Presidential Management Styles and Advisory Structures: Formulating American Foreign Policy

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Abstract

Presidents play a central role in U.S. foreign policy decision-making; however, the foreign policy analysis (FPA) and presidential studies literature reach differing conclusions concerning presidential influence in the policy process. This research focuses on how presidential choices of management style influence the U.S. foreign policy decision-making process and decision outcomes. To do so, the study develops an Advisory Systems Typology to address how presidents influence this process. Four different types of decision-making processes are produced by a president's choice of advisory structure and level of centralization. In addition, the study identifies ''unstructured solutions'' that indicate how presidential advisers and presidents choose to resolve policy disagreements, thereby providing an indication of the decision outcome. Decision-making processes and their associated outcomes are explored using three cases of security policy from the Nixon, Carter, and Reagan administrations. The case studies are constructed using the method of structured–focused comparisons.

Key Words: Presidential management style, advisory structure, U.S. foreign policy

It is not unusual for differences of opinion to arise over policy in any administration; in fact, it is expected in an administration with individuals with disparate ideological dispositions. However, this does not fully explain why divisions arise and persist and the ways in which these differences influence the outcome of the policy process. To understand why there is conflict in any administration and why it often results in ineffective or haphazard policy, it is necessary to understand the connection between presidential management and the decision-making process. It is specifically necessary to explain how the president and the president's choice of management style have implications for policy deliberations and choice of foreign policy.

Foreign policy analysts and presidential studies scholars have created explanations for presidential influence of the decision-making process in the form of typologies that explain the variety of ways in which presidents manage the decision-making process. In the foreign policy literature, the works by Richard Tanner Johnson (1974) and Alexander George (1980; George and George, 1998), whose typologies of advisory systems have been widely cited are important. Despite the prominence of these typologies, they have proved less than adequate in accurately explaining the policy process in various administrations. These early typologies are not completely wrong, rather they have been flawed, because the categories that they propose greatly overlap and often fail to describe the policy process. Most importantly, the typologies fail to account for varying degrees of centralization of the decision-making process, which has implications for the nature of policy deliberations and variations in decision outcomes. Additionally, presidential studies scholars have tried to build typologies of decision making, explaining how the choice of management style influences the policy process, but these typologies have too often treated every president as unique from every other (Walcott and Hult, 1995; Burke, 2000; Saunders, 2013). Consequently, these studies—although illuminating and important in many ways—do not allow for generalizations beyond those administrations under examination.

This study proposes a reformulated explanation of the foreign policy process by taking into account varying levels of centralization within formal and collegial advisory structures. The inclusion of centralization results in four different types of decision-making processes. The typology further refines an understanding of the policy making process by identifying the decision outcomes in terms of ''unstructured solutions'' associated with each type of advisory system. The ''unstructured solutions'' indicate how advisers and the president choose to resolve policy disagreements, thereby providing an indication of the nature of the decision. Refining the formal and collegial structures by taking into account variations in centralization and ''unstructured solutions'' makes the advisory system a more useful analytical tool, because it contributes to an improved explanation of the ways in which different U.S. presidents make security and foreign policy. In addition, it serves as the basis for investigating other dimensions of the decision-making process, such as the occurrence of bureaucratic politics and groupthink.

The new typology is assessed by applying the case study method of structured–focused comparison to three ''episodes'' of presidential foreign policy decision making from the Nixon, Carter, and Reagan administrations. Structured–focused comparison requires that the construction of the case studies be guided by a theoretically based set of questions that can allow comparison both within and between cases. In this study, the questions are designed to identify the presence or absence of the characteristics of the different decision-making processes. In the following section, a discussion of the management style literature is assessed in order to identify the key elements of presidential management. This analysis is followed by a presentation of the reformulated typology of decision-making processes, which is then explored using three cases of presidential decision making. In the last section, the study's main findings, as well as a discussion of the salience of a reassessment of the connection between management style and decision making are presented.

Advisory Typology: Formal and Collegial Structures

Among scholars and practitioners alike, there is a consensus that advisory systems generally take on one of two forms: one system, known as formal, is composed of specialized committees that are governed by rigid rules and a hierarchic order with decisions made at the top by the president. The informal or collegial system is governed by less-rigid rules and decisions are made in a ''team-like'' atmosphere (Porter, 1983; Walcott and Hult, 1987; Burke, 2000; Saunders, 2017). The Eisenhower administration's committees and explicit rule-bound process of deliberation have come to be viewed as the prototype of formal systems, while Kennedy's formation and management of the Executive Committee (EXCOM) during the Cuban Missile Crisis is considered the epitome of collegial decision making. These distinctions have not only been made of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, but have been made of the Johnson (Destler, 1972), Nixon (Brookings Institution, 1998; Bundy, 1998; Lobel, 2000), Carter (Destler, 1972; Moens, 1991), Ford (Lobel, 2000), Reagan (Campbell, 1986), and Bush (Brookings Institution, 1999; Lobel, 2000) administrations. Although there is a consensus regarding the distinction between administrations, based on the degree of formality of the decision-making structure, there remains a question as to what the essential features are of these systems that allow us to accurately define them as one or the other. Richard Tanner Johnson's path-breaking work (1974) and Alexander George's (1980) elaboration of Johnson's work present variations on presidential management style. Johnson finds that choice of management system is a product of the resolution of our ''dilemmas.'' Presidents must choose between the ''best'' policy versus the most ''feasible'' policy, including or excluding conflicting views, screening information versus evaluating as much information as possible, and responding quickly versus extensive deliberation. George, on the other hand, argues that management style is driven by the president's personality traits (cognitive style, orientation toward conflict, feelings of efficacy, experience, and competency). Despite these differences, the characteristics of the typologies are fundamentally the same. In what George and Johnson refer to as a formalistic structure, the president sits at the top of the hierarchy, policy making is orderly, there is specialized information and advice and emphasis on functional expertise, the president rarely reaches down for information, conflict is discouraged, and the ''best'' policy is sought. In the collegial structure, the president sits at the center of the process, actively leading by ''reaching down'' the bureaucracy for information and building consensus. Assignments among advisers overlap; there is shared responsibility; advisers do not filter information; and the most ''doable'' policy is sought. The competitive model—like the collegial—has overlapping assignments, presidential management of conflict, and multiple channels of communication. Unlike the collegial model, the president in the competitive model seeks to maintain a position where he can manipulate advisers in order to manage and control information.

