

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON? A COMPARISON OF THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF GEORGE H. W. BUSH AND GEORGE W. BUSH

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Abstract: This article applies cognitive (i.e., leadership) and poliheuristic approaches to foreign-policy decision making to explain variances in the policies of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. Juxtaposing these related approaches highlights the *how* and *why* of presidential decision making, providing a synthetic, though more cogent, understanding of foreign-policy analysis -- especially as it pertains to presidencies. The initial section of the article discusses the two theories. The following section examines important decisions via case studies -- one for each administration. The final section analyzes the decisions in the context of the theories. While this article emphasizes the individual level of analysis, structural as well as domestic factors will also be discussed.

Keywords: decision making, foreign policy, George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, leadership, poliheuristic approach.

On February 12, 2006, Garry Trudeau's Doonesbury cartoon juxtaposed the presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush (1989-1993) with that of his son, George Walker Bush (2001-present). Trudeau's narrator praised the elder Bush as "moderate, informed, prudent, responsible, forgiving, and modest" while vilifying the younger Bush as immoral and reckless, traits that have yielded disastrous policies, both foreign and domestic. Trudeau presented this installment of his cartoon as a mea culpa. During H.W. Bush's tenure in the White House, Trudeau had maligned him consistently as "ineffectual and out of touch, a caretaker president with no vision for the country" -- criticisms Democrats and many Republicans repeated loudly and often¹.

In 1992, the year Bill Clinton defeated H.W. Bush in the November presidential election, the incumbent struck many Americans as a bumbling New England Yankee whose mangled syntax and unfamiliarity with checkout counter scanners invited derision. As Clinton and Ross Perot attracted disaffected and other voters with their folksy style, Bush, whose popularity following *Operation Desert Storm* seemed to guarantee him a second term, stumbled badly as the campaign climaxed. His defeat seemingly assured him a spot in the pantheon of utterly forgettable presidents, the successor to the popular Ronald Reagan but in no way his heir.

Bush's qualities, often ridiculed while he served in the White House, found favor within a decade, however, as Clinton and George W. Bush exhibited traits often associated with their "Baby Boom" generation: arrogance, self-servitude, and indulgence. As Americans watched Clinton and W. Bush eschew responsibility for their political and personal misdeeds, many yearned for the propriety and integrity of George H.W. Bush. Such nostalgia, typical of much presidential history, overlooked genuine failings, both his administration's and his own, but this re-examination of his presidency prompted an obvious question: Why was George W. Bush not more like his father? Furthermore, given George H.W. Bush's acknowledged foreign-policy expertise, why did his son's diplomacy differ so starkly from his own?

The answers to these questions presume obvious differences in policy and style, yet important similarities exist and are important in explaining the foreign policies of both men. For example, George H.W. Bush authorized a U.S. invasion of

Panama in December 1989 and, like his son, defied international law and acted without the support of allies or the U.N. Although the younger Bush receives much criticism for his unwillingness to work with important allies, he has placed a premium on cooperating with France and Germany, two countries that vociferously opposed his Iraq policy, on the matter of Iranian nuclear proliferation. Contrasting father and son may therefore not be as easy as one thinks. Critics of George W. Bush may now tout his father's foreign policy as cautious, righteous, and sagacious, but this kind of *ex post facto* analysis belies many contemporary assessments of George H.W. Bush's diplomacy and military policy and, more seriously, points to a possible selectivity bias. Given how journalists, policy analysts, and scholars scrutinize U.S. foreign policy, rarely does a serving president receive plaudits for his decisions. Presidents earn kudos only when their policies can be understood and appreciated in proper context – some of Harry Truman's, Dwight Eisenhower's, and Reagan's more controversial policies come to mind.

Still, despite this caveat, a comparison between the foreign policies of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush is apropos for several reasons. First, their familial ties (they are the first *pater et filius* to achieve the presidency since John Adams and John Quincy Adams in the late 18th and early 19th century) draw attention to psychological and sociological issues such as the father-son dynamic, core beliefs, and generational effects. Second, George H.W. Bush's close relationship with his son afforded him and continues to afford him every opportunity to counsel his son -- unlike John Adams, who died in his offspring's second year in office. Likewise, George W. Bush could and can ask for his father's advice. As well, George W. no doubt learned much working for the man he affectionately calls "41" (as in forty-first president) while the latter occupied the White House. Third, the Bushes represent different factions of the Republican Party, both ideological and geographical. While George H.W. is a Rockefeller Republican, George W. is a neo-Reaganite. Although they both graduated from Yale University, the elder Bush oozes East Coast establishment (he grew up in Connecticut, the son of a U.S. senator, and owns a Kennedyesque compound in Kennebunkport, Maine), while the younger Bush epitomizes Texas cocksureness. Finally, each president came to the job with a very different résumé.

George H.W. took the presidential oath of office in January 1989 having served as Chief U.S. Liaison to the People's Republic of China, Ambassador to the United Nations, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Vice President of the United States. Like his father, George W. worked in the Texas oil industry. After a stint as co-owner of the Texas Rangers baseball club, he became Governor of Texas. Unlike "41," he did not fight in a war (his father was the youngest Navy pilot in World War II), although he served in the Texas Air National Guard. Importantly, George W. embraced Christianity following years of self-described "hard drinking".

With the above in mind, this article applies cognitive (i.e., leadership) and poliheuristic approaches to foreign-policy decision making to explain variances in the policies of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. Juxtaposing these related approaches highlights the *how* and *why* of presidential decision making, providing a synthetic, though more cogent, understanding of foreign-policy analysis -- especially as it pertains to presidencies. The initial section of the article discusses the two theories. The following section examines important decisions via case studies – one for each administration. The final section analyzes the decisions in the context of the theories. While this article emphasizes the individual level of analysis, structural as well as domestic factors will also be discussed.

1. COGNITIVE THEORY & LEADERSHIP STYLES

Following the works of Thucydides, Titus Livius, and many others, scholars have noted how individuals, no matter the background, aptitude, and skill, help shape or determine outcomes – political, economic, diplomatic, military, or otherwise. Although systemic and domestic variables can explain many events, analysts must examine individuals as well, so that national policies can be properly and fully understood². The individual level of analysis spotlights issues such as previous experiences, personality, beliefs, character, intellectual capabilities, thought processes, capacity for "learning", leadership qualities, and negotiation styles³. All these idiosyncratic factors combine to produce individual and group decisions.

Leadership often separates wise decisions from foolhardy ones. Effective leaders achieve

success, however defined, both for themselves and their countries. Conversely, ineffective leaders, no matter their preparation and ability, prove incapable of effecting desired results. That leadership matters in most cases, then, should be self-evident. As Margaret Hermann and Joe Hagan assert, “[l]eaders define states’ international and domestic constraints. Based on their perceptions and interpretations, they build expectations, plan strategies, and urge actions on their governments that conform with their judgments about what is possible and likely to maintain them in their positions”⁴. Leaders typically seek to impose their preferences upon others (e.g., decision-makers, bureaucracies, and publics) in hope that their foreign-policy views will prevail. How leaders tend to proceed constitutes leadership style.

Margaret Hermann states that this term “means the ways in which leaders relate to those around them – whether constituents, advisers, or other leaders – and how they structure interactions and the norms, rules, and principles they use to guide such interactions”⁵. Hermann’s aggregate analysis measures how 122 leaders (from both democratic and autocratic countries) responded to “political constraints” and dealt with “incoming information.” Her study also assesses what motivated those leaders to seek office⁶.

Hermann’s leadership style matrix highlights eight possibilities⁷. When it comes to “problem focus,” four styles manifest themselves: “expansionistic,” “actively independent,” “incremental” and “opportunistic”. With respect to “relationship focus,” leaders can be “evangelistic,” “directive,” “influential” or “collegial”. In the case of expansionistic leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on expanding [a] leader’s, government’s, and state’s span of control”. For actively independent leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on maintaining one’s own and the government’s maneuverability and independence in a world that is perceived to continually try to limit both”. For incremental leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on improving [the] state’s economy and/or security in incremental steps while avoiding the obstacles that will inevitably arise along the way”. For opportunistic leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on assessing what is possible in the current situation and context given what one wants to achieve and considering what important constituencies will allow”. For evangelistic leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on persuading others to join in one’s mission, in mobilizing

others around one’s message”. For directive leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on maintaining one’s own and the government’s status and acceptance by others by engaging in actions on the world stage that enhance the state’s reputation”. For influential leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on building cooperative relationships with other governments and states in order to play a leadership role; by working with others, one can gain more than is possible on one’s own”. For collegial leaders, “[f]ocus of attention is on reconciling differences and building consensus – on gaining prestige and status through empowering others and sharing accountability”.

