Presidents, the Public, and American Foreign Policy Behavior

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Zachary M. Mears, B.A., M.A.

* * * *

The Ohio State University

2009

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Richard K. Herrmann, Adviser
Professor John Mueller
Professor Kathleen McGraw

Approved by

Adviser
Graduate Program in
Political Science
ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about the relationship between presidents, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy. In particular, using a strategic choice approach, I develop a theory about how presidents behave while in office that provides new ways to think about the formation of U.S. foreign policy, the role of public opinion in the policy-making process, and the nature of audience costs and the credibility of U.S. foreign policy commitments. The result is a theory which contends that American presidents generally have great leeway in determining foreign policy, marshaling the public to at least tolerate particular policies, and avoiding electoral punishment for either poor foreign policy choices or for engaging the national honor and backing down. My dissertation project uses a multi-method approach to test my claims.

This dissertation offers a new conception - a Presidential Agency Model - of the president-public relationship, differentiating from past analyses that have relied heavily on the preferences of the median voter. The Presidential Preference Model, in short, presumes that presidents try to achieve foreign policy outcomes as close to their preferred outcomes \( p \) as possible. Moreover, knowledge of preferences is asymmetric. That is, presidents are assumed to know the public’s preferences, the public is assumed to be ignorant of the president’s true preferences, and they behave as if everyone is trying to achieve their preferred outcome. For the president, this involves attaining a policy, and moving the public, as near to his preferred policy \( p \) as possible.
The Presidential Agency Model also challenges the assumptions and theoretical underpinnings of the crisis bargaining literature, as well as the Kantian notion of the democratic peace, which argues that public opinion will act as a pacifying constraint on foreign policy makers. The Presidential Agency Model calls into question the validity of this causal mechanism, offers a contending approach, and demonstrates that *ex ante* barriers to presidents' use of force and *ex post* checks on poor or unpopular foreign policies decisions, and for engaging the national honor and subsequently backing down, are seldom present.
For my father,

Walter Gary Mears
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Faculty, friends, and family members have helped me complete this dissertation. No doubt, without their constant encouragement, advice, and, yes, prodding, I might still be writing. Thus, I would like to express my gratitude to these individuals for their support and assistance.

However, before praising the many who helped me along the way, let me first praise the institution and department that made this dissertation possible. Ohio State is a wonderful place to study international relations, and I cannot imagine having written this dissertation anywhere else. The faculty provided me with a tremendous graduate education: they provided me with tremendous and rich academic experiences; they taught me how to think about political problems and to identify interesting research questions; they equipped me with the methodological skills to answer those questions–yes, they turned me into a social scientist. For this, several individuals deserve special mention.

Rick Herrmann has been a strong and supportive advisor to me throughout my graduate career. He helped me immeasurably in my professional socialization. He always took time to introduce me to people within the discipline; has always shown faith in my work; has always been a strong advocate for me. Rick did all of this while ensuring my ability to pursue independent work and the career path that was best for me. Not all (indeed, most) advisors would have been so supportive. He is as
dedicated and devoted of an advisor as one could ask for – anyone who knows Rick will be able to discern the ways in which his ideas and suggestions have influenced me and this dissertation. Again, Rick – thank you.

John Mueller challenged me and my arguments like no other could. Throughout my graduate career he offered wonderful insight, pointed critiques, and clear direction. Without his scholarship and thoughtful arguments, my thoughts on the relationship between presidents, public opinion, and foreign policy formation most certainly would have suffered.

Kathleen McGraw, quite simply, taught me how to think about political problems. From the first day of my graduate career in Political Science 684: Introduction to Political Science Research Methods to her final critique of this dissertation, Kathleen was always teaching me how to better present scientific evidence. Her approach to social science has strongly influenced this dissertation; indeed, she ensured the analysis was as rigorous as I hoped it to be.

In addition to those professors who guided my professional development, my fellow graduate students have also been an enormous asset. Without the thoughtful advice and, more importantly, friendship of Brandon Bartels, Jong Kun Choi, Jim DeLaet, Corwin Smidt, and Nathan Toronto, this most certainly would have been a much more painful adventure.

Additionally, a special mention for the staff at the Library of Congress is required. Without their efforts in providing me with material that contributed significantly to this dissertation project, the overall quality and depth of the cases studies offered herein would most certainly have been lacking.
This dissertation would not have seen completion without the constant support of my family. Without the love and support (emotional, financial, and otherwise) of my parents, Danny and Janie Robinson, and my brother, Josh, grad school would have been much less bearable.

Though this may seem a bit odd, these acknowledgments would surely be incomplete if I did not mention my dog, Bruce. I experienced many late nights in the final year of this dissertation and I could not have had a better companion with which to burn the midnight oil. Thank you, Little Man.

Finally, I most want to thank my wife, Sarah, for her love, sacrifice, and kind indulgence, and for inspiring and amazing me every day. In fact, she was everything that I needed. She stoically bore the weight of my impatience, stubbornness, frustration, procrastination, and poverty, and did it lovingly. This work is hers.

OK, one final note: any deficiencies in this dissertation are solely mine, despite the best efforts of those praised above.
VITA

2000 .................................................. B.A., Political Science
   University of Tennessee, Knoxville

2000 .................................................. Certificate of Attendance and Completion
   University of Cambridge

2004 .................................................. M.A., Political Science
   The Ohio State University

2004 .................................................. Summer Workshop on Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy
   Columbia University

2001–07 .......................... Graduate Teaching and Research Associate
   The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Political Science
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1 The Central Puzzle</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Scope</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Introduction to the Theoretical Argument</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 Theoretical and Substantive Focus</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 Regime Type Heterogeneity</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Domain</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 Cases</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 The Approach</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Methodology</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Results in Brief</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Overview</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Theory ................................................................. 21

2.1 Introduction ....................................................... 22
2.2 Literature Review ............................................... 23
   2.2.1 Responsiveness Theories ................................. 24
   2.2.2 Public Opinion and Foreign Policy ....................... 26
   2.2.3 Public Opinion and International Relations Theory .... 31
      2.2.3.1 Audience Costs .................................... 33
2.3 The Theory ...................................................... 35
   2.3.1 An agency model of foreign policy decision-making .... 35
   2.3.2 Theoretical Assumptions ................................. 37
2.4 A Presidential Agency Model .................................. 39
   2.4.1 Hypotheses ................................................ 44
      2.4.1.1 Conventional Wisdom Hypotheses ................. 44
      2.4.1.2 Presidential Agency Hypotheses ................ 46
2.5 The Presidential Agency Model and Audience Costs .......... 47
   2.5.1 The Audience .............................................. 49
   2.5.2 The Audience: Retrospective or Prospective Voters ...... 52
   2.5.3 Audience Costs Hypotheses ............................... 54
      2.5.3.1 Conventional Audience Cost Hypotheses ........ 55
      2.5.3.2 PAM Audience Cost Hypotheses .................. 56
2.6 Summary .......................................................... 57

3. Methodology and Data ............................................ 58

3.1 Methodology ...................................................... 59
   3.1.1 Strategic Choice Model for Theory Construction .......... 60
   3.1.2 Statistical Analysis ...................................... 63
   3.1.3 Case Studies ............................................... 65
      3.1.3.1 Case Study Questions: Public Influence Cases ..... 68
   3.1.4 Case Study Questions: Audience Costs Cases ........... 69
   3.1.5 Selecting the Cases .................................... 69
      3.1.5.1 Operationalizations ................................ 70
   3.1.6 Experiments ................................................. 74
      3.1.6.1 Participants ......................................... 75
      3.1.6.2 Procedure and Materials ......................... 75
3.2 Analytic Restrictions ........................................ 76

4. Domestic Influence in Presidential Decisions to Use Force: Data Analysis and Cases ........................................... 78
4.1 Introduction ........................................... 79
4.2 Statistical Analysis .................................... 82
  4.2.1 Congruence of Executive and Public Foreign Policy Preference 82
  4.2.2 Modeling the Use of Force .......................... 87
    4.2.2.1 Empirical Tests ............................... 89
    4.2.2.2 Analysis ..................................... 96
4.3 Case Studies ........................................... 107
  4.3.1 George W. Bush and the second Iraq War .............. 108
    4.3.1.1 Case background .............................. 109
    4.3.1.2 Actor preferences and policy choices .......... 112
    4.3.1.3 Analysis .................................... 150
  4.3.2 Bill Clinton and the Kosovo war .................... 155
    4.3.2.1 Case background .............................. 157
    4.3.2.2 Actor preferences and policy choices .......... 160
    4.3.2.3 Analysis .................................... 178
4.4 Conclusions ........................................... 185

5. Audience Costs in American National Policy: Data Analysis and Cases 189
  5.1 Introduction ......................................... 190
  5.2 The Presidential Agency Model Rebuttal .................. 195
  5.3 Audience Costs Experiments .......................... 197
    5.3.1 Experiment 1 ................................... 198
    5.3.2 Experiment 2 ................................... 199
      5.3.2.1 Experimental 1 Results ...................... 200
      5.3.2.2 Experimental 2 Results ...................... 211
  5.4 Case Studies ......................................... 217
    5.4.1 Bill Clinton and North Korea (1993-4) ............ 219
      5.4.1.1 DPRK Withdrawal, March - June 1993 .......... 221
      5.4.1.2 Back and Forth Negotiations, June - September 1993 226
      5.4.1.3 Increased Tensions and the Deployment of U.S. Forces, October 1993 - March 1994 .......... 227
      5.4.1.4 The Road to Agreement, March - June 1994 .... 231
      5.4.1.5 The Public’s Preferences ..................... 235
      5.4.1.6 The 1996 Presidential Election Outcome ..... 239
      5.4.1.7 Analysis .................................... 239
    5.4.2 George W. Bush and North Korea (2002-4) ......... 242
      5.4.2.1 Laying the Groundwork, January 2001 - January 2002 244
      5.4.2.2 The Run-up to Crisis, January - October 2002 .. 247
      5.4.2.3 The Threat of Conflict, October 2002 - April 2003 251
      5.4.2.4 The Public’s Preferences ..................... 257
      5.4.2.5 The 2004 Presidential Election Outcome ..... 258
5.4.2.6 Analysis ........................................... 261
5.5 Conclusions ........................................... 262

6. Conclusion ............................................ 264
6.1 Principal Findings ................................. 266
  6.1.1 Public Influence ................................ 267
    6.1.1.1 Statistical Results ........................... 267
    6.1.1.2 Case Analyses ................................ 269
  6.1.2 Audience Costs ................................. 276
    6.1.2.1 Experimental Results ......................... 277
    6.1.2.2 Case Analyses ................................ 281
6.2 Final Reflections on the Argument ............. 285
6.3 Normative Implications ......................... 287
  6.3.1 Ignoring the Public ......................... 289
6.4 Implications and Policy Recommendations ...... 291
6.5 Conclusion ......................................... 293

Appendices:

A. Poll Questions ........................................... 295
  A.1 Iraq War Support Questions ..................... 296
    A.1.1 Pre-War Support .............................. 296
    A.1.2 War Support .................................. 297
    A.1.3 Bush Performance on Iraq .................... 300
  A.2 Kosovo War Support Questions ................... 301
    A.2.1 Pre-War Support .............................. 301
    A.2.2 War Support .................................. 303
    A.2.3 Clinton Performance on Kosovo .............. 303

B. Experiment Materials ...................... 305
  B.1 Questionnaire .................................... 306
    B.1.1 Introduction ................................. 306
    B.1.2 Independent Variables ....................... 306
      B.1.2.1 Cooperation .............................. 306
      B.1.2.2 Mercantilism .............................. 307
      B.1.2.3 Isolationism .............................. 308
      B.1.2.4 Political Knowledge ...................... 308
      B.1.2.5 Foreign policy approval .................. 311
      B.1.2.6 Rep representation ....................... 312
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Presidential Agency Model Payoffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Equilibrium associated with monitoring/shirking outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Working or Shirking on the Decision to Use Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Influence of public opinion on presidential foreign policy preferences (Full)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Summary Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Frequency of Presidential Uses of Force, 1945-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Frequency of Presidential Uses of Minor Force, 1945-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Frequency of Presidential Uses of Major Force, 1945-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Approval of the president’s handling of the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Vote for the president as a function of general approval of his handling of the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Vote for the president as a function of general approval of his handling of DPRK proliferation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Vote for the president as a function of general approval of his handling of DPRK continued proliferation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Faces of Internationalism</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Presidential Agency Model</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Time Series of U.S. Major Uses of Force, 1945-2005</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Time Series of U.S. Major Uses of Force, 1945-2005</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Time Series of U.S. Minor Uses of Force, 1945-2005</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Frequency of Minor Uses of Force</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Frequency of Major Uses of Force</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Public’s Pre-war Policy Preference</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Circumstances for Supporting Military Action Against Iraq (1)</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Circumstances for Supporting Military Action Against Iraq (2)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Believe Iraq has WMD</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Believe Saddam was involved in 9/11</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Support for the war in Iraq, March 20, 2003</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Support for the war in Iraq in the initial weeks</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Evaluation of possibility of U.S. forces getting bogged down in Iraq</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1 Party Identification and Support for the Iraq War . . . . . . . . . . . . 271
6.2 Opinions on the Iraq War and the 2004 Vote . . . . . . . . . . . . . 272
6.3 Support for Iraq War and the Presidential Vote . . . . . . . . . . . . 273
CHAPTER 1

Introduction
When does the American public influence the course of U.S. foreign policy? The main objective of this work is to clarify the conditions under which the American public influences presidents’ foreign policy decisions and the credibility of public threats and international commitments. The intent is to parse through why much of the extant literature in both American politics and international relations believes the public to have a strong and direct influence on these phenomena.

The relationship between the American public, presidents’ foreign policy choices, and American credibility in international politics is not some remote, abstract concern; the subject demands attention for several reasons. First, there are important security concerns at stake. American foreign policy decisions, as evidenced by the war in Iraq, have important, sometimes dire, implications and therefore study and analysis of what influences those decisions is necessary.

Second, the linkages between public opinion and American foreign policy has not received adequate theoretical treatment. Modern realists in international relations scholarship, such as John Mearsheimer and Steven Walt, have contributed little to the this debate, often assuming the public out of the theoretical puzzle.¹ Formal theorists of the causes of war and international credibility, conversely, assume the power of the public in, giving them more theoretical power than the empirical record warrants.² This dissertation seeks to balances these polar treatments.

Third, for international relations theory, particular the literature concerning audience costs and credible commitments, few have actually sought to unpack the behavior of the audience expected to produce audience costs. The reliance on the rather


tenuous assumption that democracies can manufacture situations in which they will suffer political harm should they make threats they are unwilling to keep, therefore, potentially poses serious problems. Theoretically, the reliance on an overly simplistic treatment of audiences and regime-type is troubling, perhaps leading to spurious conclusions. Empirically, despite the fact that the audience is a key player in the audience costs argument, the audience as an actor (or actors) is oddly absent. Indeed, we know very little about this audience, how it behaves, or why it acts in the ways that it does. This dissertation seeks to unpact the concept of audience costs in the context of U.S. foreign policy.

And fourth, there are important normative implications. Many scholars and practitioners believe that the opinions of the public do not deserve a “seat” at the foreign policy decision-making table. Most ordinary people do not devote the time or attention, or have sufficient skills and knowledge to make foreign policy choices, so the argument goes. For them, democracy and effective foreign policy are incompatible. Others, however, argue public opinion has an important, often moderating, impact of Presidents’ foreign policy decisions. Thus, a reasonable public should inform Presidents’ foreign policy choices. The theoretical argument offered here bears on these competing arguments; its implications are discussed.

The rest of the introduction proceeds as follows. The next two sections expand on the problem and scope of the study respectively. The subsequent section addresses the domain of observation. The final sections outline the remainder of the dissertation.

3To include Alexander Hamilton, who wrote in *Federalist Paper No. 1*, “it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country...to decide the important questions, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for the political constitutions on accident and force.”
1.1 Introduction

American foreign policy is supposedly conducted in the name of the people, yet after decades of research the peoples’ impact on foreign policy decisions is still decidedly murky. The last decade has seen major theoretical and empirical advances in the cross-national analysis of how domestic political systems shape international conflict and, in particular, decisions to use force. Yet, further specification and theorization is needed of whether, when, and/or how the public influences the conduct of American foreign policy, and how and when presidents are able to influence both the public’s opinion and behavior regarding foreign policy options.

The conventional wisdom in the literature concerning American foreign policy is that, though it is not determinative of policy, public opinion does constrain the range of policy choices available to presidents. Yet, history is replete with examples of the contrary: presidents constraining the range of options presented to the public, often moving the public toward his preferred policy option, or of the president “going alone” and conducting foreign policy without the support of the mass public. Theories of democratic responsiveness and liberal theories of international relations, however, hold that presidents ought to be paying attention to the interests and concerns of the public. But, in practice, is that the actual state of affairs? Does the public constrain the policy options available to presidents? Or rather, as policy analysts and those in Washington argue, do presidents set policy and attempt to move the public to support, or at least tolerate, their preferred policies?
1.1.1 The Central Puzzle

In trying to understand the links between American foreign and security policy and public opinion, most researchers rely on democratic responsiveness (or responsiveness) theories that claim that public opinion in one direction or another will (and should) influence the policies of a democratic government. Similarly, models of the president-public relationship which conceptualize the relationship as one between principal (the public) and agent (the president) presume that the median opinion (combined with presidents desire to retain office) determine policy outcomes. When public opinion shifts, or when it strongly supports or opposes particular policies, policy also shifts. It is important to note here that the United States is a republic, not a direct democracy. Thus, for most Americans, most of the time, they are citizens without politics. Given this, should we even expect presidents to respond to opinion in this manner? Most theoretical arguments to date (sometimes explicit, though most times implicit) respond in the affirmative: that is, presidents, though not directly accountable at each point of decision, are always wary of and constrained by latent opinion.4

These theories are often tested by quantitatively analyzing relationships between public opinion and particular foreign policies. Although we can draw some conclusions about the links between public opinion and policy based on this kind of research, we have a limited understanding of how presidents and their advisors view, are affected by, and utilize public opinion. Moreover, when public opinion is manipulated

4Latent opinion is opinion that might exist at some point in the future in response to the decision-makers actions and may therefore result in political damage or even the defeat at the polls. As V.O. Key remarked of latent opinion: “in the practice of politics and government . . . [latent opinion] is really about the only type of opinion that generates much anxiety,” V.O. Key. 1961. Public opinion and American democracy. New York: Knopf, 262.
by presidents, the correlation between policy and opinion is not evidence of president’s responsiveness to public opinion.\textsuperscript{5} We are thus left wondering how presidents understand public opinion, as well as when and if they heed it.\textsuperscript{6}

This dissertation therefore is about the relationship between presidents, public opinion, and American foreign policy. In particular, using a strategic choice approach, I develop a theory about how presidents behave while in office that provides new ways to think about when the American public is more likely to play a role in foreign policy decision making and the nature of audience costs and the credibility of American foreign policy commitments. The result is a theory which contends that American presidents generally have great leeway in determining foreign policy, marshaling the public to at least tolerate particular policies, and avoiding electoral punishment for either poor foreign policy choices or for engaging the national honor and backing down. There are, however, identifiable conditions under which the president is constrained is his decisions to use force abroad; as best as possible given the evidence considered, these conditions are outlined. My dissertation project uses a multi-method approach – case studies, statistical analyses, and experiments – to test my claims.


\textsuperscript{6}In 1998, the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press reported on a survey of policy actors (members of Congress, presidential appointees, and civil servants). The majority of these policy makers agreed that the public was too ill-informed about policy matters to make reasoned decisions about what to oppose, or led their support to. Among members of Congress, only 31 percent thought that Americans knew enough about public policy to “form opinions about what should be done.” Only around 14 percent of presidential appointees and senior civil servants felt that the public had any sense of what was at issue. Despite sharing the view that the public is largely uninformed, nearly 70 percent of the members of Congress responding to the survey identified “the pressures of public opinion” as an important obstacle to their getting things done. What are we to make of this contradiction? I hope to propose some answers in this dissertation.
1.1.2 Scope

This dissertation has four chief aims: 1, to create a theoretical explanation of the relationship between president’s preferences and public opinion in American foreign policy and national security decisions; 2, to examine practical implications of the theoretical argument; that is, under what conditions does the public influence foreign policy decisions, and how do perceptions of the president’s ability to determine policy and influence public opinion shape the policy formation process; 3, to examine whether presidents avoid political punishment for issuing empty threats and making poor foreign policy decisions; and 4, to explore the normative implications of the theoretical argument and empirical findings; namely, what do they suggest about the state of American democracy?

1.2 Introduction to the Theoretical Argument

One of the most pressing concerns in the study of international relations today is developing a systematic account of the impact of domestic politics on foreign policy. Recent scholarship has emphasized the linkage between leaders’ decisions about the use of military force and the preferences of the mass public. The causal mechanism between leaders’ decisions and their publics in this strand of scholarship has been the leaders’ incentive structures, shaped by a desire to remain in power and by the interests of domestic actors. In short, this model suggests that leaders will pursue popularity maximizing behavior.\(^7\) The specific foreign policies (aggressive, conciliatory, etc.) would vary with the agent’s perception of the principal’s preferences. The

most widely popular approach therefore, regardless of its substantive merits, should be the alternative pursued by the president even if it means avoiding a foreign policy issue rather than taking action. If presidents do not respond to said opinion, they face the punishment of removal from office in the next election.

This model, as does any model, uses particular simplifying assumptions to portray a stylized version of reality and derive hypotheses about presidential foreign policy decisions there from. Theoretically, however, the literature relies on logically unsound, unitary notions of both presidential motivations and the power of the public’s preferences in determining policy outcomes. I offer a contending model which brings presidential power in, and defines the conditions under which the public is most likely to influence policy choices. That is, presidents may respond to or account for public opinion in the formation of foreign policies, but they do not act simply as transmission belts: the notion that the median voter determines policy outcomes, while elegant, does not provide theoretical space for the reality of contending interpretations of the events, and the politics of presidential power. My model does so.

More generally, despite the advances in understanding public opinion, theories of public opinion in foreign policy making and the understanding and demonstration of the dynamics of the opinion-policy nexus remain miss-specified and under-theorized. Liberal international relations theorists such as Bruce Russett, for example, argue that the public sets (and should set) broad limits on presidential foreign policy decisions.\textsuperscript{8} Realists such as Morgenthau and Kennan, on the other hand, warn presidents not to respond to the publics’ preferences because of their detachment from the reality of

international politics, and their unstable shifting “moods”. In short, realists believe
the mass public to be a poor, distracting, and often misleading guide to policy.

It is not surprising however that these two strands of scholarship hold differing
views concerning the impact of public opinion on foreign policy: neither of these
paradigms systematically sets out to incorporate public opinion as a variable into
their theories of foreign policy. Rather, implicit assumptions about the public mood
and the public’s foreign policy knowledge drive both their theoretical and normative
expectations regarding the role of public opinion in the policy making process.

This dissertation offers a new conception – a Presidential Agency Model (PAM) –
of the president-public relationship, differentiating from past analyses that have relied
heavily on the Downsian median voter model. The Presidential Agency Model, in
short, presumes that presidents try to achieve foreign policy outcomes as close to
their preferred ones \( p \) as possible. Moreover, knowledge of preferences is asymmetric.
That is, presidents are assumed to know the public’s preferences, the public is assumed
to be ignorant of presidents’ true preferences, and they behave as if everyone is trying
to achieve their preferred outcome. For the president, this involves attaining a policy
as near to his preferred policy \( p \) as possible. The conditions under which this model
is most likely to hold are outlined.

What is more, PAM challenges the assumptions and theoretical underpinnings of
the crisis bargaining literature, as well as the Kantian notion of the democratic peace,
which argues that public opinion will act as a pacifying constraint on foreign policy

York: Knopf; and George Kennan. 1951. \textit{American Diplomacy, 1900-1950}. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.}

\footnote{Bueno de Mesquita et. al., \textit{The Logic of Political Survival}; and Fearon, "Domestic Political
Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes."}
makers. Kant claimed that citizens, before supporting decisions for war, “consider all of its calamities before committing themselves to so risky a game.” Similarly, Reiter and Stam conclude that democracies are more likely than other states to be more selective in initiating wars and to be more likely to win wars because their leaders are accountable to their constituents.\textsuperscript{11} Yet, the theoretical argument offered in this dissertation calls into question the validity of these causal mechanisms, offers a contending approach, and demonstrates that \textit{ex ante} barriers to president’s use of force and \textit{ex post} checks on both poor or unpopular foreign policies choices and for engaging the national honor and subsequently backing down are seldom present.

In so doing this dissertation sheds new light on the relationship between presidents and the public in the domain of American foreign policy; decisions to use force, in particular.

### 1.2.1 Theoretical and Substantive Focus

The thrust of the theoretical and the substantive argument of this dissertation is the relationship between American presidents and their publics in the formation of American foreign policy. However, the theory and its hypotheses have broader implications for theories of American foreign policy, theories of audience costs, and the treatment of regime type in international relations theory. Thus, the first empirical chapter of the dissertation tests hypotheses about the relationship between American presidents, public opinion, and foreign policy decisions, while the second empirical chapter tests hypotheses regarding audience costs in American foreign policy making, and discusses the implications for existing arguments regarding audience costs and the

credibility of international commitments. You will find the bulk of these arguments in chapters 4 and 5, respectively. However, directly below is a brief discussion on the need for considering heterogeneity in regime types, and why this dissertation is focusing on presidential systems more generally, and the United States, in particular.

1.2.2 Regime Type Heterogeneity

In contrast to much of the literature concerning the link between a state’s regime type and her foreign policy behavior, the argument offered here differentiates itself in many ways. The existing literature, though focusing as this dissertation does on political institutions and incentive structures, relies heavily on the assumption that leaders make policy choices that are compatible for a one with incentives (and hope) to survive in office.\(^\text{12}\) As Bueno de Mesquita et al. argue, for example: “Political leaders need to hold office in order to accomplish any goal . . . . We take it as axiomatic that everyone in a position of authority wants to keep that authority and that it is the maneuvering to do so that is central to politics in any type of regime . . . . We treat political survival as a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for leaders to achieve other personal objectives.”\(^\text{13}\) This dissertation, however, makes a narrower argument using slightly different assumptions as its theoretical focus is presidential systems. Why? Because though existing theories are right to bring leaders and their domestic incentives back to the forefront of foreign policy research, the generalizability of their theoretical argument has perhaps been stretched a bit


\(^{13}\) Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*, 7, 9, 23.
too far, especially if one examines the heterogeneity of democratic regimes. That is, it is important to consider whether presidents in presidential systems and prime ministers in parliamentary systems face different political incentives when crafting foreign policy.

Accordingly, this dissertation addresses the need for theorizing foreign policy behavior within regime type, offering a more focused theory of foreign policy behavior in presidential systems. Theories of international relations and comparative foreign policy frequently assume, explicitly or implicitly, that regime types – be it democracies or autocracies – are interchangeable as both theoretical and empirical units of analysis, and researchers often test state-level theories on the behavior of leaders in varying domestic political systems. However, when the preferences and incentives of leaders vary both across and within regime types, this may be a particularly dangerous assumption. On questions ranging from diversionary war to the initiation and termination of conflict to choices of bargaining strategies and the development of reputations, the incentives and characteristics of facing national national leaders within regime types appears to answer questions on which traditional regime-based and structural perspectives are silent. In order to create more valid theories, greater sensitivity to the heterogeneity within democracies and autocracies is required.


15 Chiozza and Goemans, “Peace through Insecurity”; and Giacomo Chiozza and Hein Goemans, “Avoiding Diversionary Targets”


As such, this dissertation suggests that the focus on regime structures *per se* is a misleading, or at least incomplete, way of conceptualizing domestic political influences and their effect on foreign policy; there is likely heterogeneity across democracies. Thus, the theoretical argument and substantive focus of the dissertation is presidential systems more generally, the case of the United States, in particular.

### 1.3 Domain

The dissertation focuses on U.S. foreign policy decisions concerning the use of force abroad since World War II. This dissertation identifies twenty-three cases of the use of U.S. force abroad. Of the identified cases, I examine four of those cases (outlined briefly in the subsequent section) in greater detail. Two cases are used to investigate the varying impact of public opinion on U.S. foreign policy decisions, specifically decisions to use force abroad. The other two cases are used to investigate audience costs under two conditions prominent in the literature: 1, punishment for poor foreign policy decisions, and 2, punishment for engaging the national honor and backing down.

#### 1.3.1 Cases

The cases were chosen because they show variation on the independent and dependent variables. Each case begins with a short history to give the reader a sense of the flow of events. To enumerate the detailed case studies:

I first examine the following two cases, which investigate the varying impact of public opinion on US national security decisions.

**Case 1**: George W. Bush and the second Iraq war
Case 2: Bill Clinton and the Kosovo war

I then examine two cases which investigate the condition under which audience costs exist in the execution of American foreign policy.

Case 1: Bill Clinton and North Korea (1993-4)

Case 2: George W. Bush and North Korea (2002-3)

1.4 The Approach

In developing the theory, I use assumptions from the perspective commonly referred to as “strategic choice.” In particular, I assume that agents behave as if they are maximizing their interests given their preferences, beliefs and available options.

1.5 Methodology

In addition to employing a rational choice approach for theory construction, I employ several methods for theory testing: experiments, quantitative analyses, and case studies. “The working assumption,” as Phil Tetlock writes, “is that theoretical generalizations that pass radically different tests stand a better chance of capturing robust regularities than do generalizations whose support is confined to one genre of research.” Controlled experiments reassure us of the internal validity of the audience cost causal claim; case studies employing careful archival research and interviews to evaluate whether specific decision makers really analyzed problems in the ways my


theory suggests;\textsuperscript{21} statistical analysis to see if my explanations fit well the broad history of US presidents; and explicit logic to ensure that the ideas tested in archives and through statistics are logically coherent. Again, each method has strengths and weaknesses. None would be sufficient alone, yet each offers something unique and important. By combining them I thus exploit a wider range of potential insight and reduce the odds that my findings are artifacts of a given method’s blind spots.

