

PRESIDENTIAL PERSONALITY AND FOREIGN POLICYMAKING

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Among the many different influences on Presidential foreign policy decision-making, the President's personal characteristics arguably hold the most influence. Fred Greenstein's framework of presidential leadership which focuses on emotional intelligence, cognitive style, organizational capacity, public communication, vision, and political skill, is able to capture both the internal and external aspects of presidential decision-making. Through close evaluation of four case studies, it will demonstrate which presidential characteristics are the most important for foreign policymaking. Four presidential case studies including Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, George H.W. Bush, and George W. Bush, all of who involved the United States in military conflicts abroad, often for extended periods of time. This study will show how the three internal aspects including emotional intelligence, cognitive style, and political skill lead presidents to develop their decision-making processes which undoubtedly affect the outcomes of consequential foreign policy decisions.

INTRODUCTION

Policymaking in the modern presidency has evolved considerably over the course of American history, being molded and shaped by new precedents set by America's leaders. In a continuously globalizing world, foreign policymaking is arguably one of the most important burdens on modern presidents, as their decisions have the potential to affect the image of the United States abroad, and millions of lives around the globe. There are many external influences on presidential foreign policy decisions; however, the study of presidential personality and its effects on these decisions is often overlooked due to its complexity. The influences on decision-making are portrayed by a circle graph in George C. Edwards III and Stephen J. Wayne's book *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policymaking*, with the innermost rings signifying the most immediate influences.¹ These influences include the president's personality, his relationship with advisers, organization and style of decision making, bureaucratic politics, time constraints, and

¹ George C. Edwards III and Stephen J. Wayne, *Presidential Leadership: Politics and Policymaking* (Boston: Cengage Wadsworth, 2010), 230.

the government's previous decisions and commitments. The president's personality resides within the innermost ring of this graph in order to indicate that it is ultimately the president's personality that makes each president, and therefore his decisions, unique to his presidency in conjunction with the inevitable external influences.

Fred Greenstein's framework of six qualities that relate to presidential job performance includes emotional intelligence, cognitive style, organizational capacity, public communication, vision, and political skill. Emotional intelligence evaluates the way in which presidents separate their emotions from policymaking, keeping personal qualms or tendencies from affecting their judgment. Cognitive style is the way in which presidents absorb the vast amount of information available to them, as well as their ability to understand complex foreign conflicts and the implications of their decisions. Organizational capacity is the way in which a president manages his staff, structures his advisory system, manages the flow of information, and produces an environment for both formal and informal policy formation, discussion, and analysis that ensures every decision is carefully weighed. Public communication measures how presidents employ rhetoric in order to educate the public, the international community, and Congress about foreign policy decisions. Vision will serve to show what goals each president sought to achieve through involvement in each conflict, as well as a proposed timetable for involvement and how he perceived the potential outcome of the situation. Political skill is the president's ability to maneuver through the various institutional and political constraints of the office, and to garner support for his policies from the public, international community, Congress, and even his inner decision-making circle.

There are limitations to this model, including the inability to factor in many of the other external influences touched upon by in the previously mentioned ring graph. Along with this,

evaluating personality characteristics presents many difficulties, as there are different layers to understanding presidential psychology and it is impossible to succinctly categorize any president. However, Greenstein's framework is successful at taking into account public and private aspects of presidential leadership, and it provides a basis for complete evaluation of foreign policy decision-making. By examining the foreign policy decisions of four presidents who presided over the United States during times of war, this framework will demonstrate how the three more internal aspects of leadership including organizational capacity, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence, are the most important traits to ensure a successful decision-making process exists. The three more external characteristics still remain important for an overall examination of leadership, but it is ultimately the president's internal leadership traits that shape the structure, advisory system, flow of information, and decision-making environment in the White House.

The four case studies chosen in chronological order include Harry S. Truman and the Korean War, Lyndon B. Johnson and the Vietnam War, George H. W. Bush and the Persian Gulf War, and George W. Bush and the Iraq War. George H. W. Bush will serve as an example of deliberative policymaking with the Persian Gulf War, while the other three case studies will stand as warnings for future presidents of how personal characteristics and leadership qualities can produce a perceivably ill-suited decision-making process. These cases feature some similarities and very significant differences, as they range from the early outset of the Cold War, all the way to the post-9/11 anti-terrorism world. It is important to note the brevity of the Persian Gulf War in comparison to the three other case studies, perceived as a positive outcome of George Bush Sr.'s decision-making. These case studies were chosen in order to demonstrate how lacking certain aspects of internal leadership qualities contributed to presidents making costly

foreign policy decisions with long lasting effects, including extended engagement in conflicts abroad.

For each case study, analysis will begin with a brief historical background of the foreign conflict that pertains to each president's decision-making. James David Barber's definition of worldview, or "the politically relevant beliefs that condition perceptions, thinking, and judgment,"² will introduce the analysis of each president. Understanding the international and political environment that each president operated in will facilitate understanding of other potential influences on his decisions, along with ideas that may have affected his thinking and perception of the role of the United States in the world. By evaluating the four case studies, and tailoring Greenstein's framework to the process leading up to large foreign policy decisions, analysis will demonstrate how emotional intelligence, cognitive style, and organizational capacity hold the most influence over presidential decision-making, and therefore, their outcomes. The ability to form an environment conducive to complex policy debate, analysis, and questioning ultimately benefits United States foreign policy, preventing decisions that were not weighed carefully enough from being made.

THE KOREAN WAR

Harry Truman made his unexpected accession to the executive office on April 12, 1945, following the death of President Franklin Roosevelt. During his many turbulent years in office, he made the decisions which facilitated the ending of WWII, committed to a policy of communist containment with the Truman and Marshall Plans, and engaged the U.S. military in combat operations in Korea. He oversaw the ratification of the United Nations Charter by the U.S. Senate, and furthermore, the UN Participation Act of 1945 which was designed to "protect congressional prerogatives over war and peace," explicitly outlining when military action in the

² Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 271.

name of UN Charters were within the President's power.³ The case of Harry Truman's presidency is particularly unique, as he oversaw the creation of critical components for foreign policymaking bodies in the executive branch, a significant contribution to the institution of the presidency that ultimately transformed it. The National Security Act was passed in 1947, which unified the heads of military branches under the National Military Establishment (NME) with a leading Secretary of Defense, created the National Security Council (NSC) with a purpose of advising the president on foreign policy issues, and established the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).⁴ In 1949, the importance of centralized policy cooperation between the military branches became clear, leading to an amendment of the National Security Act which established the NME as an executive department: the Department of Defense.⁵

The United States was at a critical standpoint during Truman's years in office, featuring an infantile United Nations serving as a platform for international discourse as the country entered into the early Cold War years. Tensions with the Soviet Union were continuously growing, and reached a peak after Communist leader Mao Zedong's forces successfully took control of China, founding the People's Republic of China in October, 1949.⁶ This "loss" of China implanted a growing fear of communism's spread in Truman and his policy advisers, setting the stage for what came to follow. At the end of WWII, Japan was forced to surrender its authority over Korea, where North Korea was designated as a Soviet Union zone, and South Korea as the American Zone.⁷ This division was set at the 38th parallel, "almost exactly mid-way

³ Louis Fisher, "The Korean War: On What Legal Basis Did Truman Act?" *The American Journal of International Law* 89, no.1 (1995): 31, accessed March 6, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2203888>.

⁴ "American President: A Reference Resource," Miller Center, accessed March 4, 2015, <http://millercenter.org/president/truman/essays/biography/5>.

⁵ "About the Department of Defense (DOD)," U.S. Department of Defense, accessed March 4, 2015, <http://www.defense.gov/about/#history>.

⁶ "American President: A Reference Resource."

⁷ "Korea: A Chronology of Principal Events, 1945-50," *The World Today* 6, no. 8 (1950): 319, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40392341>.

between the Yalu River in the north and the Korean Straits in the south,”⁸ forcing Japan to surrender to Soviet Union forces in the north and U.S. forces in the south which was agreed upon at the Potsdam Conference.

The situation in Korea exploded on June 25, 1950 when North Korea unexpectedly invaded South Korea, leading to the UN Security Council to issue Resolution 82, calling this invasion “a breach of the peace” and ordering “the immediate cessation of hostilities.”⁹ President Truman made a statement on June 26, affirming that “the United States will vigorously support the effort of the Council to terminate this serious breach of the peace” and provide “assistance of the type being furnished under the Mutual Defense Assistance Program.”¹⁰ Two days after North Korea’s invasion, the Security Council passed Resolution 83 upon confirmation that North Korean authorities had not withdrawn their forces to the 38th parallel. Resolution 83 invoked the language of police action, recommending member nations to assist the Republic of Korea “as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area.”¹¹ On the very same day, Truman officially announced his orders for “air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support,” the 7th fleet to prevent any attacks on the island of Formosa, and forces in the Philippines to be strengthened.¹² The days following his decision, the situation in Korea rapidly deteriorated, leading Truman’s decision on June 30, 1950 to permit ground forces in Korea. Truman had engaged the U.S. into a war without formal Congressional approval.

HARRY TRUMAN

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “82 (1950). Resolution of 25 June 1950,” United Nations Security Council, accessed March 4, 2015, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/82\(1950\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/82(1950)).

¹⁰ “Statement by the President on the Violation of the 38th Parallel in Korea,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 6, 2015, <http://trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=799&st=&st1=>.

¹¹ “82 (1950). Resolution of 25 June 1950.”

¹² “Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 6, 2015, <http://trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=800&st=&st1=>.

Truman's worldview was undoubtedly influenced by the global tension of previous decades, culminating in an attempt to create a global platform for diplomacy, also known as the United Nations. Truman deviated from the policies of his predecessors, as his "policy was global in scope" and he "addressed the meaning of America in a globalized world."¹³ After witnessing the destruction and devastation of wars and communist aggression, Truman acted on a basis of preemption rather than reaction in order to avoid the most certain "domino effect" of communist takeover. Truman's worldview provided the foundation for the Truman Doctrine and his containment policies, of which he perfectly described around three years before the start of the Korean conflict: "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."¹⁴ This statement, originally given to Congress in order to grant aid to Greece and Turkey to withstand the pressures of communism, ultimately translated into every aspect of his foreign policy. It was Truman's worldview that formed the basis for U.S. foreign policy in the modern world, originally a deviation from the accepted isolationist policies, ultimately transforming America's role in the world.

Emotional Intelligence

Harry Truman was a man who had to reign in his inclination toward angry outbursts, and was described by Administrative Assistant George Elsey to have a quick temper, who occasionally "snapped back, sometimes too fast, in press conferences on domestic as well as foreign matters."¹⁵ This tendency, while sometimes causing him to be dangerously

¹³ Dennis Merrill, "The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no.1 (2006): 28, accessed March 10, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552744>.