Despite the prominence of these works in foreign policy analysis, both typologies prove problematic. A major criticism of Johnson's work is that the features are broad and the lack of specificity results in categories that too greatly overlap. For example, there is nothing in the description of the collegial system that causes it to standout significantly from the competitive models. Both use conflict as a part of the decision-making process and both forego the use of a highly ordered and procedural process. The only significant difference is the way in which the president manages the process through the manipulation of advisers. There is nothing inherent in the collegial model that rules out a president providing overlapping assignments or using conflict as an instrument in the process. A second and more important critique of Johnson's and George's work is that, although their typologies are composed of ideal types, there is significant reason to be concerned that presidents do not manage their advisers in the manner they describe. Burke (2000) has noted that Johnson's typology demonstrates a severe ''divergence between the real and ideal''; it essentially fails to account for advisory systems in which there are variations in structure and the empirical support for the categories is weak.

A final charge against the Johnson and George typology is that they ignore the fact that all administrations operate with some degree of informality, irrespective of the kind of structures that are put into place (Burke and Greenstein, 1989; Ponder, 2000; Whipple, 2017). Ponder (2000) argues that it is this inherent informality in all administrations that prevents the categorization of advisory systems, because the informal relations can always ''short circuit'' the

structured processes that have been put in place by the president, thus resulting in a high degree of variation. This line of argument, although correct, takes a reasonable critique of the typology to an extreme and inadvertently indicts any attempt to categorize advisory systems. The informality that permeates all administrations does not mean that all activity within an administration is ad hoc or that policy is made by the ''seat of the pants.'' Informality may take place between the same set of actors, it may take place at different stages within the policy process, and it may be more prevalent when an administration deals with specific issues. These traits must be captured by a typology. Thus, informality is a part of any administration, but it does not mean that there is an absence of order or modes of operation.

Several scholars have furthered the work begun by George and Johnson and it is important to note where this study stands in relation to these other efforts. Margaret Hermann and Tom Preston (1994) have constructed a typology using formal and collegial structures and centralization, but their understanding of centralization has a cognitive focus in that it asserts that presidents differ according to their focus on accomplishing a task or their focus on managing the processes. Most importantly, this research focuses on identifying different management styles and less on thoroughly explaining the resulting decision-making process. Preston's (2001) own work on presidential management has gone further in that he bases presidential management on the formal/collegial dichotomy established by George and Johnson, but argues that management styles result from high and low variations in sensitivity to information and desire for control. These resulting management styles can then further vary according to the degree (high or low) of a president's policy expertise. Overall, these leadership characteristics result in 16 leadership style combinations. Patrick Haney's study (1997) on presidential management of the decision-making process during crises takes a different approach by focusing on the performance of different management styles. Haney has two objectives in his study. The first objective is to assess whether the decision-making process conforms to the formal, collegial, and competitive models and the second is to assess how that decision-making process performed. In carrying out his study, Haney relies on the George/Johnson typology as a theoretical starting point. Using George and Johnson as a theoretical starting point is problematic because they fail to take into account control over the process, which is argued here as better representing presidential decision making. Again, what this research demonstrates is that most presidents will adopt a collegial or formal structure and that a full understanding of the differences between decision-making processes is accounted for by the degree of centralization of the process. It is the latter feature, presidential centralization, that the author argues is the defining feature of the decision-making process. A final difference between this study and those of Hermann, Preston, and Haney is that none account for the different ways in which variations in the interactions between president and advisers influence the outcome of the decision-making process.

Reformulating the Advisory System Typology

A major thread running through the presidency literature is the importance of centralization within the advisory system. Scholars in a variety of ways have used centralization as a key defining feature of presidential management of the decision-making process (Porter, 1983; Campbell, 1986; Burke, 2000; Ponder, 2000; Striner, 2018). The problem with many of these studies is that they allow for so much variation that essentially every administration is explained as being different from every other. Thus, it is difficult to generalize from the findings of some of the presidential studies literature. However, these studies are useful because they emphasize variations in centralization found in different administrations, which can be used as a means to account for the failure of the Johnson/George typology to reflect the kinds of management systems previously discussed. The differences between the formal, collegial, and competitive models implicitly contain variations in centralization, but as presently conceived are not sufficient to overcome the problem of overlap between types, particularly the overlap created by the competitive model. The argument here is that the competitive model is a variation of the collegial structure, where the president highly centralizes the decision-making process. The president controls information and assigns advisers overlapping assignments without their knowledge in order to better evaluate available options. As mentioned, this kind of management of the process is also compatible with the collegial approach and perhaps better understood as a variation of the collegial model in which the president attempts to highly centralize the decision-making process, controlling the process as much as possible.

The inclusion of centralization within the typology assists in overcoming some of the other problems associated with the Johnson/George typology. If each of these categories can differ according to the amount of centralization, then it is possible to take into account the informality present in all administrations, which is a feature of any administration's policy making process. What may be considered informal may be better understood as decentralization of the decision-making process within either the formal or collegial structures. By including centralization in an understanding of management style, it is possible to construct a more useful and better empirically supported explanation of the decision-making process.

Centralization refers to the variety of means the president uses to exercise greater control over the management of

disputes and the flow of information. In the reformulated typology, centralization varies between high and low in relation to the formal and collegial systems, thus yielding four different types of advisory systems. A formal system that is highly centralized results in increased control over the decision-making system at the top, near the president. This means presidents will be interested in ensuring that there is an orderly process that allows them to choose the administration's policy toward the end of the deliberation process. Aiding in this effort to centralize the decision-making process is a gatekeeper who screens information that is determined to be irrelevant or deviates from the president's agenda. Since presidents want to control the process, they will let broad objectives or strategic goals be known so that they can act as guiding principles for advisers. The gatekeeper serves as a transmission belt for presidential preferences and as an obstacle for those seeking access to the president (Whipple, 2017). This is especially true for dissenters who will eventually be excluded from the process. If presidents are interested in choosing among those options that most reflect their preferences, then the president will want to coordinate advisers to avoid dissension that results in a set of options that were unwanted. Consequently, well-defined procedures are imposed to channel and control the interaction of advisers to avoid conflict with those advisers who object to or hold views at odds with the president's overall vision.

