996," in Jeremy R. Azrael and Emil A. Payin. *US and Russian Policymaking with Respect to the Use of Force*. Rand Corporation, 1996, pp. 177-200.

For all of their failures during the first two years in office, Clinton and his advisors showed signs of learning. The March 1994 ceasefire between Croatia and Bosnia showed the administration that it had diplomatic options beyond working with and through European allies. Similarly, the limited air strikes in autumn of 1994, while unsuccessful on all fronts and ultimately undone because of the tensions with allies, demonstrated that European resistance to their use was neither permanent nor unconditional. Also, the JAP agreement in May 1993, which established the war crimes tribunal, showed that the administration was capable of gaining allied support to extend attention to the Balkan conflict beyond containment. These indicators along with the overwhelming evidence that what Daalder called the failure of, “the day-to-day crisis management approach [of 1993-1994]” represented an opportunity for Clinton and his administration to use their experience gained over the previous two years to seek a path apart from “muddling through.”⁵²⁸

1995—Abandoning Incrementalism, Embracing Decisive Action:

During the four months that Carter’s ceasefire was in effect, internal deliberations showed that the Clinton administration had abandoned hope of improving dynamics in the Balkans and began formulating post-conflict policies. In February, the CIA raised concerns that Serbia would face tremendous financial difficulties because of its lack of access to Western markets and financial institutions.⁵²⁹ A week later, principals and the Contact Group (separately) planned sanctions relief for Serbia in return for Milosevic’s recognition of Bosnia, Croatia and other former Yugoslav republics within their existing borders—an offer which Milosevic

⁵²⁸ Daalder, 1998.

⁵²⁹ “BTF Report re Serbia Rough Road after Sanctions,” *Clinton Digital Library*, Feb 2, 1995, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency

refused.⁵³⁰ On March 12, the administration gained some measure of relief when Croatia agreed to extend the UN's presence there.⁵³¹

But, by the March 16, after months of discussion, the Principals agreed that the best policy path forward was the one they had been on since coming into office—defer to Europeans and work incrementally through IOs. If policy direction going forward had changed at all, it was even less ambitious. A March 17 summary of the Principals' "new" approach from Lake to Clinton said:

Principals agreed that we should continue to support the Bosnian Government's goal of a political settlement consistent with the Contact Group proposal, but that we should seek to lower public expectations of immediate success; we should also avoid nurturing any illusions on the part of the Bosnian Government that we can deliver a settlement or that the U.S. or NATO will intervene militarily on their behalf.⁵³²

However, a month later, the State Department had given up hope that Contact Group might produce any results or merit American support. A declassified department memo said, "we should not portray the Group as alive and well and working on ideas to bring the conflict to an end. This would only damage our credibility, both in the region and with our public and press." At April's end, the State Department was ready to give up any new diplomatic efforts on Bosnia as officials saw little chance of extending the ceasefire.⁵³³

With no signs of increased intervention coming from the West, Bosnia saw a return to fighting and limited Western response to it. Throughout the month, the JNA shelled Bosnian

⁵³⁰ "1995-02-13B, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia," February 13, 1995," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency and Daalder, 2014, pp. xiii.

⁵³¹ "1995-03-16B, NSC Paper re Discussion Paper for Principals Committee March 17, 1995," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency

⁵³² "1995-03-17, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia March 17, 1995," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency

⁵³³ "1995-04-14A, Department of State Paper re Bosnia Going for a Small War," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency

cities and attacked UN-protected safe areas, killing hundreds of civilians.⁵³⁴ Initially, rather than consider coercive responses as they had previously, the UN, Contact Group, and Clinton administration undertook various forms of policy review, including debating the terms of Serbian sanctions relief. Similarly, there were few consequences for Serbs after they seized weapons from the Sarajevo safe zone beyond the Americans agreeing to arm and train Bosnians if UNPROFOR troops withdrew.⁵³⁵