¹⁴ "Transcript of Truman Doctrine (1947)," OurDocuments.gov, accessed March 19, 2015, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=81&page=transcript>.

¹⁵ "Oral History Interview with George M. Elsey," Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/orallhist/elsey3.htm#113>.

misunderstood,¹⁶ did not appear to have an effect on his decision-making. Transcripts of conversations that took place in the days following North Korea invading South Korea show that every major decision “was the product of careful political or diplomatic planning and group consensus, not individual whim.”¹⁷ Truman understood the political repercussions for him as president “if the ‘loss’ of China were to be followed by the ‘loss’ of Korea”¹⁸ and undoubtedly took the attack as “an affront to his country and to himself.”¹⁹ During a conversation with Elsey on June 26, Truman described Korea as “the Greece of the Far East,” appearing “sincerely determined to go very much further than the initial orders that he had approved for General MacArthur...”²⁰ Despite more than enough influence to cause Truman’s tendency toward anger or acting on a whim, the Truman portrayed through various conversations and moments of decision-making following the Korean invasion displays a judicious and rational president who weighed every decision carefully.

Despite his understanding that action had to be made immediately in order to prevent the “fall” of South Korea to communism, Truman understood the constraints he operated within at that time. Engaging troops into action without formal Congressional approval was justified by UN Security Council resolutions, something he stressed during a meeting at Blair House on June 25, urging his closest advisors and Cabinet members, “we are working entirely for the United

¹⁶ During a press conference, his comments were dangerously misconstrued as him saying the US planned to use nuclear weapons in Korea, causing the British Prime Minister to fly out immediately in order to diffuse the situation.

¹⁷ Alonzo L. Hamby, “An American Democrat: A Reevaluation of the Personality of Harry S. Truman,” *Political Science Quarterly* 106, no.1 (1991): 52, accessed March 6, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2152173>.

¹⁸ Robert J. Donovan, *Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman, 1949-1953* (New York: Norton, 1982) Google eBooks, accessed March 5, 2015, 202.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Memo of Conversation between Harry S. Truman and George Elsey, June 26, 1950,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/exhibit_documents/index.php?collectionid=korea&groupid=3434&tldate=1950-06-26.

Nations. We would wait for further action until the UN order is flouted.”²¹ During another meeting at Blair House on June 26 to discuss the country’s next steps and logistics of military action, Truman exuded a degree of prudence and measured countenance, shown in the notes of the conversation: “The president said he had done everything he could for five years to prevent this kind of situation. Now the situation is here and we must do what we can to meet it.”²² Despite his image of being predisposed to embarrassing and sometimes imprudent lapses in judgment, potentially attributed to a moment of fleeting passion or anger, it is somewhat clear that “on the important matters, he was a rational decision maker who displayed a good mind and measured judgment.”²³

Cognitive Style

Harry Truman, notorious for being the only U.S. President without a college degree, was an avid reader of history, although he is charged with the fact that “his reading of history was often uncritical and idiosyncratic...” and he “was noted for his simplicity of thought and style...”²⁴ Although Truman could be described as a workaholic, a president who “could not abandon the urge to immerse himself in detail,”²⁵ his ability to absorb the heavy details regarding the situation in Korea could have been skewed by comparing it to the German aggression in the 1930s.²⁶ In a message to Congress almost a month after the initial invasion, Truman justified the need for prompt military action when he said, “The fateful events of the 1930's, when aggression

²¹ “Department of State Memorandum of Conversation, June 25, 1950,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 7, 2015, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/achesonmemos/view.php?documentid=ki-12-1&documentYear=1950&documentVersion=both.

²² “Memorandum of Conversation, June 26, 1950,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 10, 2015, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?pagenumber=7&documentdate=1950-06-26&documentid=ki-12-3.

²³ Hamby, “An American Democrat,” 52.

²⁴ Donald R. McCoy, “Harry S. Truman: Personality, Politics, and Presidency,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1982): 217, accessed March 19, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27547807>.

²⁵ Hamby, “An American Democrat,” 51.

²⁶ Scot Macdonald, *Rolling the Iron Dice: Historical Analogies and Decisions to Use Military Force in Regional Contingencies* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000), Google eBooks, accessed March 15, 2015, 59.

unopposed bred more aggression and eventually war, were fresh in our memory.”²⁷ The “lesson” of the 1930’s was against the use of appeasement to nondemocratic nations, a sentiment that was widely shared in Truman’s decision making circle. His fears of a repeat of history were amplified by early Cold War sentiments, that the U.S. and free nations would lose credibility “if they did not respond effectively to what was perceived to be a Soviet probe to test the West’s resolve against unprovoked aggression.”²⁸ His understanding of the situation in Korea through the prism of historical occurrences he was familiar with could have contributed to his over simplification of the problem, eventually leading to serious political backlash.

In the early days following North Korea’s initial invasion of its southern neighbor, it was clear that Truman initially underestimated the military might of South Korea’s communist foe. During a news conference on June 29, 1950, Truman stated: “And the members of the United Nations are going to the relief of the Korean Republic to suppress a bandit raid on the Republic of Korea.”²⁹ His referring to the aggressors as “bandits” significantly downplayed the severity of the situation that American and South Korean forces faced in the region, as they learned through the rapid deterioration of their ability to fend off the enemy’s continued aggression. During the same news conference, he affirmed that U.S. involvement in the conflict amounted solely to “police action under the United Nations,”³⁰ something he stressed during a private meeting with Congressional leaders on June 27, leaving the door open to operate under the authority of the United Nations without a formal declaration of war. Overall, Truman’s generalized understanding of the Korean invasion inhibited his ability to accurately understand the

²⁷ “Special Message to the Congress Reporting on the Situation in Korea (July 19, 1950),” The American Presidency Project, accessed March 19, 2015, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13560>.

²⁸ Macdonald, *Rolling the Iron Dice*, 60.

²⁹ “The President’s News Conference (June 29, 1950),” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 24, 2015, <http://trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=806&st=&st1=>.

³⁰ Ibid.

implications of military action in Korea, both internationally and politically. His understanding of the situation to be something similar to communist aggression in the 1930s fueled his dead-set intent to act swiftly and without restraint in the region—a costly decision that put the U.S. past the point of no return with regards to defending South Vietnam.

Organizational Capacity

During Truman's time in office, "the Office of the President was still a small and simple organization,"³¹ where many important decisions regarding the Korean War were made by the President, "in consultation with Acheson, Louis Johnson, members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and—over the wires—MacArthur."³² In 1950, the NSC was less than three-years-old, and while it had done significant work in its early years of existence, it did not become a critical component of foreign policymaking until the early days of the Korean War. Truman typically favored a less structured advisory system, and preferred to "turn to other advisers, in the Cabinet or executive office, or to solicit the advice of members of the Council as individuals in preference to the corporate recommendations of the entire group."³³ While Truman favored personal discussions with the heads of departments to discuss policy planning, he understood the need for formalized, structured meetings. During the first few days of the conflict in Korea, Truman directed for regular NSC meetings, and "that all major national security recommendations would be coordinated through the Council and its staff."³⁴ Truman relied heavily on his staff and advisors when it came to decision-making, and was "superb at delegating authority,"³⁵ on matters relating to foreign policy, and especially the Korean War.

³¹ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 193.

³² Ibid.

³³ Stanley L. Falk, "National Security Council Under Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy," *Political Science Quarterly* 79, no. 3 (1964): 412, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2145907>.

³⁴ Falk, "National Security Council," 414.

³⁵ McCoy, "Personality, Politics, and Presidency," 217.

During various meetings where key decisions were made, it was clear that “he worked effectively with the groups he had to associate with,”³⁶ and adamantly “sought a variety of views before coming to official decisions.”³⁷ Frank Pace described him as “an excellent administrator,” who “asked the opinion of everyone in the room without expressing any opinion himself at all.”³⁸ This description accurately describes Truman’s style of decision-making, spurred by his complete reliance on his carefully selected staff, and acknowledgment that the President sharing his views first created a potential for groupthink. The week of June 25 to July 1, 1950, following the North Korean invasion South Korea, was a critical turning point in Truman’s presidency, forcing him to partake in an entirely new realm of decision-making with the urgency that a crisis required. With severe time constraints and the concern of leaks causing mass hysteria in the U.S., the decisions made between June 25th and July 1st were made without much outside consultation, mostly limited to the views of his Cabinet and members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. By June 30, when the situation in Korea had deteriorated to a point where ground troops were necessary to prevent the fall of South Korea, “he had already gone too far to pull back without high embarrassment to himself, to the United States, and to the United Nations...”³⁹

The days preceding Truman’s approval of MacArthur’s suggestion to commit ground troops featured Truman’s increased “stake from diplomatic approach up through military action on a rising scale,”⁴⁰ proving to be unsuccessful in stopping the invasion. While Truman’s ability to foster debate within his decision-making circle was beneficial in gaining a consensus within the executive department, not enough policy options were presented nor discussed during the

³⁶ McCoy, “Personality, Politics, and Presidency,” 217.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “Oral History Interview with Frank Pace Jr.,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 19, 2015, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/pacefj3.htm#76>.

³⁹ Donovan, *Tumultuous Years*, 215.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

critical meetings following the Korean invasion. During one of the first meetings on June 25, 1950, Truman ordered for MacArthur to send a survey group to Korea and assess the situation that they faced.⁴¹ However, due to time constraints and the available information at this time, most of the information that was utilized in making major decisions came through this channel alone. Truman delegated a lot of authority to his counterparts to make sure that all details were understood by them and taken into account when making decisions, but in the case of the Korean War, his decision-making would have benefitted from the expansion of his information channels. Operating during a time of apparent crisis, “The course of action proposed by Acheson at the outset was acceptable to Truman and his advisors; therefore, the search to find alternatives was never begun.”⁴² In this case, Truman was a successful leader who trusted his advisors to deal with the details of their respected fields of expertise; however, the Korean Conflict serves as a possible case for over-delegation. A closer understanding of the limitations, implications, and potential unintended consequences would have lead him to ask more questions and search for alternatives, instead of committing U.S. power to support South Korea to a point of no return, without a formal Congressional declaration of war.

Public Communication

As president, Truman did not enjoy the role of public communicator with either scripted speeches or non-scripted news conferences, and was vulnerable to the occasional blunder.⁴³ His speeches were straightforward, avoiding flowery or grandiose language, a stark contrast from his predecessor. Truman was by no means an eloquent or notable speech giver, and he faced a

⁴¹ “Memorandum of Conversation, June 25, 1950,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 12, 2015, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?pagenumber=4&documentdate=1950-06-25&documentid=ki-12-1.

⁴² Charles F. Hermann, *Crises in Foreign Policy: A Simulation Analysis* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1969): 130.