Leadership style pairs respond differently to their political environment. Expansionistic and evangelistic leaders (Pair I) “challenge constraints” but are “closed to information”. Actively independent and directive leaders (Pair II) also challenge constraints, but remain “open to information”. Incremental and influential leaders (Pair III) “respect constraints”, but are “closed to information”. Finally, opportunistic and collegial leaders (Pair IV) “respect constraints” but remain “open to information”⁸.

Hermann, Thomas Preston, Baghat Korany, and Timothy Shaw divide the four pairs into “crusaders” (Pair I), “strategists” (Pair II), “pragmatists” (Pair III), and “opportunists” (Pair IV). According to Hermann et al., Pair I leaders “are...usually crusading for or advocating a position and being proactive. If the political context facilitates what such leaders want to do, they can be effective in mobilizing others to action”. Hermann et al. add that, “[b]y being convinced that available information supports their position, [crusaders] often create a very persuasive rationale for what they are doing that gives their actions credibility and legitimacy. Thus, in the decision making process, such leaders’ positions are likely to prevail as they take charge and work to control what happens”. Unlike crusaders, strategists seek information, which “is sought concerning what the most feasible means are currently to reach [their] goal”. For pragmatists, “the dilemma is to ensure that some progress is made toward a goal without stepping outside the bounds of one’s position. If the time is right to push their own positions, they can do so; but such leaders can also accommodate to pressure if the time is not quite right”. For opportunists, “knowledge about the political context is crucial; they are the most sensitive to contextual information. Such leaders

are expedient, defining the problem and taking a position based on what important others seem to be pushing." Hermann et al. stress that "[b]argaining lies at the heart of the political game; unless some kind of consensus can be built, inaction is preferable to an action that has the potential of losing support and building opposition"⁹.

Each of the leadership styles represents an ideal type. Nevertheless, this typology should be useful in explicating the foreign policies of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush. Another way to understand their foreign policies is to rely on poliheuristic theory.

2. POLIHEURISTIC THEORY

Although cognitive approaches to foreign policy analysis have contributed much to International Relations' knowledge of *why* leaders make decisions, explanations of foreign policy outcomes rooted in the cognitive/psychological tradition often fail to understand *how* key decisions, including the use of force, are reached¹⁰. Moreover, this approach faces serious challenges from rationalist perspectives, largely inspired by the scholarship of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita¹¹. Though both traditions have powerful explanatory and predictive functions, individually they appear to be incapable of resolving many contentious and nuanced puzzles plaguing the discipline. In the words of Patrick James and Enyu Zhang, "[i]t becomes increasingly clear that neither approach alone can provide a complete explanation of how and why foreign policy decisions are made, which creates the need for a unified model of decision processes and outcomes"¹².

Poliheuristic Theory (PH) is a sophisticated approach to understanding both the why and how of foreign policy and answers James and Zhang's call for a more unified model. Alex Mintz, originator of PH, writes, "Poliheuristic (PH) choice theory postulates a two-stage decision process in which the menu for choice is narrowed initially by a noncompensatory analysis that eliminates options by the use of one or more heuristics (cognitive shortcuts). Remaining alternatives are then evaluated in an attempt to minimize risks and maximize benefits"¹³. Since 1993, PH has been widely applied in social science research covering diverse topics including use of force, initial crisis reaction, war termination, coalition formation, level of force used in a crisis,

influence of advisors, and conflict resolution -- all salient themes in a comparison of the foreign policies of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush¹⁴.

During the first stage of PH, leaders, especially in crisis situations, are typically confronted with a bewildering number of plausible courses of action. Leaders use a dimensional and noncompensatory decision making construct in an attempt to reduce this array to a more manageable subset. Each possible policy is measured against a number of pertinent dimensions -- political, military, economic, etc. Unlike the compensatory or additive paradigm proposed by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, PH posits that options with favorable values in some dimensions *cannot* compensate for unfavorable values on (a) critical dimension(s)¹⁵.

Applied research confirms that PH is a surprisingly flexible model of foreign policy analysis and also suggests that the critical dimension(s) may change over time, space, and context, and generally leaders do not pursue policies that may endanger their own political fortunes¹⁶. Mintz contends that "[p]olicy makers are political actors whose self-interest in political survival is paramount. Consequently, policy makers are likely to reject outright any alternative that poses potentially very high political costs, even if that same alternative also yields potentially high benefits on other dimensions"¹⁷.

This first, cognitive, stage of the PH model is especially fruitful to scholars because humans, even presidents and prime ministers used to balancing numerous demands and grueling schedules, have a finite capacity to sort, order, and rank information¹⁸. This limitation combined with "[i]ndividual values, beliefs and preferences, along with the near-impossibility of obtaining complete information, inhibit rational choice at the initial stage"¹⁹. Issues of timing in crisis situations are especially relevant as they "force decision makers to strive for short-cuts in order to simplify decision matrices"²⁰.

As Mintz notes, however, the dimensional and noncompensatory decision making construct is unlikely to narrow the array of options to a single optimal outcome²¹. Though reduced, numerous policies may pass the noncompensatory dimensional threshold. Leaders will then choose from remaining

options in an attempt to maximize utility and minimize costs by employing a rational (expected utility) calculation or an optimization along the critical dimension (lexicographic choice or LEX)²². As James and Zhang explain,

“The former aims to calculate and balance the costs and benefits for each alternative, while the latter requires that the final decision achieve the utility-maximizing goal along the dimension regarded as most vital for decision makers. In other words, the dimensions in the lexicographic scenario are *not* equally weighted -- the most vital dimension will be evaluated carefully for each option and the final choice needs to be best in this way but does not have to be optimal in an overall sense”²³.

Research into American presidential decision making confirms that chief executives employ the noncompensatory device²⁴. Moreover, recent scholarship also suggests that presidential decision making is not only noncompensatory but also lexicographic²⁵. A noncompensatory lexicographic model of decision making emphasizes “[t]he options that have the highest utility on the dimension regarded as most vital by decision makers”, instead of a “simple cost-benefit analysis”²⁶. Although this second stage of the PH model is largely informed by rational perspectives, cognitive factors and personality traits are not entirely divorced from the selection between “cost-benefit” and lexicographic alternatives. James and Zhang, drawing on earlier studies, note that “[t]he actual selection of either strategy [cost-benefit or lexicographic], to a large extent, depends on the varying conditions of the problem and on the *cognitive* and *personal* characteristics of the decision maker(s)” (emphasis added)²⁷.

Application of a noncompensatory lexicographic PH model to the foreign policy decisions of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, especially the 1991 and 2003 military actions vis-à-vis Iraq, may yield theoretical and policy relevant insights into both the how and why of presidential decision making. In the following section, this paper mines the historical record, through comparative case studies, in an attempt to identify salient cognitive themes that influenced both elder and younger Bush. Relevant cognitive factors will then be coupled with the PH model in an attempt to understand how each leader framed foreign policy problems, identified critical dimensions (political or otherwise), and which rationalist

perspective, “simple cost-benefit” or lexicographic, yielded executive decisions. Although the cognitive approach may illuminate some aspects of why George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush prized some policies above others, this project applies the more sophisticated PH model to understand both the why and how of these decisions. We believe that this approach will not only help explain variances between the Bush foreign policies but also contribute to the rapidly growing body of research supporting the usefulness of PH as a mode of foreign policy analysis.

3. CASE STUDY: THE PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE H.W. BUSH

“I come before you and assume the Presidency at a moment rich with promise. We live in a peaceful, prosperous time, but we can make it better. For a new breeze is blowing, and a world refreshed by freedom seems reborn. For in man's heart, if not in fact, the day of the dictator is over” (George H.W. Bush. Inaugural Address, 1989)²⁸.