However, there were some signs of discontent within the Western senior leadership over maintaining this policy trajectory. After Serbs took several dozen UN peacekeepers hostage, French President Jacques Chirac approached Clinton about the creation of a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF), a heavily-armed land unit which, unlike UNPROFOR, could take offensive action against Serb aggression.⁵³⁶ On May 28th, a cable from the American embassy in Sarajevo reported that UNPROFOR commander's General Rupert Smith believed that the UN mission no longer functioned and that the Western position was at a point in which, "We either fight or we don't."⁵³⁷ On June 3, NATO approved the Chirac-Clinton RRF proposal which would be commanded by General Smith. The UNSC, under UNSCR 998, followed suit on June 16.⁵³⁸ During the last the two weeks of June 1995, the Principals met (sometimes with Clinton) to discuss how to balance UN and NATO considerations with domestic political concerns, prospects for overhauling diplomatic talks with Milosevic, and various long-term strategies.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁴ Sudetic, Chuck. "Surge in Sarajevo Combat Kills 20 and Wounds 150." *New York Times*, May 31, 1993

⁵³⁵ Daalder, 2014, pp. xiv.

⁵³⁶ Daalder, 2014, pp. xv and "1995-05-23, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia May 23, 1995," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency

⁵³⁷ "1995-05-28, Department of State Cable re Smith We Either Fight or We Don't," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency

⁵³⁸ United Nations Resolution 998, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/998>

⁵³⁹ Daalder, 2014, pp. xv I and "1995-06-20D, NSC Memorandum re Foreign Policy Group Meeting on Bosnia Wednesday, June 21, 1995," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency

At the same time, Albright wrote a memo to the president which advocated forcefully for the using airstrikes against the Serbs. Clinton, having seen more than two years of UN-ineffectiveness, agreed with his UN Ambassador. Lake, who was now “strengthened in this determination by the president’s evident desire for a new direction,” worked with the NSC to create a new strategy. It had three components: 1) Support RRF over UNPROFOR, 2) Accept a diplomatic solution that was kind to Serbs’ gains during the civil war—no matter how ill-gotten, and 3) No diplomatic solution was possible without a significant military threat on the Serbs. When Lake presented Clinton with this approach, the president agreed.⁵⁴⁰

Then, between July 6th and 16th, Serbs launched a series of attacks on the “safe zone” of Srebrenica, killing 7,079 Bosnians.⁵⁴¹ This would prove to be the turning point. As Daalder observed, the Srebrenica massacres made clear Milosevic’s strategy. After taking Srebrenica, Serbs would attack other lightly-guarded UN safe zones (Gorazde, Zepa, and Bihac) before moving on Sarajevo which would “conclude the war before the onset of the next winter.”⁵⁴²

In the days that followed the Srebrenica attacks, Western leaders moved to create a plan to finally stop Serb aggression in Bosnia. On July 14, the Principals met to discuss a Chirac proposal to fortify the UN presence and protect Gorazde and, once again, seek a path forward that would not necessitate the deployment of American ground troops. They decided to send General John Shalikashvili, the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, to an allies’ conference in London to represent American interests on new allied action.⁵⁴³ At the conference, allies decided to make a strong defense of Gorazde with air strikes—a position that Clinton was able to

⁵⁴⁰ Daalder, 1998.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ “1995-07-15, Anthony Lake to President Clinton re Principals July 14 Conclusions on Bosnia,” *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency.

persuade Chirac to accept just prior to the conference's start.⁵⁴⁴ After the conference's conclusion, at a July 21 press briefing, Secretary of State Christopher announced that going forward the administration would commit to the following steps:

- 1) Support UNPROFOR—even with all its shortcomings;
- 2) Defend Gorazde;
- 3) Stabilize the humanitarian challenges in Sarajevo;
- 4) Urge other nations to increase their humanitarian contributions;
- 5) Push for a Bosnia-wide ceasefire followed by a negotiated political settlement;
- 6) Hold Bosnian Serb leaders responsible for the safety of all UN hostages.