Low centralization in a formal system means that the president does not control the process at the top of the hierarchy. Low centralization permits other individuals to have a degree of control over the process below the president and gatekeeper. This kind of system contains honest-broker(s) who manage the process by allowing a wide range of views to be presented to the president; thus, the ''distance'' between the president and advisers is reduced. The slackening of centralization causes an easing in the coordination of the policy process, with the consequence that the low-centralized system does not prevent bargaining and conflict among the advisers. The bargaining between advisers takes place below the level of presidents and out of their view. There is also less reliance on well-defined procedures; in fact, advisers in this competition are inclined to circumvent the system, knowing that only a ''preferred'' option will be chosen, thus placing a premium on presenting their position to the leader at the expense of other advisers (Burke, 2005).

The president in the formal system is interested in evaluating and choosing between options; the president in the collegial system stands at the center of the decision making and deliberates with advisers pursuing the most ''feasible'' policy. In a collegial system that is highly centralized, the president ''stands'' at the center of a core group of advisers who are treated as generalists and the president guides and shapes their interactions. The president raises questions, presses for more or different options, and may assign specific tasks to different advisers. Coordination in this system requires regularity and frequent meetings, allowing the president to be updated and to evaluate advisers' new options and their consequences. This kind of coordination builds consensus on the options discussed and fosters shared responsibility. Shared responsibility feeds back into deliberations and encourages advisers to be critical in their evaluations, knowing that they have a stake in the outcome.

A collegial system that has low centralization means that the president delegates authority to adviser(s) who have a particular expertise, and these advisers are influential in guiding the process since the president does not require a high level of control. Accordingly, coordination does not require regularity or that the president is at the nexus of decision making, resulting in more bilateral and ad hoc meetings between the president and advisers. This kind of interaction supports an advisory system where there is bargaining and conflict and less consensus among the president's advisers.

Advisory Systems and ''Unstructured Solutions''

A particular challenge in the study of foreign policy making has been to make connections in a systematic way between the decision-making process and choice of policy. The advisory system literature often asserts that the formal and collegial systems are geared to find two different kinds of policy. Most often, formal systems result in the search for ''best'' policies while collegial systems result in the most ''feasible'' options being sought (Johnson, 1974; George, 1980; Hermann and Preston, 1994; Saunders, 2017). These are useful if the typology is limited to two broad categories of advisory systems, but with a greater number of advisory systems, the utility of this simple dichotomy proves limited. Charles Hermann, Stein, Sundelius, and Walker (2001) have taken a step toward making a connection between process and outcomes by identifying three types of small-group decision-units and an associated range of ''process outcomes.'' Small-group decision-units differ according to the way in which disagreements between members are resolved. Groups using unanimity, concurrence, or plurality decision rules lead to four different ''unstructured solutions.'' The interaction between decision rule and mediating variables creates different paths toward the choice of one of the four ''unstructured solutions'' that are identified as dominant, integrative, deadlock, and subset solutions.

The solutions proposed by Hermann are useful because these solutions address the nature of a particular outcome, thus avoiding the description of outcomes that are based on normative understandings or are difficult to operationalize and measure (Schafer and Crichlow, 2002). Like the advisory systems characteristics, these ‘‘unstructured solutions’’ are ideal types; intervening variables arising from the system's environment or variables from within the system, such as personal characteristics of the president, can alter the kind of solutions each system pursues. Nonetheless, the concept of unstructured solutions provides a missing element from analyses of management styles and decision-making processes. A set of ‘‘unstructured solutions’’ have been identified for each of the hypothesized decision-making processes. These unstructured solutions or decision outcomes are the product of the president's or the advisory system's efforts to resolve disagreements between policy preferences. The choice of resolution presents an indication of the choice of policy. The president's decision to resolve a disagreement by accepting one policy over another by integrating policies, for example, does not explicitly tell us what the policy will be, unless the policy preferences of the administration are known. For this reason, it is best to say that the decision outcomes here indicate the nature of the policy but not the policy itself. The solutions are not the only ones to be produced by the advisory system, but they are the solutions that have a high probability of being produced by the system and are thus considered a main characteristic.

A formal system with high centralization leads to a dominant solution. Dominant solutions result when the advisory system chooses to adopt the main option discussed at the outset of deliberation. One way in which a dominant solution will arise is when ‘‘norms prevent articulating an alternative option to an option advocated by an authoritative group member’’ (Hermann et al., 2001). In a formal/highly centralized system, the president expresses a preference designed to shape the formulation of policy that is reinforced by a set of norms (i.e., excluding dissenting voices, discouragement of bargaining and conflict, and a gatekeeper who screens information). The expression of the leader's preferences with these instituted norms privileges the president's views, gearing any solutions to fit the president's preferences.

Two different kinds of solutions result from formal systems with low centralization: deadlock or dominant-subset. Deadlock ‘‘defines a situation of stalemate in which group members reach no decision on how to resolve their differences’’ (Hermann et al., 2001). The lack of control exercised over the process permits advisers to circumvent established procedures and engage in bargaining to advance their preferences. Two sides with equal influence in the process and unwilling to reconcile differences might lead to their inability to present the president with a set of satisfactory options.

However, given that the president expects his advisers to supply options for evaluation, advisers might present the president with an option that is a combination of preferences. This aggregation of preferences does not include an integration or synthesis of views; thus, the solution may prove internally inconsistent. Of the two possible solutions, deadlock is least likely because advisers who can better manipulate the system will be able to advance their preferences, therefore, a dominant-subset solution is more likely. The president exercises less control over this system and unlike the highly centralized system does not express a strong preference; advisers who can appeal to certain values or presidential world views will be better able to advance their options. For this reason, the subset solution is called a dominant-subset solution.

An integrative solution is produced from group interaction and it partially represents the preferences of all those involved in the decision-making process. Specifically, integrative solutions ‘‘may result from successful persuasion of some members by others to change their explicitly stated preferences, by a shift in the preference orderings of all members, perhaps as a result of the creation of a new option not initially recognized by the group, or through achieving mutually acceptable compromise’’ (Hermann et al., 2001). A distinguishing characteristic of collegial/highly centralized decision making processes is that they are prone to produce integrative solutions. Through group meetings that are regularized and frequent, the president conducts discussions where the advisers are encouraged to search for a range of options. These deliberations are guided by a shared sense of responsibility and an interest in generating consensus; thus, this system is geared toward compromise among advisers and encourages advisers to be open to shifting preferences.