1.6 Results in Brief

In several ways, this dissertation advances our understanding of the relationship between the president and the American public as it relates to various aspects of the foreign policy process. For instance, within the context of the foreign policy process – from foreign policy option generation and selection, to implementation and termination – it considers many more manifestations of possible public influence than most works in the extant literature. This is not a single-minded approach where either the public influences the president or it does not. Rather, as the data in the empirical chapters to follow demonstrate, the public’s influence over the range of foreign policy decisions is rarely chronic, but there are acute bouts where the public’s preferences are paramount.

Whether it is contributing to President Clinton’s hesitation to introduce ground forces in Kosovo in the late spring of 1999, or for the most part its lack of influence over the course of events related to President Bush’s foreign policy choices regarding

\textsuperscript{21}A code book is included as an appendix to the dissertation. I developed the code book to make explicit my interpretations of the variables key to the arguments and counterarguments examined in this dissertation. By identifying a standard set of questions and the values that the variables can take, and laying out precisely what evidence is needed to “code” a variable in a particular way a priori, it is hoped that the case analyses are valid, reliable, systematic, and replicable.
Iraq, public influence (both its timing and modality) varies – this dissertation seeks to capture this variance. More generally, this dissertation and its associated findings do not support the conventional wisdom that the public preferences have a systematic influence over presidents’ foreign policy decisions.\textsuperscript{22} Using a variety of data sources – event-count models, polling data, experiments, and cases studies – this dissertation finds the public’s influence to often be conditional and acute. Rarely does the public act to stimulate foreign policy actions or uses of force (not since the Spanish-American War, anyway), but it does at times act to constrain the policy options available to presidents, as well as their implementation and duration.\textsuperscript{23}

Though this dissertation does not find the public to be an overwhelmingly influential and powerful one, it is also not a “shapeless lump” with moving preferences to which the foreign policy process is completely impervious.\textsuperscript{24} Rather, though I find presidents generally have great leeway in determining with course of American foreign policy, they at times heed the advice of their (sometime insistent) back seat driver (the public) and take a suggested scenic detour that allegedly is a better route to their desired end. This dissertation thus documents the conditions under which the public may influence foreign policy decisions, constrains them, when the president

\textsuperscript{22}As Jacobs and Page put it: “The public \textit{may play} a substantial part in the highly salient questions of war and peace.” Lawrence Jacobs and Benjamin Page. 2005. “Who Influences Foreign Policy?” \textit{American Political Science Review}, 99:118, emphasis mine. This dissertation is an effort to tease out at least some of those conditions.

\textsuperscript{23}For one account of the public’s power to constrain, see Sobel, \textit{The Impact of Public Opinion of U.S. Foreign Policy Since Vietnam}.

renders a decision he initially fears losing to lack of public support (that is, the fear of latent opinion), and when the public is ignored all together.

1.7 Overview

Chapter 2 presents a theoretical framework of the president-public relationship. The framework, which I term the Presidential Agency Model, focuses on the relationship between the president and the American public, which I seek to separate from Downsian median voter models of the relationship. The chapter therefore begins with an extensive review of the literatures concerning foreign policy decision making, public opinion, principal-agent models, psychological models of decision making, and the audience cost literature. I then proceed to describe the intuition and assumptions behind the model, and discuss how the intuition of this model is influenced by assumptions regarding the cost of ignoring public opinion when crafting policy and the resultant impact on presidential foreign policy decision making. I conclude with a discussion of theoretical implications for the audience cost literature.

To explain the president-public relationship and the result for American foreign policy, this strategic choice theory proposes several specific causal mechanisms. The model then generates hypotheses regarding when and why the president chooses to ignore opinion in crafting particular foreign policies; when and why the president prefers may be constrained by public opinion; and, finally, under what conditions the president is most likely to be punished for poor foreign policy decisions, or for issuing threats and backing down.

Following the explication of the theory I proceed in chapter 3 to discuss the methodologies used to test my claims. My dissertation project uses a multi-method
approach (quantitative analyses, polling data, experiments, and case studies) to test my claims. The experiments enable me to identify under what conditions the public – or, more accurately, a particular segment of it – is most likely to punish a president for making poor foreign policy decisions, or issuing empty threats. To combat the weaknesses of the experimental method, I also employ case studies to gauge the external validity of my hypotheses. The case methods employed are process-tracing and congruence approaches. Principally, it is process by which the sequences and variables in an historical narrative are disaggregated in a way that allows both within cases investigation of the causal mechanisms, as well as cross-case comparisons. As a result, the approach provides for both a rich empirical account and a rigorous evaluation of the model in the public influences cases. The congruence method is employed in the audience costs cases as it provides a better method with which to gauge the competing expectations of the Presidential Agency Model and the traditional audience costs argument. By analyzing the micro-foundations of the audience cost framework in experiments, and by then applying this framework to particular case studies, the hope is that an understanding of the possible factors at work in the relationship between presidents and public opinion, and between public opinion and presidents’ foreign policy decisions will be more clear. Finally, to test the macro-implications of the theory, I use a variety of quantitative analyses.

The theory yields several observable implications and predictions. Some of these predictions are tested quantitatively, and others in detailed case studies. Chapter 4 examines the argument and hypotheses of when and how presidents navigate public opinion in detailed case studies and quantitative analyses.
The last part of the dissertation takes on the notion of audience costs in American foreign policy. Chapter 5 therefore begins with a review the relevant literatures and discusses the implications of the Presidential Preferences Model for existing arguments. The argument offered here is in direct contrast to Fearon’s argument that leaders who issue threats which engage the national honor and then subsequently back down are likely to be punished in the next election; I argue (and find) that accountability and punishment are often avoided. Following Goemans, I assume that a leader’s accountability is determined by the consequences as well as the probability of losing office for adopting an unpopular and/or unsuccessful policy, or for ‘engaging the national honor’ and subsequently backing down.\textsuperscript{25} In short, the Presidential Agency Model suggests that, under most conditions, presidents should be able to avoid electoral punishment for poor foreign policy choices. The implications of this claim for the audience cost literature are significant. If the pattern is, as the theory expects, that presidents are not punished in the polling booth for poor foreign policy choices or for backing down in crises, then presidents, most of the time, fail to both credibly commit to agreements, and to signal their resolve in crises and war (at least, they fail to do so employing the mechanism of audience costs).

Chapter 5 examines the ‘(in)credible commitment’ argument in two detailed case studies. I examine Bill Clinton and North Korea (1993-4; 1996 election) and George W. Bush and North Korea (2002-3; 2004 election). Finally, taking up again the most current case of President Bush and the decision for war against Iraq, I challenge existing audience costs arguments using a counterfactual thought experiment. That is, according to the logic posed by Fearon in his seminal article on audience costs,\textsuperscript{25}Goemans, \textit{War and Punishment.}
Bush would have been punished (in the next election) had he threatened Iraq — thereby engaging the national honor — and subsequently back down. This should have made President Bush’s threat to Iraq credible; Saddam should have recognized the United States’ resolve to fight; war should have been avoided. These events did not occur. I use the counterfactual case to tease out why, according to the Presidential Agency Model, this is so.

The conclusion synthesizes the results, makes plain the normative implications of the argument and empirical results, and discusses questions for future research provoked by the Presidential Agency Model.
CHAPTER 2

Theory
2.1 Introduction

The central focus of much of the literature on public opinion and foreign policy is on the content of public opinion regarding particular foreign policy without investigating whether or how public opinion might affect foreign policy decisions. The challenge, though, is in developing more rigorous theory and empirical investigations of both how public opinion about foreign policy evolves, as well as its electoral and policy consequences. There can be said to be minor disagreement in the literature about whether public opinion constrains the range of policy options available to presidents\textsuperscript{26} or whether presidents shirk and attempt to generate public support (or at least tolerance) for their preferred policy choices.\textsuperscript{27} This dissertation seeks to contribute to this debate by 1, outlining the relationship between the public’s and the president’s foreign policy preferences, and 2, examining the implications for this relationship for foreign policy decision making. Thus, following a review of the literatures concerning public opinion and foreign policy and public opinion and international relations theory, I offer a model which seeks to delineate when the president is likely to shirk and set policy congruent with his preferences, and when he is more likely to work and set policy congruent with the public’s preferences. Also, a follow-on section develops in


greater detail the model’s implications related to audience costs in American foreign policy.

2.2 Literature Review

As this dissertation is about the relationship between presidents and public opinion in foreign policymaking process, it serves us to first review the various literatures bearing on this (or, at least, a similar) theme. In particular, I review the following literatures:

1. Responsiveness Theories- In general, argues politicians are responsive to public opinion because of political benefits (or, in some cases, the absence of costs and punishment) from pursuing policies consistent with those preferred by the public.

2. Conventional Wisdom Theories - This literature argues that the public cannot (and most likely does not) hold consistent and stable foreign policy opinions.

3. Revisionist Theories - Revisionist, like Page and Shapiro, contend that the public is actual quite rational and tend to respond to foreign policy decisions and events in rather reasonable and understandable ways.

4. Public Opinion and International Relations - Grounded in a bargaining model of international conflict, this strand of literature is links leaders’ decisions about the use of military force and the preferences of the mass public. The causal mechanism between leaders’ decisions and their publics has typically been the leaders’ incentive structures, shaped primarily by a desire to remain in office and by the interests of strong domestic actors.
5. Audience Costs - Extends the bargaining approach to international conflict to examine the varying of ability of particular regime types to signal their resolve regarding particular foreign policy commitments or threats. This literature is most relevant for the argument offered forth in this dissertation because most of the work in this area seeks to connect the likely future behavior of a states’ citizenry (her public or audience) to the efficacy of public issued commitments or threats.

Following this review, I develop and situate the chief theoretical argument of this dissertation within the context of the existing literatures.

2.2.1 Responsiveness Theories

Claims that presidents are responsive to public opinion ultimately rest on some version of the argument that political elites derive some benefit from pursuing policies that are (or appear to be) in accord with the wishes of the mass public. It is also possible, of course, that presidents really seek nothing more than to represent majority opinion, but few scholars argue today that presidents treat adhering to public opinion as an end in itself. Nonetheless, they may perceive it to be in their interests to minimize the distance between their own positions and that of the public.

The most general approach has been offered by Stimson, MacKuen, and Erikson, who, for example, report that government policy followed public opinion as it moved in a liberal direction in the 1960s, in a conservative direction around 1980, and then back toward a liberal course in the late 1980s. They concluded that politicians behave
“like antelopes in an open field”\textsuperscript{28}—“When politicians perceive public opinion change, they adapt their behavior to please their constituency.”\textsuperscript{29}

Similarly, according to median voter models, presidents not only adopt the median position to maximize political support in the short term, but also to increase the prospects for reelection in the long term. In short, the assumptions driving the behavior of the actors in these models does not allow them to lead opinion; presidents are just reflecting the public’s views, and only when the public changes its position do presidents change their view. Like the responsiveness models, there is no room for politics.

What is more, both the responsiveness and median voter scholarship have been plagued by questions about the nature of the causality in the opinion-policy (or opinion-behavior) relationship. In neither is there room for presidential influence over the public’s preferences, or for presidential mediation of the public’s opinion-behavior relationship. This is very much akin to Hoover’s argument regarding the power of public opinion to constrain presidential wartime decision-making: “Public opinion will suffice to check violence.”\textsuperscript{30} Excluding from the analyses the ability of presidents to influence, or even ignore, public opinion regarding particular policies thereby is likely to exaggerate the estimates of the public’s influence over foreign policy decisions.


2.2.2 Public Opinion and Foreign Policy

The conventional wisdom concerning the nature of the American public’s foreign policy attitudes was grounded in the research and observations of Almond, Converse, Key, Lippmann, and Rosenau. Essentially, they argued that the American public does not (and most likely cannot) hold consistent and stable foreign policy attitudes. For instance, Almond writes that “foreign policy attitudes among most Americans lack intellectual structure and factual content.” Moreover, Rosenau suggests that “the mass public is uniformed about either the specific foreign policy issues or affairs in general...It’s members pay little, if any, attention to day-to-day developments in world politics” and they typically “lack structured opinions.” Converse and Mueller likewise argue that the public generally pays little attention to international affairs. What might be a central issue to elites in forming a particular policy typically “passes almost unwitnessed by an astonishing portion of the mass public.” Consequently, Mueller claims that “how the American public typically relates to international affairs is to suggest that the mode tends toward inattention.” Therefore, from this traditionalist perspective one should not expect the vast majority of citizens to hold coherent, stable opinions on specific matters of foreign policy.


32 Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy, 53.

33 Rosenau, Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: An Operational Formula, 35.


Deeply intertwined with the public’s lack of objective knowledge concerning foreign policy issues, traditionalists were also concerned with the larger normative implications of their findings. This being that, not only did the public lacked stable, structured opinions, but that a product of that instability was a moody public.\textsuperscript{36} “On the rare occasions when it does awaken from its slumber, the mass public...is impulsive, unstable, unreasoning, unpredictable, capable of suddenly shifting direction or of going in several contradictory directions at the same time.”\textsuperscript{37} Similarly, as Lippmann (quite colorfully) notes:

The unhappy truth is that the prevailing public opinion has been destructively wrong at the critical junctures. The people have impressed a critical veto upon the judgments of informed and responsible officials. They have compelled the government, which usually knew what would have been wiser, or was necessary, or what was more expedient, to be too late with too little, or too long with too much, too pacifist in peace and too bellicose in war, to neutralist or appeasing in negotiations or too intransigent.\textsuperscript{38}

From the perspective of normative democratic theory, then, the mass public is depicted as a poor, distracting, and often misleading guide to policy.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom – also known as the Almond-Lippmann consensus\textsuperscript{39} – revisionists such as Aldrich et al., Hinkley, Holsti, Hurwitz and Peffley,


\textsuperscript{38}Lippmann, Essays in the Public Philosophy, 20.

Jentleson, Page and Shapiro and Wittkopf contend that the public is “pretty prudent.” For example, Page and Shapiro contend that – in the aggregate – the public holds real, stable, and sensible policy preferences. And, rather than change being capricious, “foreign policy preferences have in fact had considerable stability and, when they have changed, have done so in ways that can be judged as reasonable, given the unfolding of events and changes in objective conditions as reported by the media and political leaders.”

Other revisionist research has focused on identifying stable dispositional cleavages—great power versus isolationist versus internationalist or unilateral versus multilateral for example—that divide Americans. More specifically, Hinkley and Wittkopf, through analysis of Chicago Council on Foreign Relations surveys, finds that public is distributed along


41Page and Shapiro, The Rational Public, 1.

42Page and Shapiro, “Foreign Policy and the Rational Public,” 214.
two “faces” of internationalism—cooperative internationalism and militant internationalism (see Figure 2.1 below). Therefore, “rather than occurring as independent phenomena opinions and specific levels of support or opposition exists in the context of general patterns of attitudes” held by the public toward international affairs. Also, these dispositions not only identify important fault-lines in the public, but research has also established that they anchor decisions on when and in what types of conflict it is appropriate to use force.

Similarly, at the individual level, support is also found for the claim that mass foreign policy beliefs have an underlying organization and logic. Individuals make use of ‘heuristics’ and other information shortcuts (such as images) to make political judgments and formulate attitudes toward a particular issue in international relations. As Holsti notes, “these studies appear to suggest that, even in the absence of much factual knowledge, members of the mass public uses some simple—perhaps even simplistic—heuristics in order to make sense of an increasingly complex world; a few salient criteria rather than complete information may serve as the basis for


This model of public attitudes presumes that a person’s core values, dispositions, beliefs, and use of information cues have a direct impact on their attitude toward a particular issue.

We can draw two general conclusions from this body of research that will prove useful in guiding the theoretical expectations of the Presidential Agency Model: 1, as Mueller and others of the traditionalist bent note, with respect to foreign affairs the public generally tends toward inattention; and 2, that when public does pay attention to foreign affairs, they typically respond – through the use of heuristics and information shortcuts – rather sensibly to cues from the political environment. Though the literature does not go to great lengths to empirically investigate how

---

either of these general conclusions affects policy, Presidential Agency Model offers an argument on when it is more likely to do so. Namely, as the public tends toward inattention with respect to foreign affairs, the Presidential Agency Model expects there to be a low probability that they will constantly monitor the foreign policy options available to, and the foreign policy choices of, their leaders. Also, when the public does decide that monitoring is worth the associated costs, they should make sensible decisions when deciding whether to reward or punish the president for his foreign policy choices.

2.2.3 Public Opinion and International Relations Theory

As noted in the review of the literature on public opinion and foreign policy, one of the most pressing concerns in the study of international relations today is developing a systematic account of the impact of domestic politics on foreign policy. Recent scholarship in international relations theory has emphasized the linkage between presidents’ decisions about the use of military force and the preferences of the mass public. The causal mechanism between presidents’ decisions and their publics in this strand of scholarship has been the leaders’ incentive structures, shaped by a desire to remain in power and by the interests of domestic actors. In short, this model suggests that leaders will pursue popularity maximizing behavior.\textsuperscript{48} The specific foreign policies (aggressive, conciliatory, etc.) would vary with the agent’s perception of the principal’s preferences. The most widely popular approach therefore, regardless of its substantive merits, should be the alternative pursued by the president even if it means avoiding a foreign policy issue rather than taking action. If presidents do

\textsuperscript{48}See Bueno de Mesquita et al., \textit{The Logic of Political Survival}. 

31
not respond to said opinion, they face the punishment of removal from office in the next election.

This model, as does any model, uses particular simplifying assumptions to portray a stylized version of reality and derive hypotheses about presidential foreign policy decisions there from. Theoretically, however, the literature relies on logically unsound, unitary notions of both presidential motivations and the power of the public’s preferences in determining policy outcomes. I offer a contending model which brings presidential preferences in, and defines the conditions under which the public is most likely to influence policy choices. That is, presidents may respond to or account for public opinion in the formation of foreign policies, but they do not act simply as transmission belts: the notion that the median voter determines outcomes, while elegant, does not provide theoretical space for the reality of contending interpretations of the events, and conflicting policy preferences between the president and the public. The Presidential Agency Model offered tries to do so.

Moreover, the power of this model as a model of and explanation for foreign policy decisions rests on the credibility of punishment by the principal. But whether the punishment threat is credible depends on assumptions about the electoral process that the principal-agent and audience costs literatures do not make explicit. If, as in moral hazard models of elections, all candidates are alike, punishment is credible because it is costless. As Smith argues, the public is more like likely to punish leaders for foreign policy fiascos than they are to reward leaders for foreign policy successes.

---

49 Directly observing this influence, especially in the case of the affect of latent opinion on policy, is another matter. The implications for this are discussed later in the chapter.

It may not be either costless or credible, however, if politicians vary and the public believes that the incumbent conforms more closely than does his potential replacement to their preferences. Rather, as Fearon observes, the public seems to view elections “much more as opportunities to try to select good types than as sanctions to deter shirking by future incumbents.”\textsuperscript{51} Though this may be true of voters’ tendency to punish presidents at election time for bad economic performance, this has no been demonstrated of national security performance. The rejection President George H. W. Bush after a successful war effort, and the re-election of President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair after unsuccessful war efforts, seem to comport with this view. Thus, a new model that more accurately captures American president-public relationship is needed.

\subsection{Audience Costs}

Audience costs are one mechanism for doing so that has become fairly popular in recent studies of international behavior. Briefly, if presidents take actions that increase the costs of backing down from their position, then they can effectively commit to holding out for concessions. However, as Smith and Schultz note, this mechanism lacks micro-foundations: the theoretical models that investigate the impact of audience costs on behavior have largely taken them for granted. This dissertation, in part, clarifies what an interpretation of domestic audience costs would look like, and investigates the theoretical possibility for generating such costs endogenously. Under what conditions would an audience impose such costs on a leader? Are audience costs

empirically real, or only theoretically useful? Even if audience costs exist, under what conditions do leaders tolerate them?

In the original article on audience costs, Fearon assumes that citizens punish leaders who bluff by escalating a crisis and then back down; hence escalation involves increasing audience costs. He assumes that audience costs exist and justifies this assumption with an overly patriotic public concerned with the nation’s “national honor.” Fearon claims that the domestic audience, an aggregation of principals interested in the foreign policy performance of their agent, will issue a rebuke for “engaging the national honor and subsequently backing down.”52 It is unclear why citizens should punish their leaders for getting caught in a bluff when bluffing may be an optimal strategy, or when they may be happy that the leader avoided a costly foreign entanglement.53

Moreover, there has been too little attention paid to the domestic political interactions that produce these costs. Because presidents are perceived as susceptible to domestic reprisals for backing down, their demands in crisis situations appear more credible to an international audience, namely, the target of the threat. What are the mechanisms by which these costs are produced? Fearon identifies elections and/or unfavorable opinion polls, but does not explicitly incorporate how democratic publics sanction their leaders into his argument. Without micro-foundations (i.e., a theory of the president-public relationship in foreign policy), the domestic audience cost story sounds a lot less persuasive.

52Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," 581.
53As Stephen Walt notes, audiences may “reward a leader who overreaches at first and then manages to retreat short of war. Thus the British and French governments did not suffer audience costs when they backed down during the Rhineland crisis of 1936 or the Munich crisis of 1938.” Stephen Walt. 1999. “Rigor or Rigor Mortis? Rational Choice and Security Studies,” International Security, 23:34.
The research agenda of this dissertation provides us with fruitful answers to some of these questions. That is, when do publics choose to “rebuke” a president for backing down? When might the public simply tolerate, what they perceive to be, poor foreign policy decisions? And, finally, if audience costs are found to be a rather weak constraint on presidents’ foreign policy decision-making, what does this mean for democratic peace theory, more generally?

2.3 The Theory

2.3.1 An agency model of foreign policy decision-making

When Franklin Roosevelt faced the task of convincing a reluctant American electorate to come to the aid of Britain and her allies in World War II, he portrayed U.S. involvement in the lend-lease program as “if a neighbor’s house was on fire, wouldn’t you lend them a hose?,” thus transforming the way Americans saw the involvement in the lend-lease program. Roosevelt achieved his aims not by manipulating war-power rules or by directly changing preferences, but by redefining the choice context as it appeared to the public.54

In so doing Roosevelt sought to marshal the public toward his policy preference (S) and away from the preference of the general public (W). This stylized model of foreign policy decision-making is in stark contrast to the conventional wisdom that the public at the very least constrains the policy options available to the president, and at most moves the president to adopt their preferred policy. President Clinton

54For a detailed account of Franklin Roosevelt decision-making regarding US involvement in the Second World War, with particular focus on the public’s role in the process, see Steven Casey. 2001. Cautious Crusade: Franklin D. Roosevelt, American Public Opinion, and the War against Nazi Germany. New York: Oxford University Press.
stated to a reporter in 1993, the voters “gave me a contract, and I’m going to fulfill it to the best of my ability, and then they can make their judgments.”

But just what are the likely behaviors given such a principal-agent arrangement? Will the public have considerable influence on particular policies, or at best are they granted to opportunity to render judgement in the voting booth? As Clinton later told a group of radio reports in the fall of 1993, “I have a contract that runs a specific limit–amount of time. I’m going to do the very best I can during that time, and then when the time is the American people can make their own judgments.”

I believe that the model offered here more accurately captures the relationship between the president and the public in foreign policy decision making. Moreover, I seek to draw out the implications of such a principal agent relationship for foreign policy decision making, specifically decisions to use force. Though, unlike Clinton’s statements above, this account not only questions the likelihood the public will influence particular decisions to use force, but also questions the likelihood of removing a president from office based on poor foreign policy performance or issuing empty threats.

Given this, what does such a theory look like? The following section lays out the assumptions of the Presidential Agency Model. The subsequent section offers alternative sets of hypotheses – the conventional wisdom hypotheses and the Presidential Agency Model hypotheses – and the empirical chapters for this dissertation evaluates them against survey data and the historical record.


2.3.2 Theoretical Assumptions

As with any theory, mine contains a set of assumptions from which hypotheses are derived. Here are mine. The basic assumptions concern the relevant players, their preferences, actions, and behavior. These assumptions could be specified at a variety of levels of mathematical precision; I have chosen to present them largely through figures and narrative. Because the use of formal notation is minimized, footnotes are employed on occasion to offer a more precise description of the theory.57

1. There are two types of actors: presidents and the public.

2. The president’s preferences are assumed to derive from motivations such as policy goals, reelection, and favorable historical evaluations. The president has a most preferred outcome, and he prefers outcomes closer to it over ones further from it.

3. All politicians seek reelection by maximizing their popularity among the public.

4. When elections are not proximate, Presidents are more concerned with seeing their preferred policy through as opposed to implementing the policy most likely to secure them office in the long term.

5. Relative to presidents, the public holds “weak” foreign policy preferences. That is, not all citizens care about all issues, rendering their preferences regarding some issues malleable.

57 For present purposes, it is quite sufficient to indicate the causal mechanisms posited to be at work with textual models: text models frequently precede more mathematical projects of formalization, they are equally capable of heroically simplifying relationships into stripped-down stories of causation, and they are furthermore capable of doing so with parsimony, as well as with predictive and explanatory potential.
6. Presidents and politicians enjoy the advantage of asymmetric information; that is, presidents have quite a bit of it (both about the foreign policy situation and public opinion) while the public has little of it (both about the foreign policy situation and the president’s intentions regarding policy).

7. The public is not well-informed about the landscape of public opinion; they don’t know how typical or unusual their views are.

8. Asymmetric power relationship; giving the election cycle in the United States, the public has fewer political levers to stop the enactment of unfavorable policies. (And even when unpopular foreign policies are enacted, the public generally tolerates them.)

9. Presidents, as policy initiators, have first-mover advantage. This allows them to “prime” the competitive setting.

10. An actor has framing power if they are in a structural position to alter a similarity relationship between a pair of alternatives (such as by emphasizing salient features or dimensions of comparison) and instigate an individually-preferred shift in the collective outcome.

11. The President will suffer reputation effects for deception and threat-mongering if the threat is not exposed for what it is and is not dealt with effectively.

2.4 A Presidential Agency Model

The game begins with the public deciding how to monitor the president given the associated costs of thorough monitoring.\(^{59}\) Monitoring thoroughly may be thought of as the public pressuring their congressional representatives to conduct many regular congressional investigations, the formation of ad hoc commissions that investigate intelligence and defense policy, and so on.\(^{60}\) Some of the costs involve time and effort that could be devoted to other things the general public cares about (for instance, domestic policy, jobs, and family); other costs might be called policy costs which arise from micro-management, i.e., the mistakes caused by the general public seeking influence in areas outside their expertise.

Once the public has chosen their mix of monitoring mechanisms, it is the president’s turn to act. The president chooses between working (W) or shirking (S), between doing what the general public wants exactly or going against the public’s

\(^{59}\)The game makes several simplifying assumptions. I assume that the actors adhere to some minimal standard of instrumental rationality and that both the general public and the president conceive of themselves as principals and agents. I also assume as a point of departure that the actors—the general public and the president—can be represented as only two players. In fact, I recognize that there are multiple principals (interest groups, experts, lobbyists, etc.) and multiple agents (the President, Congress, military, etc.), but this dissertation does not explore more fully the consequences of relaxing these assumptions.

\(^{60}\)Monitoring and reporting procedures are efforts to overcome the hidden information/hidden behavior problem by making public the activities of the agent. Matthew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz’ influential study of congressional oversight identified two basic types of monitoring systems, dubbed police patrols and fire alarms. Police patrol refers to regularized audits and intrusive reporting requirements designed to turn up evidence of agent wrong-doing and, through regularized inspection, to deter moral hazard problems; fire alarm refers to monitoring by a third party who has a vested interest in the actions of the agent, for example, interest groups and affected constituents, and whose objections to agent behavior will set off an “alarm” to alert the principal whenever the agent misbehaves. Reporting and monitoring have obvious political applications, particularly in the Congress-bureaucracy relationship. Public investigative hearings and specific mandated reports are staples of congressional oversight and represent one of the more visible avenues of political control. In some respects, the news media functions as a fire alarm in monitoring the president. The media act as independent third agents, self-appointed public watchdogs. They uncover abuses of delegated authority. See Matthew McCubbins and Thomas Schwartz. 1984. “Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols vs. Fire Alarms.” American Journal of Political Science, 28: 165-79.
policy preference. The colloquial meanings of work and shirk are not particularly helpful; the problem in the president-public relationship is not a lazy president, or at least this is neither the only nor the most important problem. The agent is said to work perfectly when he does what the general public has asked for, how the public has asked for it, with due diligence and skill, and in such a way as to reinforce the power of the public in constraining the leeway that presidents have in both choosing and implementing policy. The agent is said to shirk when the president, whether through laziness, insolence, or noncompliance, does not abide by the public’s policy preferences, or implements them in a way contradictory to way the public prefers.

Given this understanding, at least two considerations go into the president’s choice. First, the difference between W and S, between what the public is asking and what the president would like to do anyway, will affect the propensity to shirk; other things equal, the smaller the difference the lesser the incentive the president has to shirk. The second consideration has to do with the rest of the game, specifically how the public principal responds to shirking.

After the president has moved, nature has a move: will the shirking be caught or not? Not all shirking will be detected; indeed this is the essence of the agency problem. The probability of being caught is a function of the monitoring system; the more intrusively the general public monitors, the greater the likelihood that presidential shirking will be detected. If shirking is detected, the public has a move: whether to punish or not to punish. Punishment is not a foregone conclusion. While

The information problem inherent in this relationship is further exacerbated by the secrecy restrictions that accompany military actions. A common obstacle in principal-agent relationships is the tendency of the agent to withhold information that reflects unfavorably on the behavior of the agent. The classification system vastly eases the task of an agent who wishes to keep inconvenient information from disseminating. While in theory the general public may be entitled to know everything, in practice the costs of doing so are great in any principal-agent relationship.
the principal-agent focus assumes that the public has the ability to punish, it does not assume that they will always do so. In the simple agency model presented here, I treat the probability of punishment as exogenously given, deriving from the relative strength of the players which itself is a function of other exogenous factors such as the salience of the issue, the popularity of the president, and so on.