He said:

We face a very simple and stark choice: either the international community rapidly takes firm steps to fulfill its mission in Bosnia or its mission will collapse... There'll be no more pin-prick strikes... We do not seek to make the international community a participant in the war in Bosnia, but we're determined to make another, perhaps final effort to fulfill the world's responsibilities in Bosnia. Today's meeting was a necessary first step toward that goal. Now we must act... President Clinton is committed to working with our partners, all of them—especially France and Britain—to see that the decisions we take today are translated into reality.⁵⁴⁵

A declassified July 20 NSC discussion paper entitled, “Bosnia Endgame Strategy” showed that the administration’s support for June’s “endgame” discussions had grown even stronger. The paper called for, “more aggressive use of NATO air power...to halt Serb artillery attacks on the exclusion zones.” It concluded that if air power did not lead to a political settlement, the Principals would, “let UNPROFOR collapse this year and help the Bosnians obtain the military capabilities needed to level the playing field.” Principals defined “leveling the playing field” as giving Bosnians one year of air support after which, “the Bosnians would be on their own.”⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ Daalder, 1998.

⁵⁴⁵ Congressional Record, “U.S. Department of State--Press Briefing by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of Defense William Perry, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. John Shalikashvili,” July 21, 1995 <https://www.congress.gov/congressional-record/1995/7/26/senate-section/article/S10665-4>

⁵⁴⁶ “1995-07-20A, NSC Paper re Bosnia Endgame Strategy,” Clinton Digital Library, *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency.

With the President and his administration finally coalesced around a strategy of coercive diplomacy through bombing, NATO fell in line and the end of the war in Bosnia came quickly. Throughout August, the United States and its allies ramped up preparation as NATO and the UN approved the air strikes and their projected targets. Clinton gave final approval to the endgame strategy and Christopher appointed Assistant Secretary of State Richard (Dick) Holbrooke to be the lead Balkan negotiator.⁵⁴⁷ Between August 30 and September 14, NATO conducted pinpoint bombing on Serbian targets (over Russian objections), which led to a ceasefire in early October.⁵⁴⁸ By the end of 1995, Holbrooke's skillful diplomacy led to the signing of the Dayton Accords and the formal end of the war in Bosnia.⁵⁴⁹

Final Analysis:

When George H.W. Bush ascended to the presidency, Yugoslavia was starting to come undone. Bush believed in non-intervention and even though he had several advisors with relevant expertise, the president's beliefs dominated policy considerations and actions throughout his presidency. He never discussed intervention until he was a lame duck president and, even then, intervention was used purely as a threat to discourage continued violence. Instead, his administration chose to defer to international organizations and hope that economic aid and reform might keep the country together even though there was little indication that such actions might stop the violence. As the death toll mounted into the tens of thousands and it was evident that Bush's approach was designed to keep the United States out of the Balkans and not to curb violence there, he still maintained his beliefs in non-intervention because, as Leslie Gelb put it,

⁵⁴⁷ Daalder, 1998, pp. xvi-xvii.

⁵⁴⁸ Carol J. Williams, "Yeltsin Lashes Out at NATO Strikes in Bosnia," *Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1995

⁵⁴⁹ Zimmermann, 1996.

“He just sees too many land mines in Bosnia and no way to get out.”⁵⁵⁰ For Bush, reasons for and means of keeping the United States out of the Balkans was clear and, for better or worse, effective.

As Zimmermann wrote, “As with Bush, the issue with Clinton was not who was guilty, but what could the United States do about it.”⁵⁵¹ For Clinton, the inability to support his beliefs in “doing something” with tangible policy perplexed and froze his administration until the summer of 1995. Reflective of overall administration inexperience and Clinton’s inchoate beliefs on Bosnia, it took two years of learning from the conflict before he and his advisors were finally able to effectively act. As Jane Sharp wrote, “Only after almost four years of war, more than 200,000 dead, and 2 million displaced did the United States exert leadership and, together with France and Britain, take the kind of military action that could have prevented war in the first place.”⁵⁵² Clinton, looking back on the indecisive period, gave himself a pass, attributing his inability to act on Bosnia as preferred to extant constraints. He wrote:

My own opinions were constrained by the dug-in positions I found when I took office. For example, I was reluctant to go along with...unilaterally lifting the arms embargo, for fear of weakening the United Nations (though we later did so in effect, by declining to enforce it.) I also didn’t want to divide the NATO alliance by unilaterally bombing Serb military positions, especially since there were European, but no American, soldiers on the ground with the UN mission. And I didn’t want to send American troops there, putting them in harm’s way under a UN mandate I thought was bound to fail.⁵⁵³

“Dug-in positions,” however were not the cause of waffling or even a lack of understanding of the multiparty dynamics that created the conflict and conflict mitigation’s intractability. The

⁵⁵⁰ Leslie H. Gelb, "Foreign Affairs; Get Cracking on Bosnia." *New York Times*, Dec 03, 1992

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Sharp, Jane MO. "Dayton report card." *International Security*22, no. 3 (1998): pp. 102.