Collegial systems that have low centralization are likely to result in the production of two different solutions: deadlock and a subset solution. Delegation by the president places greater influence in the hands of advisers, particularly experts, who bargain and compete with one another with less interest in building a consensus. As a result, it is very possible that advisers will stalemate because of differently held preferences. Alternatively, one adviser or group of advisers may be more effective at getting their preferences heard by the president and their options will dominate over others, resulting

in a subset solution.

With the inclusion of this discussion of process outcomes, the reformulated typology is complete. Now it is possible to have a comprehensive explanation of the process that results from a president's choice of advisory structure (formal or collegial) and the kind of control that they are willing to exercise over the process (high or low). The addition of ''unstructured solutions'' explains what kinds of solutions the advisory systems will pursue; this is significant because the solutions (deadlock, subset, dominant, and integrative) present strong indicators of the kind of policy that will ultimately be chosen by the advisory system. Identifying decision outcomes moves closer to linking the activities of leader–group interaction with substantive policy outcomes while avoiding the subjectivity and complexity associated with defining and measuring those outcomes.

The value of the typology is explored by examining three episodes of presidential foreign policy making from the Nixon (negotiations with North Vietnam), Carter (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks [SALT II]), and Reagan (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks [START I]) administrations. These particular administrations have been chosen because they have been identified as possessing the necessary advisory system characteristics and consequently provide a suitable test of the hypothesized decision-making processes. The specific cases were chosen because they were all security issues and all involve the administration engaged in ongoing negotiations with other actors. A focus on security issues permits control over some of the variability between the cases. Moreover, the types of security issues chosen are of a level of importance for these administrations that the number of actors involved will be limited, whereas with some domestic issues it is reasonable to assume that the nature of the advisory system might change given the role of actors beyond the White House (i.e., Congress and lobby groups). Most importantly, limiting the focus to high-profile security issues ensures that the president will be more involved and there is the greater probability that they will be attentive to the structure of the decision-making process. The case studies are constructed using the method of structured–focused comparisons, where a theoretically based standard set of questions is used to guide the researcher in examination of each case. The questions asked of each case are as follows:

(1) What role does the leader play within the advisory system?
(2) Who generates preferences in the system that will be deliberated over and finally chosen?
(3) What is the nature of the decision-making process?
(4) What are the procedures for managing the system?
(5) What is the control mechanism used in the management of the process?
(6) What is the nature of the policy solution?

The questions are designed to address the theoretical interest of the study, which is the nature of presidential control within the advisory system. The expected values associated with these questions are the features of the typology. It should be noted that the episodes selected for each presidency are selected from larger case studies where each case was comprised of eight to ten individual episodes. The structured–focused questions were then asked of each episode within each case, increasing the number of observations for each case. Space constraints do not permit presentation of each full case, but the presented episodes are representative of the findings in the larger study. It is expected that the Nixon decision-making process will conform to the formal/highly centralized system, the Carter administration to the collegial/highly centralized system, and the Reagan administration to the formal/low centralized system.

Nixon and Vietnam: 1969

In April 1969, the Nixon administration became more active in its diplomatic efforts toward ending the war in Vietnam. The administration began by restarting the formal talks in Paris and initiating secret talks with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV), but like many of the strategies conceived during the Nixon administration, there was nothing simple about Richard Nixon's diplomatic strategy. Nixon and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger were mainly responsible for cobbling together a strategy that combined a direct diplomatic approach to the DRV, but also an indirect diplomatic approach through the Soviet Union, which was intended to isolate the DRV from one of its chief allies. The diplomatic efforts were complemented by a military strategy that gave serious consideration to a massive air campaign. However, Kissinger was concerned that Secretary of State Rogers was trying to undermine his influence on foreign policy; thus Kissinger chose to exclude voices, like Rogers's, from the process. Nixon and Kissinger had arrived at a strategy they thought to be the best policy given the situation and proceeded without searching for alternatives or even entertaining different options that may have existed within the administration.

On July 7, Nixon met with Kissinger, Secretary of State William Rogers, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, Chairman of the JCS Earle Wheeler, Attorney General John Mitchell, and CIA Deputy Director Robert Cushman to discuss strategy and options and resolve differences within the administration. Particularly, the discrepancies between the

military and diplomatic aspects of the administration's efforts needed to be resolved. Laird and Rogers advocated and gained the support for increasing the assistance to South Vietnam, for pacification, for increasing efforts to reduce the flow of enemy supplies, and most importantly for a stepped-up withdrawal of U.S. troops. These changes in policy were essentially designed to ''appease'' Laird and Rogers, because Kissinger and Nixon decided to begin to move forward on a strategy that would be far more forceful (Kissinger, 1979).

With this compromised decision, the administration began planning ''Operation Duck Hook,'' a massive air offensive that included attacks on targets far inside North Vietnam, including the bombing of Hanoi and the mining of Haiphong harbor. The campaign was to begin on November 1 in the event that the DRV were unwilling to begin serious negotiations. The closed deliberation on the diplomatic aspects of the Nixon strategy was not true of the military planning and the decision to proceed with the Duck Hook operation. The actual plan for Duck Hook was in the planning stages as early as April—without the knowledge of Laird—but was put aside when the downing of the EC-121 occurred (Berman, 2001:57). Berman asserts that ''in July, when they decided to 'go for broke' and Nixon issued the November deadline ultimatum, it was probably this April program that was revived and expanded upon.'' It was not until September when Kissinger became frustrated with the progress of the negotiations, and with public pressure placed on the administration for the withdrawal of troops that the plan resurfaced and was debated among the members of the NSC (Kissinger, 1979; Hersh, 1983; Kimball, 1998; Berman, 2001; Ferguson, 2015). Kissinger, at this time, brought together a select group drawn from his staff that proceeded to conduct an extensive study of a military strategy, of which Duck Hook was a part. This group included Anthony Lake, Winston Lord, Laurence Lynn, Roger Morris, Peter Rodman, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, William Watts, Alexander Haig, Colonel William Lemnitzer, and Captain Rembrandt C. Robinson. This group worked through September and November developing and evaluating the military plan that Nixon would have to decide on for his November 1 deadline. Kissinger, Nixon, and Haig supported a vigorous military response, but it was not long before Nixon began to vacillate and decided against the Duck Hook option.