In Figure 2.2, the game has been simplified by grouping the branches under the shirking node together algebraically. Given the uncertainty over whether shirking will be detected and whether it will be punished if detected, the payoff for shirking can be viewed as the expected value of shirking without getting punished minus the expected value of shirking and getting punished. Given one binary choice by the general public to monitor thoroughly or not thoroughly, and one binary choice by the president to work or shirk, there are four possible outcomes: working with non-thorough monitoring, working with thorough monitoring, shirking with non-thorough monitoring, and shirking with thorough monitoring.

Table 2.1 summarizes the four outcomes and the associated payoffs. If the general public and the president’s preferences converge there is a greater likelihood of ending up at the non-thorough monitoring and working outcome. The convergence of the general public’s and the president’s preferences can be represented as a narrowing of the gap between W and S and so the expression, W-S, gets smaller. When this

---

62 This is contrary to much of the audience cost literature, which takes as given ex post punishment for shirking.

63 The shirking outcome actually represents the summed expectation of several different shirking and punishment outcomes: the president shirks and is punished with one probability and the president shirks but is not punished with the reciprocal probability.
Figure 2.2: Presidential Agency Model

Key:

W: Work aligns with the public's preference
S: Work aligns with the president's preference (shirking)
C1: Cost of publics' monitoring
PS1: Public payoff of presidential shirking if public punishes
PS2: Public payoff of presidential shirking if public does not punish
C2: Cost to president of punishment
w1: President's payoff of working with no monitoring
w2: President's payoff of working with thorough monitoring
s1: President's payoff of shirking with no monitoring
s2: President's payoff of shirking with thorough monitoring
α: Probability of detecting shirking with no monitoring
β: Probability of detecting shirking with thorough monitoring
γ: Probability that shirking is punished
happens, the equilibrium conditions for strategy pairs that would produce the no-monitoring-and-working outcome become easier to sustain.\textsuperscript{64} Note, however, that the agency model is agnostic on any significance attaching to the direction of the movement. For instance, it matters not whether the general public conception of work moves closer to the president’s ideal point or vice-versa. For the extant literature on the general public’s influence on foreign policy decisions, however, this is crucial. The president-public relationship would be at its best if the president’s preference moved closer to that of the general public. But does this theoretical and normative expectation capture the actual state of affairs? By manipulating the values of the model parameters, I generate two sets of competing hypotheses: the first represents the conventional wisdom in the field concerning the impact of public opinion on American foreign policy, and the second represents hypotheses derived from the Presidential Agency Model offered here.

\textsuperscript{64}The president will choose to always work when its payoffs from working exceed the expected payoffs of shirking. Expressed algebraically, the military will choose to always work if the following inequalities are true: \( w_1 > s_1 - \alpha \gamma C_2 \) and \( w_2 > s_2 - \beta \gamma C_2 \). Faced with such a president, the general public’s best choice is not to monitor thoroughly so long as \( W > W - C_1 \), i.e., so long as there are some intrinsic costs associated with monitoring thoroughly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>President Works</th>
<th>President Shirks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public monitors thoroughly</td>
<td>W - C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public does not monitor thoroughly</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Presidential Agency Model Payoffs
2.4.1 Hypotheses

The Presidential Agency Model identified the conditions under which certain strategy pairs would be equilibria. Recall that a strategy pair is a combination of the public’s decisions to monitor or not given a response from the president, coupled with the president’s decision to work or shirk given the public’s decision on monitoring. These strategy pairs could combine to produce each of the four monitoring/working outcomes summarized above in Table 2.1. The equilibria conditions associated with these outcomes express the conditions under which we could expect those outcomes. Table 2.2 summarizes this discussion and identifies the equilibria conditions associated with each outcome.

2.4.1.1 Conventional Wisdom Hypotheses

Generally, the literature concerning the impact of public opinion on foreign policy would argue that the “monitoring/working” cell represents the normal state of affairs. That is, this model suggests that leaders will pursue popularity maximizing behavior. The specific foreign policies (aggressive, conciliatory, etc.), then, would vary with the agent’s perception of the principal’s preferences. According to the agency model, this would be the outcome when the public monitored thoroughly and the president adopted a strategy of working when monitored and shirking when not monitored. The conditions associated with this equilibrium (listed in column three of table 2) suggest that this outcome is more likely when some or all of the following circumstances are true: the costs of monitoring (C1) are low relative to the stakes as the public sees them (W-PS2); the expectation that the public would catch and punish

\[65\] This is very a very common assumption in the bargaining literature. For a complete explication, see Bueno de Mesquita et al., *The Logic of Political Survival*. 

44
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring and Working Outcome</th>
<th>Strategy pairs that would produce this outcome</th>
<th>Equilibria associated with that strategy pair</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring/Working</td>
<td>Public Monitors and the president works if monitored thoroughly</td>
<td>$C_1 &lt; W-S_2 - \alpha \gamma (PS_1-PS_2)$ and $w_2 &gt; S_2 - \beta \gamma C_2$ and $w_1 &lt; s_1 - \alpha \gamma C_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring/Shirking</td>
<td>Public monitors and the president always shirks</td>
<td>$C_1 &lt; (\beta \gamma - \alpha \gamma) (PS_1-PS_2)$ and $w_1 &lt; s_1 - \alpha \gamma C_2$ and $w_2 &lt; s_2 - \beta \gamma C_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No monitoring/Working</td>
<td>Public does not monitor and the president always works</td>
<td>$C_1 &gt; 0$ and $w_1 &gt; s_1 - \alpha \gamma C_2$ and $w_2 &gt; s_2 - \beta \gamma C_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No monitoring/Shirking</td>
<td>Public does not monitor and the president always shirks</td>
<td>$C_1 &gt; (\beta \gamma - \alpha \gamma) (PS_1-PS_2)$ and $w_1 &lt; s_1 - \alpha \gamma C_2$ and $w_2 &lt; s_2 - \beta \gamma C_2$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2: Equilibrium associated with monitoring/shirking outcomes
shirking in the absence of monitoring \((\alpha \gamma)\) is low, and/or the public perceives little
difference between punishing shirking and letting shirking go unpunished \((\text{PS1-PS2})\); the
president’s expectation of punishment under the monitoring regime \((\beta \gamma C2)\) is
large enough to compensate for the “benefit” the president would derive from shirk-
ing \((s2-w2)\); and/or the expectation of punishment under the non-monitoring regime
\((\alpha \gamma C2)\) is not high enough to compensate for the benefit the president would derive
from shirking \((s1-w1)\). These circumstances, furthermore, imply the following about
the real world values of certain key parameters in the president-public relationship:
the costs of monitoring are low; the reliability of non-intrusive monitoring regimes
(e.g., fire alarms) is relatively low; the president expects to be punished he is caught
shirking.

2.4.1.2 Presidential Agency Hypotheses

Based on the assumptions in the Presidential Agency Model, however, we get a
different set of hypotheses. Derived from the assumptions delineated above, accord-
ing to the Presidential Agency Model the normal state of affairs is the no monitoring
and shirking cell. That is, under most conditions the presidents is more likely to
pursue policies more proximate to his policy preferences and therefore not per se
more proximate to the public’s preferences. The conditions associated with this equi-
librium (listed in column three of table 2) suggest that this outcome is more likely
when some or all of the following circumstances are true: the costs of monitoring
\((C1)\) are high relative to the stakes as the public sees them \((W-\text{PS2})\); the expectation
that the public would catch and punish shirking with thorough monitoring \((\beta \gamma)\) is
low, and the public perceives little difference between punishing shirking and letting
shirking go unpunished (PS1-PS2); the president’s expectation of punishment under
the monitoring regime ($\beta_2$) is low enough so as to not compensate for the “benefit”
the president would derive from shirking (s2-w2); and/or the expectation of punish-
ment under the non-monitoring regime ($\alpha_2$) is not high enough to compensate for the
benefit the president would derive from shirking (s1-w1). These circumstances, fur-
thermore, imply the following about the real world values of certain key parameters
in the president-public relationship: the costs of monitoring are high; the reliability
of non-intrusive monitoring regimes (e.g., fire alarms) is relatively low; the president
does not expect to be punished when he is caught shirking.

Does the evidence support either of these expectations? In chapter 4 I evaluate
these hypotheses in a couple of different ways.

2.5 The Presidential Agency Model and Audience Costs

The audience costs argument is firmly rooted in what may be termed the “rational-
ist” approach to international relations. It operates from a position of methodological
individualism, assuming discrete actors that rationally seek to maximize their utility
by choosing among options on the basis of their yield. The preferences of the actors
involved are exogenously given and do not change during the interaction. Their be-
havior is predictable in that they will select that course of action which, given their
beliefs and the information available, is calculated to generate the highest payoff,
or at the very least, the lowest costs. These are all assumptions which allow the
audience costs argument to be modeled mathematically. In its most famous formal
rendering by Fearon, audience costs are represented as $a(t)$, a “continuous and strictly
increasing function of the amount of escalation,” whereby $t$ stands for the stage of
escalation.\textsuperscript{66} So, in other words, at the outset of a crisis \((t=0)\), audience costs are equal to zero, but will accumulate over the course of the crisis. Audience costs are only suffered by the president should he/she back down; conversely, they disappear should the adversary acquiesce or the crisis result in war. Moreover, the amount of a given president’s audience costs is visible to both sides given the stage of escalation; indeed, this is necessary for audience costs to serve as a meaningful signal.

Critics of the audience costs argument, as noted above, are plenty. Relatively few, however, have actually sought to unpack the behavior of the audience expected to produce audience costs. One exception is Slantchev, who notes that a rational public would not punish a leader for implementing policies in the state’s best interest; i.e., bluffing when it was rational to bluff, backing down when it was rational to back down.\textsuperscript{67} Slantchev resolves this problem by positing the possibility of leadership incompetence and modeling variation in the restrictions placed on the sources of information available for a citizenry to judge the efficacy of a given president’s policies, specifically the opposition and the media. Even still, on the basis of his model, Slantchev finds that audience costs are quite difficult to generate and do not automatically increase according to the level of democracy within a state. Thus while Slantchev’s model provides a possible set of micro-foundations for audience costs, it limits the situations within which they would be operative to such a narrow range that their meaning as a tool of foreign policy would seem marginal at best.

Given Slantchev’s conclusions, it is interesting that not more scholars have sought to question the micro-foundational processes behind the generation of audience costs.

\textsuperscript{66}Fearon, ”Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” 582.

The original background story for audience costs provided by Fearon is that they are produced when presidents make threats that “engage the national honor,” and the further a crisis escalates the more national face is at risk. Should the leader back down in such a situation, the national honor will be sullied, and as a result the domestic audience will administer punishment “electorally or through the workings of public opinion.” 68 Many scholars would seem to accept this explanation without any qualms and appear quite content to leave the formal representation as a simple $a(t)$.

### 2.5.1 The Audience

Represented in the function $a(t)$, however, is not an audience per se, but rather the predicted outcome of a hypothetical audience’s actions. Granted, models are always simplifications of reality, and parsimony can be a virtue. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the audience is a key player in the audience costs argument, the audience as an actor (or actors) is oddly absent. Indeed, we know very little about this audience, how it behaves, or why it acts in the ways that it does. In what follows below, I attempt to remedy this deficit. Drawing upon both Fearon’s writings about the domestic audience and the properties of his model itself, I seek to systematically outline what attributes are required of this actor for it to fulfill the functions Fearon has assigned to it.

First, what is a viable audience? Fearon does not explicitly spell this out, though he does argue that “kings, rival ministers, opposition politicians, Senate committees, politburos, and, since the mid-nineteenth century, mass publics informed by mass

---

68 See Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes”
media”\(^{69}\) count as relevant audiences. As mass audiences has been the standard treatment of audience in the American foreign policy literature, so too is it here.

Second, the audience needs to be highly sensitive to the words and deed of presidents, if not outright manipulable. As Fearon’s model states, at the beginning of a crisis (\(t=0\)) audience costs are non-existent; it is only through a succession of escalatory moves on the part of the leadership that audience costs accrue. In other words, audience costs are nothing more than a function of presidential behavior. This, consequently, rules out a role for interest groups with a stake in the outcome of the crisis. An interest group would be preoccupied about the outcome of the contest regardless of the degree of escalation and thus can be expected from the outset to impose a specific cost on the leader that should betray its cause.

Even after a crisis has emerged, it is not the issue *per se* that is of interest to the audience, but the ability of its agent (i.e., the president) to stand firm. Therefore, within Fearon’s model, a president need not fear punishment for reckless actions, only “cowardly” ones. The audience described here is thus paradoxically one that should be highly concerned about national honor, yet without an opinion on foreign affairs and undaunted by the possibility of war.

Third, the audience described by Fearon needs to be ready and able to clearly convey its position to outside observers. Audience costs matter for Fearon only in that they serve as a discernible proxy for a given leader’s degree of determination – a visible representative of the invisible, so to speak. For Fearon, not only are foreign observers able to ascertain the presence of audience costs, but they are also capable of knowing the potential magnitude of these costs. But on what would rational foreign

\(^{69}\)Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes,” 581.
observers base a judgment about the audience costs facing an adversary? It would not be rational simply to assume that the adversaries have accumulated audience costs just because they say so. Logically speaking, presidents that have incentives to bluff about their level of resolve should be just as likely to bluff about the domestic audience costs that supposedly render their capitulation untenable.

For audience costs to serve the role Fearon has outlined for them, the threat of audience costs has to be confirmed by the actor unlikely to be in on the bluff: the domestic audience itself. This would seem to necessitate that, at least on some level, the audience take certain actions of its own volition to signal that it cares about presidential behavior in the crisis at hand and would punish the president that dare yield. Conceivably, actions that would fulfill this purpose include demonstrations, rallies, petitions, letters, and responses to opinion polls, and it is only the last of these that does not significantly involve the price of time and effort. Absent these indicators, audience costs would be just as inaccessible as the private information they are argued to communicate.

Finally, the audience needs to be capable of credibly threatening future punishment should its agent back down. It is crucial that the threat be valid and reliable, otherwise a foreign adversary could not be certain that the leadership in question had truly “tied its own hands.” Because the audience is to administer punishment by revoking the mandate of the president, it must be willing and able to commit itself to backing the opposition should the leadership not uphold “national honor.” This requires being prepared to jettison whatever attachments the audience may have to the leadership on other issues, throwing its support behind the opposition regardless

\[70\] For more on the utility of tying your hands in strategic situations, see Thomas Schelling. 1966. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.
of the latter’s composition and possibly even before opposition candidates are known. In essence, the audience must *ex ante* pledge itself to assuming the character of a retrospectively judgmental one-issue electorate, assigning its allegiance solely on the basis of leadership behavior in a single international contest. In sum, the audience in Fearon’s model is a curious animal. For one, it needs to show a high concerned with national honor, ever attentive and ever ready to cast off its agent should they prove themselves unable to unwaveringly assert the national prerogative, even if this would result in war. Additionally, at the onset of a crisis it has to take action to make this threat clear to not only the president, but also foreign observers, so that both know what the costs would be should the former back down. Lastly, it must be perceived as a reliable actor, one whose threat of sanction is to be taken seriously.

2.5.2 The Audience: Retrospective or Prospective Voters

Above I sought to lay out exactly what properties the audience would have to possess in order to play the role required of it by the audience costs argument. This, however, still does not tell us what type of actor the audience is, nor why it would conceivably posses the characteristics ascribed to it. In this section I go one step further in attempting to understand the nature of this audience, asking if we can explain the behavior and attributes of this actor by drawing upon the assumptions informing Fearon’s model. To answer this question I look to the classics of rational voting behavior within the United States. I choose this approach for two reasons: first, the audience costs argument hypothesizes democracies to be most capable of producing audience costs; and second, Fearon himself draws upon anecdotes taken from the U.S. political context to illustrate his model. Accordingly, I treat regularly
scheduled elections as the principal means through which audiences exact audience costs.

Retrospective voting is based on voters evaluating the performance of an incumbent - either the party in power or a specific office-holder. This evaluation is largely instrumental: it is geared to the act of voting. Indeed, the heart of Key’s theory of retrospective voting is that voters reward “good” performance by becoming more inclined to vote for the incumbent and punish “bad” performance by becoming less inclined to support the incumbent. As voters enter the election both, Key notes they have in their minds recollections of their experience of the past four years... [The electorate] judges retrospectively; it commands prospectively only insofar as it expresses either approval or disapproval of that which has happened before. Voters may reject what they have known; or they may approve what they have known. They are not likely to be attracted in great numbers by promises of the novel or unknown.71

This interpretation of voting behavior has been the bedrock of democratic theory, as well as a key assumption anchoring the behavior of audiences in the audience costs literature. The theory is attractive because it offers a compelling argument linking presidents and their audiences, and it also rescues voters from the claim that their are too ill informed and disengaged to play a meaningful role in the democratic process. The beauty of the retrospective voting argument is that audiences need not have detailed policy preferences against which they evaluate and judge their leader. Rather, audiences need only remember past behavior of leaders and their evaluation of their resultant outcomes. As Fiorina notes,

[Voters] typically have one comparatively hard bit of data: they know what life has been like during the incumbent’s administration. They need not know the precise economic or foreign policies of the incumbent administration in order to see or feel the results of those policies. And is it not reasonable to base voting decisions on results as well as on intentions? In order to ascertain whether the incumbents have performed poorly or well, citizens need only calculate the changes in their own welfare. If jobs have been lost in a recession, something is wrong. If sons have died in foreign rice paddies, something is wrong. If thugs make neighborhoods unsafe, something is wrong. If polluters foul food, water, or air, something is wrong.\textsuperscript{72}

That said, the audience costs literature still rests on a couple of very unfounded and untested assumptions: 1, that the foreign policy behavior of presidents is important to their respective audiences; and 2, audiences will exact punishment in the voting booth (e.g., undertake acts of political behavior) backing down from issued threats to use force. In other words, presidents (agents) are judged on their foreign policy competence and how well they represent the audience (principal). “Domestic audience costs arguments are essentially about the informational asymmetries and the ability of citizens to sanction their government for ‘inappropriate’ behavior.”\textsuperscript{73}

2.5.3 Audience Costs Hypotheses

The equilibria of the Presidential Agency Model also generate hypotheses related to audience costs. As they speak directly to the conditions under which we should expect the audience to monitor a president thoroughly, we can deduce when they are 1, more likely to monitor the president; 2, more likely to accurately assess whether...

\textsuperscript{72}Fiorina, \textit{Retrospective Voting in American National Elections}, 5.

\textsuperscript{73}Slantchev, “Politicians, the Media, and Domestic Audience Costs,” 450.
their preferences align with the president’s; and 3, more likely to punish the president for shirking and issuing empty threats.

2.5.3.1 Conventional Audience Cost Hypotheses

As Kenneth Schultz notes, “To date, most tests of the audience costs proposition...rather than looking for direct evidence that there are political costs to backing down...have looked for evidence that democracy correlates with the kind of outcomes that high audience costs are supposed to bring about.”74 The theoretical and empirical focus of this dissertation bears on the former. Fundamentally, audience costs are supposed to “arise from the action of domestic political audiences concerned with whether the leadership is successful or unsuccessful at foreign policy.”75 All else being equal, a leader is more likely punished ex post (i.e., to be removed from office in the subsequent election) for backing down from an issued threat. “[I]f the principal [citizens] could design a ‘wage contract’ for the foreign policy agent [leader], the principal would want to commit to punishing the agent for escalating a crisis and then backing down . . . principals who conduct foreign policy themselves may not be able credibly to commit to self-imposed punishment (such as leaving power) for backing down in a crisis. In other words, because it would benefit the leader to tie his hands through audience costs, citizens will want to impose them.”76

75Fearon, “Signaling versus the Balance of Power and Interests,” 241.
This is based on the traditional operationalization offered by Fearon: audience costs are incurred at the ballot box. However, scholars such as Michael Tomz investigated audience costs in the form of public approval ratings.\textsuperscript{77} Namely, the level of audience costs increases with the level of escalation. (The logic being, the more a president escalates, the higher the costs of backing down, and the more credible the threat not to quit.) The more pronounced a president’s threat (for example, troop deployments or military exercises rather than a verbal threat issued during a public speech) the more significant do his approval ratings drop if he fails to carry through on it. According to either of these instantiations of the audience costs argument, presidents are more likely to lose the next election or face a significant drop in public approval if they sully the national honor by making empty threats.

2.5.3.2 PAM Audience Cost Hypotheses

As outlined above in the explication of the theory, the general expectation under PAM is the costs of the public monitoring foreign policy related events and decisions are high; the reliability of non-intrusive monitoring regimes (e.g., fire alarms) is relatively low; and, the president does not expect to be punished when he is caught shirking. Moreover, a credible commitment to punish the president requires either divergent preferences over foreign policy goals, or evidence that the public actually shares similar preferences over foreign policy goals but 1, cares more about them, and 2, estimates greater reputational loses should they not be secured. In other words, the public actually cares more than the president about the consequences for backing

\textsuperscript{77}Michael Tomz. 2007. “Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach.” \textit{International Organization}, 61:821-40. See also Slantchev, “Politicians, the media, and domestic audience costs.” Slantchev’s approach is slightly different, taking a drop in approval rating is to be an indicator of audience costs because they reduce the president’s re-selection chances.
down after escalation. Accordingly to the Presidential Agency Model, neither of these conditions are probable, thus the removal of a president from office in either instance is unlikely.

2.6 Summary

Motivated by need to develop a rigorous theory and empirical investigation of both how public opinion about foreign policy evolves, as well as its electoral and policy consequence, this chapter has developed a theory and testable hypotheses to do just that. Namely, in the chapters that follow, I present a research design and associated empirical tests to examine the both the influence of public opinion on presidential foreign policymaking. I also investigate the empirical reality of audience costs; that is, are president’s punished for empty threats, and is punishment more likely the more public and escalatory the threat? In both cases I offer that it is not.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Data
3.1 Methodology

Alice in Wonderland asked the Cheshire Cat, “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?” The answer was, “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.” Well, as I seek to examine the theory and associated hypotheses proposed in this dissertation against the convention wisdom, an appropriate methodological and testing approach is required to get to such an evaluation.

The empirical component of this dissertation therefore uses a combination of case studies, statistical analyses and experimental methods to examine the hypotheses advanced in the previous chapter. As articulated in the introduction, this dissertation employs a number of empirical tests of the theoretical (and competing) argument(s). Though the theoretical argument and associated hypotheses offered herein are relatively simply stated, the behavioral implications and the political processes involved are most complex. Thus, the empirical tests need to be as rich and encompassing as possible given the constraints of obtaining the necessary information for evaluating the public’s influence of the president’s foreign policy preferences and behavior.

As each of the empirical methods employed in this dissertation has associated pros and cons, it is worth discussing each in brief. More generally, the methodological approach is geared toward analyzing my (and competing) argument(s) over both time and space. It is this rich over-time and -space analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) of the president-public relationship that will enable the identification of whether or not there is a relationship (correlation) between the public’s and the president’s foreign policy preferences, and thereby enable us to speculate on how and why the public is able to assert its influence at some times and in some cases and not others. Moreover, the selection of methods balances the against the typical tradeoff
between internal and external validity. In the case of this dissertation, large-n analysis and aggregated polling data are used to examine the “higher-level” story told over many cases (external validity), while cases studies and experiments are employed to ascertain and assess whether the theoretical argument of this dissertation holds in particular cases as well as in the laboratory (internal validity).

3.1.1 Strategic Choice Model for Theory Construction

The theory offered in the previous chapter explicitly adopts a rationalist perspective and relies heavily on the crisis bargaining literature\textsuperscript{78} as well as the literature on principal agent problems.\textsuperscript{79} Once tools created to improve decision-making,\textsuperscript{80} rational and strategic choice models are now as commonly used to explain past (rather than improve future) decisions. As noted previously, the particular approach I am adopting is a strategic-choice approach. As outlined by Lake and Powell

This approach begins with a simple insight. Students of international relations, and of politics in general, are typically interested in explaining the choices of actors—be these actors states, national leaders, political parties, ethnic groups, military organizations, firms, or individuals. These choices, moreover, are frequently strategic; that is, each actor’s ability to further its ends depends on how other actors behave, and therefore each actor must take the actions of others into account. Outcomes ranging from the foreign policies of individual states to international phenomena such


\textsuperscript{80}As Arthur Stein notes, “Probability, logic, decision theory, and game theory were all developed to improve human decision making. They were not developed as accurate representations of what people actually do but as tools individuals should apply to achieve more rational decisions than they otherwise might.” Arthur Stein. 1999. “The Limits of Strategic Choice: Constrained Rationality and Incomplete Explanation,” 211. In David Lake and Robert Powell, Eds., \textit{Strategic Choice and International Relations}. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
as war and cooperation cannot be understood apart from the strategic choices actors make and the interactions of those choices.”

Thus the emphasis is on the strategic interaction of the president and the American public and how best to explain how this interaction unfolds, and to explicitly define the micro-foundations of the relationship. In this case, I outlined above the key assumptions on which my argument rests. From there I derived a set of hypotheses regarding the expected relationship between the president and the public regarding the selection and execution of foreign policy decisions. It is from this base that we can now discuss the various ways to test the argument and hypotheses offered.

There are a couple of key assumptions (all of which are noted in the previous chapter) of the argument that drive the development of the hypotheses offered herein, as well as highlight the utility of the strategic choice approach. These assumptions are: 1, information asymmetries between actors, and 2, that the key actors—presidents and the American public—are purposive. Both are trying to achieve outcomes as close to their preferred outcome as possible, given the relative costs and benefits of the associated strategies and behaviors necessary for achieving the desired outcome.

Here is how Lake and Powell present the value of the approach:

The strategic-choice approach makes a ... bet, namely, that we can explain many important and interesting aspects of world politics by focusing on the information asymmetries between actors, the actions available to them, their preferences, and so on...As noted above, the strategic-choice approach begins from the fundamental assumption that actors are, at any level of aggregation, purposive; that is, actors have preferences over different states of the world and they pursue these preferences as best they can given the strategic situation they face.

In other words, to explain the president-public relationship in the context of foreign policy decision-making, the strategic-choice approach proposes some specific mechanisms through which the president can evade the preferences of the public, as well as mechanisms available to the public to monitor and influence a president’s foreign policy choice. The central argument of this dissertation developed in Chapter 2 presents in general terms these mechanisms, specifying them for both the Presidential Agency Model, as well as the Conventional Wisdom. In the end, the theory yields several observable implications which are examined through the methods outlined below.

Finally, a clarification as to what some would argue are the weaknesses of this approach. Game theoretical or rational choice approaches to theory building are often seen as flawed as they tend to make rather heroic assumptions concerning peoples’ rational capacity. The value, as I see it, is in using a rational actor approach as a jumping off point. In short, I propose a relationship between presidents and the public with a rationalist baseline against which other factors can be judged. The baseline is powerful in its own right and I expect it to characterize well the relationship between presidents and the public when it comes to selecting and executing American foreign policy. And even thought this theory is by no means perfect (as no theory should be), it provides an excellent barometer against which to assess deviations from the president-public relationship I would otherwise expect to be the case.

The hope here is to avoid many of the issues outlined by Green and Shapiro in their critique of rational choice theory. In particular, they argue rational choice theories of politics have often resulting in scholars fitting the data to the theory, creating a pathology of rational choice. See Donald Green and Ian Shapiro. 1994. Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
3.1.2 Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses are used to examine the macro-elements of the theory; that is, more broadly do we observe similar patterns across cases regarding the relationship between the president and the public. To explore this issue I examine both polling data as well as an updated version of Blechman and Kaplan data set regarding the use of force by the United States from 1870 to 1995.\textsuperscript{83}

As for polling data, where appropriate they are marshalled during the process-tracing examination of the cases studies, where I am trying to examine the relationship between the president and public opinion (most often operationalized through opinion polls).\textsuperscript{84} Additionally, I seek to more systematically examine the eight quadrennial surveys from 1974 to 2002–and one biennial study in 2004–sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (CCFR) and conducted by Gallup and Harris Interactive. These surveys are are used to explore the competing sets of hypotheses the Presidential Agency Model as they provide a vast amount of data on the two groups of interest: the general public, and a set of “foreign policy leaders” including important actors that make American policy.\textsuperscript{85} The data come from paired surveys conducted at nine different time points, providing a total of eighteen surveys.


\textsuperscript{84}Unless otherwise noted, the primary source for polling data is http://pollingreport.com.

\textsuperscript{85}For the purposes of this study, I am using the sub-sample of government officials in the executive branch, who are serving as a proxy for the president’s preferences.
As Page and Jacobs note, these surveys have their strengths and weaknesses. “The government officials and other elites were not randomly selected for interviews, but rather were chosen from institutional positions involving foreign policy responsibilities or expertise. Nor were the numbers of elites interviewed in any single year very large.” The surveys of the general public, though, were based on random, relatively large samples of about 1,500 respondents. Despite these limitations, the CCFR surveys allow me to examine the correlation between the foreign policy preferences of the general mass public and those of executive branch officials over the span of three decades. If we are to believe that the public significantly influences the foreign policy preferences of presidents, then we should at the very least expect to observe a correlation between their respective foreign policy preferences.

In order to conduct cross-section analyses, the CCFR data have been pooled across all surveys. The advantage of these survey data is that they permit me to compare directly the expressed policy preferences of policymakers with the preferences of the general public. Like Page and Jacobs, the comparisons rest on the assumption that the policy preferences of policymakers are indicators of the foreign policies that they enact or pursue. Though I cannot be sure that the data on policymakers’ expressed preferences invariably correspond with actual policy, inspection of the data indicates that policymakers’ responses have usually reflected the positions and actions of the institutions in which they held office. And given the difficulty of finding comparable measures of the expressed foreign policy preferences of the general public and those


87 Ibid. The average number of government officials interviewed each year was 77, and the 1974 survey (the year the survey was conducted by Harris) combined officials from the House, Senate, and Administration together.
of foreign policy officials, these concerns are outweighed by the advantages of being able to make these direct comparisons.