⁵⁵³ Clinton, 2013.

problem for Clinton was, that until the summer of 1995, he lacked the resolve to translate his beliefs into policy.⁵⁵⁴

Years of stating a desire to do something and not doing enough had created an unanticipated and unforeseen dynamic: the United States had functionally sleepwalked into having to act Bosnia. An August 3 memo from Ambassador Albright to NSA Lake encapsulated this dynamic and the process that led to it. She wrote:

Our previous strategy—give primary responsibility to the Europeans, help the Bosnians rhetorically and hope the parties will choose peace—is no longer sustainable...I strongly believe that the issue has become bigger than Bosnia. Although we may have been correct to limit our role in the past—on the grounds that the former Yugoslavia was primarily a European responsibility—the circumstances and our interests have now changed. Our interest in resolving this conflict has broadened...The failure of our European allies to resolve the Bosnia crisis has not only exposed the bankruptcy of their polity, but it has also caused serious erosion in the credibility of the NATO alliance and the United Nations. Worse, our continued reluctance to lead an effort to resolve a military crisis in the heart of Europe has placed at risk our leadership of the post-Cold War world.⁵⁵⁵

The unspoken part of Albright's assessment was that years of failing to lead were necessary for both Clinton and his advisors to learn and gain the expertise necessary to lead.

Alternative explanations:

Scholars investigating questions of presidential management of violence in the Balkans put forth varied assessments. Realists, for example offer mixed views of Bush and Clinton's performance. Mearsheimer, for example, argues in favor of the Bush approach saying that Yugoslavia, like much of Eastern Europe, was historically a morass for great powers and, unlike Germany and Russia, the United States had no real interests there.⁵⁵⁶ Similarly, Mearsheimer and

⁵⁵⁴ Daalder, 1998.

⁵⁵⁵ 1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy," *Clinton Digital Library*, Special Collection: Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency.

⁵⁵⁶ Mearsheimer, 1990..

Pape argue that because the United States had no real interests in the Balkans, it should have supported a partition of Bosnia and granted the fledgling country a NATO security guarantee.⁵⁵⁷ Even after Dayton's success, Mearsheimer and Van Evra argue in favor of partition out of fear that the peace accords would eventually draw in American troops—which it did.⁵⁵⁸ Walt, however, also taking a realist approach, is more sympathetic to Clinton arguing that managing NATO was more difficult after the end of Cold War because it had to become an organization of action instead of largely symbolic deterrent. Even though Clinton was slow to learn this, he was able to correct course, lead the West towards a lasting peace, and strengthen NATO in the process. Walt, like Mearsheimer, believes that Clinton should have favored ethnic partition because, “insisting that the long-term goal be a democratic and multiethnic Bosnia, the United States has committed outside forces to Bosnia for years to come.”⁵⁵⁹

Conclusion:

From 1989-1995, American presidential approaches towards Yugoslavia and Bosnia had 4 distinct policy phases:

- 1) Maintaining the Cold War Status Quo (1989-1990)
- 2) Inaction on State Disintegration and Avoiding American Involvement (1991-93)
- 3) Chaotic Learning (1993-May 1995)
- 4) Abandoning Incrementalism, Embracing Decisive Action (June-December 1995)

Each policy phase was foremost dictated by the relevant president's beliefs on how the United States should act. The clarity and steadfastness of the president's beliefs translated directly in advisors' ability to actualize those beliefs.

⁵⁵⁷ John J. Mearsheimer and Robert A. Pape. "The Answer: A Partition Plan for Bosnia," *The New Republic* 203 (1993): 22-27.