During their evaluation of options for the use of force, Lake, Lynn, Morris, and Watts began writing reports critical of the success of the Duck Hook option on military and political grounds. The general consensus among the staff was that air raids and mining would not sufficiently degrade the North's ability to carry on the war, because there were few industrial targets to strike and China and the U.S.S.R. could circumvent the proposed blockade (Hersh, 1983; Kimball, 1998). In return, the U.S. would suffer significantly high B-52 losses, as well as inflict high North Vietnamese civilian casualties that would be seen as an expansion of the war (Hersh, 1983; Kimball, 1998). In short, the offensive would result in no military advantage and would cause an increase in public protest and demonstrations. Despite the revolt of Kissinger's staff to an option that he wholeheartedly supported, Kissinger continued to advocate to the president the most vigorous military strategy, thus the president was not exposed to the voices of dissent within the group formulating the administration's strategy. This situation changed once Laird and Rogers were made aware of the consideration of the Duck Hook option.

In early October, both Laird and Rogers learned of the military strategy being considered and immediately sought to stop the president from going on the offensive. Laird, using reports written by Lake, Lynn, Morris, and Watts, made the case that military strikes and mining would be ineffective and that the military and political costs would be detrimental to the administration's long-term goals (Kimball, 1998). This pressure coming from within the NSC and the concern among White House staff about the growing antiwar movement that was now more mobilized than ever before proved too much for the arguments put forth by Kissinger and Haig. Nixon ultimately decided not to go ahead with his November 1 ultimatum. Nixon confided to Haldeman before dropping the military option that he did ''not yet rule out K's Plan as a possibility, but [he] does now feel [the] Laird–Rogers plan is a possibility, when he did not think so a month ago'' (Kimball, 1998:170). Nixon abandoned Duck Hook and chose to weather the protests and make a public statement on November 3, stating the administration's position and calling for public support. During these months, Nixon hoped that the ultimatum that he had given to the North Vietnamese directly and through the Soviet Union would have produced some movement, but it did not. Yet, Nixon did not drop the strategy of mixing negotiations and the threat of force, because in late October, after having already given up on the Duck Hook option, Nixon met with Dobrynin and reiterated the linkage of the Vietnam issue to strategic arms control and the possibility of escalation if no breakthrough was made.

Nixon chose to pursue a dual military and diplomatic strategy. And the process that developed during this particular episode confirms the hypothesized decision-making process produced by formal and highly centralized advisory systems. In only two instances are there deviations from the hypothesized process. Nixon, during this episode, made decisions by choosing from presented options, as well as making decisions in group settings with a select few advisers.

When deliberating on diplomatic approaches to the North Vietnamese, Nixon consulted mainly with Kissinger. But Nixon followed a different pattern when deliberating military action; initially, Nixon met with his principal advisers and the military leadership. In this decision, Nixon compromised and accepted suggestions from Laird and Rogers and at the same time supported Kissinger's position for forceful action. However, when Nixon was deciding to carryout Operation Duck Hook, he heard from Kissinger, who supported the operation, and from Laird and Rogers, who used NSC staff reports to argue against an offensive.

The decision making on diplomatic efforts was confined primarily to Nixon and Kissinger, with Kissinger again playing the role of gatekeeper; this was combined with the exclusion of dissenting voices. The decision making was orderly in that there was consistency in the deliberations, but did not follow well-defined procedures, because different procedures are followed for the military and diplomatic aspects of Nixon's strategy. For the most part, all decisions had a dominant solution, with Nixon strongly supported by Kissinger when he made final decisions. The only exception was the deliberations on a military approach where Nixon did not compromise, but cobbled together recommendations made by Kissinger, Laird, and Rogers.

Carter and Strategic Arms: Early 1977

Jimmy Carter initiated efforts on strategic arms control early in his administration. From the beginning, Carter played a hands-on role in shaping and defining the discussion of the kind of proposal to present to the Soviets. In February 1977, deliberations took place at a Special Coordination Committee (SCC) meeting that culminated in a series of meetings in March in which Carter played a significant role in evaluating options and integrating differing views. It is important to keep in mind that the structure of the Carter committee system was designed to create collegiality and give and take between advisers. Prior to the meetings in February and March, Carter, along with National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, worked to formulate a series of letters to be sent to Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev explaining the administration's position on U.S.–Soviet relations and on a range of other issues. Among the issues discussed, arms control and Carter's interest in concluding an agreement were prominent. But it was not until late January that Carter began the process of mobilizing his advisers and staff to focus on creating SALT II proposals. Carter began by directing the NSC on January 24 to create a negotiating position that Cyrus Vance could take to Moscow in March.

On February 3 at an SCC meeting, Carter let it be known that he wanted to make substantial reductions in U.S. and U.S.S.R. arsenals based on the Vladivostok Agreement (Brzezinski, 1983; Garrison, 1999; Gati, 2013). Carter called for ''profound'' reductions in strategic arsenals that would be favorable to both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. The president also requested information on U.S. antisubmarine warfare capability and prior notification agreements with the U.K. and Germany. Brzezinski suggested that the SCC examine a range of reduction options based on Vladivostok levels and options based on ''significant reductions'' (Memo, Brzezinski 2/4/77). The participants in the meeting agreed to inform the president that the SCC believed it was not clear whether an agreement that excluded the Backfire bomber and cruise missiles was either ''negotiable or desirable.'' Despite the consensus that formed around building an agreement based on Vladivostok, there was a consensus that the SCC should develop a range of options around both the Vladivostok agreement and around deep cuts (Brzezinski, 1983; Memo, Brzezinski 2/4/77). Between this SCC meeting and the next SCC meeting on SALT, Carter met with Senator Henry Jackson, who was well versed on arms control issues and whose support was critical in ratification of any final agreement. On February 4, Carter met one-on-one with Senator Jackson and both agreed at the end of the meeting that a SALT II agreement needed to contain substantial cuts in strategic forces. Eleven days later, Jackson provided Carter with a detailed SALT II proposal and he recommended that the administration move beyond the levels agreed on at Vladivostok (Chronology, SALT, National Security Archive, 1994).