As for the event count models on the use of force, Howell and Pevehouse most recently updated the Blechman and Kaplan data to include those cases of the US use of force from 1995 to 2000. As the empirical focus of this dissertation is on the period post-1950, the data set was revised accordingly to capture those cases of US use of force, as well as threats to use force, from 1950 to 2005. These event count models of the use of force are used to examine both the influence of public opinion decisions to force, as well as to evaluate the efficacy of the audience costs argument regarding presidents issuing empty threats. For the later test, election outcomes are added to appropriately evaluate the audience costs argument as originally proposed by Fearon (measures of public approval are also used).

3.1.3 Case Studies

Case studies are employed to explore specific instances of what one might consider to be a larger phenomena. In this instance, I am interesting in exploring in detail those the scope conditions of public influence in presidential foreign policy decision-making. The case study method for this dissertation is rather straightforward. I define a case study “as an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units.” The number of variables (defined and operationalized in

---


89 Descriptions of the relevant independent and control variables are included in the model specification section of chapter 4.

the subsequent sections of this chapter) is too large (given the small number of cases considered) for an ideal application of the comparative case method. Therefore, I use process tracing to immerse myself in each case and evaluate the causal links within and between cases. As Bennett and George have said of the process tracing method: “[it] can identify paths to an outcome, point out variables that were left out in the initial comparison of cases, check for spuriousness, and permit causal inference on the basis of a few cases or even a single case.” Moreover, as I am interested in both the process as well as the outcome of each case, process-tracing enables me to examine foreign policy behaviors which are “not summarized by a single data point, but by a series of points or curves plotted through time. Any explanation of the processes at work in the case thus not only must explain the final outcome, but also must account for this stream of behavior.”

As noted, I employ a process-tracing approach to immerse myself in the case and evaluate the president-public relationship within and between cases. Accordingly, I structure each case similarly, first reviewing the background of the key foreign policy decisions to be discussed; that is, the various policy options generated, selected, implemented, and, finally, terminated. Where appropriate, I introduce quantitative analysis to examine the competing hypotheses offered by the Presidential Agency Model as well as Conventional Wisdom hypotheses. These quantitative data often

---


marshal results from opinion polls or national elections to examine the relative influence or correlation between the public’s preferences, the foreign policy decision process, and the various dependent variables of interest (discussed in greater detail below). This analysis of quantitative data is then supplemented with secondary and primary source data as well as archival research to add fidelity to analysis and further assess the validity of competing claims. For the public influence cases under examination, there are three possible outcomes: the foreign policy choice is consistent with the president’s but not the public’s preference, the foreign policy choice is consistent with the public’s but not the president’s preference, and the foreign policy choice is consistent with both the president’s and the public’s preference. These outcomes are applicable across all four parts (generation, selection, implementation, termination) of each case.

A similar structure and approach is employed for audience costs cases. For the audience costs hypotheses, there are two outcomes: president remains in office, and the president is removed from office.

The cases were chosen because they show variation on the independent and dependent variables, as well as being historically interesting cases. Without exception, all of the cases are from the post-World War II era. Such a small band of time helps control for the effect of historical forces, though somewhat weakens the applicability across the sweep of American history.

I first examine the following two cases, which investigate the varying impact of public opinion on US national security decisions.

**Case 1**: George W. Bush and the second Iraq war

**Case 2**: Bill Clinton and the Kosovo war
3.1.3.1 Case Study Questions: Public Influence Cases

1. Who are the key actors?
   
   [-] What is their respective role in the decision process?
   
   [-] To what degree did they affect the available policy options generated?

2. What are the initial policy preferences of key actors, particularly of the president and the public?
   
   [-] Is there independence of preferences, or is there evidence indicating one actor’s preferences significantly influenced the others’?

3. Did the public influence the initial policy choice? If so, how? (E.g., What, if any, “policy patrols” or “fire alarms” does the public use to monitor and influence the president’s foreign policy choice)

4. Did the public influence the timing of policy implementation? Did it influence the actual implementation of the policy? If so, how?

5. Did the public have formed preferences over when and how the chosen course of action should be terminated?
   
   [-] Were those preferences congruent with how the course of action was actually terminated?
   
   [-] Did the president hold similar or contrary preferences regrading the termination of the particular foreign policy choice?

I then examine two cases which investigate the condition under which audience costs exist in the execution of American foreign policy. They are chosen because they
are supposed to be easy and hard cases (respectively) for the traditional audience costs argument.

**Case 1**: Bill Clinton and North Korea (1993-4)

**Case 2**: George W. Bush and North Korea (2002-3)

### 3.1.4 Case Study Questions: Audience Costs Cases

1. Who are the key actors?

2. Does the president publicly issue a threat to use military force?

   [-] What type of military forces is threatened?

3. Did the president feel that the issue might influence the next election?

4. How did the election factor into decision-making?

   [-] Did the election provide an incentive for action, did it deter action, or did it have no affect?

5. Does the public approve or disapprove of the president’s actions?

   [-] What is the president’s public approval ratings prior to issuing the threat?

   [-] What are the president’s public approval ratings after the threat is issued?

   ![Missing data]

### 3.1.5 Selecting the Cases

To select the cases of analysis enumerated above, I first identified potential cases from 1950 to the present. (Please find the list cases in Table 3.2 below.) I then
selected cases based on initial public support for the use of force (one supported, one unsupported). A secondary issue was selecting cases of historical importance and interest that are likely to reveal key and lasting insights regarding the theoretical relationship of interest. Some might argue here for the value of selecting randomly from this sample of cases in order to avoid systematic bias in case selection. However, selecting on differing values of the key independent variable of interest – public support for the initial decision to use force – is more useful in this case. As I prescribe disaggregating cases into four constituent parts, the value of this selection approach is it enables me to trace the sequence of decision points across the case, examining the importance (or lack thereof) of public opinion at each critical juncture.

3.1.5.1 Operationalizations

I examine each of the Public Influence cases in three phases:

1. Pre-war decision making

2. Wartime decision making

3. War termination decision making

The pre-war decision making stage consists of option generation and option selection. Option generation is the consideration of potential policy alternatives to a given problem, including the associated benefits and consequences. Option Selection is the process of selected a preferred policy option from the potential alternatives.

Wartime decision making consists of option implementation. Option implementation refers to the processes and procedures involved in executing and terminating the selected policy option.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Preference Conflict</th>
<th>Type of Pres. Opposition</th>
<th>Working vs. Shirking</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korea 1950</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred war</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Korean War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon 1958</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred intervention to sanctions</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Marine intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba 1961</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Bombing and invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba 1962</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Naval Blockade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam (1963-5)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred escalation</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Increased military aid and limited bombing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam (1965-8)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred escalation</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Increase bombing, ground forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic 1965</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred intervention</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Military invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam (Nixon)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred escalation</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Escalate bombing, increase ground forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam (Ford)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Redeploy ground forces, reduce air strikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran 1979-80</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Desert One rescue operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred intervention</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Funding and arms sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon 1982-3</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred military involvement</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>US troops participate in multinational force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada 1983</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Military rescue invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama 1989</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred invasion</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Liberation of Kuwait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq 1991</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred war to sanctions</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Humanitarian intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia 1993</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred intervention</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Humanitarian intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti 1994</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred intervention</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Humanitarian intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia 1993-4</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred intervention</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Humanitarian intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq 1998</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Operation Desert Fox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo 1999</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Preferred intervention</td>
<td>Shirking</td>
<td>Humanitarian intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan 2001</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Military invasion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq 2003-</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Working</td>
<td>Military invasion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Working or Shirking on the Decision to Use Force
War termination decision making, the final phase, consists of option termination. Option termination refers the processes and outcome associated with ending the execution of the chosen policy option. The dependent variable is the foreign policy choice made during each of these stages. This enables me to look across time and within and across cases to examine the various conditions under which the public might influence foreign policy decisions.

**President’s Public Approval Rating**

The first independent variable is the president’s public approval rating. The cases cover instance when the presidents’ approval is both above and below 50 percent, offering good variation on a proxy of public influence. One of the alternative arguments is that president’s foreign policy choices should vary with his perception of the public’s preferences. Presidents may be more likely to considered themselves weaker and more constrained in the foreign policy decision-making when their approval is relatively low as compared to sensing more leeway and greater options when their approval is high.

**President’s Perception of Public Opinion**

The second independent variable is the president’s perception of public opinion regarding a particular issue/problem. This includes remarks made during internal meetings, other private communications (e.g., memoranda), prepared and extemporaneous public remarks, and internal polling data. As Douglas Foyle argues, presidents’ perceptions about where public opinion is regarding a particular issue (as opposed to measured opinion in external polls) may influence their foreign policy decisions.

**Casualty Sensitivity**
The third and final independent variable is casualty sensitivity. The relationship between military casualties and public opinion lies at the center of many theories of foreign policy decision-making and international affairs,\textsuperscript{93} including democratic peace arguments, the duration and outcomes of war. As Eric Larson notes, “It is now an article of faith in political and media circles that the American public will no longer accept casualties in U. S. military operations and that casualties inexorably lead to irresistible calls for the immediate withdrawal of U. S. forces.”\textsuperscript{94} Support for the conventional wisdom in the scholarly literature is widespread, and there is also a strong consensus among military and civilian elites that the American public will not tolerate casualties.\textsuperscript{95}

Two versions of the casualty hypotheses exist: 1, a zero-tolerance position on the part of the public, such that no casualties will be tolerated; and 2, a pattern of co-variation, such that as casualties increase, support for military operations decreases.\textsuperscript{96} The focus here is on the latter.

**Use of Force**

The definition of a use of force is based on that used by Blechman and Kaplan. They state that


\textsuperscript{95}See, for example, Feaver and Gelpi, *Choosing Your Battles*.

\textsuperscript{96}For more on the two conceptions, see James Burk. 1999. “Public Support for Peace-Keeping in Lebanon and Somalia: Assessing teh Casualties Hypothesis.” *Political Science Quarterly*, 114:53-78.
prepared to influence specific behavior of individuals in another nation without engaging in a continuing contest of violence.\textsuperscript{97}

### 3.1.6 Experiments

This dissertation also employs experiments. The classic experiment involves manipulation of the key independent variable of interest ($X_1$, the treatment), with subjects randomly assigned to the treatment and control groups. This enables the researcher to observe both temporal and spatial variation. In this case, I examine the audience cost argument specifically linking threats and punishments (both approval and ballot box) to explore whether or not presidents are actually punished for backing down from issued threats. (Please see Appendix D for the Experiment Scenarios and audience costs operationalizations.)

An experimental approach is especially valuable in the case of audience costs, where partial observation (we can only measure them when they are incurred) and strategic selection bias (presidents take the prospect of audience costs into account when making foreign policy decisions) are present. If as the audience costs argument suggests, Presidents avoid escalatory rhetoric or decisions if they fear incurring audience costs \textit{ex post}, then the observed cases of audience costs are drawn from a distribution with a smaller than expected mean than one would expect in the full population of cases. In other words, the opportunities to observe the public backlash are fewer than would otherwise be the case.

3.1.6.1 Participants

The research participants for the experiments conducted for this dissertation were 583 students recruited from undergraduate political science courses at The Ohio State University over the course of the 2007 winter and spring quarters. Participants participated in the study in exchange for extra course credit.

Approximately 54% of the participants were male, the average age was 21 (ranging from 18 to 41), 61% self-identified as Republicans,\textsuperscript{98} and 80% identified themselves as white/caucasian.

3.1.6.2 Procedure and Materials

The experiments for this dissertation were conducted in late January and early April, 2007. The study took place in a large computer lab. Participants arrived at the experimental lab and were seated at individual computer stations. I then started the computer program (MediaLab) which presented the questionnaire with the experimental manipulations embedded. The computer program randomly assigned participants to experimental conditions.

At the end of the experimental session, the participants completed a questionnaire designed to assess a number of political and social attitudes, as well as demographic characteristics. For the purposes of our analyses, three predispositions are critical. The first is internationalism versus isolationism, or the extent to which individuals favor U. S. involvement in a wide-range of world activities. Four items were used to

\textsuperscript{98}Given that a little over 75\% of the participants were from Ohio, normally considered a Republican state, this is not unsurprising. Note the percentage of national electorate who are registered Democrats is 51\% and 38\% for Republicans; this includes independents who “lean” toward either party. See Pew Research Center. 2008. \textit{Convention Backgrounder: A Closer Look at the Parties in 2008}. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center.
measure internationalism (Cronbach’s alpha = .73; see Appendix B for the specific items). The second predisposition is militant assertiveness, or the extent to which individuals prefer more militant and assertive strategies over more accommodative and cooperative approaches (Cronbach’s alpha = .84; both the internationalism and militant assertiveness items were taken from Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser.\textsuperscript{99}

Finally, we measured political sophistication through a 13-item knowledge test (Cronbach’s alpha = .82). The knowledge items included the five questions recommended by DelliCarpini and Keeter, supplemented by four questions requiring identification of prominent American public officials and five questions requiring identification of people or concepts prominent in international affairs.\textsuperscript{100} Correct answers were summed; the resulting scale ranged from 1 to 14, with a mean of 7.45 and a standard deviation of 3.10.

Upon completion of the study, the participants were debriefed and thanked.

3.2 Analytic Restrictions

Before moving forward to the empirical portion of the dissertation, it is worth noting a rather significant constraint on the analysis: this dissertation does not exhaustively examine all possible domestic influences (e.g., the military,\textsuperscript{101} advisors,\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{99}See Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser, “Mass Public Decisions to go to War.”

\textsuperscript{100}Given debates in the literature about the superiority of general versus domain specific indicators of political sophistication, we explored the possibility of limiting the measure of sophistication to the domain-specific indicator of knowledge about international affairs. However, the general (13-item) indicator outperformed the domain-specific indicator in all statistical tests and so we limit the analyses reported here to that general measure.


the courts,\textsuperscript{103} interest groups\textsuperscript{104}, and the media.\textsuperscript{105}) on presidential foreign policy decisions. As such, it excludes a variety of other domestic variables from both the theory as well as some of the empirical components (though were possible controls are used where data is available) of this dissertation. I account for these other factors most especially when it has meaningful consequences for the relationship between presidents and their publics. Nonetheless, the theoretical and analytic focus remains determinedly on the relationship between presidents and public opinion in the course of American foreign policy decision making regarding the use of force abroad.


\textsuperscript{104}Regarding a specific case of interest group influence on US foreign policy, see John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt. 2007. \textit{The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy}. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

CHAPTER 4

Domestic Influence in Presidential Decisions to Use Force:
Data Analysis and Cases
4.1 Introduction

The preceding two chapters outlined approaches to examining the role public opinion plays in American foreign policy decision making; audience costs in U.S. foreign policy; a contending approach offered by this dissertation; a multi-method methodological approach to assess the relative validity of competing expectations. This chapter is the beginning of the empirical journey of this dissertation. What follows are statistical tests to assess the correlation between public opinion and the president’s foreign policy broad preferences, and then an extension to assess the relationship between public opinion and U.S. foreign policy behavior. I employ quadrennial CCFR surveys to assess the former, and an updated version of the Blechman and Kaplan use for force data for the later.\footnote{The Blechman and Kaplan data capture U.S. decisions to use force. While dyadic or systemic explanations for these decisions are possible (which is why some use dyadic militarized interstate disputes (MIDs) data to test like arguments), the decision to use force is ultimately a unit-level phenomenon. For more on the appropriateness of the Blechman and Kaplan data in this case, see Benjamin Fordham and Christopher Sarver. 2001. “Militarized Interstate Disputes and United States Uses of Force.” International Studies Quarterly, 45:455-66.} To explore the micro-foundations of the theoretical argument, and examine the validity of the statistical results, I examine both Clinton’s decision to use force in Kosovo in 1999 and Bush’s decision in 2003 to use force against Iraq.

I find broad support for my argument that presidents have great leeway in U.S. foreign policy decision-making. The analysis of the CCFR surveys reveals that the public and those in the executive branch generally hold divergent foreign policy preferences. When it comes to general preferences regarding the most appropriate circumstances to use military force, when it is best to act multilaterally versus unilaterally, and whether uses of force should be sanctioned by international institutions such as the
United Nations, the public and those advising the president on issues of foreign policy were generally found to have disparate policy preferences. If, as Richard Sobel and Bruce Russett argue, the public significantly constrains the foreign policy behavior of presidents, we should *at the very least* observe a correlation between the policy preferences of these two actors. However, the a review of the CCFR survey evidence actually suggests that there is little relationship at all.\textsuperscript{107}

I then explore what these results mean for presidential foreign policy behavior; specifically, how do seemingly divergent preferences between the public and the president affect decisions to deploy troops abroad. To explore these, as well as the competing claims made by the Presidential Agency Model and the conventional wisdom, I update the Blechman and Kaplan uses of force data set to 2005 and test the competing propositions against these data.

By and large, contrary to what the conventional wisdom would expect, the public’s concern over foreign policy issues had little to no relationship with presidential decisions to deploy troops abroad. Though I do find they exert some influence in a president’s re-election year on his decisions to use major force – this is not entirely surprising. As the Presidential Agency Model expects the public to exert more influence when it is monitoring the president thoroughly, such conditions are much *more likely* to hold in a president’s bid for re-election. Moreover, given that major uses of force are likely to receive both more press coverage and higher public visibility, it is unsurprising that in a re-election year the president would be cautious about contravening the preferences of the public. Otherwise, as noted, I find over time and

\textsuperscript{107}For a more detailed exploration of the “disconnect” between the foreign policy preferences of the public and their leaders, see Benjamin Page with Marshall Bouton. 2006. *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders but Don’t Get*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
across presidents that the public role in the foreign policy decision making process is not as Sobel, Russet, and others would expect.108

Using these two sets of findings as the macro-model of the president-public relationship in foreign policy making, I explore further the boundary conditions of the model in two cases: President Bush’s decision to use force in Iraq and President Clinton’s decision to use force in Kosovo. I again find broad support for the theoretical argument offered by this dissertation: the public’s role in their decisions to use force is a bit murky. If at all, it influenced President Bush’s communications strategy, and his attempts to persuade the public that staying the course in Iraq was the correct strategy. And for President Clinton, he was at least wary of a potential public backlash should significant casualties have been taken in Kosovo. However, as the case analysis below makes clear, how this concern about latent opinion actually influenced decision making is in need of clarification.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. I first examine the correlation between the public’s foreign policy preferences and the foreign policy preferences and behavior of U.S. presidents. Subsequently, I explore in two cases – Bush and Iraq, 2002-2008, and Clinton and Kosovo, 1999, respectively – the validity of the theoretical argument and statistical findings. I conclude with a brief summary and analysis of the chapter’s main findings.

108 Rather than the public’s particular foreign policy preferences playing a role in use of force decisions, it seems most presidents are more cognizant and concerned about latent opinion. In other words, presidents are more concerned with the public’s reaction to particular foreign policy decisions rendered than with incorporating their preferences into the initial formulation of policy. This issue is explored further in the case studies.
4.2 Statistical Analysis

The analyses that follow explore 1, the degree of congruence between the public and administrative officials foreign policy preferences, and 2, the relationship between the public’s approval of the president, their concern regarding issues of foreign policy, and whether the president is up for re-election on the frequency of U.S. troop deployments abroad. If the conventional wisdom holds – that the public does indeed influence presidential decisions to use force – we should observe a significant relationship between the public’s foreign policy preferences and those of the president and his advisors, as well as significant affect on the frequency with which the president deploys military troops abroad.

Though reviewed in chapter two, the quantitative use of force literature deserves a bit more attention as the theoretical argument and empirical tests offered here offering a meaningful contribution to the literature. Thus, there is a brief review below which situates within the extant literature the argument and empirical tests offered here.

4.2.1 Congruence of Executive and Public Foreign Policy Preference

The data used to test the argument above are the eight quadrennial surveys—from 1974 to 2002 – and one biennial study in 2004 – sponsored by the CCFR and conducted by Gallup and Harris Interactive. The previous chapter notes the weaknesses in these data. That said, it is worth reiterating their value: given the difficulty of finding comparable measures of the expressed foreign policy preferences of the general
public and those of foreign policy officials, concerns regarding the data are outweighed by the advantages of being able to make these direct comparisons.

I use three types of models to test the competing hypotheses of the conventional wisdom and the Presidential Agency Model: Model 1 is a cross-sectional, multivariate analysis, and Model 2 is a cross-sectional analysis that includes a lagged dependent variable. Both models are set up such that policymakers’ foreign policy preferences are the dependent variable, and public opinion, experts, and foreign policy elite\textsuperscript{109} are the independent variables. Each of these variables, with the possible exception of experts, can reasonably be treated as exogenous with respect to policymakers. Model 3 is a time series analysis that regresses the current preferences of policymakers on the preferences of policymakers, the public, experts, and foreign policy elites from the previous survey. Accordingly, the model uses the data from sequential pairs of survey questions to conduct two-observation time series analyses, with lagged values for independent as well as dependent variable.

The dependent variable is measured as the percentage of policymakers who favored a particular policy alternative in a given survey. Take, for example, the loan guarantees made to Mexico by Clinton in 1995 – the percentage favoring a particular type and amount of the loan guarantee may reflect the type and amount that the average respondent favors. This measure is argued to generally reflect the position of the average policymaker on an underlying policy continuum.

\textsuperscript{109}CCFR offers seven independent categories of elites, most of which are highly correlated ($r$ ranging from $.85$ to $.92$, $p < .01$). Also, as many of these categories have VIFs over 10–thus exhibiting high levels of multicollinearity–I created an instrumental variable for “foreign policy elites,” which contains the media, business, labor, and religious leaders. Further, I combined educators with respondents from private foreign policy organizations and think tanks, whose preferences were highly correlated with each other ($r = .92$, $p < .01$) and played essentially the same roles in regressions when entered separately. The result was a single variable for the policy preferences of “experts.”
The independent variables are measured the same way: as a percentage of the general public and of foreign policy experts who favored or opposed the same policy alternative about which policymakers were asked.\textsuperscript{110}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(with lagged DV)</td>
<td>(with lagged IVs and DV)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constant</strong></td>
<td>.248</td>
<td>1.023</td>
<td>6.437*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Opinion\textsubscript{t-1}</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
<td>(.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experts\textsubscript{t-1}</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Policy Elites</td>
<td>.39*</td>
<td>.34*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.05)</td>
<td>(.08)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Policy Elites\textsubscript{t-1}</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.37*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Officials\textsubscript{t-1}</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R\textsuperscript{2}</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>639</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from OLS regressions, with the percentage of government officials who take a given position as the dependent variable and the percentages of the general public who take that same position as independent variable. Standard errors are in parentheses.

* p < .01, two-tailed.

Table 4.1: Influence of public opinion on presidential foreign policy preferences (Full)

\textsuperscript{110}As Page and Jacobs note, because “Don’t know” and “Refuse to answer” responses are more common among the general public than among policy makers, I excluded those responses from the mass public surveys and recomputed percentages without them.
As predicted by the Presidential Agency Model and contrary to the expectation of scholars such as Richard Soble, Bruce Russett, and Douglas Foyle, the public’s foreign policy preferences exhibited little relationship with the expressed policy preferences of foreign policymakers. In none of the nine regression analyses did public opinion coefficient have a significant correlation with policymakers. Moreover, the negative coefficients in some of the models may indicate that policymakers actually move away from public opinion in some cases. However, because of the relatively small sample sizes, it is more reasonable to claim that public opinion simply has no relationship at all.

It should be noted that the use of policy makers’ preferences rather than actual policies as dependent variables may lead us to miss some “delegate”-style behavior in which policymakers act against their own inclinations in order to please the public. In addition, causal ambiguities in model specification may conceivably have deflated the estimates of the influence of public opinion; however, an erroneous finding of non-influence by the public is considerably less likely to occur under these circumstances than is an excessively large estimate of a strong relationship. Nonetheless, the implications of these findings for the conventional wisdom in the discipline which connects public opinion and policymaking seem plain. The results, in short, are highly suggestive.

This is to say that public opinion was repeatedly estimated to exert little or no significant influence on policymakers. This finding generally holds over time, and across clusters of issues. Such a finding of non-influence is generally immune to issues of model specification and causal ambiguity that may affect some of the other results. It also seems to contradict the expectations of a large body of previous research.
I did find that experts ($\beta = .33$, $p < .01$) and foreign policy elites ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$) exhibit a consistent and strong impact on the foreign policy preferences of policy makers. These results held up both across the various statistical models, though the influence of experts did decay over time. Also, taking account of possible inertial forces in policy making by lagging the dependent variable, Model 2 produces a similar story of expert ($\beta = .25$, $p < .01$) and foreign policy elite ($\beta = .34$, $p < .01$) dominance among administration officials (Table 4.1). The consistently significant and moderately strong coefficients for policymakers lagged one period indicate that the contemporary views of policymakers are indeed influenced or conditioned by the history of already established perspectives. Public opinion, like the cross sectional models, does not exhibit a lagged affect ($\beta = -.17$) on the foreign policy preference of policymakers; rather, all models suggests that it appears to have no relationship whatsoever.

These findings are consistent with the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model; namely, the public’s preferences do not correlate with the foreign policy preferences of the president (in this case, executive branch officials serving as a proxy for the president’s preferences.) If the president were acting as trusted agent of the public, we should observe a significant correlation between the public’s preferences and those of the president; if the president shirks, however, we should not expect a significant correlation between their preferences. The data clearly support that later expectation.

The results of this initial phase of analysis provide some evidence to question previously held assumptions that the public acts like a system of dikes to constrain
presidential foreign policy decision making. Recall the earlier quote from Bruce Russett: “[p]ublic opinion sets broad limits of constraint, identifying a range of policies in which decision makers can choose, and in which they must choose if they are not to face rejection in the voting booths.”¹¹¹ In other words, we should not expect foreign policies at odds with the broader contours of mass public opinion. That the public’s preferences were found to little or no relationship with those held by key policymaking officials is certainly at odds with the conventional expectation. Given this, a review of the public’s role in presidential decisions to use force is useful.

The next step is to move from preferences to behavior. Thus, the next section examines what role (if any) public opinion had in the president’s decision making process to deploy military troops abroad. The following tests look across a range of both minor and major uses of force.¹¹²

4.2.2 Modeling the Use of Force

The quantitative literature on presidential uses of force is extensive, dating back to the development of a data set on U.S. deployments in the postwar era by Blechman and Kaplan.¹¹³ These studies have focused primarily on how national economic conditions and the president’s political prospects affect the frequency of force deployments. For example, presidents are more likely to use force when the economy

¹¹¹Russett, Controlling the Sword, 110.

¹¹²Major uses of force includes such cases as, Berlin 1959, Cuba 1962, Vietnam 1968-72, Persian Gulf War 1991, and Iraq 2003-2005. Minor uses of force includes such cases as the deployment of troops to Somalia 1993, Grenada 1983, and Haiti 1994. More generally, these operations included, but are not limited to, U.S. presence operations, movement of military forces or assets to the theater, naval blockades or quarantines, non-routine military exercises, reconnaissance and surveillance, and provision of military assets or forces in the assistance of a third party.

lags, suggesting a diversionary logic.\textsuperscript{114} As Fordham notes, however, the relationship between macroeconomic conditions and “opportunities” to use force may be endogenous: presidents might be more likely to perceive a threat when economic conditions are on the downturn, suggesting a more charitable picture than one of the president blithely sending troops into danger when his domestic fortunes begin to wane.

There is mixed evidence on the effect of presidential approval ratings in these studies. Ostrom and Job find that presidential approval ratings are the best predictor of the use of force and that force is more likely when approval is high in absolute terms and/or has declined over his term.\textsuperscript{115} James and Oneal confirm this finding.\textsuperscript{116} Fordham, as well as Howell and Pevehouse, identify no significant effect.\textsuperscript{117} Presidential popularity, Fordham writes, has “contradictory supply and demand effects,” making the use of force simultaneously more attractive and more risky; high approval ratings make it easier to mobilize support for using force but leave little reason to do so, while low ratings make the diversionary use of force more tempting but also more difficult.\textsuperscript{118}

The overarching theme in all of these studies is that the president keeps a watchful eye on the potential political ramifications of choosing to deploy forces. The following tests use a measure of the public’s overall evaluation of the president, a measure of


\textsuperscript{117}Fordham, “The Politics of Threat Perception and the Use of Force,” 578; and Howell and Pevehouse, \textit{While Dangers Gather}, 63-66.

\textsuperscript{118}Fordham, “The Politics of Threat Perception and the Use of Force,” 571, 584.
the public’s concern over foreign affairs, and whether or not the president is up for re-election in a given year to capture the public’s relationship to decisions to use military force abroad.

Consistent with previous scholarship employing the Blechman and Kaplan data set, I also examine the influence of domestic economic conditions (as past research indicates presidents are more likely to use force when conditions are poor), control for Cold War era effects, test for evidence of Congressional influence over the broader contours of decisions to use force via War Powers, examine whether a unified government makes it more likely a president will use force, and control for the effects of on-going wars and their influence over subsequent decisions to use force.

4.2.2.1 Empirical Tests

As noted in Chapter 3, I model the use of force from 1945 to 2005 as a quarterly event count, following current practice.\textsuperscript{119} I extend the existing Blechman and Kaplan time series to 2005, identifying uses of force after 1995 following the practice established by Fordham and Carver.\textsuperscript{120} Further, I revise the existing data by removing scheduled exercises and incidents in which forces already deployed to a crisis area carried out additional operations in response to provocations (e.g., attacks on Iraqi antimissile batteries after patrols over the nofly zone took fire from the ground), following Howell and Pevehouse. The dependent variable is a count of the number of times each quarter that the president initiates military force abroad.

\textsuperscript{119}see Fordham, “The Politics of Threat Perception and the Use of Force”; and Howell and Pevehouse, \textit{While Dangers Gather}.