⁴³ One famous blunder during a November 30 press conference where he insinuated that the administration planned to use nuclear weapons in Korea, causing the PM of England to fly out immediately and diffuse the situation

significant challenge when crisis struck in North Korea, as it was understood that public opinion and American morale over his foreign policy decisions were half the battle. His speeches and public statements made during the month following the Korean invasion, most especially those made in the first week, served to place “Korea squarely in the context of the global struggle against communism,”⁴⁴ without causing mass war hysteria among the people. He publicly justified U.S. engagement in the Far East through the authority of the UN, invoking the language of multilateralism and “police action” in order to diffuse any opinions against a formal Congressional declaration of war. In a statement he made on June 27, 1950, he portrayed the threat to the U.S. of non-action by invoking Cold War rhetoric when he said, “...communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war.”⁴⁵ During a time of crisis, and due to his forging a “limited war” in the early Cold War era, Truman faced many constraints for public communication, and “was keen to counterbalance his use of crisis imagery with reassuring words and phrases.”⁴⁶ However, his lackluster delivery, infrequent public addresses, and usually non-informative news conferences failed to create a public narrative for the situation in Korea that could ease the minds of Americans.

Vision

Truman’s commitments in the Far East region were the result of a series of reactive policies following the initial Korean invasion, which transformed from “police action” “into an issue of American security and world peace.”⁴⁷ Truman lacked a clear vision for U.S.

⁴⁴ Steven Casey, “White House Publicity Operations during the Korean War, June 1950-June 1951,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (2005): 702-703, accessed March 24, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552724>.

⁴⁵ “Statement by the President on the Situation in Korea.”

⁴⁶ Casey, “White House Publicity,” 703.

⁴⁷ Arnold A. Offner, “‘Another Such Victory’: President Truman, American Foreign Policy, and the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 2 (1999): 149, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.ucd.ie/~history/postgraduate/coldwar/Offner.pdf>.

involvement in the conflict, signified by his shift from the defensive policies of containment spurred by his Truman Doctrine, to the fateful decision of utilizing an offensive strategy, sending forces “across the 38th parallel to vanquish North Korea and to unify the Korean peninsula militarily.”⁴⁸ Truman left the question of to what extent the U.S. would be involved almost a month after the June 24 invasion when he delivered a special message to Congress: “We and the other members of the United Nations who have joined in the effort to restore peace in Korea must expect a hard and costly military operation.”⁴⁹ This was a significant turnaround from his clear statement, “We are not at war,”⁵⁰ on June 29, 1950. During the early unfolding events of the Korean conflict, Truman’s vision changed to frame U.S. and UN involvement in the region as a war between the “free world” and unlawful aggressors, a threat to the future of democracy and peace in the world if it was not met with considerable force. His stance on the issue obviously extended elements of his Truman Doctrine to the Far East when he said, “We seek a world where all men may live in peace and freedom, with steadily improving living conditions, under governments of their own free choice.”⁵¹ Had Truman possessed a more clear vision of the goals he wished to achieve in the region rather than taking a more reactive course which lead him into continuous military escalation, his legacy regarding the Korean War might have been looked upon by historians as a success, falling in line with his other containment policies.

Political Skill

Truman, once being a Senator from Missouri, was well acquainted with the politics associated with the legislative process, as well as the relationship between the legislative and executive branches. Due to various time constraints during the unfolding of the Korean crisis,

⁴⁸ Offner, ““Another Such Victory,”” 149-150.

⁴⁹ “Special Message to the Congress Reporting on the Situation in Korea (July 19, 1950).”

⁵⁰ “The President’s News Conference (June 29, 1950).”

⁵¹ “Special Message to the Congress Reporting on the Situation in Korea (July 19, 1950).”

“his anxiety to maintain a strong presidency led him to circumvent Congress as much as possible in times of emergency.”⁵² He was adamant about frequent meetings with his Cabinet and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as the “Big Four” in Congress, along with a few others mentioned during a meeting on June 26, 1950.⁵³ During his assembled meeting with several Congressional leaders on June 27, his personal style of politics shone through when he “made a circuit of the room, shaking hands with those present and exchanging a few words of personal greeting with each Member...”⁵⁴ While he made sure to inform Members of Congress of his important decisions, he never formally “requested” permission for authority to intervene militarily in Korea, causing a lot of political backlash over his unilateral executive action that was arguably a violation of the U.S. Constitution. In order to gain Congressional support for his policies, he portrayed the threat posed in the Far East as a direct threat to U.S. national security interests, invoking Cold War language when he said: “If we were to let Asia go, the Near East would collapse and no telling what would happen in Europe.”⁵⁵ His ability to justify police actions and immediate military involvement through the prism of UN multilateral action and immediate need for prompt, strong resistance garnered support within his Cabinet, and with Congressional leaders of doing everything in their power to fully support and conform with the Security Council of the United Nations.⁵⁶

Conclusion

⁵² H. Wayne Morgan, “History and the Presidency: Harry S. Truman,” *The Phylon Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1958): 168, accessed March 16, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/272942>.

⁵³ “Memorandum of Conversation, June 26, 1950,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/achesonmemos/view.php?documentid=ki-12-3&documentYear=1950&documentVersion=both.

⁵⁴ “Notes Regarding Meeting With Congressional Leaders, June 27, 1950,” Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?pagenumber=2&documentdate=1950-06-27&documentid=ki-2-40.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Without ignoring the obvious external influences including the early Cold War environment, South Korea being a U.S. ally, belief in the domino theory, and a brand new United Nations striving to establish and maintain legitimacy as an international diplomatic body, the influence of internal aspects of Truman's leadership is undeniable. Factors such as the South Korean invasion being a clear breach of UN Charter and South Korea's sovereignty created a crisis situation, limiting the president's time to act. Truman exemplified sound emotional intelligence in the realm of foreign policymaking, but was his cognitive style and organizational capacity that contributed to his lack of attention to long-term implications in Korea, which kept him from presenting a clear vision for U.S. involvement in the region. His ability to delegate to his staff was a positive aspect of his presidential leadership in many ways, but he erred on the side of over-delegation in this situation, fostered by his lack of deeper probing into the options presented to him by his staff. Had Truman possessed stronger organizational capacity and cognitive style, his style of decision-making may have been more deliberative and analytical, creating an environment where deliberation and analysis took place over long-term and short-term goals, strategies, and implications of the conflict.

THE VIETNAM WAR

United States involvement in Vietnam began as early as 1954 under the authority of Dwight Eisenhower. The defeat of French Forces by the communist Viet Minh forces on May 7, 1954 was a catalyzing event, setting the stage for the Geneva Accords and division of North and South Vietnam.⁵⁷ When the two countries split at the 17th parallel, the U.S. came to the side of the new Southern Vietnam, continuing to provide aid to prevent a communist take over from

⁵⁷ Andrew A. Wiest, *The Vietnam War, 1956-1975* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2002), Google eBooks, accessed November 10, 2014, 12.

Northern Vietnam.⁵⁸ During Eisenhower's presidency, he supplied South Vietnam with hundreds of military advisers, monetary funding, and weaponry. Aside from that, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was created in 1955 to prevent communist expansion to the rest of Southeast Asia.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1961 under Kennedy's administration, there were increased amounts of aid to South Vietnam and the rest of the region, the creation of task forces and counterinsurgency teams in all neighboring countries, and continuous assessments of the amount of troops necessary to succeed. Ultimately, Kennedy sent over 16,000 U.S. military advisers to assist the South Vietnam military forces, but no combat troops were committed during his administration.⁵⁹ Kennedy was committed to a policy of containment and assistance to the countries facing the threat of communist invasion rather than engaging in a war that he believed other countries should be fighting themselves. He affirmed this stance in an interview in 1963, when he said, "We can help them, we can give them equipment, we can send our men out there as advisers, but they have to win it, the people of Viet-Nam, against the Communists."⁶⁰

When Lyndon B. Johnson unexpectedly took office after the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963, he inherited Kennedy's foreign policy advisers, as well as a large stalemate with no end in sight. His heavy reliance on his advisers and lack of confidence in the arena of foreign policy drove him to initially commit to continuing Kennedy's policies, both domestically and abroad. The Gulf of Tonkin incident that took place on August 2 and August 4, 1964, when two U.S. destroyer ships were attacked by Vietnamese gunboats, paved the way for

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ "Vietnam," John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, accessed November 10, 2014, <http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK/JFK-in-History/Vietnam.aspx>.

⁶⁰ "John F. Kennedy Transcript of Broadcast with Walter Cronkite (September 2, 1963)," The American Presidency Project, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=9388>.

increasingly escalated military involvement that occurred over the rest of Johnson's presidency.⁶¹ Congress responded to the urgent situation, resulting in the passage of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution on August 7, 1964.⁶² This resolution granted the president significant authority over the course of the Vietnam War, stating that Congress supports the president, "to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression."⁶³ Over the course of his presidency, Johnson referred back to this resolution, which passed in Congress with a vote of 88-2⁶⁴ to justify his policies toward Vietnam and multiple troop increases.

During his years in office, Johnson increased the troop count from 23,000 by the end of 1964⁶⁵ to around 536,000 troops in 1968.⁶⁶ As a president who inherited the free-form White House that Kennedy created, Johnson struggled to adapt to this new realm of decision-making, due to his general disinterest in policy discussion and disorganized advisory system. On various instances, he understood the difficulties of the situation in Vietnam, relating his concerns to Senator Richard Russell on March 6, 1965, "But there ain't no daylight in Vietnam. There's not a bit."⁶⁷ The structure of his White House, coupled with his tendency to command policy discussions and discourage dissent, did not grant Johnson the avenues through which to voice his concerns and the concerns of his closest advisers. Rather than digging deep into potential strategies with various policy experts, Johnson relied mostly on his closest advisers for guidance

⁶¹ Brian VanDeMark, *Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Google eBooks, accessed November 11, 2014, 17.

⁶² VanDeMark, *Into the Quagmire*, 18.

⁶³ "Transcript of Tonkin Gulf Resolution (1964)," OurDocuments.gov, accessed November 12, 2014, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=98&page=transcript>.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Sidney M. Milkis and Michael Nelson, *The American Presidency: Origins & Development, 1776-2011* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2012), 347.

⁶⁶ "Vietnam War Allied Troop Levels 1960-73," The American War Library, accessed November 12, 2014, <http://www.americanwarlibrary.com/vietnam/vwatl.htm>.

⁶⁷ "There Ain't no Daylight in Vietnam (March 6, 1965)," Miller Center, accessed November 14, 2014, <http://millercenter.org/presidentialclassroom/exhibits/there-aint-no-daylight-in-vietnam>.

on the war, evident by the notoriously small and informal “Tuesday Lunches” where many important Vietnam decisions were made.⁶⁸ He preferred to keep his decision-making circle small, which may have potentially shielded him from much-needed policy discussions regarding the Vietnam War.