In January 1989, George H.W. Bush, after decades of service in Washington, assumed the presidency at a most uncertain time in American history. After decades of ideological, political, economic, and military rivalry, America's arch foe, the Soviet Union, inched ever closer to collapse. Though many Reaganite cold warriors undoubtedly welcomed Moscow's retreat from global prominence, others feared the instability generated by a contracting USSR. Dramatic international change, on a scale not seen since the days immediately following World War II, was not limited to the Soviet Union. By the end of 1989, hitherto Communist Eastern Europe was in full revolt, Germany seemed destined for reunification, and Japanese economic might threatened American primacy, a development that convinced many analysts that the United States was entering a period of slow decline²⁹.

George H.W. Bush, however, seemed particularly well-suited for the difficult job of guiding America through these challenging geopolitical and economic times. A permanent fixture in Washington politics since winning a House of Representatives seat in 1966, Bush brought more foreign policy experience into the White House than any president in generations. After losing his second Senate race in 1970, President Nixon rescued Bush's political career. Throughout the 1970s, Bush became one of the

best known and well-respected presidential appointees, serving as Ambassador to the United Nations (1971-73), Chief U.S. Liaison to China (1974-75), and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (1976-77)³⁰.

Despite Bush's expertise, the more charismatic Ronald Reagan easily won the 1980 Republican nomination for President. Reagan, in a move reminiscent of Nixon's 1970s appointments, selected Bush as his running mate. During his two terms as Vice President, Bush remained in the background, yet managed to enhance his reputation as a leader with keen interest in foreign affairs. Once again seeking the presidency, he ran a skilled primary and general campaign and handily defeated Democrat Michael Dukakis in 1988. Bush's behavior during the primary election foreshadowed a salient theme in his presidency: he did not want to be considered a "wimp". As Gary Hess notes,

"During his long pursuit of the presidency, Bush had suffered from a reputation for being deferential and indecisive, and political opponents, pundits, and cartoonists portrayed him as a "wimp." During the 1988 presidential campaign, Bush took the offensive in a calculated and ultimately successful effort to change that perception. In a masterful acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention, Bush presented himself to the American electorate as a forceful leader"³¹.

Armed with a landslide victory over Dukakis, extensive experience in Washington, and having lost, at least temporarily, the unwanted (and perhaps unwarranted) "wimp" label, Bush assumed the presidency confident and optimistic about the future.

Dramatic international events in 1989, including the Tiananmen Square upheaval in June, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November, and a unilateral American invasion of Panama in December, tested the new president's much lauded foreign-policy acumen. Bush and his team of key advisors, the so-called big eight (National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, Secretary of State James Baker, Vice President Dan Quayle, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates, and White House Chief of Staff John Sununu)³², managed to handle these incidents with aplomb, even as domestic issues including the mounting Savings and Loan

banking scandal and economic slowdown increasingly occupied Bush's attention.

With domestic pressures rising and foreign policy aimed squarely at ensuring a peaceful devolution of the Soviet system, the H.W. Bush team was not expecting Iraq to instigate a major international crisis. Although the Persian Gulf remained a key strategic theater for the United States, the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988 greatly lowered the prospects for regional conflagration. Moreover, since the 1978-79 Iranian Revolution Washington and Baghdad's relations had steadily warmed, despite some Congressional protests over Saddam Hussein's human rights abuses³³. Bush signed National Security Directive 26, aimed at normalizing all aspects of American-Iraqi relations in October 1989, less than ten months before Saddam Hussein's irredentist invasion of Kuwait presented Bush with the most vexing foreign policy issue of his presidency³⁴.

Iraq, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, emerged from a punishing eight-year war with Iran heavily indebted and in dire need of hard currency to repair damaged infrastructure as well as rebuild its military. Iraq's petro-wealth was insufficient to cover the billions owed to Persian Gulf creditors, including Kuwait, as well as creditors in the United States, Japan, and elsewhere. Hussein's preferred strategy to cover Iraq's debt payments was to raise the price of oil³⁵. Baghdad's efforts were complicated by falling oil prices and OPEC members, including Kuwait, producing more than their allotted quota. After months of demands, negotiations, and saber rattling, Hussein finally opted for a military solution. His army invaded the small, vulnerable Kuwaiti emirate on August 2, 1990.

Within hours, H.W. Bush learned of the invasion and issued a statement calling the action "naked aggression" and demanded "the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces"³⁶. Turning quickly to the international community, Bush displayed his preference for multilateral action. Within the day, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Thomas R. Pickering called for an emergency meeting of the Security Council. The body quickly adopted Resolution 660 condemning the invasion and demanding a complete Iraqi withdrawal. Not content to work solely through the United Nations, the United States consulted with allies, and the European Community

adopted a position consistent with earlier American and U.N. statements.

Throughout the duration of the crisis, which culminated with the U.S.-led, U.N.-sanctioned invasion of Kuwait in January 1991, George H.W. Bush, recalling the policies of both Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, placed a premium on multilateral cooperation. This crisis also provided Bush with an opportunity to develop his previously inchoate concept of a "new world order"³⁷. Eric Miller and Steve Yetiv, writing on the subject, claim that "[t]he Gulf crisis contributed fundamentally to the development of the concept of a new world order. The end of the cold war created conditions that made a new world order possible in theory"³⁸.

The confluence of the changing structure of the international system, from bipolarity to unipolarity, and Bush's personal worldview about the role of expansionist powers, drawn largely from his experience in the Second World War, greatly helped define the parameters of the American response. The analogy between events in the Persian Gulf and the Munich Crisis of the 1930s affected Bush's thinking of how to craft America's response to Kuwait's invasion³⁹.

George H.W. Bush experienced firsthand the horrors generated by unchecked aggression and the failure of diplomacy at Munich. A senior in prep school in December 1941, Bush graduated and immediately enlisted in the Navy, serving as a decorated pilot in the Pacific⁴⁰. Steve Yetiv, commenting on the role of analogy in the George H.W. Bush presidency, writes, "The [Munich] analogy made Bush more likely to personalize the conflict with Saddam, to undermine others' efforts at compromise with Saddam, and to prefer war to the continued use of economic sanctions"⁴¹. On August 8, 1990, while addressing the nation, Bush claimed, "This new era can be full of promise, an age of freedom, a time of peace for all people. *But if history teaches us anything, it is that we must resist aggression or it will destroy our freedoms*" (emphasis added)⁴².

Having secured at least the rhetorical support of key allies and the United Nations, Bush moved to prevent Hussein from attacking Saudi Arabia. Although the United States lacked substantial military assets in the Persian Gulf, as a result of Washington's "over the horizon" policy, Bush ordered ships from Diego Garcia to the Gulf.

Two squadrons of F-15 fighters and the 82nd Airborne Division were hastily deployed to Saudi Arabia at the request of a very nervous Riyadh. Though Washington had not yet committed to military force as means of restoring Kuwaiti sovereignty, Bush and his advisors agreed that the United States must have, at minimum the capability to deter further Iraqi advances in the region. By the end of August, approximately 100,000 U.S. forces, known as Desert Shield, were in place ready to defend Saudi Arabia and the House of Saud⁴³.

As American military forces arrived in the region and it became increasingly clear that Saudi Arabia was secure in the short term, Bush began developing a more comprehensive strategy for evicting Hussein from Kuwait. Alex Mintz, in his application of the PH model to the Persian Gulf War, writes that "[t]o achieve the policy of forcing Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, three alternatives were identified: (1) use of force; (2) containment, that is, continue the sanctions and keep the diplomatic pressure on Iraq; and (3) withdrawal"⁴⁴. Unwilling to allow Hussein to gain access to vast Kuwaiti oil reserves and not wanting to appear weak before a regional dictator, Bush and key advisors rejected the withdrawal option.

As the crisis continued throughout the autumn of 1990, Bush increasingly favored a military solution. Going to war over Kuwait, however, hinged on the Bush team's ability to marshal domestic, especially Congressional support -- not an easy task given early Democratic (and some Republican) opposition as well as a general, post-Vietnam reluctance of Americans to support and sustain large-scale military operations⁴⁵. Congressional leaders from both parties, mindful of upcoming elections, expressed a number of reservations about rushing to war without exhausting diplomatic, including economic, options.