\textsuperscript{120}Fordham and Carver, “Military Interstate Disputes and United States Uses of Force.”
Blechman and Kaplan ranked uses of force on a five point scale, ranging from minor (5) to severe (1) uses of force. As I am interested in testing and identifying the scope conditions of public influence on presidential foreign policy decision making regarding the use of force, all instances of force are used in this analysis. I estimate separate models for all uses of force, major uses of force, and minor uses of force. Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 below trace these use of force trends in U.S. foreign policy from 1945 to 2005.\textsuperscript{121}

Figure 1 shows the president deployed force abroad 393 times from 1945 to 2005. On average, this is about 1.6 times per quarter. Figure 4.2 depicts major uses of force, of which there were 146 ordered by U.S. presidents from 1945 to 2005 – an average of .60 uses per quarter, with most quarters experiencing zero or one use. Deployments were most prevalent from 1955 to 1964 (.98 uses/quarter) and 1975 to 1984 (.90 uses/quarter), but the post Cold War years have seen the fewest (.23 uses/quarter from 1995 to 2005); on average, major force was used about .7 times per quarter. Figure 4.3 shows the plot of 247 minor use of force by presidents from 1945 to 2005. On average, minor force was deployed about 1 time per quarter. Again, the data is skewed toward the earlier half of the time series. Minor deployments of force were most prevalent from 1955 to 1964 (1.79 uses/quarter) and 1975 to 1984 (1.02 uses/quarter), but the post Cold War years have seen the fewest (.33 uses/quarter from 1995 to 2005).

\textsuperscript{121}These and other data points shown in this chapter are summarized by Lowess smoothing.
The estimation is done with negative binomial regression implemented, using Huber-White standard errors clustered by president.\(^{122}\) I include indicators for each president to capture any idiosyncratic differences among administrations.

\(^{122}\)Standard Poisson models return almost exactly the same results and tests do not indicate overdispersion, suggesting that our negative binomial models reduce to the Poisson in these data even though there is good reason to believe the observations may not be independent. I also considered the possibility of zero inflation, but the distribution of uses of force matches closely the theoretical distribution of the Poisson (\(\lambda = .60\)) and Vuong tests comparing zero-inflated Poisson models with standard Poisson models do not return significant test statistics.
Operationalizations of Key Variables

Approval: The percentage of respondents approving of the president’s performance in office, measured by the Gallup Poll. The president’s last approval rating in the previous quarter is recorded. Gallup did not measure approval in eight quarters; these values are linearly interpolated from the values of the previous and subsequent quarters.
Figure 4.3: Time Series of U.S. Minor Uses of Force, 1945-2005
**FP Concern**: The percentage of respondents identifying an international issue as the most important issue (whether “international concerns” in general or a specific issue such as Vietnam) when the Gallup Poll asked the question “What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?” Although Gallup now asks this question on a monthly basis, in earlier periods the organization asked the item on a less frequent and irregular schedule. To account for these disparities in the raw data, the percentages identifying a foreign policy concern as the most important problem across all polls taken in each quarter were averaged. In quarters when the question was not asked, values were linearly interpolated between the most recent poll and the next available poll. Finally, the values were lagged by one quarter to account for the time it takes the president to incorporate this type of information and to avoid potential problems of reciprocal causation.

**Re-election year**: An indicator coded 1 for quarters during a presidential re-election year and 0 otherwise.

**War Powers**: An indicator for quarters after the passage of the War Powers Resolution. Quarters from 1974 and onward are coded 1; previous quarters are coded 0.

**Unified government**: Indicates whether the congressional majority party in both the House and the Senate is the same as the president’s party. Instances of unification are coded 1; others are coded 0.

**Unemployment**: The seasonally adjusted rate of adult unemployment, averaged across the three months of the quarter. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.
Inflation: The percentage change in the Consumer Price Index from the same quarter a year previous. The rates in the three months of each quarter are averaged to produce the quarterly rate. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Ongoing war: An indicator coded 1 for quarters during which the U.S. was engaged in interstate war, coded 0 otherwise. These wars are World War II, the Korean war, the Vietnam war (from the Tonkin Gulf Resolution in the third quarter of 1964 to the first quarter of 1973), the first Gulf war (last quarter of 1990 and first quarter of 1991), the Kosovo war (first two quarters of 1999), the Afghanistan war (last quarter of 2001 and first quarter of 2002), and the Iraq war (first quarter of 2003 to the last quarter of 2004).

Cold War: An indicator for quarters during the Cold War. Quarters from 1946 to 1989 are coded 1; all others coded 0.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses of Force</td>
<td>0.613</td>
<td>0.852</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential Approval</td>
<td>53.865</td>
<td>14.024</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP Concern</td>
<td>30.537</td>
<td>22.468</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>106.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Government</td>
<td>0.393</td>
<td>0.482</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>5.710</td>
<td>1.732</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>0.980</td>
<td>0.981</td>
<td>-1.491</td>
<td>8.125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-election Year</td>
<td>0.187</td>
<td>0.373</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing War</td>
<td>0.246</td>
<td>0.431</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td>0.443</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 244 for each variable

Table 4.2: Summary Statistics
4.2.2.2 Analysis

Tables 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5 and Figures 4.4 and 4.5 present the estimation results for the all use of force, minor use of force, and major use of force models. The results across all three models are strikingly clear: as the Presidential Agency Model expects, the public’s evaluation of the president and and their concern regarding foreign affairs did not have a significant impact on the frequency with which presidents’ deployed forces abroad. Rather, with the except of major deployment of forces in a re-election year, presidents were relatively uninfluenced by the public’s preferences and concern on foreign policy issues, or their assessment of the president’s job performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All Force</th>
<th>Minor Force</th>
<th>Major Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>0.02 (0.45)</td>
<td>-0.23 (0.76)</td>
<td>0.33 (0.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.05 (0.21)</td>
<td>-0.25 (0.31)</td>
<td>-1.12 (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP CONCERN</td>
<td>-0.01 (0.21)</td>
<td>0.07 (0.35)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.75 (0.63)</td>
<td>-1.04 (0.79)</td>
<td>-1.01 (0.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE-ELECTION YEAR</td>
<td>0.33 (0.43)</td>
<td>0.37 (0.77)</td>
<td>0.56* (0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.98 (0.63)</td>
<td>-1.11 (0.87)</td>
<td>-1.35* (0.25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parameter for quarterly number of uses of force from 1945 to 2000 are estimated using negative binomial regressions. Huber/White/sandwich standard errors are in parentheses; errors are clustered by presidential administration. Not reported, each model also contains fixed effect terms for each presidential administration.

* p < .05, two-tailed.

Table 4.3: Frequency of Presidential Uses of Force, 1945-2005
Table 4.3 presents simple event count models for each of the key explanatory variables – presidential approval ratings, foreign policy concern, and re-election year. For the majority of the models estimated, none of the key explanatory variables is statistically significant. That is, under most cases when the president decides to use force, the public’s approval of the president, their concern over foreign policy issues, and whether or not it is a re-election year for the president have little relationship with those decisions. But examining major uses of force, I do find Re-election year to be significantly related to major uses of force. Presidents employ major uses of force more frequently in a re-election year than in other years.

As presidential decisions are likely to hinge on factors other than these three alone, the following two models present estimation results including standard alternative explanatory variables and background controls. Unfortunately, there are not available controls for some of the other key variables of interest, such as the public’s casualty sensitivity, advisor opinions and influence, and the president’s perception of public opinion. The subsequent case studies will therefore take up these variables to assess other ways in which the public might play a role in a president’s foreign policy decision-making calculus.

But let us first examine expanded models of the initial event count estimation above. Tables 4.4 and 4.5 present the results of models of minor and major uses of force, respectively. I estimated four models in each case; the first three estimate independently each of the various operationalizations of the public’s mechanisms for affecting presidents’ decisions to use force, while the fourth model estimates them all.

Table 4.4 presents the results for presidents’ deployment of minor force abroad. As the Presidential Agency Model would expect, the public’s overall approval (APPROVAL)
of the president, their concern over foreign policy issues (FP CONCERN), and whether or not the president is up for re-election (RE-ELECTION YEAR) are not significantly related to the frequency with which presidents’ use minor force. As minor uses of force are less likely to grab the public’s attention than major uses of force, it is not surprising to find the key explanatory variables to have little relationship with presidential decisions to use minor force abroad. This is most clearly demonstrated with respect to the public’s concern over foreign policy issues. If the public is expected to monitor the president thoroughly and clearly demonstrate its policy preferences with respect to the particular foreign policy decision at hand, one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>0.00 (0.01)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.00 (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP CONCERN</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–0.07 (0.05)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–0.04 (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE-ELECTION YEAR</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.27 (0.25)</td>
<td>0.19 (0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Powers</td>
<td>-1.02* (0.22)</td>
<td>-1.13* (0.27)</td>
<td>-1.08* (0.24)</td>
<td>-1.05* (0.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Government</td>
<td>0.41 (0.54)</td>
<td>0.44 (0.49)</td>
<td>0.42 (0.50)</td>
<td>0.47 (0.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-going war</td>
<td>-0.24* (0.10)</td>
<td>-0.25* (0.12)</td>
<td>-0.24* (0.12)</td>
<td>-0.34* (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>0.23* (0.11)</td>
<td>0.24* (0.10)</td>
<td>0.23* (0.10)</td>
<td>0.27* (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>0.21* (0.05)</td>
<td>0.21* (0.05)</td>
<td>0.21* (0.05)</td>
<td>0.24* (0.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>0.09* (0.02)</td>
<td>0.10* (0.02)</td>
<td>0.09* (0.02)</td>
<td>0.04* (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-0.78 (0.73)</td>
<td>-1.28 (1.56)</td>
<td>-1.01 (1.17)</td>
<td>-1.13 (1.02)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parameters for quarterly number of uses of force from 1945 to 2000 are estimated using negative binomial regressions. Huber/White/ sandwich standard errors are in parentheses; errors are clustered by presidential administration. Not reported, each model also contains fixed effect terms for each presidential administration.

* p < .05, two-tailed.

Table 4.4: Frequency of Presidential Uses of Minor Force, 1945-2005
would first expect them to have some concern over the issues and stakes involved. With respect to minor uses of force, at least, I find no relationship between the public’s foreign policy concerns and the frequency with which presidents’ use minor force.

Additionally, though, I did find the frequency with which presidents’ use minor force to be depressed after the passage of the War Powers Resolution (War Powers) and during on-going wars (On-going war). Conversely, this frequency increased during the Cold War and when the economy was doing poorly (Unemployment and Inflation).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL</td>
<td>0.00 (0.01)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>0.00 (0.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP CONCERN</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-0.17* (0.02)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-0.06* (.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE-ELECTION YEAR</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>-0.29* (0.04)</td>
<td>-0.32 (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Powers</td>
<td>-0.73* (0.17)</td>
<td>-0.75* (0.14)</td>
<td>-0.75* (0.14)</td>
<td>-0.77* (0.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Government</td>
<td>0.48* (0.11)</td>
<td>0.46* (0.10)</td>
<td>0.47* (0.10)</td>
<td>0.49* (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-going war</td>
<td>-0.47 (0.29)</td>
<td>-0.40 (0.25)</td>
<td>-0.41 (0.25)</td>
<td>- 0.46 (0.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold War</td>
<td>0.68* (0.09)</td>
<td>0.69* (0.10)</td>
<td>0.69* (0.10)</td>
<td>0.67* (0.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>0.24* (0.07)</td>
<td>0.24* (0.08)</td>
<td>0.24* (0.08)</td>
<td>0.25* (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation</td>
<td>0.03 (0.02)</td>
<td>0.03 (0.03)</td>
<td>0.04 (0.04)</td>
<td>0.02 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.79* (0.87)</td>
<td>-3.89* (1.13)</td>
<td>-2.81* (1.02)</td>
<td>-2.97* (0.98)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parameters for quarterly number of uses of force from 1945 to 2000 are estimated using negative binomial regressions. Huber/White/ sandwich standard errors are in parentheses; errors are clustered by presidential administration. Not reported, each model also contains fixed effect terms for each presidential administration.

* p < .05, two-tailed.

Table 4.5: Frequency of Presidential Uses of Major Force, 1945-2005
Table 4.5 presents the results for presidents’ deployment of major force abroad. These results, too, are generally favorable to the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model. Given that major uses of force should draw greater public attention and scrutiny as they require a significant investment in time, resources, and a greater risk of . This should especially be the case during a re-election year. As the results in Table 4.5 indicate, the frequency with which presidents’ deploy major forces abroad is depressed in re-election years (RE-ELECTION YEAR). Moreover, the public’s concern over foreign policy issues (FP CONCERN) also appears to depress this frequency (more on this finding below).

Somewhat surprisingly, the public’s overall evaluation of the president was not related to the frequency with which presidents’ used major force abroad. A number of scholars have demonstrated previously that presidents are likely to “gamble for resurrection” – and benefit from the typical “rally ’round the flag” effect experienced at the outset of a conflict – and use major force when their approval rating is low or declining. However, in these data I did not find this relationship.

To further explore these data, Figures 4.4 and 4.5 present another way of looking at these results. Graphical data displays are often easier to interpret and visualize the relationship between all of the variables of interest. These figures therefore show the relationship between decisions to use minor and major force, respectively, and key domestic and international explanatory variables. For each, the dot represents the parameter estimate for the variable of interest, while the horizontal lines depict 95 percent confidence intervals. A red dot indicates the parameter estimate is significant.

A vertical dashed line is placed at 0 to act as a reference point for comparing the magnitude of positive and negative parameter estimates. The key explanatory variables of interest are displayed along the y-axis, and the value of the parameter estimates along the x-axis.\textsuperscript{125}

The main results presented in the figures below are similar to the simpler fixed effects model, and mirror Model (4) in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, respectively. Perhaps the biggest discrepancy between the two figures is the significance of domestic political factors in presidential decision to employ major uses of force; a relationship not found regarding minor uses of force and noted in the discussion of the results above. Consistent with previous research, I did not find a relationship between election cycles and minor uses of force. Though presidents may be slightly more likely to use minor force in a re-election year (between 10 to 15 percent), the effect is not statistically significant.\textsuperscript{126} I did, however, find a significant relationship between election cycles and major uses of force. The finding presented here is substantial and robust. The magnitude and significance of the effect are consistent across specifications, and the models predict substantial decrease in the expected number of deployments per quarter during presidential reelection years (anywhere from 33 to 54 percent, depending on the specification; p < .05 in all models).

There is also a difference in influence of FP CONCERN, depending on the size of the use of force. However, I found that when election year is dropped from

\footnote{The length of the error bars also visually signal which variables are significant: those that do not cross the reference line, which is zero in this case. However, because this is a less common way of presenting regression results, I choose to use the colored dot to make this more clear.}

\footnote{For more on the value of graphically displaying quantitative information, see Edward Tufte. 1983. The Visual Display of Quantitative Information. Cheschire, CT: Graphics Press.}

\footnote{See, for example, Ostrom and Job, “The President and the Political Use of Force.”}
Figure 4.4: Frequency of Minor Uses of Force
Figure 4.5: Frequency of Major Uses of Force
the model **FP CONCERN** is no longer significant, leading me to conclude that **RE-ELECTION YEAR** is driving the result.

Looking at the background control variables typical of the use of force literature, the findings are broadly confirmatory of those who find domestic political factors to be important. The unemployment rate (*Unemployment*) and the change in the level of inflation (*Inflation*) are both positive and significant predictors of the use of force, suggesting that presidents are apt to deploy military force abroad in times of economic downturn.\(^\text{127}\) The president is also more likely to undertaking a major use of force when there is a *Unified Government*, while this propensity is depressed in quarters after the *War Powers* Resolution was passed.\(^\text{128}\)

During the *Cold War*, the expected number of uses of force more than doubles, which is not an unsurprising result given the use of force in that period. In cases of both minor and major uses of force, *Ongoing War* depresses the likelihood of president using force, but only in the case of minor uses of force is this relationship statistically significant.

I also estimated Poisson autoregressive (PAR) models to account for any serial autocorrelation in the event count series, as suggested by Mitchell and Moore.\(^\text{129}\)

\(^{127}\)This is broadly consistent with Fordham’s past work on the subject.


autocorrelations in the force data are almost negligible.\footnote{Autocorrelation function (ACF) plots produce four statistically significant spikes in the USES OF FORCE time series, but the highest value of $\rho$ is only .21. Moreover, unlike Poisson models, negative binomial estimation does not assume independence among the observations.} In any case, the estimates are substantively very similar to those obtained using the negative binomial, and all the electoral variables retain their respective statistical significance or lack thereof.

The analyses presented above examined three mechanisms by which the public might impact president’s decisions to deploy troops abroad – these were the president’s overall approval rating, the public’s concern over foreign affairs, and whether or not the president was up for re-election. I considered all deployments of troops from 1945 to 2005 and only in one instance did I observe a correlation between these mechanisms of the public’s general evaluation of the president and concern over foreign policy and the quarterly frequency with which presidents’ deployed American forces abroad. Only in the case of major uses of force during presidents’ re-election year, was there a significant correlation with the frequency with which the president deployed forces.

These findings are important for at least two reasons. First, they challenge existing work on the relationship between presidential approval and a president’s war-making propensity. Whereas previous research by Ostrom and Job and Hess and Orphanides claimed to demonstrate that approval ratings are a significant determinant of uses of force, the data analyzed here indicates otherwise. In none of the model specifications – from considering the three main public mechanisms alone to examining them with standard background controls in the use of force literature – did the public’s overall evaluation of the president related significantly to his propensity to deploy minor or major military force.
Second, of the public preferences variables considered, \textit{FP CONCERN} comes the closest to operationalizing the public’s preferences as required by the Presidential Agency Model. This is because the model expects that the more concerned is the public regarding foreign affairs the more likely it is to monitor the president thoroughly on issues of foreign policy, in this case decisions to deploy military force abroad. Like \textit{APPROVAL}, however, in none of the model specifications was the public’s concern regarding foreign affairs significantly related the frequency with which presidents’ deployed forces. This does not quite fit the expectation of the model, as it expects there to be some relationship between \textit{FP CONCERN} and deployments when \textit{FP CONCERN} is relatively high. However, because the unit of analysis is the frequency of deployments per quarter rather than the individual deployments themselves, the high \textit{FP CONCERN} over particular deployments may have been washed out.

Finally, a word on what this misses. Following the procedures established by Howell and Pevehouse, all these analyses did was insert some proxy measures of the public’s preferences and evaluation of the president into standard use of force models. As there is not available data on the public’s preferences related to most of the actual deployments of force examined in the data set, these proxies are only a loose approximation of the public’s concern of these actual deployments. Similarly, these data do not allow us to explore potential differences between Republican and Democratic presidents. In short, those these data say something about the seemingly marginal role of the public in presidential decisions to U.S. military forces, to explore more exactly why this is so and to assess more validly the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model, I examine two cases of presidents’ deploying and employing U.S.
military forces abroad to examine other ways in which the public may impact such decisions.

4.3 Case Studies

The previous two sections analyzed two data sets in order to examine across presidents the relationship between public opinion and presidents foreign policy preferences and behavior (specifically, decisions to deploy forces abroad). The remainder of this chapter takes a decidedly different approach, diving into two cases studies to assess whether the theoretical argument offered in chapter 2 and the empirical findings from the tests above hold up in particular cases.

The case studies are President George W. Bush’s decision to invade Iraq in 2003 and subsequent decisions over the remainder of his presidency regarding the deployment and use of force there, and President Bill Clinton’s decision to use force in Kosovo in 1999 to coerce Slobodan Milosevic to end a brutally repressive war against Kosovar Albanians. The two cases are instructive for several reasons: 1, they enable us to look across presidencies to examine how and when the Presidential Agency Model applies in each case; 2, they capture a significant range of the spectrum of combat operations: major combat operations, to limited air strikes, to stabilization and reconstruction operations, to the conduct of counterinsurgency operations; 3, they capture a broad range of public support and opposition to the use of force; and 4, illustrate well some of the conditions under which the Presidential Agency Model may apply.

To the cases this dissertation now turns.
4.3.1 George W. Bush and the second Iraq War

In his 2002 and 2003 State of the Union messages, President Bush characterized Iraq as a grave potential threat to the United States because of its refusal to verifiably abandon its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs and the potential for it to transfer WMD to terrorist groups. In September 2002, the President told the U.N. General Assembly that unless Iraq fully disarmed in cooperation with United Nations weapons inspectors, the United States would lead a coalition to achieve that disarmament militarily, making clear that this would include the ouster of Saddam Hussein’s regime. After a November 2002 - March 2003 round of U.N. inspections in which Iraq’s cooperation was mixed, on March 19, 2003 the United States launched Operation Iraqi Freedom to disarm Iraq and change its regime. The regime fell on April 9, 2003.

Over the time period since, the United States has been continued to conduct major stabilization and reconstructions operations, conduct a counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign against both domestic and foreign insurgents, and advise and train reconstructed Iraqi forces to eventually stand up and take the lead across the full spectrum of operations as the U.S. forces stand down.

This case study examines the course of events from pre-war activities and the initial decision to use force by President Bush through then end of his administration. Throughout, a keen eye is turned to the role (if any) public opinion played in those decisions.
4.3.1.1 Case background

Concern about Iraq and its potential development of chemical and biological weapons was, at the time President Bush’s inauguration, nothing new in the realm of presidential politics. In 1991 the United Nations Security Council established a Special Commission (UNSCOM) to investigate Saddam and Iraq’s development of chemical and biological weapons, while developments and activities regarding its nascent nuclear program were the responsibility of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Throughout the 1990s, then, President Clinton’s attention would turn to Iraq on several occasions. Most notable were those in the second half of his presidency.

From the mid-1990s through early 1997, Saddam Hussein and key Iraqi government and military officials increased interference in U.N. weapons inspections. The confrontation peaked in late October 1997 when Iraq barred participation by U.S. personnel in UNSCOM inspections, demanded the departure of all U.S. UNSCOM personnel within 7 days, and called for termination of U.S.-piloted flights by U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. In response, a U.S. force build-up in the Gulf region began in October 1997 as tensions with Iraq mounted. For several months thereafter, the United States maintained two aircraft carriers in the Gulf, and three during a brief period in February 1998 (the U.S.S. Nimitz, U.S.S. George Washington, and U.S.S. Independence). In November 1997, during the early stages of the crisis, the United States sent six F-117A stealth fighters to Kuwait; eight B-52 bombers to the Indian Ocean base of Diego Garcia.

131 In 1998 Congress passed and President Bill Clinton signed the Iraq Liberation Act, which declared that “it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power.” The Iraq Liberation Act made the previously unstated policy of promoting regime change in Iraq official, declared policy. See One Hundred Fifth Congress. 1998. House Resolution 4655 - Iraq Liberation Act of 1998. http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c105:H.R.4655.ENR: (Accessed on November 13, 2008.)
(British territory); and an Air Expeditionary Force consisting of 32 combat aircraft (12 F-15 fighters, 18 F-16 fighters, and 2 B-1 bombers) to Bahrain, accompanied by additional personnel to man a Patriot missile battery to protect the aircraft.

On February 4, 1998 as the crisis intensified, Secretary Cohen announced additional deployments to the Gulf region. According to subsequent press reports, these included the following: the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (approximately 2,000-2,200 personnel) to the Gulf; 6 more F-117A stealth fighters to Kuwait; 6 more B-52 bombers to Diego Garcia; 6 more F-16s and one more B-1 bomber to Bahrain; and additional U.S. Army troops to join 1,500 already in Kuwait. According to a subsequent order on February 16, the Army troops include approximately 5,000-6,000, comprising mechanized infantry units to complete a brigade, a 24-helicopter aviation unit, and communications personnel. These deployments brought U.S. force levels to a peak level of almost 45,000 personnel (including over 20,000 on ships); approximately 35 combat and support ships, and over 350 aircraft (including approximately 275 fighters and bombers). Force levels of over 35,000 were maintained from March through May.\footnote{132 For the complete Order of Battle, see http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/desert_fox_981216.htm.}

Tensions between Iraq and United Nations weapons inspectors eventually culminated in four days of intense military strikes, initiated against Iraq for its refusal to comply with the demands of UN weapons inspectors. In a televised address on December 16, 2008 President Clinton declared that the action, called Operation Desert Fox, was “designed to degrade Saddam’s capacity to develop and deliver weapons of mass destruction and to degrade his ability to threaten his neighbors.”\footnote{133 William Jefferson Clinton. 1998. Statement by the President Announcing Military Strikes Against Iraq. Presidential Document 2494, 2494B96.} In a press
conference shortly following the end of the conflict, Secretary of Defense William Co-
hen reported that the strikes during Desert Fox targeted slightly over 100 sites in
President Saddam Hussein’s political and military infrastructure and suspected sites
for the production or storage of weapons of mass destruction.

Almost a year-to-date from the end of Operation Desert Fox, the United States
and other members of the U.N. Security Council were working toward a new res-
olution to revise the existing sanctions program against Iraq and to also offer Iraq
an incentive to readmit U.N. weapons inspectors. On December 17, 1998, the U.N.
Security Council passed Resolution 12284 doing just that. Resolution 1284 began the
process, continued in subsequent oil-for-food program rollover resolutions, of easing
restrictions on the flow of civilian goods to Iraq. Moreover, it included incentives
(in the form of revenues) regarding domestic oil production to convince Iraq to allow
U.S. inspectors back into the country.

Throughout most of its first year, the Bush Administration continued the basic
elements of Clinton Administration policy on Iraq. With no immediate consensus
within the new Administration on how forcefully to proceed with an overthrow strat-
ey, Secretary of State Colin Powell focused on strengthening containment of Iraq,
which the Bush Administration said had eroded substantially in the year prior to its
taking office. Secretary Powell visited the Middle East in February 2001 to enlist
regional support for a so-called “smart sanctions” plan: a modification of the U.N.
sanctions regime to ensure that no weapons-related technology reached Iraq.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{134}For a review of the smart sanction policy, see Anthony Cordesman. 2001. \textit{Iraq and “Smart San-
cations”: Reshaping US Policy in the Gulf}. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International
5:107-10; and George Lopez and David Cortright. 2004 “Containing Iraq: Sanctions Worked.”
\textit{Foreign Affairs}, 83:90-103.
How did public opinion impact the Bush administrations initial smart sanction policy, as well as the initial decision to commence war planning against Iraq? In the section that follows I review the policy preferences of the key actors involved and trace the decision making process to determine what role if any the public played.

4.3.1.2 Actor preferences and policy choices

This section explores the policy preferences of key actors associated. In order to assess the relative impact of the public’s policy preferences on a president’s wartime choices, a careful accounting of the key actors and their preferences is required. From this, a narrative of the various decisions is constructed in order to trace in influence of the president, public opinion, president’s perception of public opinion, Congress, and key advisors on decision outcomes.

As George and McKeown stress, “[t]he process-tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that then occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing, and behavior; and the effect of other variables of interest on attention, processing, and behavior.”135 Whereas the prior empirical exercises sought to uncover the macrofoundations of the Presidential Agency Model argument, the cases study method of process-tracing is deeply rooted in the tradition of methodological individualism. As such, this case study attempts to uncover the microfoundations of presidential decision making regarding the use of force.

135 George and McKeown, “Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making,” 35, emphasis added.
For the sake of coherence and inference, the case study unfolds linearly. Another option would be to report discretely each actors’ policy preferences for each stage of decision making. Such a method, however, renders the process-tracing approach less effective as you lose a true sense of the relationships between actors and the decision timeline.

So, where did we leave off?

**Pre-War decision-making**

The Administration believed that the “smart sanctions” proposal, by easing the suffering of the Iraqi people, would cause Iraq’s neighbors and other countries to cease unilateral violations of the sanctions regime. Secretary Powell, who openly expressed skepticism about the opposition’s prospects, barely raised the regime change issue during his trip or in his March 7, 2001, testimony before the House International Relations Committee, at which he was questioned about Iraq.136 After about a year of negotiations among the Security Council permanent members, the major feature of the smart sanctions plan – new procedures that virtually eliminate U.N. review of civilian exports to Iraq – was adopted on May 14, 2002 (U.N. Security Council Resolution 1409).

Bush Administration policy toward Iraq became notably more assertive after the September 11, 2001, attacks, stressing regime change and asserting that containment was failing or, at best, inadequate. Almost immediately after the U.S.-led war on the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan began in early October 2001, speculation began building that the Administration might try to change Iraq’s regime through direct use of military force as part of a “phase two” of the war on terrorism. Some U.S.

officials, reportedly led by deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, believed that the United States needed to respond to the September 11, 2001 attacks by ending any or all regimes that support terrorist groups, including Iraq.\textsuperscript{137}

Even though several senior officials had been strong advocates of a regime change policy even at this stage, many of the persistent questions about the wisdom and difficulty of that strategy were debated early in the Bush Administration.\textsuperscript{138} Aside from restating the U.S. policy of regime change, the Bush Administration did little to promote that outcome throughout most of its first year.

We now know well that the president began planning in late 2001 for potential military operations against Iraq in order to remove Saddam from power and disable Iraq’s WMD capability.\textsuperscript{139} During a meeting at Camp David in November 2001, the President requested that Rumsfeld (who shortly thereafter tasked U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) Combatant Commander, General Tommy Franks) begin

\textsuperscript{137}Iraq was a designated state sponsor of terrorism during 1979-82, and was again designated after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraq remains on the list, despite the change of regime.

\textsuperscript{138}For a review of such internal debates, see Seymour Hersh. 2002. “The Debate Within.” New Yorker, March 11. It is not surprising that discussing regarding Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein occurred so close to the events of September 11th. Many within the administration were from the beginning of the administration eag to remove Saddam from power. In 1998, the Project for the New American Century issued a letter to President Clinton calling for a policy of “regime change” in Iraq to be taken seriously. They wrote, “[C]urrent American policy toward Iraq is not succeeding, and that we may soon face a threat in the Middle East more serious than any we have known since the end of the Cold War...The only acceptable strategy is one that eliminates the possibility that Iraq will be able to use or threaten to use weapons of mass destruction. In the near term, this means a willingness to undertake military action as diplomacy is clearly failing. In the long term, it means removing Saddam Hussein and his regime from power. That now needs to become the aim of American foreign policy.” Among the signatories, Paul Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Armitage, and John Bolton – all then future to be members of the Bush Administration. See Appendix E for the full text of the letter.

military planning for war with Iraq. The Secretary of Defense said at the time that action against Iraq could come “as early as April or May” of 2002.