LYNDON JOHNSON

Lyndon B. Johnson held a strong conviction in his antipoverty agenda, and in many ways he extended this belief into his foreign policy as well. During his July 28, 1965 speech, he relayed his vision for the country, stating, “As battle rages, we will continue as best we can to help the good people of South Viet-Nam enrich the condition of their life, to feed the hungry and to tend the sick, and teach the young, and shelter the homeless....”⁶⁹ He viewed the basic necessities as something every human being had the right to, further influencing his policy decisions to remain in Vietnam, which was at risk of falling under communism without American assistance. Furthermore, he understood to be true that a communist Vietnam could be a threat to national security. He saw the United States as the world’s bodyguard and protector of more vulnerable nations, and the power of the U.S. as a “very vital shield.”⁷⁰ Ultimately, Johnson’s worldview of the U.S. being a strong, reliable nation committed to the betterment and protection of people continuously pushed his decisions to escalate the war, as he saw no other choice. Johnson’s understanding of the world around him, undoubtedly influenced by his own knowledge and experiences, contributed to his many consequential policy decisions throughout the Vietnam War.

Emotional Intelligence

⁶⁸ George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War* (Austin: University of Texas, 1994), 10, Google eBooks, accessed November 13, 2014.

⁶⁹ <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27116>

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Johnson is as an exceptional example of a president whose keen political skill and strong cognitive capabilities were overshadowed by emotional shortcomings. He serves as a warning for future presidents on the importance of emotional intelligence, as he was known to have “major mood swings that affected his policy judgments.”⁷¹ Insecurities over his policymaking, especially when it came to the Vietnam War, drove Johnson to endlessly pry his aides and advisers for information, potentially distorting information he received. The existence of the notorious Tuesday Lunch Groups shows how Johnson preferred to personally consult those who he believed were loyal, although “He forced top aides and officials who dissented on Vietnam to leave his administration.”⁷² Johnson was not very open to criticism or dissenting opinions, and this may have had an impact on his disorganized advisory structure. He equated policy dissent with disloyalty, and “he was secretive, hypersensitive to criticism, demanding of total loyalty from his staff, and willing to manipulate people as it served his purpose.”⁷³

His emotional intelligence encumbered his leadership, as he was not able to separate his feelings and emotions from the policymaking itself, and often responded to criticism by discrediting its source.⁷⁴ In the case of the Vietnam War, he saw the war as a personal challenge and feared that failure in Vietnam would equate his leadership with failure. In a conversation with Eugene McCarthy on February 1, 1966, he said, “...I know we oughtn’t to be there, but I can’t get out. I just can’t be the architect of surrender.”⁷⁵

Cognitive Style

⁷¹ Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 287.

⁷² Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 242.

⁷³ Robert W. Sellen, “Old Assumptions versus New Realities: Lyndon Johnson and Foreign Policy,” *International Journal* 28, no. 2 (1973): 208, accessed November 11, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40201113>.

⁷⁴ Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 283.

⁷⁵ “Johnson Conversation with Eugene McCarthy on Feb 01, 1966,” Miller Center, accessed November 10, 2014, <http://millercenter.org/presidentialrecordings/lbj-wh6602.01-9602>.

Despite many of Johnson's emotional shortcomings that may have clouded his judgment in foreign affairs, Johnson possessed significant knowledge and understanding of the inner workings of domestic policymaking. His experience with foreign policy decision-making was limited, however, pushing him to navigate through complicated decisions with understanding gained by his deference to several key aides and advisers. As a whole, Johnson had a strong cognitive style, but in the case of Vietnam, often processed information on a simplistic level. Although general cognitive understanding was not a problem for him, "Johnson frequently utilized simple analogies-especially ones involving Munich-to understand events abroad, and this heavily influenced his early decision-making on Vietnam."⁷⁶ This over-simplification of a very complex and difficult situation in Vietnam may have endangered his ability to make well-informed decisions with the large amount of information available to him at the time. Johnson toed a dangerous line of oversimplification, as well as his tendency to view major foreign policy decisions through an American prism, potentially exposing him to the use of incorrect analogies.⁷⁷

Organizational Capacity

Perhaps one of the biggest shortcomings of Johnson's presidency, organizational capacity is a critical component of effective leadership, and without which, a president may fall prey to making ill-advised decisions. Johnson lacked the political ardor for policy discussion that his predecessor had, and "As a creature of Congress... he was not as attuned to structural or managerial issues,"⁷⁸ failing to create a structural advisory system that would have greatly

⁷⁶ Stephen Benedict Dyson and Thomas Preston, "Individual Characteristics of Political Leaders and the Use of Analogy in Foreign Policy Decision Making," *Political Psychology* 27, no. 2 (2006): 280, accessed November 14, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3792441>.

⁷⁷ Dyson and Preston, "Individual Characteristics," 280.

⁷⁸ Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult, "White House Structure and Decision Making: Elaborating the Standard Model," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2005): 305, accessed November 16, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552684>.

benefitted him with Vietnam policy analysis. Aside from the previously mentioned tendency to discourage dissent in policy discussions, Johnson's advisory system was "organizationally chaotic,"⁷⁹ as he was inconsistent with meeting with national security advisers and often relied on informal discussions to chart his policies, such as his notorious Tuesday Lunch Group. Johnson inherited the less structured system that John F. Kennedy created, notable by its lack of a Chief of Staff and flexibility, placing the president at the center of the "spokes of the wheel" with several aides reporting directly to him.⁸⁰ Johnson's style of decision-making, however, soon proved that this sort of system was ill-suited for him as president. As a strong and sometimes intimidating presence coupled with exceptional political skill, Johnson would have benefitted from a more structured advisory system, allowing all policy advisers to voice their sometimes unfavorable opinions.

The lack of an organized structure for policymaking and analysis made Johnson vulnerable to making poorly-considered decisions. Instead of discussing new potential policy alternatives and their repercussions, Johnson was more focused on squashing criticisms of his policies, and the politics of policymaking itself. While he was adamant about meeting with various advisers from across the political spectrum for consultation, Johnson's disorganized advisory system facilitated a degree of competition between his closest advisers. This environment in the White House could have isolated the president from dissenting views, shown by the fact that, "In addition to major personnel changes, there were changes as the war progressed in the relative influence of the people who remained."⁸¹ The lack of an open system for policy critique and analysis created an environment where his closest advisers chose to deliver what the president wanted to hear in order to maintain their influence, rather than what

⁷⁹ Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 246.

⁸⁰ Walcott and Hult, "White House Structure," 305.

⁸¹ Herring, *Different Kind of War*, 11.

the president should have heard. Aside from Johnson's inability to create a structurally beneficial system, he "failed to press for additional alternatives or questions incisively the options presented to him."⁸²

The largest buildup of military forces during the Vietnam War took place between 1965 and 1966, following Johnson's announcement to the public on July 28, 1965 of his decision to Grant General Westmoreland's request for more troops.⁸³ This announcement followed a week of intense planning and debate within the White House, featuring frequent meetings between Johnson and his closest foreign policy advisers, most often including Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, McGeorge Bundy, and George Ball. On July 16, 1965, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara went to Vietnam in order to meet with Westmoreland and other leaders to see firsthand the status of the war in order to properly gauge the commander's request. He returned on July 21, beginning a week-long series of daily meetings between Johnson and his inner circle, where they gathered sometimes multiple times a day in order to discuss the ongoing strategy in Vietnam.⁸⁴ This focus is significant to Johnson's organizational capacity, as he was willing to think deeply and critically analyze his next move before committing significant military and financial resources to the war in Vietnam.

While Johnson insisted on such thorough planning prior to making a decision on whether to grant Westmoreland's request, which was supported by McNamara, the system through which this planning took place was not the most effective. Johnson stressed the need for confidentiality, unintentionally marginalizing key figures in the process such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff, due to the fact that he "carefully limited his advisory circle to prevent unauthorized disclosures of

⁸² Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 247.

⁸³ <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27116>

⁸⁴ http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/secretaryofdefense/OSDSeries_Vol6.pdf

policy discussions to the media and his political foes.”⁸⁵ Aside from McNamara’s hawkish stance and understanding that the only possible solution to the problem was to increase troops, Lyndon Johnson’s only real opponent to escalation was George Ball, voicing his concerns about increasing military involvement. This is a positive step in light of the rest of his presidency, however, his lack of outside involvement in discussions and personal investment in the war did not sufficiently prepare him for the cost of lives and billions of dollars. Ultimately, many aspects of Lyndon Johnson’s personality and leadership style predisposed him to having poor organizational capacity, and impeded his ability to carefully consider the merits of policies presented to him. This characteristic of leadership is one of the most important aspects to making a successful decision-making process in the White House, something that Lyndon Johnson is not known for in the case of Vietnam.

Public Communication

The most visible aspect of presidential leadership is public communication, an area that Johnson did not excel in. Following in the shadow of John F. Kennedy, who was notably well-versed in the realm of public communication and charisma, Johnson struggled to produce inspiring and exciting speeches, and was especially tense when facing questions from the media. As a man who was commonly known to be compelling and lively in person, he seemed uncomfortable on camera, “and so he came across as studied and wooden with a ‘fixed periodic smile.’”⁸⁶ Often, Johnson employed metaphors and analogies to explain his policies to the public, partially influenced from his down-home Texas background where a personal style of

⁸⁵ Ibid p 14

⁸⁶ Warren I. Cohen and Nancy B. Tucker, ed., *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy 1963-1968* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 19, Google eBooks, accessed November 15, 2014.

communication was effective.⁸⁷ Public communication was important in the case of the Vietnam War, as his job was both to lead the country's foreign policy in the region, while shaping public opinion and garnering public support at home. However, this aspect of presidential leadership is less involved with the decision-making itself, and rather, is aimed toward selling the decisions after they have already been made.

Vision

Johnson's vision was strong and coherent when it came to domestic policy and the shaping of "The Great Society," but this aspect of leadership was lacking when it came to the Vietnam War. He retained a degree of uncertainty and pessimism from the outset of his unexpected presidency, made clear when he admitted to his National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy in May, 1964, "I don't see what we can ever hope to get out of there with once we're committed... I don't think it's worth fighting for and I don't think we can get out."⁸⁸ Aside from his general goal of protecting the Southeast Asian region from falling under communist control, Johnson did not specify any outcome he expected from this involvement other than "success," nor a time table for the escalation of military involvement. He responded to a reporter's question during the July 1965 news conference stating the uncertainty of the situation, when he said, "I would not want to prophesy or predict whether it would be a matter of months or years or decades."⁸⁹ Had Johnson possessed a more clear vision for the war in Vietnam, he may have avoided an extensive buildup of military forces in the region and directed his policies toward a more direct outcome.

⁸⁷ Dror Yuravliker, "'Peace without Conquest': Lyndon Johnson's Speech of April 7, 1965," *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 36, no. 3 (2006): 461, accessed November 13, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552240>.