In response to Congressional misgivings over direct military action, Bush and his advisors drafted a new strategy aimed at culling public and Congressional support for their policies. The White House wanted to gain as much international support as possible from traditional allies and Arab states in the Middle East, U.N. approval, and compliance from a divided and weak, though not impotent, Soviet Union. During these months, Secretary of State James Baker became one of the most well-traveled American diplomats in history, making the

rounds to dozens of foreign capitals⁴⁶. Bush, for his part, took an active role in convincing foreign leaders that Hussein was a regional, if not global, menace that must be stopped, with military force if necessary. The United Kingdom, under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, was a strong supporter of a hard-line policy against Iraq; however, other European states, notably France, were less willing to entertain such a policy without U.S. or U.N. cajoling⁴⁷. Bush and Baker's deft diplomacy ultimately worked, though Hussein's increasingly boastful public statements and news coverage of Baghdad's cruel treatment of Kuwaiti and foreign citizens likely helped Washington's case.

With key European and Arab allies slowly lining up behind the U.S. position, American diplomats, for both domestic and international reasons, sought legitimization from the United Nations. Bush and key advisors were well aware that a U.N. Security Council Resolution authorizing the use of military force would go far in muting Congressional opposition as well as further enhancing the still inchoate concept of a "new world order". The White House knew that such a resolution hinged on securing Soviet support. Though the Kremlin's foreign-policy staffers were evenly divided on how best to resolve the Kuwait situation, Moscow's need for American economic aid silenced the calls of those opposing a military solution⁴⁸. Secretary of State Baker later recalled a conversation with Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev in which Gorbachev said: "We need help. We're in the middle of the transition right now. As we move toward implementing these reforms, there's going to be great dissatisfaction. It's very difficult for us right now. The domestic situation is getting much worse"⁴⁹. With Moscow's support in place, the United States secured passage of U.N. Resolution 678, demanding Iraq make a complete withdrawal from Kuwait by January 15, 1991, and authorizing member states to use all necessary means to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty⁵⁰.

Domestic and Congressional support slowly but steadily increased during the fall of 1990 as it looked as if the White House and its allies were attempting diplomatic and economic solutions before entering into a conflict. Though multilateral sanctions were in place, Hussein showed little signs up budging under economic pressures. During this time, the Central Intelligence Agency authored a number of

reports predicting that sanctions would have little effect over the short to medium term. Moreover, these reports suggested that sanctions would most likely harm Iraqi civilians rather than Baghdad's military⁵¹. Having garnered multilateral support, including substantial financial pledges meant to bankroll military operations, Soviet support, a U.N. resolution, and increased domestic support, the White House put the issue before Congress on January 12, 1991. Although opposition remained, both the House of Representatives and Senate cast affirmative votes authorizing the president to use military force to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty⁵².

After a flurry of last minute diplomacy failed to resolve the crisis, the American lead coalition launched an offensive campaign, *Operation Desert Storm*, on January 17, 1991. A massive aerial bombing blitz preceded the ground campaign. *Operation Desert Storm* quickly displayed American military superiority against Hussein's much vaunted military. Within weeks, Iraq's army had largely collapsed and on February 27, 1991, Bush declared victory⁵³. Contrary to dire pre-war predictions, *Operation Desert Storm* produced only minimal American casualties⁵⁴. From a military standpoint, the campaign had been an unqualified success and did much to restore prestige to an American military still haunted by the legacy of Vietnam.

The latter still figured prominently, however, in the minds of key policymakers and likely had much to do with Washington's decision not to advance further into Iraq and depose the Hussein regime. This decision, moreover, as Bush was fond of noting, also kept U.S. action within the letter of U.N. Resolution 678 and satisfied coalition partners, including those leery of an expansionist America as Soviet power waned, as well as Congress and the American public. Bush's handling of the war, as well as his restraint in not enlarging the operation to include the occupation of Iraq, gained him much currency as a wise statesman and for a time boosted his domestic approval ratings to previously unthinkable levels -- nearly 90%⁵⁵.

During the buildup to the conflict and in the months following, it was increasingly clear that this crisis had provided the catalyst for the development of what Bush hoped would be his legacy, the idea of a "new world order." Entailing a rejection of aggression and emphasis on multilateralism, this idea matured from clever

phraseology into the core of the administration's policy vis-à-vis Iraq. As Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger later recalled, "[w]e thought it [failure to check Iraqi aggression] could set all the wrong standards for the post-Cold War world by suggesting to regional dictators that naked aggression pays and by hurting U.S. credibility at a time when its leadership was being tested, if it did not take strong action"⁵⁶. This sentiment was echoed by James Baker who called the Iraq crisis "a critical juncture in history"⁵⁷.

Bush maintained that he would have used unilateral military force against Iraq. Miller and Yetiv write, "[t]o be sure, Bush was determined to reverse Iraq's invasion even without support from the United Nations or even the U.S. Congress"⁵⁸. However, counterfactual speculation about the veracity of these claims does not reveal what would have happened had Washington been unable to secure multilateral and U.N. support for its preferred policy. Although Bush had acted alone in Panama against another dictator, Manuel Noriega, it is unknown if he would have replicated unilateral action on a larger scale against Iraq.

George H.W. Bush's presidency was filled with a number of demanding and contentious foreign-policy challenges (ethnic conflict in the Balkans and famine in Somalia would draw his attention following *Operation Desert Storm*, yet none was as significant as the Persian Gulf War. That crisis, because of its length and the depth of Bush's personal involvement, in many ways typified his approach to foreign policy. A shrewd and restrained leader, he felt a keen sense of moral responsibility. He recognized the importance of multilateral support for his policies, however, especially in light of his desire to advance a post-Cold War foreign-policy agenda centered around his concept of a "new world order". His oldest son, George W. Bush, would have the opportunity to build upon that order eight years after his father left office.

4. CASE STUDY: THE PRESIDENCY OF GEORGE W. BUSH

George W. Bush's tenure as president promised a "humble" America internationally, while returning the country to the kind of traditional foreign-policy concerns (U.S.-Russian and U.S.-Chinese relations, for example) which had preoccupied George H.W. Bush and his administration. Like his father, George W. Bush

sought to overhaul the American military force structure and evolve a strategic doctrine more in sync with the post-Cold War world. But, unlike his dad, he made a national missile defense system an urgent priority despite the exorbitant cost and daunting technological challenges associated with such a venture. To pursue this dream of shielding the United States from enemy missile attacks, and to husband U.S. financial and other resources he would need to provide Americans with significant tax cuts, his most important campaign promise, he and his administration thought it imperative for the country to avoid Clintonesque "social work" abroad, "nation building" especially⁵⁹.

Early Bush foreign policy irritated America's friends and enemies alike, as the White House eschewed the Clinton preference for multilateralism in favor of a series of unilateral measures that won the United States scant international admiration. In a cavalier manner reminiscent of the Reagan years, Bush rejected the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which sought to curb alarming rates of greenhouse gas emissions harmful to Planet Earth's ecology; withdrew from (or "unsigned") the 1998 Rome Treaty that created the International Criminal Court (ICC), an institution that could try individuals, such as ex-Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, accused of hideous crimes (i.e., so-called crimes against humanity); imposed onerous steel tariffs in violation of World Trade Organization stipulations forbidding such protectionism; and supported a Congressional farm bill that appealed shamelessly to agribusiness interests and Farm Belt politicians hungry for votes. The Texan with the Harvard MBA justified his controversial decisions by invoking American self-interest. In his mind, the United States had to seek self-sufficiency rather than global well-being, which required cooperation and compromise with other countries. Similarly, Bush maligned international norms, such as environmental stewardship, human rights, and fair trade, while promoting unchecked U.S. economic growth and exempting American soldiers and citizens from ever standing trial at The Hague should they commit atrocities on foreign soil and not be prosecuted in America -- the only circumstances under which Americans could have appeared before the ICC⁶⁰.