Rumsfeld communicated to Franks that he wanted to conduct a quick, lightning-like operation in Iraq, followed by a swift handover of power to the Iraqis. He did not want a large scale operation like Desert Storm, which he saw as wasteful and outmoded. He also did not want U.S. troops unnecessarily bogged down in an endless postwar peace operation. In the end, the last version of the operational plan, Cobra II, called for a force of about 140,000 troops – one-third the size of the force in the plan that was on the shelf when the administration came to power. Ultimately, the parameters of the nature, timing and size of an actual deployment to Iraq – using a much smaller force, more rapidly deployed, with the aim of getting to Baghdad quickly and then rapidly turning over the reins of government to some coherent, effective force - were set between November 2001 and the summer of 2002.

As noted above, the war planning effort was guided by General Tommy Franks. Franks thinking and planning for the war was simple: Rumsfeld and the President asked him to begin operational planning for the war, which he did literally. Franks never briefed either Rumsfeld or President Bush on options short of war. He took his charge to prepare a war plan as a mission to develop a full-scale, direct military

141 Ibid., 38-43.
143 For a complete account of the original operational plan and it subsequent revisions, see Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor. 2006. Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq. New York: Pantheon Books, 75117.
144 Woodward, Plan of Attack,130-38.
approach to the overthrow of Saddam’s regime. There were never plans for creating enclaves, supporting a guerrilla war, or using only special operations forces and air-power in a coercive manner. And even then, a majority of Americans also consistently favored sending American troops back to the Persian Gulf to remove Saddam Hussein from power. September 11 served to reinforce these trends, with the public ready to countenance military action against a wide range of targets as part of the “global war on terror.” Afghanistan topped this list, of course, but Iraq was not far behind.

The preferences of the American public (at the time) regarding Iraq and the removal and Saddam Hussein were thus plain – they supported it. Whether unilaterally, multilaterally, or via the United Nations Security Council, the American public favored removing Saddam Hussein from power. Figure 4.6 below illustrates this preference well. At no point from late 2001 to the run-up to the war in Iraq did public support for using ground troops to remove Saddam Hussein drop below 50 percent.\textsuperscript{145} What is more, CBS News conducted a poll on March 23, 2003 asking “Do you think George W. Bush should have waited for specific United Nations approval of military action before issuing tonight’s ultimatum, or not?” 32 percent of respondents answered positively to this question, while 65 percent said the president did not need U.N. approval before using force against Iraq.

Despite this widespread (and publicly supported) belief that President Bush was marching the United States toward war with Iraq, throughout 2002 President Bush said repeatedly that his mind was not made up. In the late winter 2001 and throughout 2002 the Bush administration conducted an internal review of potential policy

\textsuperscript{145}Moreover, Pew and Gallup surveys between 1992 and 2003 found majorities ranging from 52 percent to 74 percent favoring the use of force to remove Saddam.
Would you favor or oppose invading Iraq with U.S. ground troops in an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power?

Source: Gallup/CNN/USA Today

Note: Question wording for the 2001 survey was, "Would you favor or oppose sending American troops back to the Persian Gulf in order to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq?" Question wording for the remainder was, "Would you favor or oppose sending American ground troops to the Persian Gulf in an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power?"

Figure 4.6: Public's Pre-war Policy Preference
options regarding Iraq. In other words, he left the impression that using force to remove Saddam Hussein from power and rid Iraq of WMD was not a forgone conclusion. (Several analysts have argued, I think correctly, that this was simply a charade designed to give the diplomatic channels time to run their course, and time for General Franks to conclude war planning and begin preparation of the battlefield. As later recounted by Hans Blix, the director of the UN Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), “Although the inspection organization was now operating at full strength and Iraq seemed determined to give it prompt access everywhere, the United States appeared as determined to replace our inspection force with an invasion army.”  

But what this review did make clear was the underlying policy preference within the administration: containment was no longer a viable strategy for dealing with Saddam Hussein – his removal by force would be required.

President Bush’s State of the Union speech in January 2002 decidedly and publicly put the possibility of using preventative force on the table, with Iraq in the cross hairs. Referring to Iraq, Iran, and North Korea as the ‘axis of evil,’ the president warned that “we will be deliberate yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world’s most destructive regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.” In other words, past policies of containment were not longer working and the possibility of using preventive force against these regimes was now on the table.

146Hans Blix. 2004. *Disarming Iraq*. New York: Pantheon, 3. In late November, Franks requested 300,000 troops immediately. Rumsfeld rejected this stating it would run counter to diplomatic efforts. “Were going to dribble this out slowly, so that its enough to keep the pressure on for the diplomacy but not so much as to discredit the diplomacy.” Woodward, *Plan of Attack*, 233-34.

As noted above, the public largely supported action against Iraq. A Quinnipiac Poll taken a couple short weeks after the president’s state of the union address, found 67 percent of Americans in favor of “having United States forces take military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power;” 24 percent were opposed.

What is more, in two speeches later that year, one at West Point and the other in Cincinnati, the President firmly laid the groundwork for war with Iraq.\textsuperscript{148} As Tom Ricks recounts,

In June 2002 [President] Bush traveled to West Point to drop the other shoe. There, at the most identifiably Army post in the nation, the U.S. Military Academy, he made preemption a national strategy—an astonishing departure from decades of practice and two centuries of tradition. Henceforth, the United States was prepared to attack before threats became full-fledged. “We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge,” Bush told the cadets assembled on West Point’s football field. “If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long.” Between the State of the Union Address and the West Point speech, [President] Bush had shown the political route toward attacking Iraq. The first speech had done the targeting—that is, stated the goal. The West Point speech provided the doctrinal, or intellectual, rationale for doing it.”\textsuperscript{149}

Similar policy preferences and direction where intimated by the President’s speech in Cincinnati in October later that year: Iraq “gathers the most serious dangers of our age in one place” and that “danger is already significant, and it only grows worse with time.” He went on to claim

If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year. And if we all that to happen, a terrible line would be crossed. Saddam Hussein would be in a position


\textsuperscript{149}Ricks, \textit{Fiasco}, 38-9.
to blackmail anyone who opposes his aggression. He would be in a position to dominate the Middle East. He would be in a position to threaten America. And Saddam would be in a position to pass nuclear technology to terrorists...Knowing these realities, America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, *we cannot wait for final proof*—the smoking gun—that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.\(^{150}\)

The President’s campaigning of sorts is at this point strategically unclear if the American public is his target audience. Again, he was only telling them things they were at the time already inclined to support. Throughout much of 1990s and early 2000s there was consistent support (always remaining about 50 percent) for invading Iraq in order to remove Saddam Hussein. As Figure 4.6 above illustrates, long before the Bush Administration began campaigning for the war in Iraq, support already existed.\(^{151}\)

However, especially by mid-2002 through the run up to the Iraq war’s commencement in March 2003, the public was inclined to look more favorably on using force against Iraq if it was to be done multilaterally. Figure 4.7 and 4.8 demonstrate that the public, when offered options, was more likely to support limited war options and multilateral uses of forces than using only U.S. troops (particularly, ground) to remove Saddam from power.


\(^{151}\)Thus, it is somewhat confusing that some in the administration felt that the public was going to be pulled into the conflict. Here is Richard Haas, then director of policy planning in the State Department: “I don’t think the American public needs a lot of persuading about the evil that is Saddam Hussein,” he said. “Also, I’d fully expect the President and his chief lieutenants to make the case. Public opinion can be changed. We’d be able to make the case that this isn’t a discretionary action but one done in self-defense.” Quoted in Nicholas Lemann. 2002. “The Next World Order: The Bush Administration may have a brand-new doctrine of power.” *New Yorker*, April, 42.
Please tell me whether or not you would support each of the following kinds of U.S. military action against Iraq and its leader Saddam Hussein.

![Graphs showing support or opposition to military actions against Iraq over time.](image)

Source: *Newsweek*

Figure 4.7: Circumstances for Supporting Military Action Against Iraq (1)
Please tell me if you would support or oppose U.S. military action against Iraq in each of the following circumstances. First, what if...

Source: Newsweek

Figure 4.8: Circumstances for Supporting Military Action Against Iraq (2)
Secretary of State Colin Powell felt there was still merit to this argument.\textsuperscript{152} In particular, he argued the receiving U.N. approval would remove any question as to the legitimacy of using force preventively to remove Saddam from power.\textsuperscript{153} Secretary Powell lobbied for a tougher sanctions regime to be applied first; if that failed, then the president would have both U.N. legitimacy and a coalition of countries supporting the removal of Saddam’s regime by force.

In an effort to obtain U.N. backing for confronting Iraq, on September 12, 2002 President Bush urged the United Nations General Assembly that the U.N. Security Council should enforce its 16 existing WMD-related resolutions on Iraq. The Administration subsequently agreed to give Iraq a “final opportunity” to comply with all applicable Council resolutions by supporting Security Council Resolution 1441 (November 8, 2002), which gave the U.N. inspection body UNMOVIC (U.N. Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission) new powers of inspection, and also threatened “serious consequences” if Saddam chose not to comply.

That same month President Bush declared, “The first time we may be completely certain he has nuclear weapons is when, God forbid, he uses one.”\textsuperscript{154} The President also made it clear to the U.N. General Assembly that unless Iraq fully disarmed in cooperation with United Nations weapons inspectors, the United States would lead a coalition to achieve that disarmament militarily – this would undoubtedly include

\textsuperscript{152} Moreover, Powell was not convinced following 9/11 that the U.S. was no longer able to contain Iraq: “Iraq is not going anywhere. Its in a fairly weakened state. Its doing some things we dont like. Well continue to contain it.” Karen DeYoung. 2006. Soldier: The Life of Colin Powell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006, 76.

\textsuperscript{153} Gordon and Trainor, Cobra II, 71-2; and Woodward, Plan of Attack, 332-36.

the ouster of Saddam Hussein. In a Fox News poll conducted just three days prior, 69 percent believed that Iraq already had nuclear weapons; in another conducted by Time/CNN in early January, 2003, 80 percent thought this likely.

Congress to date had played a rather marginal role in the decision making process regarding Iraq. At their most intense points, the debates in the House and Senate attracted fewer than 10 percent of each body’s members. To be sure, several congress-men and -women voiced concern over the claims being made with respect to Iraq’s WMD program. Four went so far as to request a national intelligence estimate (NIE) regarding Iraq’s weapons programs, which was delivered to the Senate Intelligence Committee in early October 2002. In the end, the NIE did little to sway members from previously held positions regarding a potential war with Iraq.

Challenging the president in foreign policy is always a risky endeavor in which Congress typically suffers from acute informational asymmetry, and members do not want to be caught on the wrong end of a successful military endeavor. The temptation to remain on the sidelines is high; as Rep. Ron Paul (R - TX) put it, “Congress would rather give up its most important authorized power to the President and the UN than risk losing an election if the war goes badly.”

155 In fact, a review of the academic and popular accounts of the pre-war debate and decision making finds mentions of Congress to be few and far between. See also, Ricks, Fiasco, 61-64. Jane Kellett Cramer goes further and presents extensive evidence that a large majority in Congress were not persuaded that attacking Iraq was necessary. Jane Kellett Cramer. 2007. “Militarized Patriotism: Why the U.S. Marketplace of Ideas Failed Before the Iraq War.” Security Studies, 16:489-524.

156 Ricks, Fiasco, 61.

157 Though, some top Democrats pushed back at some of the intelligence claims levied in the document. In particular there was concern about the validity of the claims linking Saddam to Al Qaeda.

Republicans thus generally fell behind a wartime (war on terror, that is) Republican president, and Democrats and Independents were brought along, most somewhat reluctantly.\textsuperscript{159} (Many argued they were not voting for the war, but for diplomacy backed by the threat of force.\textsuperscript{160}) By October 11, 2002, both the House and Senate voted overwhelmingly to support the Iraq War Resolution (AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE AGAINST IRAQ RESOLUTION OF 2002\textsuperscript{161}). The House voted, 296 to 133, to authorize the president to use military forces against Iraq; the Senate soon followed suit, voting 77 to 23 in favor of the same. This was, essentially, the end of any potential Congressional influence over the war. Once the president deployed troops, Congress’s only real recourse for removing them was to cut off funding. However, the “not supporting the troops” taboo was and remains a political hurdle that most in Congress are not willing to jump over.

Shortly thereafter, President Bush had what is now a rather well-known meeting with then Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, George Tenet, where he articulated that planning for the overthrow of Saddam was well underway and that war was likely to come sooner rather than later. “We’re not going to wait,” he said.\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{159}Democratic opposition, it seems, collapsed because of the political risks entailed in appearing “soft” on national security and challenging the executive branch in a time of crisis. For more on this point, see Cramer, “Militarized Patriotism,” 501-06

\textsuperscript{160}For example, Senator Joe Biden (D-Delware): “The stronger the vote in favor of this resolution, the stronger the likelihood, in my view, that the Security Council will approve a tough U.N. Resolution...The tougher a U.N. resolution, the less likely it is that we will have to use force in Iraq. That is because such a resolution would finally force Saddam to face the choice between inspectors and invaders, between giving up his weapons and giving up power, and there is at least a chance that he might make the right choice.” Joseph Biden. 2002. Congressional Record S10293. October 10.

\textsuperscript{161}http://www.c-span.org/resources/pdf/hjres114.pdf

When later asked about the certainty of the president’s decision, Tenet responded rather bluntly: “You bet your ass...It’s not a matter of if. It’s a matter of when. This president is going to war. Make the plans. We’re going.”\textsuperscript{163} The president, in other words, had decided that nothing short of regime change would do.\textsuperscript{164}

The two primary themes in the Bush Administrations public case for confronting Iraq were 1, its purported refusal to end its WMD programs, and 2), its ties to terrorist groups, to which Iraq might transfer WMD for the purpose of conducting a catastrophic attack on the United States. (A third, though less stated publicly at the time, was that it saw Iraq as the vehicle to bring democracy to the Middle East.) Most senior officials did not specifically assert that Iraq was an imminent or immediate threat to U.S. security, but they did assert that Iraq was a “grave and gathering” threat that was best blunted before the threat became imminent.

The public was initially inclined to agree. See Figures 4.9 and 4.10 below. Though support from Democrats and Independents eventually waned on these issues, majorities were inclined to belief both instances. And as we will see, even when a majority of Democrats and Independents (as well as a minority of Republicans) came to believe otherwise, this did little to affect the course of the President Bush’s wartime decision making.

Also, for those that argued the public did not have an appetite for casualties – which they believed could eventually change the course of the war if it dragged on – the Bush administration was clear that they did not believe this to be the case. In the build up to the first use of force in Iraq in March 2003, many in the press

\textsuperscript{163}Ibid.

Figure 4.9: Believe Iraq has WMD
Figure 4.10: Believe Saddam was involved in 9/11
noted the administration’s position that the casualty sensitivity of the public had been exaggerated. Nicholas Lemann reported that, in early 2002, a “senior official” in the Bush administration “approvingly mentioned a 1999 study of casualty aversion by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies, which argued that the “mass public” is much less casualty averse than the civilian elite believes; for example, the study showed that the public would tolerate thirty thousand deaths in a military operation to prevent Iraq from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.”

In short, the President and his top advisors believed that the probability to be very slim that a casualty phobic would rise. Outside of the Triangle Institute report referenced by administration officials, they also had some empirical evidence regarding the public’s willingness to tolerate casualties in Iraq. Comparing polls conducted late in 1998 to those conducted in January 2002, when asked if they were willing to incur in a war with Iraq, the number of Americans answering positively rose from 30 percent to 56 percent. So, even if casualties were to eventually drag down support for the war, the President and others made it clear this would not affect the direction and execution of the war. “A president must be steel to deal with the casualties that inevitably come from a strategy aimed to win the war,” Bush said. “And I mean there will be death, and particularly if you are aiming to free an entire nation of people. There will be death.” In Iraq, with nearly 200,000 U.S. military personnel on the ground, he said, “I knew there would be casualties.”


As inspectors worked in Iraq under the mandate provided in U.N. Resolution 1441, the Administration demanded complete disarmament and full cooperation by Saddam if Iraq wanted to avert military action. In a probable effort to garner international support for any U.S.-led war effort against Iraq, the Administration had downplayed the goal of regime change in President Bush’s September 12, 2002, speech before the United Nations General Assembly, stressing instead the need to enforce U.N. resolutions that required Iraqi disarmament. However, having received both Congressional authorization and a U.N Resolution promising “serious consequences,” President Bush made Saddam and his possession of WMD the focus of his State of the Union in January 2003. He concluded the speech noting he planned to request the U.N. Security Council convene in early February “to consider the facts of Iraq’s ongoing defiance of the world.”

Secretary Powell went to the U.N. in early February and made plain the administration’s case for using military forces to remove Saddam from power and to secure Iraq’s WMD. He presented the intelligence ‘facts’ the administration had be using to justify preventative action against Saddam Hussein’s regime, hoping the international community and U.N. Security Council members would draw similar conclusions. Some U.N. Security Council members (most notably, France and Russia), however, were unconvinced that war was required just then. Secretary Powell and the administration pushed hard for a second resolution that explicitly authorized the use of force, but it faced opposition from other Security Council members, as well as pleas for more time.

The Administration nonetheless resumed stressing the regime change goal after February 2003 as diplomacy at the United Nations ran its course. The drums of war were officially beating. Just before the invasion, several polls demonstrate a bare majority for invading Iraq without a new U.N. resolution – hardly the public support war the administration had even just six months prior. As President Bush became more certain about his decision to use force to remove Saddam from power, the more uncertain was the American public.

**Wartime decision-making**

**Major Combat Operations**

“Now that the conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force.”\(^{168}\) Starting on March 19, 2003, major combat operations were indeed decisive. The Iraqis never significantly challenged U.S. forces conventionally, choosing instead to concentrate on the defense of Baghdad. The overwhelming power of U.S. and British forces quickly accomplished tactical objectives, and the major conventional fight was over by mid-April, months ahead of schedule. The only real surprise during the fighting – and a bad omen for the future – was the sporadic resistance put up by paramilitary irregulars, such as the Fedayeen Saddam. The much-anticipated bloody battle for Baghdad and the use of WMD did not happen, nor was there a flood of refugees.

The American public saw these events as positive. Early evaluations of the Iraq war followed the traditional “rally round the flag” effect.\(^{169}\) The initial use of force

---


\(^{169}\) For the authoritative statement regarding the “rally round the flag” effect, see Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion*, 208-13.
drove public approval of President Bush’s handling of the war up to 73 percent overall, with Democrats even over 50 percent. (See Figure 4.11 below.) And these numbers persisted over the opening weeks of the Iraq War, to the fall of Saddam’s statue in Firdos Square in early April. (See Figure 4.12 below.)

Strong approval held through early May and President Bush’s “mission accomplished” proclamation aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln (with approval peaking at 74 percent), where he stated that major combat operations in Iraq had come to a successful conclusion. As U.S. forces transition into stabilization and reconstructions operations, the landscape of American support for those operations and its evaluations of how well they were going began the downward trend from which they would not recover. The first war, in other words, ended, and the second war was about to begin. Unfortunately, U.S. decision makers and war planners had no plan for this one.\footnote{Gordon and Trainor, \textit{Cobra II}, 149-63; Ricks, \textit{Fiasco}, 80-1, 101-11; and Woodward, \textit{Plan of Attack}. For the most thorough account of all, see Nora Bensahel et al. 2008. \textit{After Saddam: Prewar Planning and the Occupation of Iraq}. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.}

**Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations**

On April 9, 2003, throngs of Iraqi citizens enlisted the support (and aid of an Abrams tanks) to topple the status if Saddam Hussein in central Baghdad. Within hours of this event, amid looting, spreading disorder, U.S. forces were confronted with the challenges of restoring public order and infrastructure even before combat operations ceased. Matters would only worsen with time. In place of a quick turnover to Iraqis, the United States military forces were now engaged in a full-scale occupation of Iraq without the requisite increase in resources to carry it off.
As you may know, the United States went to war with Iraq last night. Do you support or oppose the United States having gone to war?

Source: ABC News/Washington Post

Figure 4.11: Support for the war in Iraq, March 20, 2003
Do you support or oppose the United States having gone to war with Iraq? Do you support/oppose it strongly or only somewhat?

Figure 4.12: Support for the war in Iraq in the initial weeks
Prior to the war, on January 20, 2003, the President signed National Security Directive (NSPD) 24, established the Department of Defense as the lead agency for postwar Iraq. It also established the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) – eventually headed by retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner – which would plan and carry our the administration of postwar Iraq. ORHA was placed within the Department of Defense, reporting directly to Secretary Rumsfeld; he was charged with making sure the civilian and military planning efforts were working in tandem (‘unity of effort,’ as those within the DoD were found of calling it).

For many of the postwar planners, chiefly General Franks, Jay Garner, and Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) leader Paul “Jerry” Bremer, getting Iraqis in charge as soon as possible was an article of faith, one that had been briefed to and approved by the President. The rapid turnover of power to Iraqis was key to the U.S. postwar plan, but it could not be arranged in advance or imposed by fiat; they would have to find their Hamid Kharzi for Iraq.

Many key decision makers and planners believed the the postwar environment would be rather benign; U.S. forces greeted as liberators.\textsuperscript{171} Thus, the initial plan was to draw down U.S. forces in Iraq by August 2003 so somewhere between 25,000 to 30,000 troops. Though some have argued this decision was predicated on the administrations belief that the American people would not tolerate a long, drawn out postwar occupation, policing, and reconstruction of Iraq, it seems plain that those charged with making the decision regarding force deployment and employment in the postwar period simply expected a much rosier scenario than that which they ultimately found themselves in. This is typified by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul

\textsuperscript{171}For more on this point, see James Fallows. 2004. “Blind into Baghdad.” \textit{Atlantic Monthly}, January/February, 63.
Wolfowitz’s view of the requirements for postwar Iraq: “it’s hard to conceive that it would take more forces to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq than it would take to conduct the war itself and to secure the surrender of Saddams security forces and his army.”  

But clearly, efforts to stabilize Iraq stumbled out of the gate. Rather than a functioning, liberated state, U.S. forces and civilian authorities were wrestling with a country that lacked public order, essential services, postwar looting, and a growing insurgency. Events were going so poorly on the ground that the President and Rumsfeld brought in Paul Bremer to head the newly created CPA.

The public, too, was now worried that U.S. forces were going to become bogged down in Iraq; Figure 4.13 notes this increasing trend from mid-April to late October. Perhaps most significantly, of those who felt U.S. forces were now bogged down in Iraq, a significant majority held those opinions strongly. Other events were also troubling; namely, by the latter part of 2003 U.S. forces and inspectors had yet to find the caches of biological and chemical weapons that were expected. That, combined with a growing insurgency, early indications of increased sectarian violence (which would eventually grow into a civil war) increased U.S. casualties, rendered an American public less and less supportive of U.S. operations in Iraq. For example, in August 2005 a Harris poll tallied only 36 percent in support of staying and 61 percent in support of withdrawing when it asked, “Do you favor keeping a large number of U.S.

172 Paul Wolfowitz. 2003. “Testimony before the House Budget Committee.” February 27


troops in Iraq until there is a stable government there or bringing most of our troops home in the next year?”

The public had lost such confidence in the war effort in late 2003 that when told, “Earlier this year, Congress approved spending 79 billion dollars to help pay for the war in Iraq and the rebuilding effort there. George W. Bush has now called for spending 87 billion dollars more,” and then asked, “Do you support or oppose this additional spending for the war and rebuilding in Iraq?” only 34 percent supported additional spending, while 64 percent opposed it. Nonetheless, President Bush’s decision making regarding Iraq policy remained largely immune to these trends. Over the course of 2004 and 2005, the President, supported by his key advisors, continued to fund and

This is not to say the President was completely unaware of the public’s increasing dower evaluations of the Iraq war effort. With the 2004 election looming, media access to Dover Air Force Base and Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany were restricted to prevent coverage of flag-draped coffins, and uncertainty over the handover of Iraqi sovereignty (back to Iraq) in June of 2004, the President and his advisors certainly tried to manage the public’s views of Iraq and likely success there. Though public opinion wasn’t directly affecting war policy, it most certainly affected the President’s behavior. The 2004 election was undoubtedly on his mind; as Figure 4.14 illustrates, Bush’s approval continued to drop in sink with the public’s evaluation of his handling of Iraq.

Fortunate for President Bush, the American public viewed the war on terrorism as the most important issue facing the nation, according to the 2004 American National Election Survey. Only 18 percent of voters mentioned the war in Iraq as the most
How do you feel about the possibility that the United States will get bogged down in a long and costly peacekeeping mission in Iraq? Would you say you’re very concerned about that, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not concerned at all?

Source: ABC News/Washington Post

Figure 4.13: Evaluation of possibility of U.S. forces getting bogged down in Iraq
Figure 4.14: Comparison of Evaluations Bush’s handling of Iraq and his overall approval ratings
important issues facing the nation. Moreover, as fewer Americans were associating Iraq with Al-Qaeda and the war on terrorism, the less weighted was the public's evaluations of Iraq on their presidential vote in 2004.

Bush's re-election in November 2004 only left him more emboldened. As he proclaimed less than a month after the election: “We know we are doing the right thing [with regard to Iraq]. We on the right track here. We’re doing the right thing for ourselves, for our own interest and for the world. And don’t forget it...We’ve got to make sure that we win the war. We’ve got to make sure that we support our troops.”

Over the first few months of 2005, President Bush and his key advisors repeated this need for “resolve” in Iraq; to “stay the course” until U.S. forces have stabilized the country and Iraqi forces can stand up and take the lead in combat operations. As he said at a stop in Omaha, Nebraska in February 2005, “Our strategy is clear. We’re going to help the Iraqis defend themselves. We’ll accelerate training...We’ll help them stand up a high-quality security force. And when that mission is complete, and Iraq is democratic and free and able to defend herself, our troops will come home with the honor they deserve.”

175 Similarly, a post-election survey by the Pew Research Center found 27 percent of those polled claimed the war in Iraq as the most important single issue.


177 Woodward, State of Denial, 371, 75.

178 George W. Bush. 2005. “Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Omaha, Nebraska.” In John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, Eds. The American Presidency Project [online]. Santa Barbara, CA: University of California (hosted), Gerhard Peters (database). Available from World Wide Web: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=63052. For similarly unyielding defense of the administration’s strategy a little more than a year and a half late, see Rich Lowry. 2006. “The W is not for Wobble.” National Review Online, September 13. Bush made plain the administration’s strategy needed no revisions: “If you believe in a strategy...you’ve got to stick to that strategy...It’s the tactics that shift, but the strategic vision has not, and will not, shift. If you don’t have a set of principles to fall back on, you flounder, and it matters. It creates waves, and the waves rock the decision making process.”
Yet throughout much of 2005 there were complaints within the administration, within the Pentagon, and within the American public that U.S. did not have a clear strategy for victory in Iraq (for example, CNN/Gallup poll found 58 percent percent of those polled said Bush did not have a clear plan on Iraq, compared to 38 percent who said they believed Bush did have a plan for victory). Senior Communications Director, Dan Bartlett, took notice and recommended to the president that the White House consider changing the communications strategy regarding Iraq. In other words, this notion of absolute resolve had to go. Though President Bush was not immediately convinced, he eventually agreed to consider alternatives for presenting the administration’s case for victory and success in Iraq.

Stephen Hadley, the newly appointed National Security Advisor (Condoleezza Rice became Secretary of State at the beginning of Bush’s second term), recommended bringing in Duke political scientist Peter Feaver to help craft a message for “eventual future success” in Iraq. Feaver and his colleagues at Duke had over the previous few years generated a strand of scholarship which argued the public is more inclined to support U.S. uses of force if they believe that a war will succeed. Hadley believed that the right message could change the public’s evaluation of battlefield events and generate more support for the overall war effort. The public never bought in, however; they showed an increasing trend toward believing the president had no clear plan for victory in Iraq. (See Figure 4.15.)

Do you think George W. Bush has a clear plan for victory in Iraq, or hasn’t he developed one yet?

![Graph showing the evaluation of the President’s strategy for victory in Iraq. The graph displays a comparison between having a clear plan and not having a clear plan, with dates from May 2005 to April 2007.]

Source: CBS News/New York Times

Figure 4.15: Evaluation of the President’s strategy for victory in Iraq
At the time of the administration’s “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq” public relations campaign there were official estimates that by the summer of 2006 U.S. forces could be reduced to 138,000 and that a further draw-down to the 100,000 level was possible by the end of the year. In the light of growing rather than diminishing insurgent violence and continuing disappointment in the performance of Iraqi military and police units, those estimates proved to be too optimistic. At the same time, public support for maintaining or increasing troop levels eroded rather steadily. In fact, according to a USA Today/Gallup poll in September only 9 percent of the American public favored sending more troops to Iraq to stabilize the country. Those 9 percent did not know it yet, but they would soon get what they wished for.

Some suspected that Iraq wartime decision making would change in Iraq with the changing of the guard that was the 2006 mid-term elections. Though the President had shown little responsiveness to public opinion regarding wartime decisions, perhaps the public would gain some influence via Congress. As Howell and Pevehouse note,

180National Security Council. 2005. “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq.” Of interest, Duke political scientist, Peter Feaver, known for his scholarly work on the role of perceived success in garnering public support for military operations, was brought on as the key author of this strategic document. John Mueller, however, notes the futility of such exercises: “The prospects for reversing the erosion of support for the war in Iraq are...limited. The run-ups to the two wars in Iraq are also instructive in this regard: even though both Presidents Bush labored mightily to sell the war effort, the only thing that succeeded in raising the level of enthusiasm was the sight of troops actually heading into action, which triggered a predictable “rally round the flag” effect.” John Mueller. 2005 “The Iraq Syndrome.” Foreign Affairs, 84: X.