⁸⁸ "Telephone Conversation Between President Johnson and the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)," U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian, accessed November 18, 2014, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v27/d53>.

⁸⁹ "The President's News Conference (July 28, 1965)," The American Presidency Project, accessed November 20, 2014, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=27116>.

Political Skill

Johnson is one of the most politically skilled presidents to hold office. His skill often resembled political cajoling, evidenced by his keen ability to sway others to fall in line with his ideas. His political adeptness was seasoned during his many years in Congress serving in the House, then as Senate majority whip, minority leader, and finally, one of the most effective majority leaders the U.S. has seen.⁹⁰ His experience in Congress gained him extensive knowledge in the legislative process, and fertilized his keen persuasive capabilities, along with his ability to forge coalitions and reach bipartisan agreements. This experience undoubtedly proved to be invaluable when it came to pursuing his ambitious domestic policy program, and may have even helped him gain congressional support for some initial Vietnam policies. Johnson utilized the sense of urgency created by unprovoked attacks in the Tonkin Gulf in order to facilitate the passage of Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, granting him the authority to take any necessary action to repel communist aggression in Southeast Asia.⁹¹ Johnson understood the importance of personal, one-on-one politics, but this aspect of leadership may have done more harm to his decision-making process rather than help it, as he was able to convince others of his sometimes incorrect convictions about the situation in Vietnam.

Conclusion

Lyndon B. Johnson's foreign policy leadership and decision-making leading up to the engagement in the Vietnam War epitomizes the critical influence that emotional intelligence, cognitive style, and organizational capacity have on the decision-making process. His weak emotional intelligence contributed to the structure of the advisory system and the flow of information in the White House, causing him to be shielded from information that may have

⁹⁰ Sellen, "Old Assumptions versus New Realities," 207.

⁹¹ VanDeMark, *Into the Quagmire*, 18.

opposed his policy intents, and placed more importance on loyalty rather than merit in his advisory circle. Johnson, famously known for being an avid reader of history and ill-prepared in the realm of foreign policy, often resorted to oversimplifying the serious short-term and long-term effects of engaging in Vietnam. As a result, Johnson failed to implement a strongly structured decision-making process, especially regarding the consequential decision-making that went into the Vietnam War. Without this important characteristic, Johnson fell prey to making decisions that were not carefully enough weighed and he failed to perceive potential long-term consequences of the Vietnam War.

PERSIAN GULF WAR

In 1990, tensions in the Middle East reached a breaking point, leading to the largest American military engagement since the Vietnam War. Iraq's economic crisis following the seven year war between Iraq and Iran drove Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait, both due to its weak military capabilities and location with access to rich resources.⁹² Prior to the invasion, the United States under the authority of George H. W. Bush made attempts at diplomacy with Iraq in order to moderate the regime's policies, proving to be unsuccessful upon Iraq's unexpected invasion of its neighboring country. On August 2, 1990, an overwhelming force of over 140,000 Iraqi troops invaded the small country⁹³, quickly securing Kuwait City, air and oil fields, Warba and Bubayan islands, among other key locations.⁹⁴ This act crossed boundaries of international law, leading to immediate condemnation from most of the international community. George H.W. Bush exercised his adept diplomatic skill when he immediately reached out to leaders all over the world in order to form a coalition to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, leading to swift multilateral action to be taken against the regime.

⁹² <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/essays/biography/5>

⁹³ <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=103010>

⁹⁴ <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/gulf-war>

The same day of Iraq's initial invasion, the United Nations Security Council issued its first resolution regarding the conflict, Resolution 660, condemning the Iraqi invasion and demanding its immediate withdrawal.⁹⁵ Upon Iraq's failure to comply with Resolution 660, Resolution 661 was passed on August 6, 1990, imposing sanctions on Iraq, followed by Resolution 662 declaring Iraq's annexation of Kuwait to be null and void.⁹⁶ Fear of Iraqi troops going further to invade Saudi Arabia and its vast oil resources led George H.W. Bush to order land, sea, and air forces to help defend Saudi Arabia, marking the beginning of Operation Desert Shield on August 7, 1990.⁹⁷ After several UN Security Council resolutions were ignored by the Iraqi regime which appeared to have no plans to withdraw from Kuwait, Resolution 678 was passed on November 29, 1990, giving Iraq until January 15, 1991 to comply with all previous resolutions.⁹⁸ Resolution 678 granted member states the authority "to use all necessary means to uphold and implement resolution 660 (1990) and all subsequent relevant resolutions..."⁹⁹ As the deadline approached for Iraq to withdraw all forces from Kuwait, President Bush obtained permission from Congress to engage military forces in order to bring Iraq into compliance with Resolution 678 and all other related resolutions.¹⁰⁰

Congress passed the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution on January 12, 1991, and the president signed it into law on January 14, 1991.¹⁰¹ The deadline passed without any action from Iraq's regime, leading to the beginning of Operation Desert Storm on January 17, 1991.¹⁰² The 36-member coalition led by the United States engaged in crippling air strikes against Iraq, attacking strategic targets to weaken the regime's large

⁹⁵ [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/660\(1990\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/660(1990))

⁹⁶ [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/662\(1990\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/662(1990))

⁹⁷ <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=103010>

⁹⁸ [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/678\(1990\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/678(1990))

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ http://www.military.com/Resources/HistorySubmittedFileView?file=history_gulfwar.htm

¹⁰¹ <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/102/hjres77/text>

¹⁰² <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/essays/biography/5>

military's capabilities.¹⁰³ On February 24, the coalition engaged in a ground war, leading to a ceasefire being made after only 100 hundred hours of battle.¹⁰⁴ President Bush addressed the nation on February 27, 1991 about the successful liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi forces, stating: "exactly 100 hours since ground operations commenced and 6 weeks since the start of Desert Storm, all United States and coalition forces will suspend offensive combat operations."¹⁰⁵ This was a momentous success both for the international community as well as for President Bush, who proved his ability to forge cooperation between many nations in order to reach a swift and decisive victory. The Gulf War is an instance of positive foreign policy decision making, and through analysis of Bush's decision making, it will show which characteristics contributed to such a success.

GEORGE H. W BUSH

George Herbert Walker Bush, like many leaders who filled his office, firmly believed in the United States as a leading nation in the world, charged with a vast array of responsibilities to "maintain robust armed forces, contain the Soviet Union, combat aggression, work with U.S. allies, and promote free trade internationally."¹⁰⁶ His view of the U.S. was more global in scope, leading him to define his long-term foreign policy goal for the U.S. as a "new world order" characterized by international peace, democracy, free trade, and collective security...¹⁰⁷ President bush perceived diplomacy to be of utmost importance for the U.S. in an increasingly globalized world, both politically and economically, and understood that both U.S. and international stability "required great caution and care with regard to specific policy

¹⁰³ http://www.military.com/Resources/HistorySubmittedFileView?file=history_gulfwar.htm

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-5530>

¹⁰⁶ The Conservative as Realist, 235

¹⁰⁷ Ibid 242

initiatives.”¹⁰⁸ Bush’s focus on international relations in the context of U.S. foreign policy drove him to exercise extreme prudence in many cases of foreign policymaking, and encouraged him to “set a precedent for a ‘new era’ that would encourage international cooperation to deter aggression.”¹⁰⁹ By identifying clear goals in the Middle East region from the outset, he was able to push for a viable exit strategy that avoided an indefinite occupation with unattainable goals, which would undoubtedly perpetuate further instability in the region, and even the world.¹¹⁰

Emotional Intelligence

President H. W. Bush was relatively emotionally steady, unhindered by any emotionally-driven reactions or lapses in professional leadership. He was aware of his own inclinations, possessing “an acute awareness of his need to impose self-control and reflection on himself when making decisions.”¹¹¹ However, it was clear that Bush contained a strong degree of dislike toward Saddam Hussein in the wake of the Kuwaiti invasion, triggering his anger “to such a point that his rhetoric made his own advisers uncomfortable.”¹¹² His apparent outrage toward the invasion of Kuwait was clear in his famous ambiguous statement on August 5, 1990: “This will not stand. This will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait.”¹¹³ Although this statement triggered degrees of confusion among what action he was insinuating the United States was to take against Iraq, there are no indications that his foreign policy decisions were driven by anger-fueled whims. His ability to recognize his shortcomings of being “impatient, with a tendency to make decisions impulsively,” led him to rely closely on senior advisors, including National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft.¹¹⁴ His self-awareness enabled him to mitigate his sometimes

¹⁰⁸ Ibid 235

¹⁰⁹ Prudence and Presidential Ethics, 68

¹¹⁰ Prudence 69

¹¹¹ J. Patrick Dobel, Prudence and Presidential Ethics, 61

¹¹² Steve A. Yetiv, Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making and the Persian Gulf War

¹¹³ <http://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2138>

¹¹⁴ Dobel, 60

emotional reactions to Saddam Hussein, who he characterized to himself and others as being evil.¹¹⁵ George H. W. Bush is an example of a president who understands a potentially crippling shortcoming in his leadership, and utilizes his available resources to turn conflict-driven anger into resolution-seeking passion.

Cognitive Style

Bush's impressive background and experience in many areas of public service, including the House of Representatives, United Nations, CIA, and as Vice President, granted him significant experience in foreign policy which allowed him to delve into complex foreign policy issues. As president, he was closely involved in deliberations during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, but "concentrated on the formulation of high strategy and general policy principles while leaving it to subordinates to fill in the details."¹¹⁶ While he was not closely involved in the abstracts, his experience taught him lessons against falling prey to micromanagement, similar to Lyndon B. Johnson during the Vietnam War.¹¹⁷ Similarly, Bush encouraged meaningful discourse during meetings with his advisors, as he "did not like idealistic or overly theoretical discussions... or commit himself to unattainable objectives."¹¹⁸ He approached foreign policy as "a hands-on, detail-oriented decision maker with an established strategic vision,"¹¹⁹ allowing him to receive all available information and engage in policy analysis in order to reflect the goals and values of his administration. While he did occasionally fall victim to using simplified analogies comparing Saddam Hussein to Hitler, or in terms of "good versus evil; right versus wrong,"¹²⁰ he understood the complexity of the situation, and was focused on carefully weighing all available

¹¹⁵ Peter Liberman, Punitiveness and U.S. Elite Support for the 1991 Persian Gulf War, 24.

¹¹⁶ Crabb and Mulcahy, George Bush's Management Style and Operation Desert Storm, 255

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid 256

¹¹⁹ The Structures of National Security Decision Making by Newmann, 282

¹²⁰ Quoted in Dobel, Prudence, 61

options; willing to use force “if it could be done in a prudent manner.”¹²¹ Bush’s ability to absorb a lot of complicated information gave him a firm grasp on his administration’s policies toward Iraq’s removal from Kuwait, bringing in his past experiences to exercise a policymaking agenda of “prudence.”