The SCC continued to meet and work on different specific SALT II packages. At a February 25 SCC meeting, the committee considered three SALT II proposals that were closely tied to Vladivostok. One option was essentially the Vladivostok agreement without major changes. The second option was called ''Vladivostok-plus,'' which was Vladivostok with special provisions for the Soviet Backfire bomber; and a third option separated the cruise missile and Backfire bomber from the negotiations altogether. At the outset of the meeting, Brzezinski indicated that the president wanted the SCC to look seriously at reductions to 1,500 intercontinental ballistic missiles as one of the proposals to be put to the Soviets (Memo, Brzezinski 3/8/77). However, the meeting primarily focused on the treatment of the Backfire bomber and cruise missiles. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown argued that the latter two options needed to be better studied in greater detail, which the group decided to do. Further, Brown said that he preferred strict limits on the Backfire bomber and that he would accept loose limits on cruise missiles, but added that

there needed to be a 1,500-km range limit on all cruise missiles. Representing the JCS, Admiral James Holloway noted that the JCS were concerned with the Backfire bomber, but at the same time believed it could easily be countered with air defenses. Acting in the place of Cyrus Vance, Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher argued that the Backfire bomber should be counted after October 1977 and a 300-km limit should be put on all cruise missiles. Leslie Gelb, Assistant Secretary of State, pointed out that if the U.S. pushed for restrictions on the Backfire, the Soviets might link this to U.S. forward-based systems in Europe. The issues raised by Christopher and Gelb put the State Department's views directly at odds with those of the Secretary of Defense.

The members at the SCC meeting went on to discuss cruise missile definitions and their implications for verification. Before ending the meeting, Brzezinski circulated a table outlining all the possible options; the group then agreed that the SCC would continue to study the options and at the next meeting discuss reductions to 2,000 ballistic missiles with the possible combination of Backfire and cruise missile reductions. Paul Warnke, representing the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), encouraged the group to give consideration to the priorities in U.S. negotiating positions. The main issue, deep cuts, remained unresolved at the end of the meeting because none of these options achieved the substantial reductions called for by the president.

The SCC convened again on March 2 and Brzezinski began the meeting by reasserting that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss Backfire and cruise missile reductions in combination with a reduction to 2,000 ICBMs (Memo, Brzezinski 3/2/77). The discussion was dominated by the issue of cruise missiles and missile range limitation. Paul Warnke advocated a 300-km limit on all cruise missiles, arguing that to accept this low limit would be advantageous in later stages of the negotiations. Leon Sloss, who also represented the ADCA, defended a 1,500 limit on cruise missiles, arguing that although this limit brought a cut, it allowed the U.S. to retain cruise missiles designed for specific roles. The Defense Department wanted to maintain longer ranges (2,500km) on cruise missiles because of the decision previously made that cruise missiles were to be used to strike medium-and intermediate- range ballistic missiles in the western part of the Soviet Union. Again, at the end of the meeting, Brzezinski summarized the discussion and he noted that preferences seemed to be coalescing around Vladivostok reductions with a variety of options still remaining on cruise missiles and Backfire remained unresolved.

It was not until the March 10 SCC meeting that two suitable options were found; however, the options divided Carter's advisers. Brzezinski, Brown, and Deputy National Security Advisor David Aaron came out strongly for a proposal that called for deep cuts; specifically, Aaron argued for deep cuts in the number of ICBMs (2,400–2,000) and Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicles (1,320–1,200). Brown supported the deep cuts proposal and called for a freeze in the testing of ICBMs.

Both Vance and Warnke could accept the deep cuts, but they believed that this deviation from the Vladivostok agreement needed to include a concession to the Soviets, which led Warnke to suggest that the U.S. exempt the Backfire and place limits on cruise missiles. The next day, Brzezinski sent Carter a memo outlining the options that the SCC had arrived at and the position of his advisers (Brzezinski, 1983). Carter was made aware of the nature of the debate in the SCC and was put in a position to monitor the progress of the SCC. Two days later, Carter joined a meeting of the SCC (Vance, Brown, Brzezinski, Warnke, Aaron, Chairman of the JCS George Brown, Vice President Walter Mondale, and Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner) where he commented on and raised questions regarding a range of issues, in addition to restating his interest in deep cuts (Talbott, 1980:58). After hearing the argument for deep cuts once again, Carter made the decision to go ahead and support the Brown, Vance, and Aaron proposal, which most closely fit his own. In a meeting on March 19, Carter, Vance, Mondale, Brzezinski, and Brown reviewed the draft Presidential Directive. Carter determined that in the directive the deep cuts proposal should be the preferred option, but he also made the decision to integrate the Vance/Warnke position and thus made the ''Vladivostok-minus'' proposal the fallback position. Finally, Carter decided to amend the reduction numbers and chose to reduce the number of ICBMs from 2,000 to 1,800 and 1,200 to 1,000. On the 22nd, Carter met with the JCS in a meeting where he sought and obtained the support of the JCS (Brzezinski, 1983; Garrison, 1999).

The decision-making process that led to a proposal at the end of March resembles the process expected to be produced from a collegial structure with highly centralized control. Carter demonstrated himself to be an active member of the group, guiding and shaping deliberations when he attended the February 3 and March 19 SCC meetings. In these meetings, he guided deliberations by stating the kind of proposal that he would like and at the same time requesting a range of options. Carter was also active in drafting the early letters sent to Brezhnev setting out the administration's general position on a range of issues including arms control. As expected, Carter requested a range of options on a SALT II proposal; there was, however, no explicit attempt by the president to foster consensus among his advisers, with the exception of Carter's efforts to gain the support of the JCS at the end of March. Any

consensus that was built seems to have been created by the efforts of the advisers in the SCC. Similarly, there was no explicit indication of shared responsibility. However, meetings throughout the process were frequent and regularized in the SCC and Carter was constantly monitoring the discussions occurring at each meeting by way of Brzezinski. Finally, the decision process did produce an integrative solution to the different perspectives in the administration. Advisers throughout the process sought integrative solutions in the SCC and the final proposal decided on by Carter integrated the two final options produced by the SCC.