181Here are four different plans the U.S. could follow in dealing with the war in Iraq. Which ONE do you prefer? Withdraw all troops from Iraq immediately. Withdraw all troops by September 2007, that is, in 12 months’ time. Withdraw troops, but take as many years to do this as are needed to turn control over to the Iraqis. OR, Send more troops to Iraq.” (Options rotated) Withdraw immediately (17 percent), Withdraw by September 2007 (31 percent), Take as Long as Needed (42 percent), Send More Troops (9 percent), and Unsure (2 percent). http://www.pollingreport.com/iraq9.htm. (Accessed on January 29, 2009.)
Congress made no secret of their plans.\textsuperscript{182} Ike Skelton (D-MO) was one of the more blunt on the subject:

Oversight. I’ll repeat it: oversight, oversight, oversight! Congress has done a poor job of overseeing the conduct of the war, the corruption in the reconstruction program in Iraq...They have rubber-stamped the Pentagon.\textsuperscript{183}

Carl Levin (D-MI), too, claimed the Democratic majority in Congress constituted a “referendum” on changing course in Iraq. However, though the war in Iraq would now divide more sharply the Congress and the President, President Bush was still driving policy.

In January 2007 the president would announce a “surge” in U.S. forces, with the deployment of nearly 30,000 additional military personnel, largely to the Baghdad area. The policy change did stem and partially reverse declining support for keeping American forces in Iraq, but none of the surveys revealed majorities favoring the retention of military forces in Iraq.\textsuperscript{184} In fact, surveys by Pew and CBS News/New York Times revealed continuing erosion of support for keeping troops in Iraq. By mid-July 2007, the latter poll found that 61 percent of respondents favored funding American troops with a timetable for withdrawal, 28 percent supported full funding without a timetable, and 8 percent preferred to block all funding.

Public opinion on Iraq, in short, followed events on the ground rather faithfully. Support was now waning significantly among Democrats and Independents, and even

\textsuperscript{182}Howell and Pevehouse, While Dangers Gather, 238-42. Where Howell and Pevehouse err is in arguing the battle over U.S. military policy in Iraq as of this point to be an evenly match one.


started to show its first signs of slippage among Republicans. As the Bush administration was struggling to redefine its strategy in Iraq, public opinion across all parties was moving toward withdrawal. Figure 4.16 below compares Republican, Democrat, Independent, and All responses to the prospects of changing strategic policy in Iraq.

Which comes closest to your view: 1) The U.S. should continue fighting the war in Iraq using the same military strategy and tactics it is using now; or 2) The U.S. should continue fighting the war in Iraq, but needs to change its strategy; or 3) The U.S. should remove all its troops from Iraq.

Figure 4.16: Support for Changing Strategy in Iraq
The Surge\textsuperscript{185}

In a nationally televised speech on January 10, 2007, President Bush announced publicly for the first time the revised strategy for “victory” in Iraq. Bush stated, “America will change our strategy to help the Iraqis carry out their campaign to put down sectarian violence and bring security to the people of Baghdad. This will require increasing American force levels. So I’ve committed to more than 20,000 additional American troops to Iraq. The vast majority of them – five brigades – will be deployed to Baghdad.”\textsuperscript{186}

Pressure to send additional troops to Iraq to secure Baghdad and key provinces surfaced in late November 2006 as a potential policy and the President was willing to listen. Previously committed to a policy of training and standing up Iraqi forces so U.S. forces could stand down (a policy still advanced strongly by the Pentagon, despite Rumsfeld’s departure shortly after the election\textsuperscript{187}, the President began receiving council from outside experts – such as retired General Jack Kean, Frederick Kagan of the American Enterprise Institute, and Stephen Biddle of the Council on Foreign Relations – who supported sending additional troops to Iraq to secure the population and bring some measure of stability to the capital. Though hardly any other government agency supported such a policy, the President believed this to be the path to victory. “The idea was to make protection of the Iraqi population an important goal and reduce violence before resuming efforts to transfer responsibilities


to the Iraqis. Invoking a sports metaphor, he described the surge as a “slow-motion lateral” to Iraqi control.”

As the “surge” began, evidence from several polling organizations suggest that the Bush Administration’s public relations campaign on the “victory” theme has failed to gain a great deal of traction among the public to date. Indeed, optimism about America’s ability to achieve its goals – either a democratic or stable Iraq – declined markedly. A June 2007 USA Today/Gallup poll revealed that only 30 percent of respondents believed that the U.S. will “definitely” [10 percent] or “probably” [20 percent] “win the war in Iraq,” whereas 41 percent stated that the U.S. cannot win.

Figure 4.17 below charts the public’s opinion of the surge strategy from its announcement through its first year of execution. In the early stages of the surge, the public believed the efficacy of the surge to be dubious. At its announcement, as many people believed the surge would make conditions worse in Iraq as believed the surge would make things better. And at no point in the first year does the combined number of those who believe it will make things better surpass those who believe it will make things worse and those who believe it will have no impact at all.

These numbers do not paint an overwhelmingly supportive public; they do not even paint a supportive public. Though there was a slight uptick in the public’s evaluation of the efficacy of the surge strategy, a majority still had doubts and also believed the U.S. should instead set a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq. When asked by Newsweek in March 2007, “Do you support or oppose the legislation passed this week by the U.S. Senate calling for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq by March

188Ibid.
As you may know, the U.S. is sending more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq. From what you have heard or read, would you say this troop increase is making the situation in Iraq better, making it worse, or is it having no impact on the situation in Iraq so far?

Sources: CBS News and CBS News/New York Times

Figure 4.17: Conditions in Iraq and the Surge
2008?”, 57 percent of the public supported setting such a timetable. Moreover, despite abated violence and a decline in American military casualties as a result of the “surge” in mid-2007, by the spring of 2008, in none of the major polls did as many as forty percent of the American public respond with a favorable judgment on the war.

Yet, in spite of these numbers, the President and key advisors decided in favor of and implemented the “surge” over the course of 2007 and early 2008.

**War termination decision-making**

War, according to Clauswitz, is “a continuation of politics by other means.” Like politics, war outcomes are often blurry and muddled. The brief conventional conflict that started in March and ended in April of 2003 neither ended the fighting nor gave the Bush administration what they wanted. As Schelling so eloquently put it: “War appears to be, or threatens to be, not so much a contest of strength as one of endurance, nerve, obstinacy, and pain. It appears to be, and threatens to be, not so much a contest of military strength as a bargaining process – dirty, extortionate, and often quite reluctant bargaining on one side or both – nevertheless a bargaining process.” As of this writing, the bargaining process continues.

The apparent success of the troop surge in reducing sectarian violence and American military casualties has resulted in a somewhat greater public willingness to maintain troops in Iraq until the situation there has stabilized. For example, 47 percent of those taking part in a February 2008 Pew survey expressed support for that course of action. But even when improvements in the situation in Iraq led to somewhat

---

189 Broken down by party affiliation, 28 percent of Republicans, 81 percent of Democrats, and 58 percent of Independents favored a timetable for withdrawal.

more optimistic judgment about how well the war is going, substantial majorities of Americans continued to reject the proposition that the United States had done the right thing in using force against Iraq, and they continued to believe that doing so was a mistake.

4.3.1.3 Analysis

If there had been any ambiguity about the impact of public opinion on Iraq policy up through the summer of 2003 – the chief argument of the Presidential Agency Model offered here is that it had almost no impact because the administration would likely have invaded Iraq even in the absence of public support – evidence for the period since the president announced the successful conclusion of hostilities points rather clearly to the conclusion that the public was seen largely as an entity to be “educated” rather than as a source of useful policy guidance or even as a significant political barrier. The most telling point is the steadily widening divergence between public support for the Iraq war and the administrations repeated insistence that its actions are vital to American national security.

Though there was policy preference congruence between the President and the American public in the lead up to the war in Iraq, it would be mistaken to infer the President was adopting and following the public’s preferences. This becomes more clear as the commencement of the war approached: the American public moved from supporting the invasion of Iraq with ground troops to remove Saddam Hussein, to requiring some sort of internationally-sanctioned multilateral effort (preferably via a U.N Security Council resolution). Despite not securing the second U.N. Security
Council resolution it sought in early February 2003, the Bush administration proceeded to execute the war plans it had developed over the previous year and a half.

The more striking divergence between public opinion and Bush administration policy in Iraq is evidenced by wartime efforts from mid-2003 through the present. Since the initial rally event shortly after the invasion in March of that year, public support for the war effort steadily declined over the course of the next five years. Regardless, President Bush did not hedge from his positions. Yes, he was most certainly concerned about the lack of public support for the war effort. In this sense, his behavior at the very least was effected.

Spanning 2004 through 2006 especially, the President was concerned with the drop in both public support for the war efforts, as well as his personal approval numbers. He and others in his administration made concerted efforts to rally the public behind wartime success. This is not an uncommon response to downward trending approval numbers: when presidents are faced with declining levels of public approval, they are more likely to give a broadcast address. In particular, the president is more likely to give an address that references a past use of force. Scholars such as George Edwards believe that this sort of presidential strategy – that is, of “going public”\textsuperscript{191} – is misguided, and the presidents continually engage in behavior that is rarely useful.\textsuperscript{192}

This seems to be the case here. This even lead in 2006 to the appointment of Peter Feaver to the National Security Council in 2006 to paint a picture of victory in Iraq, believing this would alter the public’s evaluation of battlefield events and ultimately garner more support for the war effort. President Bush’s pre-election speeches in


2006 focused on national security issues, but rarely did they gain him higher approval rating or more support at the polls. Though this outcome did not materialize, President Bush’s decision making regarding the deployment and employment of force there was largely unaffected by the increase sour public evaluations of the war effort.

Although responsive to specific events in Iraq, popular support for the war followed a clear downward trajectory over the 40 months between March 2003 and June 2006. John Mueller, examining trends in opinion regarding the wars in Korea and Vietnam, concludes that public support for such engagements declined as a logarithmic function of cumulative casualties: “every time American casualties increased by a factor of 10, support for the war dropped by about 15 percentage points.” Mueller detected a similar pattern for the Iraq War, but with a steeper rate of decline.

What is more, there is striking evidence that the American public came to believe the war in Iraq to be a mistake. This is evidenced by Figures 4.18 and 4.19 below, which illustrate well the drop in support over the course of the war. (The data in Figure 4.18 are the percentage of those supporting the war effort.) That said, despite this continual drop in support, rarely was the Bush administration’s decision making effected by this trend. This conforms with statements by President Bush and others in his administration that the war would not be guided by a focus group of the American public.

Later President Bush recalled making this plain from the outset of the war planning. Talking to General Tommy Franks, Bush noted that it was “Very important for

---


194Mueller, War, Presidents, and Public Opinion, 60; emphasis in the original.

195Mueller, “The Iraq Syndrome.” As he writes, “The most striking thing about the comparison among the three wars is how much more quickly support has eroded in the case of Iraq.” -44.
In view of the developments since we first sent our troops to Iraq, do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq, or not?

Figure 4.18: Iraq was not a mistake
All in all, do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq, or not?

Wording prior to 6/03: "All in all, do you think the current situation in Iraq is worth going to war over, or not?"
Wording, 6/03-12/03: "All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not?"

Figure 4.19: Iraq was worth it
a president not to micromanage a war plan to suit, 1. domestic politics, and 2. the international politics... I wanted [General Franks] to understand some of the nuances, or understand issues in a nuanced way. The worst thing a president can do is to say, Oh, no, the war plan must conform to a political calendar.”196 President Bush more or less stuck to this modus operandi throughout, much preferring to follow his policy preferences rather than those of the public.

4.3.2 Bill Clinton and the Kosovo war

When Bill Clinton was elected President in 1992 pundits worried he would retreat from the international activism of his predecessor, George Bush Senior. It was certainly assumed he would be reluctant to militarize U.S. foreign policy. After all, Clinton promised to focus on domestic issues, something apparently facilitated by the end of the Cold War.197 Yet in spite of his preference for domestic issues, Clinton assumed office when five factors conducive to American military intervention abroad

196 Quoted in Woodward, Plan of Attack, 122.

197 In fact, during the election in 1992, Clinton promised to “focus like a laser beam” on the economy if elected. Indeed, Clinton campaign rhetoric was overwhelmingly focused on domestic issues, particularly the economy; rarely did foreign policy received a spot light. When it did, Clinton was often emphasizing the need to align foreign and domestic policy:

Throughout this campaign I have called for a new strategy for American engagement: to revamp our Cold War military forces to meet our nations changing security needs; encourage the consolidation and spread of democracy abroad; and restore Americas economic leadership at home and abroad...[W]e are in a position to do more with less than at any time in our recent history. During the Cold War, we spent trillions to protect freedom where it was threatened. In this post-Cold War era, the West can spend a fraction of that amount to nurture democracy where it never before existed. Americas challenge in this era is not to bear every burden, but to tip the balance...[M]ost important, none of this will be possible unless we restore Americas economic strength.

prevailed: proliferating intervention opportunities, created by internal political instability and socioeconomic tensions; incentives to intervene due to the “spill-over” effects of these internal conflicts; expansion of significant military capabilities by more states and non-state actors; weak or unenforced international prohibitions against foreign military intervention; and lack of other strategies that were both available and viable.198

Clinton thus left office in early 2001 with a remarkable record of war-making. In addition to peace-keeping activities associated with a number of episodes of humanitarian intervention, he ordered acts of war against four states (Iraq in on-going operations, particularly in 1996 and 1998; Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998; and Yugoslavia in 1999) and one sub-state actor (the Bosnian Serbs, in 1995).

This case study turns its eye toward the Kosovo case in particular, examining the potential pushes and pulls of domestic and international politics in order to flesh out the roll public opinion played in President Clinton’s decisions to use force there. To date, even though a decade has passed since the 78-day U.S. bombing campaign in 1999, the scholarly literature examining the events and decision making leading to the initial decision to use force and subsequent decisions to stick to a air-centric campaign rather than introduce ground forces is surprisingly small. Sure, several books have been written by journalists, think tanks, and even chief players and decision makers in actual events. None, however, have examined specifically the role public opinion played in the choice and implementation of courses of action chosen.

Throughout the 78-day air campaign, President Clinton’s approval ratings remained high (though they declined over the course of the conflict), as did his handling of the war. (See Figures 4.21 and 4.22 below.) However, these factors only tell us so much about the public’s appraisal and influence over the course of events in Kosovo. This case study therefore combines primary and secondary sources, interviews, and opinion polls in order to assess the public’s influence (or lack thereof) over decisions to use force in Kosovo in 1999. As noted in chapter three, the case study will also consider the president’s beliefs about the role of public opinion in policy, and his perception of the public’s casualty sensitivity. Let us take a deeper, more systematic look at how the public’s views regarding the use of force in Kosovo played out.

4.3.2.1 Case background

In the winter of 1998-1999 U.S. decision makers became increasingly concerned with Serbian violence and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, a province under Serbian control but populated overwhelmingly by ethnic Albanians. The Serbian government of Slobodan Milosevic claimed it was engaging in necessary counterinsurgency measures against the Kosovar Liberation Army (KLA). Pressure for western governments to react mounted after Serbian forces massacred forty-five Kosovar Albanians – including women and children – at Racak on January 15. In February, President Clinton, supported most vociferously by Secretary of State Madelaine Albright, pushed the parties to negotiate at Rambouillet outside Paris. After a year’s effort to resolve the conflict through diplomacy, negotiations never held: the Kosovar Albanians ultimately signed a peace plan and the Serbs refused.
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bill Clinton is handling his job as president?

Source: Gallup

Figure 4.20: President Clinton’s Approval Rating During the Kosovo War
Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Clinton is handling the situation in Kosovo?

Source: Gallup

Figure 4.21: Public's Evaluation of President Clinton's Handling of the Kosovo War
On March 24 1999 the U.S. led NATO countries in an air war against Serbia, seeking an end to the ethnic cleansing campaign and a peace agreement monitored by NATO troops. Instead of capitulating, the Serbs reacted by escalating their ethnic cleansing of Kosovo. The result was a dragged out bombing campaign lasting 78 days, which eventually led some to speculate the use of ground forces to be required. Milosevic and Serb forces, however, abruptly ceased offensive actions in Kosovo. A set of agreements concluded June 3-10 outlined the conditions at the end of hostilities: a verifiable cessation of all combat activities and killings; withdrawal of Serbian military and paramilitary forces from Kosovo; the deployment of an international peacekeeping force; the unimpeded access to those delivering humanitarian aid, and a right of return for Kosovar refugees; and a political framework for Kosovo.

4.3.2.2 Actor preferences and policy choices

Pre-War decision-making

Many hoped that the Dayton Accords in 1995 would bring peace to the Balkans. Unfortunately, it did not. In the end, the political realities were that NATO efforts to rebuild Bosnia were failing. Yes, fewer people were illegally crossing the zones of separation established by the Dayton Accords and violence was dampened. But the situation on the ground was less than ideal in the summer of 1997. Other NATO members were anxious to end their peacekeeping responsibilities without incident, less interested in taking more aggressive actions to sow the seeds for long-term political

reform. In the end, the U.S. and its NATO allies reaped what was sown – future conflict in the Balkans.

In spring of 1998, members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) undertook several targeted actions against Serbian police forces in Kosovo. (In journalist Tim Judah’s words, the KLA was “emerging from the shadows.”) Serbian forces perceived that the Albanian resistance to Serb rule had begun to accelerate – Milosevic retaliated systematically. It was suspected that Milosevic and his Serbian forces were deliberately holding its brutal repression of Kosovar Albanians just below a level that would trigger United States and NATO action. Yet, many believed the underlying conflict was at risk of developing into a wholesale ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians. NATO Secretary General Javier Solana quoted a Serb diplomat as saying “a village a day keeps NATO away.”

Discussing the early days of the Kosovo crisis in an interview with Barton Gellman of the Washington Post, then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright would claim that, in early March 1998, she “felt that there was still time to do something about this, and that we should not wait as long as we did on Bosnia to have dreadful things happen.” The United States and other members of what was known as the Contact Group – France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Britain – announced that they would impose sanctions on Yugoslavia unless Milosevic withdrew his security police from Kosovo and opened talks with representatives of Kosovos Albanian community on the future of the province. Milosevic, however, remained defiant.


In June 1998, President Clinton issued an executive order authorizing sanctions against Yugoslavia. The executive order made plain how the Clinton administration viewed the potential spiralling conflict between Serbs and Kosovars. According to the text of the order, the situation in Kosovo constituted “an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States,” because the Yugoslav policies, by promoting ethnic conflict and human suffering in Kosovo, threatened “to destabilize countries in the region.”203 At this point, few within the administration, but most especially Clinton’s national security advisor, Sandy Berger, were wary about threatening to use force against Milosevic. Additionally, as the administration sought to leverage support of its NATO allies to coerce Milosevic into ceasing offensive operations against Kosovar Albanians, Berger believed any threat to use force would have to involve them. A threat of a unilateral use of American force had been overtaken by events, and according to Berger the administration “wanted to avoid empty rhetoric as [they] tried to multilateralize the threat of force.”

Unfortunately, from the spring of 1998 through the summer, the conflict between the KLA and the Serbian forces in Kosovo had degenerated. The fierce Serbian offensive left an estimated 1,500 Kosovar Albanians dead, while an additional 300,000 fled their homes for the safety of the surrounding mountains.204 Speaking of massacres


204Ibid., 40-42; and Clark, Waging Modern War, 129-30.
during September 1998, National Security Advisor Samuel (“Sandy”) Berger said they exceeded America’s “atrocities threshold.” 205

By October of 1998, Clinton’s rhetoric escalated – and along with it, war planning for intervention in Kosovo 206 – to claim that instability in Kosovo threatened peace and security in the entire Balkans region. Clinton stated: “We all agree that Kosovo is a powder keg in the Balkans. If the violence continues, it could spill over and threaten the peace and stability of Bosnia, of Albania, of Macedonia and other countries in the region. What is already a humanitarian disaster could turn into a catastrophe.” 207

“As we approach the next century,” he stated on 12 October, during a discussion of the Kosovo situation, “we must never forget one of the most indelible lessons of this one we’re about to leave – that America has a direct stake in keeping the peace in Europe before isolated acts of violence turn into large-scale wars.” 208

The President, however, was still uncertain as to the necessity of threatening force at that time. Sandy Berger, Defense Secretary William Cohen, and Chairman of the JCS, Hugh Shelton, all favored continued diplomacy without the explicit threat of force. Madeleine Albright was the only principle advisor recommending force at the time. Recall one of her more memorable quotes: “What is point of having this superb

205 Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly, 65.

206 Ibid., 31-34.


military...if we can’t use it?” Note, though that Albright was never in favor of sending in ground troops into anything but a “permissive environment.”

General Wesley Clark, then Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, too was claiming there to be merit in threatening to use force. So much so that he tried to use his position as NATO Supreme Commander for Europe to bypass his Pentagon superiors, who he argued were oblivious to the problematic situation arising in Kosovo in early 1998. His view was that the U.S. should exercise leadership in devising a coercive diplomacy strategy. Clark’s bias in favor of strategic air strikes as a coercive tool, in particular, stemmed from a remark Milosevic had made to him in December 1995 to the effect that his armed forces would not stand a chance against NATO airpower. Clark recalls that by late May 1998, he was trying to convince his superiors that “we could use a carrot-and-stick approach to bring Milosevic to the point of negotiating a political solution to the emerging conflict.”

In the days just before Operation Allied Force, General Clark and others suggested the use of U.S. Army attack helicopters as another possible strike asset – the General did not want the president to take of the table forces that might later be required due to shifting battlefield events. Task Force Hawk was intended to provide an additional means for hitting Serbian forces in the field using AH-64 Apache attack helicopters and the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS). But when two Apache

---

209 Albright, Madam Secretary


211 Ibid., 116.

212 Ibid., 117.

213 Ibid., 181.
pilots were killed in training accidents in Albania, whatever inclination there was to employ the task force quickly dissipated.

Unilateral or multilateral, the American public was not at the time supportive of NATO air strikes against Serb forces in Kosovo. When surveyed from October 9 to 12, “If a peace agreement is not reached between the Yugoslavian Serbs and Kosovo’s ethnic Albanian majority, NATO has said it would carry out air and missile attacks against Serb military installations. Would you favor or oppose the U.S. being a part of that military action?” only 42 percent of the American public favored such an action. Congress was similarly opposed or silent on the issue. Those that did speak out were both in the minority and the opposition party. In other words, most in Congress were skeptical of the President’s call for action in Kosovo.

From the outset, Madeleine Albright was the most adamant of the Principals in relating Kosovo to Bosnia. As she wrote in her memoirs,

The killings at Prekaz filled me with foreboding matched by determination. I believed we had to stop Milosevic immediately. In public, I laid down a marker: “We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with in Bosnia.”

... Earlier in the decade the international community had ignored the first signs of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans. We had to learn from that mistake.

214 Senator Chuck Hagel (R-N) claimed, “I see a shift on the Republican side of this. The reality is...we’re probably going to have to put NATO troops in there.” Steven Erlanger. 1998. “First Bosnia, Now Kosovo.” New York Times, June 10:A14. And Trent Lott (R-MS) stated, “What were seeing happen once again is slaughter, people being left dead in the streets and ethnic cleansing. If we dont do something pretty quickly, stronger than weve done so far, were going to have the same sort of disaster occurring in Kosovo that you had in Bosnia.” Miles Pomper. “Reluctant White House Urged to Send Troops to Province of Kosovo.” CQ Weekly, June 13:1628.

Later, Albright recalls that the President eventually decided to send Richard Holbrooke to Belgrade to deliver an ultimatum to Milosevic on NATO's behalf, “to show [America's] willingness to explore every reasonable alternative to force.” According to second-hand accounts, the Secretary of State finally succeeded in convincing her colleagues of the need for action: she “reiterated her plea for air strikes to bring Milosevic to the bargaining table...[I]nstead of their usual debates...members of the [Principles] committee supported her recommendations.”

The ultimatum did not have its intended long-term effect. Though he initially agreed to remove Serbian troops from Kosovo, Milosevic, like the American public, was dubious regarding the prospects that NATO would resort to using air power against Serbian forces in Kosovo. At one point during his negotiations with Richard Holbrooke, Milosevic asked, “Are you crazy enough to bomb us over these issues were talking about in that lousy little Kosovo?” Holbrooke responded, “You bet, were just crazy enough to do it.”

Over the course of negotiations with Milosevic, both Holbrooke and Lt. Gen Michael Short repeatedly tried to make clear the real possibility of air strikes. During these negotiations, President Clinton, General Clark, and other

---

216 Albright, Madam Secretary, 388.


NATO allies agreed (though, France and Germany did so somewhat begrudgingly) on October 12-13 to activate key air assets for an air campaign in Kosovo.

As plans for a potential war in Kosovo continued, internationally sponsored peace talks on Kosovo opened in Rambouillet, France, in early February 1999. The talks could not have come at a worse time – the conflict between Kosovar and Serbian forces had recently escalated. As Madeleine Alright is reported to have said at one point during the negotiations at Rambouillet: “It’s all stick now...Milosevic will be hit hard with NATO air strikes and deprived of the things he values.”

As the President and his advisors kept Congress informed of the building plans to use air strikes against Serbian forces in Kosovo, most kept silent. Democrats tended to support the President in his decisions, while the Republicans shifted between supporting action and criticizing the administration’s planning process. And only with the collapse of the talks at Rambouillet did Congress finally begin debates concerning the deployment of U.S. troops. Nonetheless, a skeptical Congress approved in early March the President’s authority to use force against Serbian forces and to insert U.S. peacekeepers into Kosovo postwar.

Howell and Pevehouse explain Congressional support thusly: “many members of Congress recognized that a vote against the president would effectively ruin any chances of persuading Milosevic to halt his assaults against the Kosovars.” Former Senator Robert Dole offered the most clear version of this line of reasoning: “if there is a ‘no’ vote tomorrow, there probably won’t be an agreement.” In other words, Congress understood the president had the power and willingness to use force

220Howell and Pevehouse, While Dangers Gather, 147.
221Quoted in Ibid., 147.
without their support and approval, but that this would potentially be detrimental to the efficacy of the threat and employment of force. Congress, reluctantly, went along.

By March, the Pentagon had prepared plans for a massive air campaign. Yet, seemingly confident that Milosevic would not hold out for long once air strikes were actually launched, the White House initially authorized only a limited list of targets.\textsuperscript{222} Therefore, Clinton and his political staff saw no harm in declaring that American ground troops might be part of an eventual peacekeeping mission but would not be engaged in combat operations in the Balkans. That statement, made on March 24, satisfied both the military establishment and the American public, which the administration believed would not tolerate combat casualties, while maintaining the United States’ credibility.

\textbf{War decision-making}

Operation Allied Force began March 24, 1999, just as President Clinton was announcing to a nationally televised audience that air strikes were under way. In his speech, President Clinton declared the operation had three goals: “To demonstrate the seriousness of NATO’s opposition to aggression,” to deter Milosevic from “continuing and escalating his attacks against helpless civilians,” and if required to “damage Serbia’s capacity to wage war against Kosovo by seriously diminishing its military capabilities.” At the same time, however, the President also made clear that did not

“intend to put our troops in Kosovo to fight a war.”\textsuperscript{223} The president’s words were indicative of a near consensus in Washington: avoid actions that could lead to an inadvertent ground war.\textsuperscript{224}

Public opinion had still yet to come around on the necessity of the air campaign. As Figure 4.23 below charts, even after the initial use of force, the public still showed what would turn out to be fleeting support. And a Harris Interactive poll conducted on the even of the bombings found that, of those respondents who had heard of the situation in Kosovo, 49 percent favored the use of NATO ground troops, and 52 percent favored air strikes against Serbian targets. In short, a public divided regarding either course of action.

During the first days of the campaign, the White House initially pushed for attacks on Serb forces in the field and disapproved strikes aimed at some Serbian infrastructure. The Defense Department opposed such attacks if they required low-flying aircraft like the Apache helicopter or the A-10 attack plane because such attacks violated the 15,000 foot flight floor enacted to prevent allied casualties during the air war.\textsuperscript{225} This, however, was as much a NATO allies’ requirement as it was was the Pentagon’s. NATO allies, particularly France and Germany, fought vigorously


\textsuperscript{224}Subsequently, in an interview broadcast on national news, President Clinton was asked to clarify his position on ground troops in Kosovo and replied that “the thing that bothers me about introducing ground troops into a hostile situation into Kosovo and the Balkans is the prospect of never being able to get them out.” Interview of the President by Dan Rather, CBS News, The White House, Washington, D.C., March 31, 1999.

\textsuperscript{225}Though, this was arguably due to the perceived efficacy of Serbian air defense systems. Serbia had older air defense weapons of Soviet design cued by newer, commercially available radars and coordinated through redundant communications, including landlines. All told, Serbian forces shot
As you may know, the military alliance of Western countries called NATO, has launched air and missile attacks against Serbian military targets in Yugoslavia. Do you favor or oppose the United States being a part of that military action?

Figure 4.22: Percentage of the American Public Support Kosovo War
to limit both the target sets and threats to those pilots carrying out the bombing campaign.226

From the outset of the attacks, most within the administration believed this would be a short war. As Secretary of State Albright stated in a television interview on the evening that the air attacks began: “I don’t see this as a long-term operation.”227 By the start of the second week, however, Clinton administration officials acknowledged that Operation Allied Force had failed to meet its declared goal of halting Serbian violence against the ethnic Albanians.228

When the limited air campaign failed to rapidly produce the desired results, President Clinton and his advisors faced the challenge of deciding how best to proceed. For the first time since 1995, Milosevic had not yielded when confronted with actual military action. By mid-April 1999, the Principals were once again divided over what to do next: continue air strikes, broaden the air strike target list, introduce ground troops (the President had already deployed Apache’s to the theater, which
down only two NATO aircraft, but its air defenses survived and presented a nearly constant threat. For more on this point, see Posen, “The War for Kosovo,” 56-58.