Conservatives may have applauded Bush's assertiveness, but his administration's realism -- jingoism, said critics -- clashed with increasingly assertive allies opposed to U.S.

policy. Europeans, especially, expressed profound dismay when Washington substituted diktat for consultation, a reversal of Clinton policy. They preferred the forty-second president's dictum of "multilateralism when we can, unilateralism when we must" to the forty-third's "unilateralism when we can, multilateralism when we must". Bush may have reassured Americans that he would not sacrifice their best interests to the whims of the European Union and U.N. diplomats, but White House selfishness promised much global acrimony at a time when U.S. plenty, the result of half-a-dozen or so years of spectacular economic expansion, contrasted dramatically with an international scene often racked by inequality, injustice, poverty, disease, strife, anger, and despair – a "world on fire," in Amy Chua's words. Ironically, in many cases only the United States (with the assistance of various non-governmental organizations) could provide assistance, relief, and salvation – which it often did, though not to everyone's satisfaction⁶¹.

This charitable impulse served Americans well on September 11, 2001, as they unexpectedly experienced an agony unlike any other in the country's history. As New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani tried to console a grief-stricken nation, President Bush overcame his initial bewilderment to rally his countrymen and women. He vowed justice for those wantonly murdered and committed the country to a unique campaign -- the defeat of international terrorism. He promised no quick victories, but spoke confidently of eventual victory in this Manichean contest. While some U.S. and other commentators reexamined America's supposed innocence abroad, Bush dismissed any American culpability for the apocalyptic events of 9/11. Armed with the world's sympathy, the White House carefully and deliberately crafted a nuanced response that sought to punish culprits, mainly members of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda Islamic organization, while reassuring Muslims (in the United States and elsewhere) that Washington would not wage a civilizational war on the *umma* (i.e., the community of believers), the followers of Prophet Muhammad⁶².

Although fifteen of the nineteen September 11th hijackers hailed from Saudi Arabia, in the fall of 2001 the Bush administration targeted the Taliban, Afghanistan's medieval rulers, and their al-Qaeda terrorist guests for removal. Following a shaky start, *Operation Enduring*

Freedom achieved its objective within a few months. Eager to claim a victory in its "War on Terror," President Bush spotlighted the end of the Taliban's tyrannical rule and the routing of al-Qaeda forces. Most importantly, he continued to portray his policy as just and consistent with both American and global values. The U.S. public wholeheartedly concurred with its president, as any criticism of the Bush administration struck most Americans, who clamored "United We Stand", as unpatriotic.

With dissent frowned upon following the 9/11-induced erosion of U.S. civil liberties, Bush sought to polarize the world further by alerting Americans and a worldwide audience, in his January 2002 State of the Union Address, to the existence of an "Axis of Evil" reminiscent of World War II's Axis Powers. The president substituted Iraq, Iran, and North Korea for Nazi Germany, Japan, and Italy. While consistent with the Texan's Evangelical Christianity, Bush's dichotomy between "Good and Evil" satisfied many Americans fearful of renewed attacks against the U.S. homeland. The White House's de facto emphasis on civilizational conflict (rhetorically, though, Bush praised Islam) alarmed many Europeans and Asians, who greeted a twenty-first century crusade with utmost trepidation. With *imams* in the Middle East calling for *jihād*, Washington forged ahead with its plan to defend so-called Western civilization from enemies who either sought to undermine or destroy it⁶³.

In a June 1, 2002, speech at West Point, President Bush previewed a transformation in American foreign policy. He spoke of his country's right to eliminate threats before they manifested themselves. A doctrine of prevention would call for an offensive rather than defensive military policy, in contravention of international law. Although the White House already considered the United States at war -- the 9/11 attacks certainly allowed Washington to invoke Article 51 of the U.N. Charter, which authorized national self-defense -- the discarding of the Cold War strategy of "containment" for a policy of selected aggression promised to set a dubious precedent and draw howls of disapproval from some foreign leaders. Owing to its unrivaled military superiority, America could behave capriciously, or so the international community feared. Bush dismissed such concerns, however, and reported to Congress in the fall that henceforth the United States would reserve the right to dispose of threats before they

materialized. His national security strategy struck another blow for American primacy when it stated that the United States would oppose any country that tried to compete with it for political-military supremacy⁶⁴.

The Bush Doctrine's imperial features forecasted an America indefinitely trying to counter potential harm to U.S. national interests. As the administration proceeded with its missile defense project and continued to hunt down Osama bin Laden, it fixated upon its favorite *bête noire*, Saddam Hussein's Iraq. North Korea's fall 2002 confession to an illicit resumption of its nuclear programme annoyed the White House, but President Bush and his advisors preferred diplomacy to a military campaign with Northeast Asia's impoverished, Stalinist member of the "Axis of Evil". Pyongyang's conventional and possible nuclear arsenal, as well as its ability to strike key American allies, including South Korea and Japan, dictated a cautious policy. To avoid a similar scenario in Iraq, whereby a nuclear-armed Baghdad could deter the United States, early in 2003 Bush officials kept their eyes trained on Hussein and his purported weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The president and his advisors thought their country could transform the fossilized Arab world -- with its anachronistic authoritarians, sclerotic economies, and apparent abundance of suicidal-homicidal terrorists ready to murder scores of Israeli Jews and Americans in return for Islamic salvation -- into a progressive, thriving, and, most importantly, more U.S.- and Israeli-friendly area, by toppling the man who incarnated the worst political, economic, and military trends in the Middle East -- Saddam Hussein⁶⁵.

The White House's opportunity to dislodge Hussein arose once al-Qaeda terrorists utilized three hijacked planes to fell New York City's twin towers and tear into the Pentagon. Within a week of the 9/11 attacks, President Bush ordered that something be done about the Hussein Government. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld obliged the commander in chief by instructing General Tommy Franks, head of U.S. Central Command, to devise an invasion plan for Iraq. Although the interdiction of much illegal Iraqi commerce by the U.S. and Australian navies restricted Hussein's ability to import military items, the White House pressed on with its agenda to remove the Iraqi autocrat. Consistent with his nascent doctrine of

preventive war, formally announced in September 2002, President Bush invoked Baghdad's WMD threat as a sufficient reason for America to attack Iraq. Secretary of State Colin Powell insisted, however, that the United States seek international approval for its policy. Members of the president's inner circle -- Vice President Dick Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz -- disparaged such a tactic, asserting that the United Nations would only impede the United States as it sought to achieve its foreign-policy objectives. Powell considered such thinking shortsighted and potentially very harmful to U.S. relations with its allies. Better to build up American credibility, the retired general argued, than waste it needlessly via some unpopular, unilateral U.S. venture⁶⁶.

President Bush sided with Powell, who favored renewed inspections rather than a hasty invasion. In fall 2002 at the U.N. General Assembly, Bush urged member states to tackle the Iraq issue to ensure that the world's premier international organization carried out its obligation to uphold global peace. Following the president's speech, Security Council members worked feverishly to craft a resolution that allowed the United Nations Monitoring, Inspection, and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC), still barred by Hussein from entering Iraq, to inspect Iraqi facilities suspected of WMD activity. On November 8, the Security Council voted unanimously to approve Resolution 1441, which promised "serious consequences" should Iraq not fully comply. President Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose solidarity with the U.S. position ingratiated him to the White House and thus earned him input into American policy, wanted explicit authorization to wage war on Iraq, should Hussein thwart U.N. will. France, Russia, and the People's Republic of China strenuously objected, however. As a result, the permanent, veto-wielding members of the Security Council bickered over whether a second resolution would be necessary to sanction a military campaign to disarm Iraq. Washington and London said no; Paris, Moscow, and Beijing took a contrary view. Previous to the approval of Resolution 1441, members of the U.S. Congress expressed confidence in the president's policy by authorizing him to use whatever means he considered appropriate to enforce Iraq's compliance with U.N. resolutions. The timing of the vote, just before the Congressional election, hamstrung many Democrats, who risked

alienating constituents if they opposed the measure⁶⁷.

With only minimal dissent from Democrats and rousing support from fellow Republicans (who in November 2002 took back the Senate and increased their advantage in the House of Representatives), President Bush used his January 2003 State of the Union Address to deliver an ultimatum: either the Security Council honored its commitment to disarm Iraq or the world's most exclusive political club risked forfeiting its relevance. The commander in chief also informed ordinary Iraqis that the United States intended to emancipate them from Saddam Hussein's slavery. That day's initial U.N. inspectors' report confirmed Bush's impatience with the Iraqi Government⁶⁸.