Reagan and Arms Reduction: Early 1982

In the spring of 1982, the Reagan administration began in earnest to construct a strategic arms proposal that could be presented to the Soviets. National Security Adviser William Clark and Deputy National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane were directed to take the lead in organizing an interagency group (IG) to develop a proposal. At this stage in the process, Ronald Reagan did not play a role; instead, the options that would arrive on the president's desk in April were first deliberated on in the IG. Two sets of positions quickly emerged in the committee: one represented by Richard Burt, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, and the other by Richard Perle, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy (Talbott, 1984:234–240). Burt and the State Department proposed that the U.S. make reductions in launchers and warheads the basis for an arms control agreement because of the need for verifiability. Perle and the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) argued that the destructive capability of a missile was most important and Soviet heavy ICBMs posed the greatest danger to the U.S.; therefore, reduction needed to be based on ballistic missile throw-weight. The proposal offered by Perle and the OSD, Burt argued, required disproportionate cuts by the Soviets, and thus was unacceptable as a legitimate proposal. In fact, the Burt and Perle approaches both required deep cuts in the Soviet ICBM forces, which were the centerpiece of the Soviet nuclear deterrent force, but they differed in terms of how to make cuts, particularly regarding the crucial issues of bombers and cruise missiles. Burt wanted to continue the tradition started in the aborted SALT II treaty and consider bombers under the ballistic missile ceiling with sub-ceilings for the number of bombers that could carry air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) and the number of ALCMs that each bomber could carry. Perle took the position that if bombers were limited, they had to be in a separate category. If not, the Soviet Union would be able to give up some of their bombers, of which they had fewer, to acquire more ICBMs.

In early April, the IG debated the different proposals with the OSD and the ACDA, both of which supported cuts based on throw-weight. The opposing proposals presented by the State Department had Robert McFarlane's support. Burt sought further support in the government for his launcher proposal by holding meetings with the JCS outside of the IG without the knowledge of Richard Perle (Talbott, 1984:260–261). The chiefs were not completely sold on all aspects of Burt's plan, but they did fundamentally agree that reductions based on launchers made more sense than throw-weight, which was ''overrated as an index of Soviet power and non-negotiable for arms control'' (Talbott, 1984:261). The position formulated by the JCS did not have the support of all the chiefs and as a result Perle, according to Defense Department rules, was able to ensure that the proposed plan was not circulated to the full NSC.

The president finally heard the views of his advisers at an April 21 meeting of the NSC. In attendance at the meeting were the major players in the debate on START, with the exception of Perle. Alexander Haig (Secretary of State), Weinberger (Secretary of Defense), Burt (Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs), Fred Ikle (Defense Department Under Secretary for Policy), David Jones (Chairman of the JCS), Clark (National Security Adviser), and Eugene Rostow (Director of the ACDA) all attended what was meant to be an informational meeting where the president and his advisers were to become acquainted with the issues. However, the meeting turned from an informational meeting to one where each of the opposing camps argued for their preferred plan. Reagan spent part of the meeting disengaged and when he did speak, he had difficulty explaining his preference, which was to limit land-based missiles while preserving bombers and submarines from cuts (Talbott, 1984:249–251). Given that the intent of the meeting was not to reach a decision, none was made at the end, but neither had there been any attempt to reconcile the differing points of view.

The different camps clashed again on April 29 in a Senior IG meeting. This time, the antagonists were the JCS's representative General James Dalton and OSD representative Fred Ikle (Talbott, 1984:254–257). The Chiefs had decided to support the reduction of launchers, which was at odds with the military's civilian leadership. The Chiefs believed that a reduction in launchers would better serve the interests of the military, as it better met the requirements of the nuclear war plan, known as the Single-Integrated Operational Plan. Once again, no movement was made in reconciling differences.

NSC meetings took place on May 1 and 2 without the president in attendance. The purpose of these meetings was to create a common position in the administration that would then be further discussed on May 3 with the president, but

what took place was a hardening of differences that had implications for the proposal made to the Soviets. The two days of meetings produced a compromise between the Joint Chiefs' and the State Department's positions. Burt and James Goodby (State's representative at the negotiations in Geneva) accepted the Chiefs' reduction of 850 launchers, and in exchange the Chiefs' representative, General Paul Gorman, accepted a 2,500 sub-ceiling on land-based warheads. Consequently, the Defense Department's representatives, Fred Ikle and Ronald Lehman, and ACDA representative Rowny were isolated, because they refused to compromise on the Defense Department's position. Two days of discussions resulted in a failure to produce a common interagency paper (Talbott, 1984:261–263).

Burt attempted to advance his choice of cuts made on launchers by circumventing the interagency process and gaining the support of Robert McFarlane for a plan that was raised in the May 1–2 meetings, but was adamantly resisted by the OSD. What Burt presented to McFarlane was a proposal that was superficially a compromise between the Defense and State Department positions. The proposal required that reductions take place in two phases: first phase cuts were to be made on launchers and second phase cuts would be made based on throw- weight. Burt and McFarlane both understood that this was not a true compromise because the probability of ever reaching a second phase was unlikely (Talbott, 1984:263–264). On May 3, McFarlane briefed Reagan on the variety of positions in the administration, but directed Reagan's attention to Burt's two-phase proposal, which the president found favorable.

McFarlane opened the meeting by presenting the ''consensus'' proposal produced from the previous two days of meetings, which in fact was the two-phase proposal put forth by Burt. Weinberger and ACDA director Eugene Rostow protested that the Burt plan would not go far enough in reducing the destructive capability of the Soviet arsenal. But Reagan did speak positively about the idea of deep cuts brought about by throw-weight that was proposed by Weinberger. Neither side was willing to make concessions nor was Reagan willing or able to break the deadlock. Because of the opposing views, the meeting ended without Reagan making a final decision. Undeterred, Burt took this opportunity to further the two- phase option by holding a secret meeting with Reagan's Chief of Staff James Baker. After considering the plan, Baker was convinced that the State Department plan was in the president's best political interest because of his belief that launcher reductions presented the best image for the president. Reductions in launchers were more tangible than throw-weight and would be better understood by the public, thus maintaining that the president was serious about arms reduction. Burt's ability to gain the support of McFarlane and Baker, outside of the committee process, was successful in establishing the State Department plan as the basis for the National Security Decision Directive on START. However, the two-phase proposal was not adopted unadulterated, because McFarlane was conscious of the resistance in the OSD and the need to make a link between the two phases and the president's vague agreement with Weinberger on throw-weight. McFarlane moved the discussion of cruise missiles into phase two, which meant cruise missiles were not going to be useful as a bargaining chip. In addition, McFarlane set an explicit target for throw-weight reductions in phase one.