⁵⁵⁸ John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera, "When Peace Means War: The Partition That Dare Not Speak Its Name," *New Republic* 18 (1995): 16-21.

⁵⁵⁹ Walt, 2000.

In the first phase, the Bush administration was united behind the president's beliefs in trying to maintain Yugoslav unity without directly intervening. However, after the state dissolved and acts of genocide were being reported, Bush maintained his nonintervention beliefs (the second phase). Adherence to these beliefs functionally negated his administration's considerable expertise and any reason for advisors to consider policies that might challenge those beliefs. For example, his senior advisors were unreceptive to new information (e.g. NIE 15-90) that warned that maintaining the Cold War status quo would be insufficient to either stopping the fighting or keep Yugoslavia whole.

Even Ambassador Zimmermann, who justified ignoring the NIE report, recognized that the Bush administration's commitment to nonintervention meant missing the best opportunity to intervene in Yugoslavia and handicapped his Bush's successor. He wrote, "There is no doubt that Bill Clinton was dealt a bad hand in Bosnia. The best time for the United States to have made its mark on the Bosnian war was during the Bush administration."⁵⁶⁰ Zimmermann's argument tracks with the argument forwarded in this chapter because Bush had a more experienced set of advisors and the conflict was more tractable during his presidency. Had Bush, who considered himself a champion of human rights, been open to having his beliefs challenged or afforded his advisors greater latitude on policy considerations, they might have at least considered interventionist policies as they did for the Gulf War or the humanitarian crisis in Somalia.⁵⁶¹ Bush's rigid beliefs functionally precluded his advisors' expertise from influencing the policy making process and removed any motivation they have had to learn from and adapt to the Yugoslavia conflict as it transformed from an economic crisis into a civil war in which acts of ethnic cleansing took place.

⁵⁶⁰ Zimmermann, 1996.

⁵⁶¹ Bush and Scowcroft, 2011, pp. 7.

Inheriting a “bad hand,” as Zimmermann called it, was not Clinton’s fault. However, voicing his beliefs in “doing something” in the Balkans before linking those beliefs to a tangible policy action made that hand worse as it forced inexperienced advisors to seek policy acts the president was unprepared to fully support. Because he was also not settled in his beliefs (as Bush was), Clinton routinely backtracked on policy. Clinton’s insufficient resolve grew out the president’s lack of foreign policy experience. That there was a similar disjoint between his advisors’ public statements and policy actions similarly speaks to their inexperience. Furthermore, these incongruities appeared to incentivize Milosevic and the Serbs to gain as much ground as possible before the West and/or the Americans could organize behind a cohesive strategy.

The two and a half years of failing to change Bosnia policy were crucial for Clinton and his administration. The lessons they learned during that time provided the president and his advisors with the necessary experience they would need to lead an international coalition. For example, small successes like the ceasefire in March 1994 or airstrikes in the autumn of 1994, portended the administration’s learning how to lead instead of simply deferring to European allies. By the time Serbs escalated the violence during the summer of 1995, the Clinton administration was prepared to lead through a policy of coercive diplomacy. At that time, Clinton’s policy beliefs became clear and so his then experienced advisors were able to actualize them. Declassified documents show that this endgame policy, NATO airstrikes in order to drive Milosevic into peace negotiations, was never considered until the late-summer of 1995 and is evidence of the Clinton administration’s learning and experience.

Conclusion:

Introduction:

The body of this dissertation forwarded a new theory of American presidential decision-making and developed its empirical groundings. In the sections that follow, I will reflect on the study's theory and findings and consider their implications for future inquiry.

The environment in which American presidents make intervention decisions is complex. It is influenced by domestic and international political considerations as well as intra-administration dynamics. Presidents are affected by extant policies and lessons from history (including their own experiences and must attempt to predict the repercussions of their (in-) actions. All the while, they are reliant upon their advisors for emotional, logistical, and informational support.