Buoyed by this news, Bush promised that Secretary of State Powell would unveil damning evidence at the Security Council to convince skeptics, especially France and Germany, of Baghdad's duplicitous ways and connect Hussein to al-Qaeda, an administration contention that most terrorism, intelligence, and Middle East experts doubted or disbelieved. Powell's presentation swayed many Americans, yet Paris and Berlin still opposed the proposed American remedy to Iraqi deceit⁶⁹.

Despite UNMOVIC's apparent validation of the White House's assertions, the Bush administration struggled to present a coherent rationale for intervention in Iraq -- it would invoke twenty-three justifications for war, according to one researcher. Oddly, Bush officials refused publicly to invoke the precedents of Bosnia and Kosovo to justify their call for Saddam Hussein's removal. Perhaps these Republicans considered "humanitarian intervention", Bill Clinton's justification for sending U.S. forces overseas, impolitic. To avoid any comparisons to their detested predecessor, the president and his Reaganite advisors emulated their political hero when they announced that the United States would seek to democratize Iraq, whose example hopefully would spur neighbors to imitate it. Cynics blew raspberries at this idea of occupation à la Germany and Japan circa 1945, which they considered preposterous given the near absence of any democratic tradition in the Arab world. Furthermore, they doubted Washington would want to spend years inculcating Iraqi society with democratic theory and habits and to invest

the billions necessary to fashion a successful liberal economy⁷⁰.

When confronted with such derision, the White House conjured up the specter of a WMD attack upon the United States in an attempt to quell criticism of its policy. This appeal to fear of a possible, rather than probable, calamity likely convinced many Americans, a majority of whom consented to a war whether or not the Security Council approved one. As long as some U.S. allies endorsed American policy, nearly 60% favored intervention, according to a *Washington Post-ABC News* poll. Americans only expressed lukewarm support (44%), however, for a lengthy and costly U.S. occupation⁷¹.

With scarce knowledge of what could transpire in postwar Iraq, Defense and State Department officials hardly reassured U.S. senators when they testified before the Foreign Relations Committee. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith conceded that American forces would occupy Iraq for two years at a cost of at least \$15 billion per year. This minimum sum contrasted with those analysts who believed that a war and its aftermath would tally in the hundreds of billions. In an era of spiraling budget deficits, due to Bush tax cuts and exorbitant expenses for homeland as well as national security, additional fiscal burdens courtesy of an invasion and occupation potentially promised bruising economic times⁷².

Oblivious to, or unconcerned with, such costs, a determined President Bush seemed convinced of his policy's correctness and sure of his own righteousness, a trait he and his father shared. As George W. Bush aimed to do what he thought "right", he likely kept in mind the following: his dad's overwhelmingly popular victory in *Operation Desert Storm* (a war U.S. allies paid for), Iraq's deleterious behavior vis-à-vis the United States since 1991, Saddam Hussein's efforts to assassinate George H.W. Bush in 1993, and, of course, the lessons of 9/11, which the Bush Doctrine incarnated. Such analogies enabled George W. Bush and his advisors to dismiss the claims, which they considered spurious, of critics who suspected a U.S.-ExxonMobil conspiracy to seize Iraq's oil resources. With Baghdad apparently intending to torch Iraqi oil fields should an invasion occur, the White House denial seemed credible, especially when coupled with administration assurances that it would instruct American occupation officials to use Iraqi crude to pay for

the rebuilding of the country's infrastructure -- already shattered after years of war, international sanctions, and misrule. Such promises underwhelmed many opponents of Bush's policy, who could recite numerous occasions when the U.S. Government renege on its word or plain lied⁷³.

As the White House struggled to persuade non-permanent Security Council members (such as Guinea, Cameroon, and Angola) and other governments whose populations vociferously opposed war in the Middle East, irate U.S. officials issued ultimata in a concerted effort to dragoon states reluctant to endorse American policy despite the promise of significant financial rewards. U.S. heavy-handedness and arrogance on the part of some American decision-makers -- to wit, Rumsfeld's caustic reference to France and Germany as "Old Europe" -- corroded America's ties with its traditional partners and friends, some of which, notably the French and Germans, sought to rein in or even corral U.S. power. Still, the White House seemed either not to care or simply expected the Europeans, Australians, Japanese, and Canadians, whose compromise U.N. resolution proved futile, to follow the American lead or risk irrelevance⁷⁴.

Although U.S. intransigence only frustrated America's friends and embittered its enemies, the Bush administration relentlessly pressed its case for intervention. At the Security Council, Washington continued to clash with the French, Germans, Russians, Chinese, and Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who opposed any U.N. document approving the use of force in Iraq. Despite this opposition, the United States, United Kingdom, and Spain submitted a resolution asking for exactly that. American diplomats lobbied the other Security Council countries intensely in a Sisyphean effort to recruit them to the U.S.-U.K.-Spanish position. The Bush administration hoped to persuade nine members; even if a permanent member vetoed the proposal, support from a Council majority would have satisfied the White House. With an unsuccessful vote likely to embarrass Washington and London, the pro-invasion threesome withdrew its proposal in mid-March⁷⁵.

Although British Prime Minister Blair's Labour Party clamored for a U.N. mandate, President Bush ignored -- albeit unwillfully -- his partner's political needs to satisfy his own. Having

accused Saddam Hussein of ruthless and unpardonable crimes, and of harboring weapons of mass destruction with the intent to strike U.S. targets or arm anti-American terrorists, the self-assured Texan could not back down without forfeiting his own as well as his country's credibility and disappointing the 71% of Americans, according to an *ABC News/Washington Post* poll, who approved of war in Iraq. Bush thus issued an ultimatum on March 17. If Hussein did not disarm to U.S. satisfaction within forty-eight hours, then Washington would attack Iraq and depose Hussein⁷⁶.

Predictably, Hussein, who apparently thought war improbable or, if unleashed, confined to an air campaign his regime could survive, rejected Bush's demand. On March 19, 2003, when seemingly reliable intelligence -- courtesy of the U.S. DB/ROCKSTARS spy network in Iraq -- persuaded the president to authorize a "decapitation strike" aimed at Hussein and his sons, American missiles and heavy bombs crashed into an Iraqi government facility, thereby initiating *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. On April 9, following weeks of steady U.S. advances and with no one to defend Saddam Hussein's regime, the Americans assisted jubilant Iraqis as they tore down statues of Hussein and other despised symbols of their oppressor's decades of tyrannical rule. When President Bush announced the cessation of major combat operations on May 1, his controversial foreign policy seemed vindicated⁷⁷.

In the months and years that followed, however, events in Iraq, especially, and elsewhere underscored the shortcomings of Washington's obnoxious unilateralism. Despite occasional successes, such as the apprehension of Saddam Hussein in December 2003 and various elections in 2005, life in post-Hussein Iraq proved brutish as insurgency and ethno-sectarian conflict threatened to ruin the White House's plan for Iraqi democratization. President Bush spoke of Iraq as a beacon of liberty, but reality in that country presaged civil war, not harmonious federalism. As America found itself mired in the heartland of the Middle East, inhabitants of that region and other Muslim lands shouted their dissatisfaction with U.S. policy. Such anti-Americanism no doubt emboldened Iran, which, starting in the summer of 2005, brazenly defied the United States and its European allies on the all-important matter of nuclear proliferation.

Unlike in Bush's first term, however, the president could not order his overextended army to invade yet another country. Dissent at home and abroad precluded policies that called for military intervention. No longer indifferent to world opinion, George W. Bush touted, and continues to promote, the sagacity of multilateralism, a remarkable volte-face for a man so previously committed to splendid American unilateralism⁷⁸.

5. ANALYSIS

From a leadership style standpoint, George W. Bush and George H.W. Bush differ rather markedly. W. Bush epitomizes what Hermann et al. call the "crusader." He may not have possessed much in the way of foreign-policy knowledge upon entering the White House, but he certainly advocated an unequivocally ideological point of view. His emphasis on an unbound America seemed effortless given his unabashed nationalism, which critics considered naïve and parochial. Like Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush seemed only inclined to perceive his country's good intentions and inexhaustible capacity for peerless achievement. Unlike Bill Clinton, he refused to acknowledge his nation's shortcomings.