Organizational Capacity

President Bush exemplified strong organizational capacity during the Persian Gulf Crisis, and it became one of the biggest contributing factors to his successful decision-making process. He carefully selected advisors who had experience from serving in previous administrations, and adamantly stressed that “No departments or points of view were to be excluded.”¹²² During and leading up to the start Persian Gulf War, Bush favored a more informal process of decision-making, allowing him to openly interact with all of his advisors without dominating discussions and leading to a potential for groupthink. Bush’s core group of national security advisors was called the “Gang of Eight,” and through their experiences, “they learned that even deeper collegiality could be developed with a more informal process,” even featuring things such as weekly interagency breakfast meetings.¹²³ Bush relied on his staff, most notably his close advisor Brent Scowcroft, to help organize discussions and direct the meetings to mediate the sometimes disorganized and chaotic nature that resulted from his preference for informality.¹²⁴

President Bush’s hands-on approach toward decision-making contributed to his success with a less structured decision-making process, contrasting from presidents such as Lyndon B. Johnson, who did not particularly prefer complex policy analysis or discussion. Although Bush did prefer the informality of policy discussion, he did not ignore the need for formal National Security Council meetings, encouraging participation from all agencies and forging meaningful

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Newmann 282

¹²³ Newmann 284

¹²⁴ Dobel 64

discussion. Bush sought to examine every angle of the situation in Kuwait before acting, and “insisted on the full participation from the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, and demanded an active professional military voice in the group” in order to generate creative ideas for the situation, while keeping in mind the many costs of military action.¹²⁵

Bush’s appointment of close friends to key advisement positions allowed him to operate through both his informal and formal processes of decision-making, avoiding potential rivalries within the decision-making circle that could have hindered debate.¹²⁶ Although there was a certain degree of disorganization that came with the informal decision-making circle, “Bush made sure that the informal process would make the formal processes run more smoothly, not replace them.”¹²⁷ Despite the fact that the National Security Council “convened relatively infrequently...Bush leaned heavily upon its members for council,” showing the importance that he placed on personal discussions with all of his foreign policy advisors.¹²⁸

The period of time between Iraq’s initial invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and the U.S. commitment of air and ground forces which began on January 17, 1991 featured a diplomatic convergence of states, partially attributed to the president’s considerable diplomatic skills. He pushed his closest advisors to continuously seek policy alternatives while maintaining clear goals, which included maintaining a united Iraq while limiting Saddam’s offensive power,¹²⁹ without becoming committed to a long-term engagement in hostilities. His ability to account for long-term implications rather than acting on a whim was demonstrated clearly by U.S. abiding by the UN Resolution’s set timeframe before military interference could be used. Overall, Bush was highly active in the realm of decision-making, and his ability to select and organize his staff,

¹²⁵ Dobel 64

¹²⁶ Newmann 298

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Crabb and Mocahey 256

¹²⁹ Dobel 69

manage the flow of information and successfully facilitate meaningful discussions significantly contributed to his success in the Persian Gulf War. Without his ability or interest to absorb vast amounts of information and analyze complex issues, his mostly informal decision-making structure would have proven to be less effective. He exercised a prudent demeanor in U.S. foreign policy, attributed to his deliberative decision-making process and attention to long and short-term consequences of military buildup in the region.

Public Communication

Taking office after a president named the “Great Communicator,” President Bush faced significant expectations of the role of rhetoric and the presidency. Bush rejected the idea of utilizing his highly visible position the same way that his predecessor did, becoming clear that “speeches, debates, public relations, image-building, and image maintenance—were not a high priority of the Bush White House.”¹³⁰ His speech delivery itself was not lacking; but rather, his aversion toward sounding phony or artificial contributed to his belief that “eloquence possessed a ‘slippery,’ demagogic quality” less suitable for leadership.¹³¹ Leading up to Operation Desert Storm, Bush’s speeches invoked heightened language against Saddam Hussein’s regime, as he said during an address to a joint session of Congress: “Saddam Hussein is literally trying to wipe a country off the face of the Earth... there is no substitute for American leadership.”¹³² Although he employed images of good and evil to publicly build the case against the Iraqi regime, Bush’s lack of ardor for public communication made him fall prey to lacking a rhetorical vision, making him appear to not have an agenda. Overall, Bush’s dislike toward the public aspect of leadership caused him to discount its importance, “relegating public rhetoric to a position of secondary

¹³⁰ The Rhetorical Presidency of George H W Bush, 3

¹³¹ Reflections of Yesterday by Wynton Hall, 540

¹³² <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-3425>

importance as something that could be more or less ignored merely because he was not Ronald Reagan.”¹³³

Vision

Bush is famously charged with the inability to grasp “the vision thing” when it came to domestic policy, portraying him to lack an agenda for the course of his presidency. He was accused of lacking an overall vision because “he did not create a public narrative that was simple, repetitive, familiar, and artistic.”¹³⁴ During a time when people were more interested in the future of domestic policy, Bush’s vision “stressed a ‘New World Order’ in which the United Nations would play an integral role in promoting freedom and democracy around the globe.”¹³⁵ When it came to the Persian Gulf, however, Bush exemplified a strong sense of vision for the future, as he communicated during an address to the nation: “Our objectives are clear: Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait... Our goal is not the conquest of Iraq. It is the liberation of Kuwait.”¹³⁶ Similarly, his communication of his vision for the “New World Order” and a “world in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice”¹³⁷ was defined in broad terms, failing to create a common idea among Americans through his rhetoric. Ultimately, it was his clear international vision that helped garner his success in the Persian Gulf, and his trust in multilateral action gave the world a newfound confidence in the United Nations and multilateral efforts to combat unprovoked aggression.

Political Skill

After the initial invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, President Bush immediately went to work utilizing his exceptional political skill in order to form a coalition against the Iraqi

¹³³ Rhetorical Presidency 6

¹³⁴ Rhetorical Presidency 21

¹³⁵ Ibid. 21

¹³⁶ <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-3428>

¹³⁷ <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-3425>

regime's aggression. His previous experiences working in public affairs gave him the confidence to exercise "'personal diplomacy,' involving frequent telephone calls and face-to-face meetings with foreign leaders."¹³⁸ He excelled in this area of leadership, evident by the successful formation of a large coalition of around 30 nations ready to resist Iraq's aggression with multilateral force. Understanding the need for both international and Congressional support in order to take action in the region, Bush cited the multilateral efforts that had already been made immediately after the invasion in his address on August 8, 1990.¹³⁹ He emphasized the need for U.S. leadership and international unity in this new era of international cooperation, and "to demonstrate U.S. internal unity to the international community... Bush periodically met with congressional leaders to discuss the conflict."¹⁴⁰ His arguments toward military action were justified by international law and the illegality of Iraq's actions, insisting that any action that is taken must be firm and resolute. Ultimately, it was Bush's adept political skill that helped form the coalition, and his emphasis on international unity that helped facilitate Congressional support.

Conclusion

The case of George Herbert Walker Bush and the Persian Gulf War is looked upon as a successful instance in foreign policymaking, due to important factors such as the brevity of the conflict and its careful utilization of multilateral efforts to resist aggression. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was a clear violation of UN Charter and it presented a substantial threat to U.S. interests, both economically and politically. The course of action that Bush led for the U.S. may have seemed clear at the time, and it could be argued that the outcome of this situation is not unique to this specific president. However, in Bush's case, he was able to diminish the potential

¹³⁸ Crabb and Mulcahy 260

¹³⁹ <http://millercenter.org/president/bush/speeches/speech-5529>

¹⁴⁰ Rhetorical Presidency 63

consequences of his sometimes wobbly emotional intelligence through self-awareness and proper delegation. His vast experience in foreign affairs and deep cognitive understanding of international relations allowed him to create a structure in the White House which benefitted him as a decision-maker, facilitated the construction of attainable goals, and propelled him to create viable options for success in the region. He created an environment suitable for a careful, deliberative decision-making process, allowing him to consider long-term implications of the conflict. Despite considerable pressure to “continue to Baghdad and finish the job,”¹⁴¹ Bush realized that his outlined goals had been met, leading to a cease-fire to be declared almost a mere seven months after the conflict’s initiation.

THE IRAQ WAR

Similar to previous cases, unforeseen circumstances changed the course of George W. Bush’s presidency, leading him to become an unexpectedly controversial wartime president. Bush’s presidency took a turn on September 11, 2001 after the deadly terrorist attacks that occurred in New York City at the hands of Al Qaeda terrorists. His policy focus quickly gravitated toward post-9/11 anti-terrorism and the protection of national security, both domestically and abroad. Shortly after the attacks, the war in Afghanistan began on October 7, 2001,¹⁴² and almost two years later, the U.S. expanded its quest for democracy and peace when it invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003.¹⁴³ President Bush gave a speech to the United Nations a year after the attacks, asking for a resolution allowing swift action to be taken against Iraq. He posed that Iraq violated all previous UN resolutions that prohibit building weapons of mass destruction, and “The conduct of the Iraqi regime is a threat to the authority of the United Nations, and a

¹⁴¹ Dobel, 69

¹⁴² “American President: A Reference Resource,” Miller Center, accessed November 10, 2014, <http://millercenter.org/president/gwbush/essays/biography/5>.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

threat to peace.”¹⁴⁴ On November 8, 2002, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1441 condemning Iraq’s lack of complicity to these resolutions, their failure to allow weapons inspections, and warned them of consequences should they continue to fail to comply.¹⁴⁵ This was only the beginning of the U.S. push toward invasion of Iraq and their attempts to win United Nations support for the endeavor.

Secretary of State Colin Powell famously addressed the UN Security Council on February 5, 2003 claiming Iraq’s material breach of Resolution 1441, and called the Council to take action against the regime in order to maintain the body’s legitimacy.¹⁴⁶ The threat of Iraq avoiding weapons inspections and the concealment of potential weapons material, along with suggested evidence at the time that Saddam Hussein had ties with terrorist groups, fueled the administration’s sentiment that action had to be taken promptly to condemn Iraq’s lack of complicity with Resolutions 1441 and 687.¹⁴⁷ By March, 2003, the Bush administration was reasonably certain of these violations, and was then able to rely on the 1990 Resolution 678 to “use all necessary means” to enforce “relevant resolutions and to restore international peace and security in the area...”¹⁴⁸ The U.S. invasion that began the war in March 2003 was forged by these convictions, some of which were not entirely conclusive at the time of the invasion. Therefore, the invasion of Iraq is seen as one of the most controversial foreign policy decisions in recent U.S. history, although there is much speculation that the decision was made with as

¹⁴⁴ “George W. Bush Remarks to the U.N. (September 12, 2002),” Presidential Rhetoric, accessed December 14, 2014, <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.12.02.html>.