While I set out to argue that intervention decisions emerge from the interactions between a president's beliefs about a particular intervention and a foreign policy team's relevant capacities, findings from this dissertation's case studies reveal that the commander in chief's beliefs actually animate a team's capacities. When the leader's beliefs were coherent and he was resolved in those beliefs, advisors actively sought to realize them. When the leader's beliefs were incoherent or he demonstrated a lack of resolve, advisors floundered. Viewing intervention decisions through this lens, the coherence and strength of a leader's beliefs, raises several issues that may warrant further investigation.

Somalia discussion:

In the Somalia case study, I explored the American historical relationship with that country. Under Reagan and Bush, the United States scaled back its longstanding support

commensurate with Somalia's diminishing Cold War strategic value. They did so without concern for Barre reliance on American aid.

As Somalia fell apart, Bush continued this trend and maintained noninterventionist beliefs until he was a lame duck. Then, with the humanitarian situation deteriorating rapidly, he changed his beliefs. Bush's team supported this change with an intervention policy that was narrowly defined to provide humanitarian aid and avoid armed conflict. By these standards it was an effective intervention as thousands of Somalis' lives were saved and conflict was limited.

When Clinton took office, neither he nor his foreign policy team were prepared to implement his ill-defined beliefs in "helping Somalis." Clinton never meaningfully voiced one single policy preference as shown when he publicly backed several policies in the month before the Black Hawk Down incident. Following the executive, his inexperienced team did not effectively engage with the Somalia intervention and thus deferred to the UN's prerogative.⁵⁶² As discussed in Chapter 3, there were no senior level NSC meetings on Somalia before Black Hawk Down. This left troops on the ground without clear mission parameters or action plans. Over time, all of these factors contributed to the Black Hawk Down disaster and Clinton's rapid withdrawal from the country. Ultimately, Clinton's incoherent beliefs are demonstrative of his inexperience.

In both cases, deliberations and policies flowed from the executive's beliefs. Bush's team was animated by his beliefs in avoiding intervention and then pursuing it once his beliefs changed. The ability to quickly and successfully change policies showed an adeptness steeped in expertise. Furthermore, declassified national security files, showed that Bush's advisors learned throughout Somalia's decline by consistently monitoring events there. At the point when Bush's

⁵⁶² The extent of the intentionality of this deferral remains unclear.

beliefs changed, his advisors, who had practiced good learning, forwarded what they considered to be a tenable intervention plan.

Likewise, Clinton's foreign policy team's poor Somalia management flowed directly from the executive's unformed beliefs. As James (Jim) Steinberg, who held several positions within the Clinton administration, said of the team's early foreign policy challenges, "The problem is you have...very small number of people, and very few who are confirmed, and a bunch of crises on your plate...Somalia wasn't a big problem initially, but it turned into one fairly quickly and in the first six months before you had people in place."⁵⁶³ Perhaps a more experienced President or set of advisors might have been more prepared to handle Somalia, as Bush's team did. Which is to say, in examining Somalia intervention management, advisors' capacities were amplified, for better and worse, by the strength of the president's beliefs.

Bosnia discussion:

The Bosnia case reveals a similar dynamic vis-à-vis presidential intervention beliefs. Bush maintained resolute nonintervention beliefs throughout Yugoslavia's dissolution and the ensuing conflict and ethnic cleansing.⁵⁶⁴ Because of this steadfastness, his experienced advisors did little and had little reason to discuss any alternative policy options. Even though his foreign policy team monitored ongoing events in the Balkans, the clarity of Bush's beliefs and strength of his conviction functionally negated their expertise. Given the adeptness they demonstrated in changing Somalia intervention policy late in Bush's final weeks in office, I wonder if Bush had

⁵⁶³ National Security Council Project. 2000. "The Clinton Administration." University of Maryland—Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland. National Security Council Project. September 27, 2000, <http://www.cissmdev.devcloud.acquia-sites.com/sites/default/files/papers/clinton.pdf>

⁵⁶⁴ While realists might laud his restraint from intervening in a country/region where there were ostensibly no vital American interests, his noninterventionism did little demonstrate the European and Euro-Atlantic organizations that were an important part of the Cold War and his vision for the post-Cold War order.

similarly changed his beliefs and allowed his expert team to pursue tough diplomatic actions against Milosevic, the ethnic cleansing might have been halted and the greater genocide and killings avoided or at least lessened.