The disagreements between Reagan's advisers during this initial stage of the START process resulted in a subset solution because of Burt's lobbying outside of the IG. However, the discussion was not a clear victory for either side nor was it a compromise. Rather, the resolution of the differences between the two camps resulted in a simple aggregation of the plans without any real reconciliation of differences. This resolution came at the end of long deliberations in the IG meetings and culminated in Reagan's choice during the May 3 NSC meeting. On May 9, Reagan announced the administration's START proposal at Eureka College, beginning the long process of negotiations between the U.S. and the Soviets, which, six years later, would end in a permanent impasse.

This episode in the administration's efforts to formulate an arms reduction proposal perfectly reflects the decision-making process attributed to an advisory system that is formally structured with the president exercising low centralization over the process. Reagan allowed proposals to be created and deliberated on within the IG and NSC without participating, until it was time for him to choose the options that arose from the process. This was the case in the April 21 and May 3 NSC meetings. The discussions that took place within the IG and among Reagan's advisers demonstrate that there was a high degree of conflict and bargaining taking place outside of the president's view. William Clark at this stage was playing the role of gatekeeper, but his impact was negligible because of the ability of other advisers to circumvent the process. Richard Burt's appeal to James Baker outside of the interagency committee process and McFarlane's influence on the president's thinking prior to the May 3 NSC meeting demonstrate the ways in which advisers were competing to advance their preferences and their willingness to circumvent the established procedures. The disagreements between Reagan's advisers during this initial stage of the START process resulted in a subset solution because of Burt's lobbying outside of the IG. However, the discussion was not a clear victory for either side nor was it a compromise. Rather, the failure to fully resolve the differences resulted in long-term deadlock between the two camps in the administration.

Summary

The decision making in the three episodes are consistent with the hypothesized decision-making processes that are produced by variations in the level of centralization exercised by the president in formal and collegial structures. Nixon is identified as having an advisory system with a formal structure and high centralization, and it is evident that during 1969 his decision making generally fits that described in the typology. Nixon shaped preferences, had a gatekeeper in Kissinger, who screened information, excluded dissenting voices, evaluated presented options, and chose dominant solutions. However, the decision-making process was not well defined. In fact, it seemed to change in correspondence to the changing international conditions and the nature of the policy issue. Diplomatic issues were handled between Kissinger and Nixon, while military issues involved more advisers.

The process that results from a collegial structure and high centralization generally matches the decision-making process in the Carter administration's negotiations with the Soviet Union regarding arms limitations. In this episode of decision making, we see Carter guiding and shaping deliberations, his advisers assessing a range of options, their meetings being regularized, and finding frequent and integrative solutions to resolve differences. Surprisingly, there is no indication in the case of the SALT II negotiations for a sense of shared responsibility among the president's advisers. Perhaps a better way to account for responsibility is to understand it in terms of loyalty. With this understanding, it is possible to argue that there was a shared responsibility, because there was a high level of loyalty at the cabinet and sub-cabinet levels (Vance, 1983).

The hypothesized decision-making process produced by a formal structure and the exercise of low centralization perfectly match the Reagan administration's decision making on negotiations with the Soviet Union on the reduction of nuclear weapons. All five of the features identified in the typology were present in the case. Reagan chose between presented options, allowed advisers to compete to advance preferences, selected a gatekeeper to act as honest-broker, permitted bargaining and conflict to take place out of the presented view, which provided for procedures to be circumvented, and used a dominant-subset and deadlock to resolve disagreements.

Conclusion

The case studies demonstrate that the reformulated typology of foreign policy decision making provides a valuable tool for explaining the variations in the policy-making process. The value in better understanding how policy is made has several benefits. First, it elucidates the processes that result from different choices of levels of centralization. The previous typologies, notably those created by Richard Johnson and Alexander George, prove inaccurate because of their failure to account for differences in centralization. Presidential studies literature has accounted for centralization, but it treats all administrations as essentially distinct, which proves unhelpful in constructing a general theory that explains systematic variations in decision making processes. Moreover, this typology, unlike previous examples, links presidential management to decision outcomes, by specifying the types of decision outcomes produced by each advisory system, something not satisfactorily discussed in foreign policy analysis or presidential studies literature.

Second, this research also presents us with a better understanding of the role played by advisers in the decision-making process. Discussions of foreign policy often degenerate to discussions of the president's preferences without acknowledging that presidents' preferences are often a function of their advisers' deliberations. Presidents choose the level of centralization and assemble an advisory system; but once established, as these case studies demonstrate, presidents are bound by the functioning of these systems. Significantly, this means that, depending on choice of centralization and structure, advisers can have varying levels of influence in shaping the decision-making process and influencing outcomes.

Overall, this reformulated typology provides a clearer understanding of the ways in which advisers influence the president's ability to make decisions within the context of the advisory system. The value of an advisory systems typology, beyond explaining how structure and centralization produce a particular kind of decision-making process, is it's implications for how we think about other decision-making theories and models. If this study's explanation of the decision-making process is accurate, then it is possible to address a range of questions regarding the decision-making process. For example, are some advisory systems more or less prone to engage in bureaucratic politics? Likewise, which advisory systems are more readily susceptible to groupthink? What ways do advisers go about influencing the decision-making process given a type of presidential management?

Third, having a better developed typology can provide the basis to carryout investigations into differences between different kinds of policy. In what way is the decision making on domestic issues different from foreign policy? Does decision making differ between types of security issues (i.e., economic policy versus conflict management)? Without a serious investigation and explanation of how policy gets made, we are left with an incomplete understanding of policy

and are in a poor position to make evaluations of success or failure of policy or how to improve policy. Further research with different sets of cases needs to be conducted in order to derive stronger conclusions, but this can only be accomplished with a firm understanding and an accurate representation of the way in which centralization and advisory structure influence the decision-making process.

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