¹⁴⁵ “Resolution 1441 (2002),” United Nations Security Council, accessed November 23, 2014, <http://www.un.org/depts/unmovic/documents/1441.pdf>.

¹⁴⁶ “Remarks to the United Nations Security Council (February 5, 2003),” U.S. Department of State Archive, accessed November 23, 2014, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/former/powell/remarks/2003/17300.htm>.

¹⁴⁷ John Yoo, “International Law and the War in Iraq,” *The American Journal of International Law* 97 (2003): 565-6, accessed November 22, 2014.

¹⁴⁸ “Resolution 678 (1990),” United Nations Security Council, accessed November 18, 2014, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/575/28/IMG/NR057528.pdf?OpenElement>.

much information available at the time as possible.¹⁴⁹ The decision to engage the U.S. into another conflict abroad on the basis of implementing democracy and protecting the world from a rogue state with mass weapons capability was not enough, however, to win the full support from the UN and the international community. During the period leading up to the decision to invade, the Bush administration was more focused on the strategies in which they could invade, rather than the necessity of such an invasion.

Since the invasion, it has become clear that there were some shortcomings in the recovery and analysis of intelligence relating to Iraq's possession of weapon of mass destruction. The U.S. acted as a hegemon in this situation, as the "UN's failure to endorse the conflict meant that from the outset the USA lacked the sort of broadly based support and legitimacy that distinguished its position..."¹⁵⁰ After invasion, as more reports came out doubting the existence of weapons of mass destruction, justification for the Iraq War shifted to Hussein's possession of biological weapons, repression and violence against the Iraqi people, and the inconclusive evidence of Iraq having ties to al Qaeda.¹⁵¹ By using the imminent threat on national security and the legality of self-defense stated in the United Nations Charter, the war in Iraq became a controversial aspect of George Bush's foreign policy, and a crucial component to the "War on Terror" with no clear vision as to what the U.S. wanted to gain from its involvement. An Iraqi survey group headed by David Kay went into Iraq in search of WMD'S in October, 2003, only to find that there was no clear evidence that the Hussein regime had taken steps toward developing nuclear weapons or

¹⁴⁹ Richard K. Betts, "Two Faces of Intelligence Failure: September 11 and Iraq's Missing WMD," *Political Science Quarterly* 122, no. 4 (2007-2008): 596-98, accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20202928>.

¹⁵⁰ Mark Beeson and Richard Higgott, "Hegemony, Institutionalism, and US Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice in Comparative Historical Perspective," *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 7 (2005): 1184, accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4017810>.

¹⁵¹ James P. Pfiffner, "Did Bush Mislead the Country in His Arguments for War with Iraq?," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (2004): 39, 37, accessed November 13, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552561>.

related materials.¹⁵² No report has shown that there was clear evidence of WMDs at the time of invasion, calling to question the process through which the Bush administration based its very critical foreign policy decisions.

GEORGE W. BUSH

In the case of the Iraq War, George Bush's worldview was, in many ways, influenced by history, dating back to the 1991 Persian Gulf War and consistent attempts at nuclear non-proliferation of Iraq under the authority of his father. Bush cited Hussein's failure to comply with many UN Resolutions passed between 1991 and 1998 in his remarks to the UN on September 12, 2002,¹⁵³ using them as leverage to push for new resolutions to condemn Iraq's defiance. However, he saw Iraq's violations to be more than the possession of weapons of mass destruction and chemical weapons. Bush included Iraq's refusal to comply with UN Resolution 688, condemning repression of the people, claiming, "Iraq continues to commit extremely grave violations of human rights, and that the regime's repression is all pervasive."¹⁵⁴ The unexpected terrorist attacks of 9/11 may have distorted Bush's view of how to attain U.S. security in the world, but he cited the triumph of liberating the people of Afghanistan to be a positive outcome of U.S. engagement in that region during his State of the Union Address in 2002.¹⁵⁵ In that same address, he concluded that states including North Korea, Iran, and Iraq, "and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world."¹⁵⁶ Ultimately, Bush viewed the U.S. role in the world to be both a government watchdog and protector of the people all over the world. He saw rogue states that made efforts to develop mass weaponry as the biggest threats

¹⁵² Pfiffner, "Did Bush Mislead," 37.

¹⁵³ <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.12.02.html>

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/sou012902.htm>

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

to international security, and believed that even without backing from the UN, it was up to the U.S. to maintain peace, stability, and security within the world at all costs.

Emotional intelligence

When it came to foreign policymaking and decisions concerning the Iraq war, President Bush exhibited composed confidence, exceeding the emotional intelligence of presidents such as Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon. However, he did display a degree of impulsiveness, stubbornness, and a tendency to take criticisms of his policies personally. He described himself as “a gut player,”¹⁵⁷ allowing instincts to guide much of his decision-making, and believed “his faith provides a lens through which to see the world as it is... and is the source of his willingness to take bold risks, even in face of severe criticism...”¹⁵⁸ His reliance on instinct may have pushed him to make incorrect assessments on Iraq’s possession of weapons of mass destruction or any connections between al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein, despite any evidence against it. His inclination to place a degree of importance on instinct rather than fact could have hindered his ability to objectively analyze information available to him while planning and executing his consequential foreign policies.

Bush created an environment of wishful thinking within his decision-making circle by not actively encouraging policy dissent or analysis, which focused more on how to go to war and left out whether or not the war should happen. Running on gut reactions and “cherry-picked” intelligence information, Bush “went to war without requesting-and evidently without being influenced by-any strategic-level intelligence assessments on any aspect of Iraq.”¹⁵⁹ Bush’s

¹⁵⁷ Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 421 (page numbers referred to digital version), Scribd.com, accessed January 5, 2015.

¹⁵⁸ D. Jason Berggren and Nicol C. Rae, “Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush: Faith, Foreign Policy, and an Evangelical Presidential Style,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2006): 626, accessed December 22, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552257>.

¹⁵⁹ Paul R. Pillar, “Intelligence, Policy, and the War in Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 2 (2006): 19, accessed December 12, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20031908>.

dislike toward constructive criticism of his policies or questioning of the merits of going to war may have influenced the information he received from his closest advisers, shielding him from information that may have benefitted his policy decisions. Had he been less personally invested in the conflict and more willing to measure facts which either supported or refuted his inclinations, it is possible that he would have developed different means to reach the unclearly specified ends.

Cognitive Style

Due to a lack of experience in foreign affairs, Bush deferred to his competent foreign policy advisers for information regarding Iraq instead of taking a hands-on approach, sometimes deducing intricate problems into simple, clear-cut frameworks from which he could choose. He failed to understand the complexity of Iraq, “seeing international problems in basic... black and white, good versus evil, civilized versus uncivilized, terms.”¹⁶⁰ Secretary of State Colin Powell noted that Bush “asked some general factual questions but tended not to be very probing...”¹⁶¹ He thought about issues pertaining to Iraq in broad, simpler terms, preferring “short memos, oral briefings, and crisp meetings.”¹⁶² The president relied on his staff for the implementation of his broad policy goals, as he saw his job to be chief policy setter and executive decision maker.

His inexperience with foreign policy and disinterest in complex policymaking predisposed him to have “a tendency to act without sufficient deliberation, an unwillingness to admit the complexity of many policy issues, and a tendency to consider only a narrow range of alternatives.”¹⁶³ His lacking cognitive style was also perpetuated by the fact that he saw his

¹⁶⁰ Berggren and Rae, “Faith, Foreign Policy,” 625.

¹⁶¹ Bob Woodward *Plan of Attack* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 103, Scribd.com, accessed January 5, 2015.

¹⁶² James P. Pfiffner, “The First MBA President: George Bush as Public Administrator,” *Public Administration Review* 67, no. 1 (2007): 7, accessed December 28, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4624535>.

¹⁶³ Pfiffner, “First MBA President,” 7-8.

position to be similar to a chief executive officer who is “able to make decisions quickly and leave the details up to his team,”¹⁶⁴ excluding him from the process of deep policy analysis and measuring potential implications. Bush’s capability to understand and base his decisions off of a plethora of complex information available to him was perceivably hindered both by the organization of his White House and his lack of probing inquisition, which might have benefitted him when making decisions regarding Iraq. He was not sufficiently attentive to the need for clear-cut goals in the region, which made him susceptible to the indefinite occupation that his father had strived to avoid over a decade prior.

Organizational Capacity

President Bush foreign policymaking was hindered most by his lacking organizational capacity. Despite his ability to appoint a highly qualified cabinet and series of aides to help shape and enact policies, he employed a less than effective process of managing them. Being the first president to hold a Master’s degree in Business Administration, he favored a hierarchical, top-down approach of governance in which information flowed from the bottom up, reaching him in the form of already formed options and alternatives in which he could consider.¹⁶⁵ His dislike toward policy debate contributed to the formation of this hierarchical management style in the White House, and he failed to create a structured system of policy and information management that might have benefitted him in the decisions leading up to engaging in Iraq. The effects of his uninquisitive nature were exacerbated by the fact that “the policy process involved in Iraq policy was run by a small, tightly controlled group of loyalists...”¹⁶⁶ Secretary State Colin Powell

¹⁶⁴ Pfiffner, “First MBA President,” 7.

¹⁶⁵ Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 285.

¹⁶⁶ Patrick J. Haney, “Foreign-Policy Advising: Models and Mysteries from the Bush Administration,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2005): 296, accessed January 13, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552683>.

remarked that “Huge issues were never brought to his-or the president’s-attention...”¹⁶⁷ and many officials perceived that “his White House does not adhere to any regularized policy development process.”¹⁶⁸ Had there been means through which to develop available information and options in an open and analytical environment, his policy options and decisions may have turned out to be very different.

The president’s failure to consult outside opinions and the filtering of unfavorable information from entering discussion was a severe shortcoming in the decision-making process leading up to Iraq. Intelligence received was politically skewed, as “It was clear that the Bush administration would frown on or ignore analysis that called into question a decision to go to war...”¹⁶⁹ By creating the top-down structure in his White House, Bush inevitably placed himself in a bubble, with information often being diverted from him, or information being taken directly to him without prior review.¹⁷⁰ Along with this, meetings between Bush and his “War Cabinet” were aimed toward forging agreements rather than closely examining any potential disagreements. This organization could have contributed to an environment of groupthink within Bush’s decision-making circle, and instead of asking the CIA for intelligence to disprove any connection between Hussein, al Qaeda, or WMD, “Bush administration repeatedly called on the intelligence community to uncover more material that would contribute to the case for war.”¹⁷¹

Without structured discussions between Bush and his advisers where everyone openly discussed potential consequences and achieved a clearly-defined consensus on their goals, a tendency toward wishful thinking occurred, and “Not enough attention had been given either to

¹⁶⁷ Bob Woodward, *The War Within: A Secret White House History 2006-2008* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 84, Scribd.com, January 2, 2015.