For Clinton, his Balkans' management started like his Somalia management. He stated unformed beliefs in "doing something." Unlike with Somalia, his advisors were engaged with the conflict. Through two and half years of flailing and failing, they learned from the conflict. Importantly, they learned that the Serbs would not be deterred by conventional diplomacy and their reluctant allies would, under the right circumstances and American leadership, support airstrikes. In the summer of 1995, Clinton's foreign policy team coalesced behind support for coercive diplomatic action.

That Clinton and his team needed experience to respectively clarify beliefs and pursue a corresponding policy raises counterfactual questions about the Somalia case. If Clinton had not abandoned Somalia and his team had time to gain greater experience, might they too have found success there? More broadly, if Clinton had more foreign policy experience prior and stronger intervention beliefs to ascending to the presidency, might his advisors have been more effective in their dealings with the Serbs and European allies?

Military Experience and Militarized Dispute Initiation:

While the quantitative portion of this study did not show a clear relationship between presidents' individual experiences of wars and predilections for initiating militarized disputes, there are further avenues of potential inquiry. For example, foundational definitions might be clarified. The definition of combat forwarded by Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis is:

Deployment as part of a national military in what would generally be considered a war zone (absent evidence of nonparticipation), deployment/general participation

in a battle, or affirmative evidence of direct combat. Note that this does not require affirmative evidence of a given person firing a weapon, but instead adopts a definition requiring the soldier to be deployed in a war zone facing the risk of death in general. In general, combat was coded 0 in the absence of affirmative evidence that a leader who served in the military had combat experience.⁵⁶⁵

This definition may be overly broad in that “facing the risk of death in general” is open to subjective interpretation when actually coding. Put another way, they define combat by a soldier serving in the field, not which part of the field and so a soldier on the frontlines is treated as having as much combat experience as a soldier in the backlines. Also, “risk of death” is self-determined and may not be real. For example, a combat pilot may take fire and not know it. While the pilot’s experience would be coded as “combat” experience, he/she was unaware of “facing the risk of death in general” and so the psychological impact might be muted.

Similarly, war’s psychological impact might be better determined (but harder to define) by a soldier’s experiences with death. For example, drone pilot’s do not face the risk of death but hit enemy targets and are shown to suffer from PTSD.⁵⁶⁶ Likewise, one can foresee how a soldier who serves in a medical facility and witnessed death routinely would be rightly classified as ‘non-combat’ while having seen more of war’s horrors than the aforementioned pilot might have.⁵⁶⁷

In terms of empirical study, it is possible that MIDs is not the proper dataset to use. The mis-categorization problems raised in Chapter 3 speak to this issue. Perhaps future studies might consider using other dataset like the Uppsala Conflict Data Program’s dataset.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁵ Calli Ellis, Michael C. Horowitz, and Allan C. Stam, “Technical Appendix for Why Leaders Fight,” pp. 24-25. <http://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/politics-international-relations/international-relations-and-international-organisations/why-leaders-fight>

⁵⁶⁶ Sarah McCammon. 2017. "The Warfare May Be Remote But The Trauma Is Real." *National Public Radio*. Apr 24, 2017.

⁵⁶⁷ My thanks to Col. Ajax Peris for this insight.

⁵⁶⁸ My thanks to Eric Clint Van Sonnenberg for this insight.

Limitations and Implications for Future Work:

There are limitations to the qualitative empirical work in this study. It does not give full treatment to domestic political considerations or other interventions under considerations. In light of the latter limitation, the qualitative study done here lends itself to examination of Bush and Clinton's approaches towards Rwanda and Haiti. Also, it is difficult to generalize the theory forwarded in this study based on 2 relatively low stakes interventions and 2 foreign policy teams with vastly differing experience levels. Further study might investigate variation on both the foreign policy teams' expertise and stakes involved in interventions. Another area of future inquiry might examine an inexperienced foreign policy president with experienced advisors (e.g. Barack Obama or Jimmy Carter) or a president who eliminated the variable of experienced advisors (e.g. Nixon) as grounds for theory testing.⁵⁶⁹ Another approach might include the full qualitative examination of all interventions considered by a president to see how lower profile cases and nonintervention decisions were made.