Ever the chief executive officer, George W. Bush left the details of foreign policy to his capable advisors. But he continually proved the most passionate salesman of his administration's policies, especially as they pertained to the War on Terror and Iraq. He relentlessly touted the appropriateness and necessity of his foreign policy while ignoring or disparaging criticisms. As an "expansionistic" leader, he sought to impose his views on others, whether members of Congress, the American people, or foreign leaders and societies. In this task, his advisors proved invaluable. Vice President Cheney and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, veterans of the Washington bureaucratic and political "wars," repeatedly displayed consummate skill at swaying important political constituencies that could facilitate the implementation of the Bush agenda. With their assistance, George W. Bush spent much of his first term in office rewriting the rules of international politics. Unlike his father and Bill Clinton, he overlooked or disregarded the views of others if they clashed with his own preferences. As an "evangelistic" leader, he sought to convert others to his opinions, which he relentlessly clung to even when evidence undermined his viewpoint.

In the months before *Operation Iraqi Freedom*, George W. Bush hyped the Iraqi threat by spotlighting Saddam Hussein's purported weapons of mass destruction. Ever the "crusader," he insistently told Americans that unless the United States evicted Hussein from power, America would not be safe from terrorist attack. By proselytizing in such a hyperbolic manner, Bush convinced a majority of Americans of the necessity of war with Iraq, even though many analysts considered such a conflict purely optional. His father demonized Saddam Hussein, often comparing him to Hitler, but seemingly more for instrumental purposes than out of heartfelt conviction. George W. Bush seemed to believe his own rhetoric, the hallmark of any true evangelist.

Unlike his son, George H.W. Bush seems the archetypal "pragmatist". His conservative political instincts, knowledge of the complexities of global politics, and diplomatic experience informed his every foreign-policy decision. As his administration mid-wifed the birth of a new era, he struggled, as did his advisors, to adjust to an international reality so different from the Cold War. A sometimes dumbfounded Bush responded warily to the momentous events unfolding in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, prompting critics to chide him for his seemingly anachronistic behavior. Although Bush occasionally proved deaf and blind to, as it turned out, important information and developments, he favored an incremental policy carefully calibrated to the political entropy whirling through the Soviet Empire and collaborated with his European counterparts to usher in a reunited, peaceful continent. His influential diplomacy yielded a rosy outcome that redounded to his country's advantage.

Like his offspring, George H.W. Bush believed in America's capacity for justice, but he realized its limitations in a way his progeny did not intuitively grasp. Whereas George W. Bush pursued a transformative, even revolutionary foreign policy, his father worked to insure that the post-Cold War world would not succumb to international lawlessness. When threats to George H.W. Bush's "new world order" manifested themselves, he evolved into an "opportunist". His efforts to remove Manuel Noriega as Panama's illegitimate autocratic leader following a democratic election in that country proved felicitous even though the United States proceeded without U.N.

authorization and allied support. No state that mattered internationally stood with Noriega, and his status as a narcotics kingpin endeared him to no one. By limiting the scope of the mission to the mere seizure of Noriega, which took only days, Bush won approval from Americans and Congress. Likewise, when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, Bush hurriedly moved to undo this violation of state sovereignty in a region of critical strategic importance to America. He sensed what could be achieved diplomatically and militarily, consulted repeatedly with foreign and domestic leaders, forged an international consensus, and allowed other countries to take credit for the coalition's triumph even though the United States invested more human and technological resources into the endeavor.

Assigning a leadership style to any American president invites caveats and rebuttals. As the above makes evident, George H.W. Bush's style should be considered a hybrid (i.e., pragmatic and opportunistic). Similarly, his son's "crusader" attitude and *modus operandi* should not be considered monolithic. Already in his second term, W. Bush is exhibiting much more conciliation vis-à-vis other countries and leaders. Reminiscent of Reagan after the 1985 Geneva Summit, Bush is softening his formerly abrasive and condescending tone. Dissimilar to Reagan, though, Bush's opting for a radically different style has coincided with the misfortunes of his Iraq policy and his commensurate loss of power domestically. Currently, even Congressional Republicans, formerly administration stalwarts, doubt, if not oppose, Bush's foreign policy. W's new style, however, should not be considered his preferred or dominant one. Should he recover his lost political strength, he may yet revert to his fully fledged "crusader" ways.

Leadership style, as mentioned earlier, helps explain *why* George W. Bush and George H.W. Bush made certain foreign-policy decisions, rather than others. Poliheuristic theory can explain *how* they made those decisions. Given that each Bush presidency is defined by its Iraq policy (i.e., its decision to wage interstate war), PH provides a method for understanding both policies, especially their divergent outcomes.

Both Bushes waged what many academics and pundits would call "wars of choice" against Iraq. Cognitive analysis of both leaders suggests, however, that the elder and younger Bush viewed military action not as a choice but as a

necessity -- actions required to ensure future peace, stability, and prosperity in a rapidly changing international system. For H.W. Bush, the transition from bipolarity to unipolarity was a chance for Washington to reassert its primacy on the global stage. The liberation of Kuwait was an opportunity to define the rules for his "new world order." Influenced by the events of the 1930s, he believed that if America did not act decisively in checking regional aggression, this new era in international politics would be marked by conflict rather than cooperation. Like his father, George W. Bush also opted for war against Iraq against the backdrop of changes in the international system stemming from the events of 9/11. For him, a failure to prevent a state such as Iraq from gaining WMD, especially nuclear weapons, was likely to result in catastrophic attacks on U.S. soil courtesy of radical extremists. Both Bushes, grappling with the moral burden of serving as steward of the most powerful state in the world, believed that conflict with Iraq was required to ensure the future security of the United States.

Although many individuals on the political Left have accused George W. Bush of rushing into war in a most cavalier manner, it seems clear that Bush, despite his sometimes bombastic rhetoric, did not take this decision lightly. The same is true with George H.W. Bush. In both cases, an application of PH theory suggests that presidential decisions can be measured via dimensions -- political, economic, military, diplomatic, and ideological. What follows examines how the decision to use military force against Iraq likely measured on each dimension as well as explains how each president made his final decision, in the rational or utility maximizing stage of PH.

Consistent with the PH framework, the actions of both George H.W. and George W. Bush suggest that the political dimension of decision making is most salient. Both leaders expended vast amounts of political capital to secure domestic and Congressional support for their policies. Although American presidents claim the right to deploy large numbers of troops without explicit approval from Congress, embarking on wars of this scale and duration without Congressional blessing would constitute political suicide. For H.W. Bush, this entailed convincing a somewhat skeptical domestic audience that Iraq was a menace to global security *and* that diplomatic and economic policies were insufficient to check Baghdad's

irredentist ambitions. For the younger Bush, this meant convincing a domestic audience, one recently sensitized to the horrors of terrorism, that Iraq was seeking, or already had, nuclear and other WMD. Aware of the need to secure political support for his preferred policy, W. Bush cited alleged connections between Iraq and al-Qaeda frequently and loudly in a clear attempt to bolster domestic support for an invasion of Iraq. The need for political support is noncompensatory -- no matter how high the decision scored on other dimensions could not compensate for a lack of domestic political support.

Domestic, especially Congressional support, also directly relates to the economic dimension of the war decision. Both leaders believed they could successfully prosecute war in the Persian Gulf with minimal financial cost to the U.S. Treasury. H.W. Bush was far more successful in this respect, as he convinced the international community to supply most of the billions it cost to wage *Operation Desert Storm*. George W. Bush believed he could replicate his father's feat of war without economic cost by employing a dual strategy of using Iraq's petro-wealth as well as international contributions to finance the cost of war and reconstruction. The younger Bush, however, did not count on a costly and prolonged insurgency as well as a general unwillingness of allies to open their coffers to contribute to the American led "nation-building" enterprise. The ultimate success or failure of these financial matters, however, is unimportant because *at the time* of planning the war, Bush and many of his key advisors believed they would be able to depose Hussein and rehabilitate his country at little cost. In both cases, then, the Bushes' preferred solution, war, scored highly on the economic dimension.