¹⁶⁸ Pfiffner, “First MBA President,” 8.

¹⁶⁹ Pillar, “Intelligence, Policy,” 22.

¹⁷⁰ Edwards and Wayne, *Presidential Leadership*, 237.

¹⁷¹ Pillar, “Intelligence, Policy,” 23.

nonmilitary options or the aftermath of a military conquest.”¹⁷² Bush’s October 7, 2002 speech which preceded Congress passing an authorization to use force in Iraq claimed that “confronting the threat posed by Iraq is crucial to winning the war on terror,”¹⁷³ utilizing his “war on terror” platform as an ends that would justify the means. His lack of a deliberative decision-making process contributed to the creation of detrimentally broad goals with no decisive means for victory, ranging from the elimination of WMD, liberating the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein’s regime, and combatting terrorism.¹⁷⁴ President Bush serves as a warning for presidents who do not develop a structured and efficient hierarchy for policymaking in the White House, which allows relevant and necessary information to flow in, whether it falls in line with the president’s policy goals or not.

Public Communication

President Bush was not a notable public communicator throughout his presidency; however, he utilized this aspect of the office to push the “rally around the flag” effect and sense of nationalism that undoubtedly existed in the aftermath of 9/11. Bush often publicly employed 9/11 as a fearful example of what could be repeated should no action be taken against Saddam Hussein’s pursuits of a nuclear weapon, as he said in his remarks to the UN on September 12, 2002: “And if an emboldened regime were to supply these weapons to terrorist allies, then the attacks of September the 11th would be a prelude to far greater horrors.”¹⁷⁵ Leading up to the engagement of troops in Iraq, Bush made several notable speeches on the premise of the war,

¹⁷² Colin Powell and Tony Koltz, *It Worked for Me: In Life and Leadership* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012), chap. 34, Scribd.com, accessed January 14, 2015.

¹⁷³ <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/10.7.02.html>

¹⁷⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/22/world/nation-war-pentagon-rumsfeld-says-iraq-collapsing-lists-8-objectives-war.html>

¹⁷⁵ “George W. Bush Remarks to the U.N. (September 12, 2002).”

employing “two Cold War-tested binaries: good/evil and security/peril,”¹⁷⁶ identifying the clear enemy for the public to oppose. He capitalized on the common sense of vulnerability that existed in its aftermath and the new anti-terrorism platform, and characterized Saddam Hussein as a grave threat to national peace and security with potential ties to al Qaeda. A Gallup Poll taken the day after Bush declared war in Iraq shows the public’s approval of the war to be as high as 76%, and his job approval at 71% by March 23, 2003.¹⁷⁷ He was initially successful at garnering support toward the cause in Iraq, and utilized this aspect of leadership to educate and comfort the public, while simultaneously “selling” his policies.

Vision

He did not lack a policy vision for the war in Iraq, but rather, his policy vision is charged with being too broad, focusing on overarching goals rather than realistic strategies. Bush described his goals in Iraq as to destroy Saddam Hussein’s weapon capabilities, take down the violent regime in order to free the Iraqi people from oppression, and continue to fight the War on Terror that began in Afghanistan. He described his intentions to rebuild Iraq and implement democracy after the fall of its regime in a speech on February 26, 2003, stating: “Rebuilding Iraq will require a sustained commitment... we will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more.”¹⁷⁸ This painted a picture to the American people and to the world of the future of this war, but at the same time, “he risked having a vision that was unattainable or even counterproductive.”¹⁷⁹ His lack of a time frame for operations in Iraq created an environment of

¹⁷⁶ Kevin Coe et al., “No Shades of Gray: The Binary Discourse of George W. Bush and an Echoing Press,” *Journal of Communication* 54, no. 2 (2006): 236, accessed January 2, 2015, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2004.tb02626.x/pdf>.

¹⁷⁷ “Seventy-Two Percent of Americans Support War Against Iraq,” Gallup, accessed December 28, 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/8038/seventytwo-percent-americans-support-war-against-iraq.aspx>.

¹⁷⁸ “George W. Bush on the Future of Iraq,” Presidential Rhetoric, accessed January 2, 2015, <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/02.26.03.html>.

¹⁷⁹ Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 204.

fatigue among Americans, evident by his gradual decrease of public approval and criticisms of the merits of the Iraq War. While vision did not directly influence the process by which Bush made his decisions, it deterred him from making specific, short-term goals, and drove him to focus too much on the “big picture,” something that he might have deemed to be impossible had he scrutinized it more closely.

Political Skill

Bush’s political skill and ability to convince others of his policies can be observed on two levels: with Congress and with the American people. He called upon Congress to grant him the legal authority to go to war in Iraq during his speech on October 7, 2002, just days before they were set to vote on the White House’s proposed use-of-force resolution.¹⁸⁰ With the 2002 midterm elections nearing, and the potential threats posed by Iraq fresh in American voters’ minds, Bush was confident “that Congress was virtually certain to grant its request.”¹⁸¹ He invoked the language of national unity and a sense of duty during his speech when he said, “The resolution will tell the United Nations, and all nations, that America speaks with one voice... I’m confident [Members of Congress] will fully consider the facts, and their duties.”¹⁸² This maneuver proved to be successful by the passage of the Authorization for Use of Military Force against Iraq Resolution of 2002, enacted on October 16, 2002.¹⁸³ This historical resolution ultimately granted the president authority to use the Armed Forces “as he determines to be necessary and appropriate” in order to protect national security and enforce U.N. Security

¹⁸⁰ “George W. Bush: The Iraqi Threat (October 7, 2002),” Presidential Rhetoric, accessed December 28, 2014, <http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/10.7.02.html>.

¹⁸¹ James M. Lindsay, “Deference and Defiance: The Shifting Rhythms of Executive-Legislative Relations in Foreign Policy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (2003): 543, accessed January 2, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552512>.

¹⁸² “George W. Bush: The Iraqi Threat (October 7, 2002).”

¹⁸³ “Text of Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002,” GovTrack, accessed January 4, 2015, <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/107/hjres114/text>.

Council resolutions regarding Iraq.¹⁸⁴ Bush's ability to persuade both the public and congressional leaders to side with his policy visions granted him a legal basis on which to engage in a war in Iraq.

Conclusion

The case of George W. Bush and the Iraq War, being the most recent, is subject to obvious limitations of the potential for contemporary analysis. As the Iraq War is still a significant component of U.S. foreign policy during the time of this analysis, the withholding of valuable sources which may have contributed to analysis is to be expected in the interest of protecting ongoing efforts in the region. However, considering Bush's weak emotional intelligence, cognitive style, and organizational capacity, and how they contributed to his non-deliberative decision-making process, demonstrates the importance of these traits in conducting perceivably successful foreign policy endeavors. Bush's "instinctive" inclinations, coupled with his selective use of intelligence regarding WMD and the increasing threat of terrorism, skewed his vision of the conflict and disallowed him from developing clear, attainable policy strategies. He had a simplified understanding of the potential consequences for a war in Iraq, leading to his tendency to act without sufficiently weighing all viable options. These leadership traits shaped his organizational capacity in a negative way, causing him to form an advisory structure that did not mitigate his natural emotional and cognitive shortcomings. Had President Bush set aside personal ideas and feelings, and strived to delve deeper into policy formulation and analysis with his advisors, he might have achieved a decision-making process that benefitted his foreign policy, and furthermore, his legacy.

CONCLUSION

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Case study analysis of four presidents who chose to engage the U.S. in controversial foreign conflicts has demonstrated the invaluable importance of presidential personality and internal leadership qualities while making foreign policy decisions. Harry S. Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, and George W. Bush suffered to varying degrees from weak emotional intelligence, cognitive style, and organizational capacity, while George H. W. Bush's three internal leadership traits were strong leading into the Persian Gulf War. Analysis in this paper did not serve to evaluate the actual outcomes of each conflict; however, the brevity of the U.S. engagement in the Persian Gulf War in comparison to the three other conflicts is perceivably a positive outcome of George H. W. Bush's decision-making process. By using Greenstein's framework of six qualities of presidential leadership, dividing them into two categories, internal and external, and applying them to cases of significant foreign policy decision-making, a few larger lessons about presidential leadership have been made clear.

The complexity of presidential personality has presented many limitations to its study, despite its obvious and significant influence on decision-making. Aside from the limitations presented by the unique and incalculable nature of personality, external influences on presidents undoubtedly hold considerable weight on their decision-making as well. Truman oversaw the U.S. in the early Cold War years, which featured a heightened sensitivity to communism and the Soviet Union, while the United Nations strived to establish its legitimacy as a global diplomatic body. Lyndon B. Johnson inherited the Vietnam War and his predecessor's policies, forced to react to a critical act of aggression and commit to protecting states vulnerable to the grasp of communism that was widely feared. George H. W. Bush's understanding of geopolitical interests in Kuwait and Iraq's unprovoked aggression required for swift action to be taken in order to maintain international stability. George W. Bush's new anti-terrorism platform and convictions

of a viable threat of nuclear weapons in a post-9/11 world posed a perceivably significant national security threat and threatened the U.S. image abroad. These are only some examples of the potential influences that play a part in presidential foreign policymaking. As previously mentioned, Edwards and Wayne categorized these influences as: relationship with advisers, organization and style of decision making, bureaucratic politics, time constraints, and the government's previous decisions and commitments.

Despite the limitations to the study of presidential personality and policymaking, Fred Greenstein's framework provides an appropriate basis on which to analyze presidential personality, leadership, and decision-making. While the clear importance of emotional intelligence, cognitive style, and organizational capacity have already been demonstrated, an accurate assessment would be lacking without also taking into account public communication, vision, and political skill. All of these presidents were somewhat weak in the realm of public communication, but were particularly adept in the realm of political skill. The presidents' ability to formulate and communicate a firm vision varied between cases, the strongest case being George H. W. Bush. As a whole, a president's ability to separate emotions from policymaking, understand complex foreign conflicts and their potential consequences, and successfully create a structure for deliberative policy creation and analysis is critical to ensure that consequential foreign policy decisions are sufficiently weighed before being executed.

The above case studies have shown how lacking varying degrees of the three internal aspects of leadership can contribute to forming an ineffective decision-making process, and therefore, poorly-weighed decisions. The resulting ineffectiveness of these processes can be attributed to their structure not being a beneficial fit with the president's leadership style, as well as the president's poor usage of the decision-making structure he created. Each decision-making

process is unique to every president, evidently influenced by his personal characteristics of leadership. By evaluating the four presidential case studies, patterns have emerged that suggest when an ineffective decision-making process is in place, the president is less attentive to long-term foreign policy visions and goals regarding a specific conflict. As a result, the president's decisions are more likely to result in long-term engagements in foreign hostilities, rather than completing quick, decisive victories such as the one examined under George H. W. Bush.

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