⁵⁶⁹ Richard Smoke. 1994. "On the Importance of Policy Legitimacy." *Political Psychology*: 97-110; Alexander George. 2006. "The Need for Policy Legitimacy," in *On Foreign Policy: Unfinished Business*: 15-49. My thanks to Debbie Larson for helping flesh out this idea.

Appendix A:

Table 1: US Presidents and Military Experience:

<u>Order</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Military Service</u>	<u>Combat</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Highest Rank</u>	<u>Conflict</u>
1	Washington	1	1	Virginia Regiment, Continental Army, United States Army	General	French and Indian War, Revolutionary War
2	J. Adams	0	0	None	None	None
3	Jefferson*	1	0	Virginia Militia	Colonel	None
4	Madison*	1	0	Virginia Militia	Colonel	None
5	Monroe	1	1	Continental Army	Major	Revolutionary War
6	J. Q. Adams	0	0	None	None	None
7	Jackson	1	1	Tennessee State Militia, United States Army	Major General	Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Creek War, First Seminole War
8	Van Buren	0	0	None	None	None
9	Harrison	1	1	United States Army	Major General	Northwest Indian War, War of 1812
10	Tyler	1	0	Virginia Militia	Captain	War of 1812

11	Polk	1	0	Tennessee State Militia	Colonel	None
12	Taylor	1	1	United States Army	Major General	War of 1812, Black Hawk War, Second Seminole War, Mexican–American War
13	Fillmore	1	0	New York State Militia	Major	None
14	Pierce	1	1	New Hampshire State Militia, United States Army	Brigadier General	Mexican–American War
15	Buchanan	1	0	Pennsylvania State Militia	Private	War of 1812
16	Lincoln	1	0	Illinois State Militia	Captain	Black Hawk War
17	Johnson	1	0	Tennessee State Militia, Union Army	Brigadier General	Civil War
18	Grant	1	1	United States Army, Union Army	General of the Army	Mexican–American War American Civil War

19	Hayes	1	1	Union Army, United States Army	Major General	Civil War
20	Garfield	1	1	Union Army	Major General	Civil War
<u>Order</u>	<u>President</u>	<u>Military Service</u>	<u>Combat</u>	<u>Type of Service</u>	<u>Highest Rank</u>	<u>Conflict</u>
21	C. Arthur	1	0	New York State Militia, United States Army, Union Army	Brigadier General	Civil War
22	Cleveland	0	0	None	None	None
23	B. Harrison	1	1	Union Army	Brigadier General	Civil War
24	Cleveland	0	0	None	None	None
25	McKinley	1	1	Union Army	Major	Civil War
26	Roosevelt, T.	1	1	United States Army	Colonel	Spanish- American War
27	Taft	0	0	None	None	None
28	Wilson	0	0	None	None	None
29	Harding	0	0	None	None	None
30	Coolidge	0	0	None	None	None
31	Hoover	0	0	None	None	None
32	Roosevelt, F.	0	0	None	None	None

33	Truman	1	1	Missouri National Guard, United States Army, United States Army Reserve	Colonel	World War I
34	Eisenhower	1	1	United States Army	General of the Army	World War I, World War II
35	Kennedy	1	1	United States Navy	Lieutenant	World War II
36	Johnson	1	1	U.S. Naval Reserve	Commander	World War II
37	Nixon	1	0	United States Navy Reserve	Commander	World War II
38	Ford	1	1	United States Navy Reserve	Lieutenant Commander	World War II
39	Carter	1	0	United States Navy	Lieutenant	World War II, Korean War
40	Reagan	1	0	US Army Reserve	Captain	World War II
41	G. H.W. Bush	1	1	United States Naval Reserve	Lieutenant (Junior Grade)	World War II
42	Clinton	0	0	None	None	None
43	G.W. Bush	1	0	Texas Air National Guard	First Lieutenant	Vietnam War

44	Obama	0	0	None	None	None
45	Trump	0	0	None	None	None

* Indicates conflicting historical accounts of a president's military history.

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