On the ideological dimension, both presidents held similar views that war with Iraq was good for not only the United States, but for the global community. Leery of a possible comparison with Neville Chamberlain, George H.W. Bush thought that the costs of not restoring Kuwaiti sovereignty and checking Iraqi aggression were much higher than pursuing an alternative, less effective strategy. The same logic applies to his son, who, traumatized by 9/11, believed that his country could not absorb a first strike before going to war. A first strike by a foe armed with WMD, especially nuclear weapons, was simply unacceptable. Thus, like his father, George W. Bush thought that not acting against Iraq in 2003

would prove more costly than ignoring what he considered a growing threat in the short term.

While both H.W. and W. Bush believed that engaging in war against Iraq scored highly on the political (the critical dimension in the language of PH), economic, and ideological dimensions, their calculations on military and diplomatic dimensions differ. During the Persian Gulf War, H.W. Bush, Congress, and the American people braced themselves for a bruising campaign against a resolute and skilled Iraqi military. This overestimation likely stemmed from the legacy of Vietnam as well as reports and analysis that grossly inflated Baghdad's military capability. Despite a relatively low score on the military dimension, H.W. Bush believed the risks acceptable. This low score on a secondary (or non-critical) decision making dimension is also highly consistent with PH analysis. In the case of George W. Bush, he and his advisors had little doubt that the military campaign against Iraq could be easily won. Drawing from the Persian Gulf War as well as recent American advances in command and control and other high technology military tactics, the Bush administration seriously doubted Baghdad's potential to fend off the world's premier military power. In this respect, the preferred option of invasion scored highly on a military dimension for George W. Bush. Although a virulent insurgency confirmed that stabilizing and occupying Iraq would prove much costlier than initially predicted, this development did not manifest itself until after inter-state hostilities had ceased. In an ironic historical twist, George H.W. Bush prepared for a punishing military campaign that never materialized. His son planned, however, for a short military campaign and easy occupation, which never materialized.

The final dimension of our PH framework is diplomatic. That dimension is where George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush differ most significantly. Although H.W. Bush later claimed he would have proceeded unilaterally if he had been unable to secure international backing for a military solution to the Kuwait crisis, his intense diplomacy suggests that he very much valued multilateral support. For the elder Bush, the events in the Persian Gulf were inseparable from the era and were thus intimately linked to his plans for a "new world order". For him, diplomacy, while not as critical as the political dimension, likely was nearly as important. Thus, the effort to convince the Soviets, French, and

others that a military solution was needed to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty and “set the tone” for a post-Cold War security environment. Unlike his father, George W. Bush clearly did not consider diplomacy a critical dimension. Though he did seek, in opposition to many of his influential neo-conservative advisors, U.N. support for his military venture against Iraq, his policy did not hinge on that blessing. From the initial planning stages of the war, U.N. legitimacy was not a necessary condition for invading and occupying Iraq. For the younger Bush, his preferred policy solution scores quite low on a diplomatic dimension. But this proves largely irrelevant given that diplomacy was the least salient decision making dimension, in stark contrast with his more internationalist father.

As previously noted, the second stage of a PH analysis is where a leader must choose among the reduced number of policy options. In this process, a president is likely to employ either an expected utility calculation or an optimization along the critical dimension. In both Bush cases, however, military action was the only possible solution that passed the noncompensatory threshold on the critical dimensions. In the case of George H.W. Bush, his desire to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty and inculcate his concept of a “new world order” meant that other available policies (sanctions, a negotiated diplomatic solution, or acquiescence in Hussein’s territorial expansion) were rejected. For H.W. Bush, military intervention was the only policy that could achieve his preferred outcome while scoring well on critical, especially political and diplomatic, dimensions. As well for George W. Bush, military action was the only policy solution that could secure his preferred policy outcome (i.e., removing Hussein from power and obviating the risk of Iraqi-sponsored attacks using WMD) and pass the key dimensional thresholds.

CONCLUSION

This article has compared the foreign policies of two American presidents, a father and son. As John Quincy Adams’ decisions differed from those of his *pater*, George W. Bush’s policies have not typically resembled those of his dad. Context, of course, explains many of the differences. No foreign policies of two presidents can be exactly alike given that events do not repeat themselves. But, while family relations and shared DNA cannot make for presidential clones and identical foreign

policies, sociological and biological commonalities ought to make presidents related to one another somewhat similar to each other -- temperamentally, ideologically, or otherwise. While George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush embrace the vigorous life (they both like physical activity), they tend to avoid introspection, preferring to assess situations via feeling. Thus, they judge based on their own morality – e.g., they opposed Saddam Hussein since each thought it “right” to do so. Notwithstanding such similarities, both President Bushes displayed contrasting styles, making foreign-policy decisions for entirely different reasons and in differing ways. For the most part, then, the dictum “like father, like son” does not apply to George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush and their foreign policies.

As for cognitive and poliheuristic theory, each spotlights different issues. Although PH incorporates cognitive theory, emphasis on leadership style provides worthwhile insight into *why* presidents behave as they do. Since PH emphasizes *how* presidents make foreign-policy decisions, a study such as this one provides a more nuanced analysis of U.S. foreign policy and the men who make it. Neither theory should be thought of as normative, however, a shortcoming Garry Trudeau would probably bemoan, but one George H.W. Bush might consider “prudent” given family reunions.

NOTES

¹ The cartoon appeared in the Comics section of the February 12, 2006, edition of *The Blade* (Toledo, OH).

² See Valerie Hudson’s excellent review of foreign-policy analysis literature. Hudson, Valerie M., “Foreign Policy Analysis: Actor-Specific Theory and the Ground of International Relations”. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, I-1 (march 2005), 1-30.

³ See, for example, Isaacson, Walter, *Kissinger: A Biography*. New York, Simon & Schuster, 1992; Etheredge, Lloyd, “Personality Effects on American Foreign Policy”. *American Political Science Review*, 72 (june 1978): 434-451; Hermann, Margaret G., “Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders”. *International Studies Quarterly*, 24 (march 1980), 7-46; Shepard, Graham H., “Personality Effects on American Foreign Policy, 1969-1984”. *International Studies Quarterly*, 32 (march 1988), 91-123; Wayne, Stephen J., “President Bush Goes to War: A Psychological Interpretation from a Distance”, in Stanley A. Renshon (ed.), *The Political Psychology of the Gulf War: Leaders, Publics, and the Process of Conflict*. Pittsburgh, PA, University of Pittsburgh

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⁴ Hermann, Margaret G.; Hagan, Joe D., "International Decision Making: Leadership Matters". *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1998), 124-35.

⁵ Id., "Assessing Leadership Style...", *op. cit.*, 181.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 181-182.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 185. See also *id. et al.*, "Who Leads Matters: The Effects of Powerful Individuals," *International Studies Review*, III-2 (Summer 2001), 86-95.

⁸ All these definitions can be found in Hermann, Margaret G., "Assessing Leadership Style...", *op. cit.*, 185.

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¹² James, Patrick; Zhang, Enyu, "Chinese Choices: A Poliheuristic Analysis of Foreign Policy Crises, 1950-1996". *Foreign Policy Analysis*, I-1 (March 2005), 32.

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¹⁴ For an in-depth discussion of the types of decisions studied by poliheuristic theory, see Mintz, Alex, "How Do Leaders Make Decisions?...?", *op. cit.* and James, Patrick; Zhang, Enyu, "Chinese Choices...", *op. cit.*, 34.

¹⁵ See Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce; Lalman, David, *War and Reason: Domestic and International Imperatives*. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1994.

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- ²⁰ Ibid., 35.
- ²¹ Mintz, Alex, "The Decision to Attack Iraq...", op. cit., 600.
- ²² James, Patrick; Zhang, Enyu, "Chinese Choices...", op. cit., 33. See also Mintz, Alex; Geva, Nehemia, "The Poliheuristic Theory...", op. cit.
- ²³ James, Patrick; Zhang, Enyu, "Chinese Choices...", op. cit., 33.
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- ³² Ibid., 155.
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- ⁵³ Hess, Gary R., *Presidential...*, op. cit., 211-215.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 214. Only 148 American soldiers died in the conflict, with another 458 wounded.
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