226 As one analyst put it: “In the calculus of the NATO democracies, the immediate possibility of saving thousands of Albanians from massacre and hundreds of thousands from deportation was obviously not worth the lives of a few pilots.” Edward Luttwak. 1999. “Give War a Chance.” Foreign Affairs, 78:41.

227 Quoted in John T. Correll. 1999. “Assumptions Fall in Kosovo.” Air Force Magazine, June, 4. NATO Secretary General Javier Solana also announced that he was sure that the bombing would be over before the start of the long-planned Washington summit on April 23 to celebrate NATO’s 50th birthday. See James Gerstenzang and Elizabeth Shogren. 1999. “Serb TV Airs Footage of 3 Captured U.S. Soldiers.” Los Angeles Times, April 1, 1.

228 Bradley Graham and William Drozdiak. 1999. “Allied Action Fails to Stop Serb Brutality.” Washington Post, March 31, A1. For instance, “I think right now, it is difficult to say that we have prevented one act of brutality at this stage,” Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon told reporters.
were ready for tasking), or some combination of these. Albright still believed that air power alone would be sufficient to prevail, given enough time.\textsuperscript{229}

The President’s National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, was still convinced, however, that Congress would not approve funding for any operations involving ground forces. Concerns over a possible land invasion were so severe that even after it was clear the initial bombing had failed to compel Belgrade, no formal military contingency planning for a possible invasion occurred. Rather, a series of largely unconnected “assessments” by small planning cells was all that took place. This would remain the case well into the air operation. Whatever the political merits of resisting any ground operation planning, it did have serious military consequences.

“I don’t think we or our allies should take any option off the table, but we ought to stay with the strategy we have and work it through to the end.”\textsuperscript{230} Clinton’s chief military advisors were also beginning to doubt question the tactical and operational for preemptively taking the possibility of using ground troops off the table before commencing Operation Allied Force. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), General Hugh Shelton, even went so far as to claim that thought there were no plans “right now” to introduce ground troops into Kosovo, leaving open the possibility that they might be introduced later on if deemed operationally necessary.\textsuperscript{231}

\textsuperscript{229}Albright, \textit{Madam Secretary}, 414-415, 418.


In Clinton’s words on April 5, “NATO will continue the air campaign. It will be undimining, unceasing, and unrelenting.” As General Jumper later observed, “we really had the level of consensus we should have had to start this thing off. . . . After the Washington summit, there was no way that NATO was going to let itself fail.” The Washington summit celebrating NATO’s 50th anniversary, held April 23-25, was the point at which many NATO members came to realize failure to act effectively in Kosovo might be the end of NATO as a viable security organization. Daalder and O’Hanlon write that the NATO summit “represents the best dividing line between losing and winning the war.”

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright summed up the U.S. position regarding the possible introduction of ground troops with the following terse statement: “We do not favor the deployment of ground forces into a hostile environment in Kosovo.”

In the end, the substance of American policy making changed little throughout May. For example, the JCS recommended the president withhold authorizing the use of ground troops and Apache helicopters, a recommendation Clinton accepted on


\[234\] The summit was when many NATO members realized fully that losing the war in Kosovo might lead to the end of NATO as a viable security organization. See Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly, who write that the NATO summit “represents the best dividing line between losing and winning the war,” 3. Clark takes a similar view in Waging Modern War.

\[235\] Daalder and O’Hanlon, Winning Ugly, 3.

\[236\] Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, press conference, Washington, D.C., April 22, 1999.


Ibid., 307-08.


Ibid.


Clark in mid-May also wrote a letter to NATO Secretary General Solana which, he said, “demonstrated at length how moving into ground-force preparations would exponentially increase [NATO’s] leverage against Milosevic.” He had gone so far as to come up with a preliminary plan for an attack from the south by 175,000 troops, mostly through a single road from Albania. As Dana Priest of *The Washington Post* noted at the time, Clinton’s national security team, including Berger, was increasing willing to consider a ground option; the Pentagon still was not.

It was not until June 2 before Berger argued to the president that a ground invasion must occur if NATO air strikes failed. Clinton is reported to have agreed with Berger’s assessment. This squares with reports from two weeks prior that President Clinton had already considered that introducing ground troops might now be necessary. Though contradicting earlier claims that the United States did not want to be involved in a ground war in Kosovo, Clinton stated in late May that “we [the
United States and its allies] have not and will not take any option off the table.”

Regardless, as President Clinton put it on April 6, “Our plan is to persist until we prevail.”

Just as the President and his advisors were moving toward the option of ground troops in Kosovo, the public was moving away from that option. Figure 4.24 below illustrates over the course of the war effort in Kosovo, the public eventually saw the introduction of ground forces as an unfavorable option.

Though support for various policy options regarding Kosovo changed over time, opinion did move toward supporting the NATO air campaign and peacekeeping operations, and away from peace enforcement operations and using ground forces in combat operations.

**War termination decision-making**

243 Harris, “Clinton Says He Might Send Ground Troops.”


If the current NATO air and missile strikes are not effective in achieving the United States’ objectives in Kosovo, would you favor or oppose President Clinton sending U.S. ground troops into the region along with troops from other NATO countries?

Source: Gallup

Figure 4.23: Support for ground troops in Kosovo
Michael Ignatieff wrote that a “NATO defeat – and anything less than Milosevic’s capitulation and the full return of the [Kosovo] refugees would be a defeat – would leave the two global civilizations, Europe and America, without a credible defense alliance.”\textsuperscript{246} Reportedly, the political necessity for a NATO victory was also driving Clinton to truly consider what he had earlier ruled-out: a ground invasion.\textsuperscript{247}

Though there was no real turning point in the war to suggest a clear reason why the war ended abruptly on June 3, momentum and alliance unity certainly were significant factors that gained credibility after the April 23-25 NATO summit. War planning became more systematic, both countervalue and counterforce targets were struck, and the KLA mustered up some important offensive battles against Serbian forces in Kosovo.\textsuperscript{248} Why Milosevic decided to accept NATO terms and withdraw his forces remains unclear. Though, damage caused by NATO bombing, sustained allied unity, possible allied planning for a ground war, a desire to preserve his forces, and desertion of Russia as a possible protector were likely principal reasons.\textsuperscript{249}

The bombing was only one element in a broad front of diplomatic, economic, and military pressure brought to bear on Milosevic. But it is plain that the air campaign gave both credibility and force to the other elements: As General Clark


Tony Blair offered a similar argument: “... Because you had to decide what the consequences of losing would be. And the consequence of losing would not just be appalling for the people in Kosovo, those refugees would have stayed. Heaven knows what would have happened to the region. But NATO’s credibility would have been incredibly damaged.” Interview with Prime Minister Tony Blair. 2000. “War in Europe.” PBS \textit{Frontline}, February 22. http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/fighting/ending.html


\textsuperscript{248}It should also be noted – and this is not as trivial a matter as it may seem – the weather improved dramatically in the last month of the war.

\textsuperscript{249}The most thorough analysis on why Milosevic settled, see Stephen Hosmer. 2001. \textit{The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did}. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
later remarked, “The indispensable condition for all other factors was the success of the air campaign itself.”

4.3.2.3 Analysis

More generally, President Clinton believed public opinion should play a long-term role in shaping foreign policy decisions, but that specific foreign policy decisions remained his. Rather, more often was the case that the Clinton pulsed the preferences of the people to best gage how to frame and sell particular policy choices. As Clinton himself once described:

I can tell you categorically that I do not use polls to decide what position to take...I have used polling information to try to make sure I understand where the American people are, what they know and what they don’t know, what information they have, and to determine what argument might best support a position that I believe is in the right position for the country.

This notion is consistent with the second form of political responsiveness as described by Jacobs and Shapiro:

Politicians tend to respond to public opinion in two qualitatively different ways. In one, politicians track the content of the mass public’s substantive policy preferences in order to guide their policy decisions. The median voter theory predicts this kind of substantive responsiveness...In the second, politicians track public opinion to identify the words, arguments, and symbols about specific policies that the centrist public finds most appealing...In this case, “responsiveness to public opinion is an instrument

Clark, *Waging Modern War*, 82. Though, this point can certainly be argued. Without the threat of a NATO ground attack, Serb forces were able to use cover and concealment to avoid taking direct hits. Over the 78 day bombing campaign, which comprised tens of thousands of sorties, at most only a few hundred Serb ground force targets were hit and killed. See Wesley Clark. 1999. “Kosovo Strike Assessment.” NATO Headquarters, Brussels, September 16. Briefing slides were made available to the author. See also, Anthony Cordesman. 1999. *Lessons from the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies.

for changing it in order to simulate responsiveness. Instrumental responsiveness is a pervasive aspect of contemporary politics and its has been underestimated in the study of politics.\textsuperscript{252}

**Casualty Sensitivity**

This is close to what we find in the Kosovo case. During the first half of the air campaign, the U.S. was very much in favor of continuous bombing but opposed to using ground forces. From previous experiences in Somalia and Bosnia, President Clinton was keenly aware of the public’s casualty sensitivity. This awareness shaped at the margins the initial decision regarding the introduction of ground troops in Kosovo, and also influenced the execution of the air campaign, as most aircraft conducting sorties over Kosovo had a floor of 15,000 feet. However, it is still unclear exactly how much the public’s perceived casualty phobia drove these decisions.

Daalder and O’Hanlon claim the desire to minimize casualties in order to avoid a significant public backlash was one of the central driving forces behind the decision to use air strikes rather than ground forces in Kosovo. The presumed casualty aversion of the American public, they argue, profoundly influenced the operational and tactical operations in Kosovo.\textsuperscript{253} See Figure 4.24, which charts the prospective willingness to tolerate casualties in Kosovo. Casualty phobia indeed was clearly a feature of the mass public’s attitudes regarding the use of force in Kosovo – in other words, public support for U.S. and NATO operations in Kosovo was likely contingent on casualties not being incurred.

This, it seems, is generally supportive of the latent opinion argument. Like the “rally ‘round the flag” effect (but in the opposite direction), the public can generally

\textsuperscript{252}Jacobs and Shapiro, *Politicians Don’t Pander*, 48.

be counted on to retract support for military operations where casualties are taken, especially in significant numbers (though significant numbers are not a necessary condition – e.g., Somalia). Whereas presidents typically seek to activate latent opinion in the case of rallying the public to support particular foreign policy ventures, in the case of the public’s aversion to casualties they are likely to make decisions which decrease the likelihood of incurring casualties (and thereby decrease the likelihood of a public backlash against the military operations being conducted). This is consistent with the Clinton administration’s approach to the Kosovo conflict as they generally undertook operations intended to limit the number of U.S. casualties incurred. Though there are competing explanations for these choices – e.g., the Air Force’s belief in the effectiveness of an air-only campaign and reluctance on the part of NATO allies to put troops on the ground – the public’s casualty aversion certainly seems to have played an important role in Clinton’s wartime decision making.

**Public Ambivalence**

More generally, the public’s attitude toward the war in Kosovo tended toward ambivalence. Since the air war and the subsequent peace operation were essentially casualty-free, most Americans seem to have tolerated the war, even if they were unsure as to its necessity and purpose. Recall the trends in Figure 4.23 – the public showed some, though hardly overwhelming, support for the use of force in the opening weeks, and only be late June after bombing had ceased did public support rise back over 50 percent.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, June 25-27, 1999. “All in all, do you think the situation in Kosovo was worth going to war over, or not?” 52 percent responded “Yes, worth going to war,” and 45 percent responded “No, not worth going to war.” http://www.pollingreport.com/serb9906.htm
Figure 4.24: Prospective Willingness to Tolerate Casualties in Kosovo, April 1999
Though support for various policy options regarding Kosovo changed over time, opinion did move toward supporting the NATO air campaign and peacekeeping operations, and away from peace enforcement operations and using ground forces in combat operations.

This is generally consistent with the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model, though with some qualifications. For instance, President Clinton made a decision to and actually commanded the conduct of military operations that were generally not supported by a majority of Americans. However, worried that the incursion of casualties would wake a slumbering public and invite a backlash against the war against Milosevic and the Serbs, the Clinton administration backed a NATO bombing campaign that still had some likelihood of achieving the desired end of driving the Serbian army from Kosovo, while also decreasing the probability of casualties and even lower public support for the war effort. In other words, the president


256On the latter point, conducting operations consistent with the public’s aversion to casualties and thereby decreasing the probability of their being incurred, also decreased the probability of the public thoroughly monitoring events on the ground in Kosovo. Recall that in Somalia, the public was similarly unsure as to the purpose and necessity of sending military troops there. Unlike in the Kosovo case, ground troops were sent in to both provide humanitarian assistance and hunt for Somali warlord Farah Aideed. The marines quickly encountered resistance in the capital city of Moghadishu, casualties mounted to unacceptable levels, the American public reacted swiftly and
was generally shirking in pursuing a policy not supported by the American public. However, for fear of being caught shirking and inviting thorough monitoring by the public, the President Clinton followed latent opinion in this case and employed only air strikes in order to avoid a significant withdrawal of public support and increased public monitoring due to a protracted and costly ground conflict.

**Military Advisors**

President Clinton’s military advisors also played an important role in the policy formation, selection, and implementation process. Recall that the Clark postulates that the Joint Chiefs opposed the ground option not only from fear of a repeat of Vietnam and Somalia, but also because this plan clashed with the Pentagon’s overall defense program, which called for greater reliance on air power and high-technology weaponry. For many military planners, the conflict in Kosovo thus became an opportunity to prove that air power alone could work, making it the “war to end all ground wars” for America.\(^{257}\)

In many ways, decision to rely primarily on airpower was thus an argument being hashed out in the higher ups of Pentagon planning over the efficacy of an air power only campaign. Lt. Gen. Michael Short, largely charged with running the bombing campaign in Kosovo, argued “NATO got every one of the terms it had stipulated in Rambouillet and beyond Rambouillet, and I credit this as a victory for air power.”\(^{258}\)

Negatively, criticism of the effort became widespread, and Clinton quickly retreated and removed troops from those areas where they faced significant resistance.


NATO Allies

Also, many administration officials and key Pentagon officials argued that the United States would have conducted a much more aggressive campaign (both from the air and the ground) from the outset had other NATO members not constrained the target sets and campaign strategy. Secretary of Defense Cohen, for instance, claimed that “if we were to carry out and act unilaterally, we would have a much more robust, aggressive, and decapitating type of campaign.”

In other words, one of the primary constraints on Clinton’s wartime decision making was NATO’s intra-institutional machinations; it brought the United States into a particular means of warfighting than it otherwise would have pursued. This was also a view held by the Admiral James Ellis, then chief theater commander, who concluded that NATO’s command and control environment affected “every aspect of planning and execution” and caused an “incremental war” instead of a decisive campaign.

Congress


In the end, Congress played little to no role in the Kosovo conflict.²⁶¹ Fearing Congressional opposition would embolden Milosevic, Congress voted to authorize the Kosovo war. Over the remainder of the conflict, Congress did not effectively influence key wartime decisions, such as consideration regarding whether or not to introduce ground troops in the summer of 1999.

### 4.4 Conclusions

Tying things together, I make three final points in this concluding section: 1, I review the incongruence of the conventional wisdom argument – mentioned in the introductory section – and the findings of this chapter; 2, I review the Presidential Agency Model in light of the empirical findings; and 3, I offer some concluding thoughts.

Many have conducted in-depth studies of public opinion’s impact on the design of specific policies.²⁶² They indicate that public opinion is an important factor for decision makers and influences their decisions, particularly by removing from consideration broad policy directions that are opposed by the mass public. According to this research, elites have discretion in setting policy details but generally make decisions that are not at odds with the broad contours of public opinion. Echoing V.O. Key’s often-cited observation that public opinion creates a system of “dikes” within which government actions flow, Russett notes that in foreign policy “[p]ublic opinion sets broad limits of constraint, identifying a range of policies in which decision makers can


²⁶²See, for example, Russett, Controlling the Sword; and Sobel, The Impact of Public Opinion on Foreign Policy Since Vietnam.
choose, and in which they must choose if they are not to face rejection in the voting booths.”

For the most part, the findings above contradict these expectations. In the analysis of two quantitative data sets, I found the public and key foreign policy officials to have divergent foreign policy preferences, and that several mechanisms of public influence did not have a significant relationship with presidents’ decisions to deploy U.S. troops abroad. In the examination of two specific cases of presidential decisions to use force by Presidents Bush and Clinton, the public either withdrew or outright did not support the foreign policy ventures pursued in either case. Nonetheless, at times both presidents conducted policy at odds with the preferences of the public. President Clinton, more so than President Bush, showed himself to be wary of the power of latent opinion. In the decision over the type of force to be used to compel Serbian forces from Kosovo, the public’s casualty sensitivity played a role in the president’s decision to initially pursue an air-only campaign.

I found both results striking. Across time and presidential administrations, there has been a growing disconnect between the foreign policy preferences of the the American public and those of administration officials. What is more, the public’s overall evaluation of presidents (APPROVAL), their concern regarding foreign policy issues (FP CONCERN), and the power of the voting booth (RE-ELECTION YEAR) by and large did not have a relationship with president’s decisions to deploy troops.

These two empirical relationships holds up well in the two cases, though the findings are a bit more nuanced. For President Bush, even though the public did

---

263 Russett, *Controlling the Sword*, 110.

264 Again, for more on this point, see Page with Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*. 
not significantly influence his policy preferences and behavior, it did influence they way he tried to sell the war. Moreover, had the war not elicited such party loyalty, and had Republicans not turned out in droves in 2004, the election outcome most certainly could have been different. So, we should take the Bush case with a note of caution. Though he was able to conduct the Iraq war with declining public support, not all (even most) cases are likely to be as divided. As Mueller and Jacobson note, the partisan divide over the Iraq war was considerably greater than for any military action over the last half century – it seems, then, future presidents should be more wary of war efforts that lack this seemingly distinctive partisan flavor. Without it, President Bush most surely would have been left job-hunting in 2004.

And for President Clinton, it remains unclear as to which of the two competing arguments – wariness of the public’s casualty sensitivity or the DoD and Service arguments about the efficacy of air power – ultimately drove the air-dominated campaign against Serbian forces in Kosovo. What is clear is that the public’s casualty sensitivity certainly played some role. With regard to President Clinton’s decision to use only air strikes, his fear of the public’s latent opinion regarding ground troops and possible casualties led to a restricted set of force employment options than would otherwise have been the case. Though he carried out a policy that a majority of Americans did not support, he carried it out in a way that did.

This dissertation offered an alternative argument and set of expectations regarding the relationship between the public’s foreign policy preferences and the actual policies enacted by presidents. In short, it argued that, most of the time, presidents have a relatively long leash in the domain of foreign policy decision-making, particularly
decisions to use force. The Presidential Agency Model expects the probability of the public’s impact to be higher when they monitor the president’s foreign policy behavior thoroughly and hold strong opinions regarding the particular event(s); the model (and the empirical record) does not expect to observe this often. However, when the public does monitor thoroughly, the model expects the public to take greater action to influence president’s foreign policy decisions. Or, for president’s finally tuned to the public’s latent opinions, the president is likely to be more inclined to take actions in line with these latent opinions in order to avoid unfavorable reactions from a roused public. These expectations seem to be a good fit for the empirical findings just noted above.
CHAPTER 5

Audience Costs in American National Policy: Data Analysis and Cases
5.1 Introduction

In the lead up to the war in Iraq in 2003, President Bush issued a public threat that if Iraq did not give up its nuclear program and allow IAEA inspectors in country, Iraq would face serious consequences. According to logic of audience costs, President Bush made the threat more credible by making it public because he jeopardized his political future if he did not carry through with the threat. What is more, the threat was graduated, such that President Bush’s audience costs (and thus, his likelihood of incurring them should be back down) increased as the crisis escalated. Knowing this, Iraq should have understood war was optimal for the United States if Iraq did not concede enough, yet Iraq stood firm. As others have noted, models of audience costs have often assumed or asserted audience costs to be a well understood mechanism by which states credibly convey their resolve and commitments to particular courses of action. Yet, in this case, the audience costs mechanisms seems anything but clear. This chapter seeks to identify conditions under which audience costs might contribute to the credibility of threats issued by U.S. presidents, or whether they are epiphenomenal altogether.

Fearon argues leaders jeopardize their political futures by taking military action or making public threats of military action. He claims the domestic audience, an aggregation of principals interested in the foreign policy performance of their agent, will issue a rebuke for “engaging the national honor and subsequently backing down.” In other words, if a leader makes a threat and then backs down, it is assumed her domestic audience will punish her for having done so. Domestic audiences typically understand threats and the deployment of troops to “engage the national honor,” exposing leaders to potential criticism or even loss of authority if they are perceived by
their audience to have performed poorly. Thus states with the greatest audience costs are better able to signal their commitment and resolve because they have the greatest price to pay if they do not follow through with their commitments. Fearon identifies elections and/or unfavorable opinion polls but does not explicitly incorporate into his argument how democratic publics sanction their leaders.

However, if war always generates rally effects when president’s take the nation to war, then the public’s behavior would not convey useful information to the adversary because it would not discriminate between those situations in which the president is likely to implement his threat and those in which he is bluffing. As Smith, Schultz, and Slantchev note, the audience cost mechanism lacks micro-foundations: the theoretical models that investigate the impact of audience costs on behavior have largely taken them for granted. Moreover, both in theory and in practice, audience costs as operationalized do not distinguish between opposition created by the substance of a policy from disappointment from an expectation or reneging on a commitment. Nor do audience costs exhibit constant or near unvaried affects across all democratic governments, across all situations; rather, they vary.²⁶⁵

Despite the micro-foundations problem, recent studies claimed empirical support for the hypothesis that democracies have a signaling advantage, which they attribute to audience costs.²⁶⁶ Eyerman and Hart, for example, argue that the existence of


higher audience costs in democracies implies that we should observe democratic going through fewer crisis “phases” than other dyads, and present findings supporting this claim. Somewhat differently, Schultz argues that crisis reciprocation is an observable indicator of variation in the ability to signal: target states should be less likely to reciprocate or escalate a threat the more genuine they think the threat is. Although Schultz’s mechanism is different, his finding that threats by democracies are less likely to be met with resistance than threats by non-democracies could also be viewed as evidence for a democratic audience costs advantage. Prins uses a similar research design, and comes to similar conclusions. Gelpi and Griesdorf operationalize the concept of audience costs as the difference between the democracy scores of two countries in an International Crisis Behavior crisis dyad. Their findings indicate that demonstrations of resolve (measured through displays of force) only influence crisis outcomes when states have asymmetries in audience costs, while demonstrations of resolve do not have the same effect between countries of the same regime type. They attribute this finding to the superiority of democracies in generating audience costs, and argue that democracy scores are a good proxy for operationalizing the ability to generate these costs.

Audience costs as a result have grown in their influence on international relations theory, yet it still remains unclear whether, when, and how such costs exist in practice. With the exception of Tomz, most of the empirical work on audience costs in indirect. Fearon and Smith conjectured that audience costs tend to be higher in democracies than in autocracies, and he explained why this would lead the two regime types to behave differently in world affairs. Scholars in international relations have thus the Impact of Political Participation on Interstate Crisis Bargaining.” Journal of Peace Research, 40:67-84; and Schultz, “Looking for Audience Costs.”
checked for correlations between democracy and foreign policy. But validity of such empirical tests is dubious; as Tomz notes, they do not reveal whether the effects of democracy stem from audience costs or from other differences between political regimes.\(^{267}\)

Ideally one would study audience costs directly, perhaps by examining the historical fate of leaders who issued threats and then backed down, and the calculus of leaders who resisted threats issued by democratic states.\(^{268}\) The problem, which international relations scholars widely recognize, is two fold: 1) strategic selection bias, and 2) partial observability.\(^{269}\) In theory, leaders take the prospect of audience costs into account when making foreign policy decisions. To the extent that leaders value staying in office, they are unlikely to make choices with high domestic costs. If this is the case, audience costs will be largely invisible. To counterbalance as best as possible cases of audience costs “nonevents,” this dissertation combines the analysis of the historical record with experiments. Experiments enable us to examine the internal validity of the audience costs argument, which we can then explore in the cases to judge its external validity and boundary conditions.

Thus, this dissertation aims to say something about whether audience costs are generated when a president backs down from a threat and how those costs might vary under different scope conditions, the duration of their impact, and how presidents might move to mitigate or rebound from the punishments inflicted upon them for jeopardizing the national honor. The results suggest the connections between audience costs, regime type, and threat credibility are not obvious. At most, they

\(^{267}\)Tomz, “Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations: An Experimental Approach,” 822.

\(^{268}\)Ibid.

\(^{269}\)See, for example, Schultz, “Looking for Audience Costs,” 35.
indicate the extant literature on audience costs is seriously misleading. At least, they suggest we must do a better job of defining the conditions under which audience costs are most likely to be operative – both empirically and in the mind of the target government. Failing to do this only perpetuates spurious arguments and invalid claims.

That is, what reason due targets governments have to believe the American public will sanction a leader for issuing hollow threats? Does the empirical record support this claim? In other words, has the American public ever demonstrated its ability to credibly commit to such a strategy? Schelling argues superior resolve is demonstrated through credible escalating threats, including the display and use of force. The key to success, though, is the “exploitation of potential force.” Fearon and others claim that audience costs are one mechanism for making credible this exploitation of potential force. That is, audience costs enable President’s to credibly signal that war is optimal should the target state fail to concede enough. They decrease the value of peace and of backing down, thereby making the war option more credible. The Presidential Agency Model generates different expectations: on average, a weakly interested audience that does not thoroughly monitor the president and does not hold strong foreign policy preferences – hardly an audience that seems likely to sanction presidents for not being bellicose enough.

These expectations are in line with arguments made previously by Stephen Walt. Namely, he argues that it “is not clear whether the argument is in fact correct.”

There are a number of possible exceptions to the “audience costs” argument: “the


United States gave in to North Korea’s demands following the seizure of the Pueblo in 1968 and also granted many of Iran’s demands following the seizure of the U.S. embassy in 1980, even though it probably faced higher audience costs than did North Korea or Iran...[and] higher “audience costs” did not enable the United States to prevail against England in the Trent affair in 1861, and public opinion had virtually no impact in the Venezuelan crisis in 1895-96.”272 Walt generally observes that in cases where the public is not seriously engaged, there historically have not been audience costs for failure to honor an obligation. He concludes noting that, “until it is rigorously tested...there is no way of knowing how significant the actual contribution really is.”273 This dissertation offers one such empirical test.

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. I first present the Presidential Agency Model’s rebuttal to the audience costs argument. I then examine the competing expectations in a set of experiments, exploring in a controlled environment whether the public behaves as either model would expect. Subsequently, I explore two cases of president’s issuing public threats of force – President Clinton’s threats of economic sanctions and force against North Korea in 1994 and similarly for President Bush in 2002-03. I conclude with a brief summary of this chapter’s main findings.

5.2 The Presidential Agency Model Rebuttal

It is useful here to recall the divergent expectations of the traditional audience costs argument and the Presidential Agency Model. The traditional audience costs argument posits that, all else being equal, a leader is more likely punished *ex post*
(i.e., to be removed from office in the subsequent election) for backing down from an issued threat. “[I]f the principal [citizens] could design a ‘wage contract’ for the foreign policy agent [leader], the principal would want to commit to punishing the agent for escalating a crisis and then backing down . . . principals who conduct foreign policy themselves may not be able credibly to commit to self-imposed punishment (such as leaving power) for backing down in a crisis. In other words, because it would benefit the leader to tie his hands through audience costs, citizens will want to impose them.”

The first requirement for the audience costs mechanism to function, then, is that the act of making a threat and then backing down is undesirable. As Fearon noted, there is a subjective and normative quality to how the audience perceives the act of backing down. For public threats to be informative, the “audience cost” must be negative: otherwise presidents would have incentives to make empty threats and the mechanism would not function. The second is that the audience must credibly commitment to removing the president from office should he issue empty threats and have a mechanism for doing so. This second requirement illustrates the most problematic part of the audience costs argument: herculean expectations of public’s ability to monitor and value highly foreign policy issues, and the fact that the public lacks the ability to sanction presidents in their second term.

The Presidential Agency Model, on the other hand, contends that the costs of the public monitoring foreign policy related events and decisions are high; the reliability


275 Accordingly, in order to render a valid test of the audience costs argument, the cases selected for examination below are of presidents in their first-term in office.
of non-intrusive monitoring regimes (e.g., fire alarms) is relatively low; and, the president does not expect to be punished when he is caught bluffing. Moreover, a credible commitment to punish the president requires either divergent preferences over foreign policy goals, or evidence that the public actually shares similar preferences over foreign policy goals but 1, cares more about them, and 2, estimates greater reputational loses should they not be secured. In other words, the public actually cares more than the president about the consequences for backing down after escalation. Accordingly to the Presidential Agency Model, neither of these conditions are probable, thus the removal of a president from office in either instance is unlikely.

5.3 Audience Costs Experiments

As noted above, empirically observing audience costs is no easy task. Some have tried using office tenure and survival rates as a proxy for audience costs.\textsuperscript{276} Others still simply posit audience costs to be more prevalent in democracies as compared to autocracies, and simply infer outcomes (democracies initiating and backing down in fewer crises) the presence or absence of audience costs.\textsuperscript{277} To more directly assess if audience costs exist, I developed two experiments to examine both the logic of the audience costs argument and to assess if there were any mitigating effects due to successful outcomes. The two experiments are described below.\textsuperscript{278}


\textsuperscript{277}See, for example, Eyerman and Hart, “An Empirical Test of the Audience Cost Proposition.”

\textsuperscript{278}A more complete description of the experiments and associated conditions can be found in Appendix B.
The experiments also enable us to more fully explore the scope conditions of the audience costs argument. For example, does the American public treat threats against allies differently than those against adversaries? Is there a difference between punishment mechanisms? That is, are subjects as willing to remove a president from office as they are to dock him approval points? These and other findings are explored below.

5.3.1 Experiment 1

This experiment focuses on three variables: the targets state (Japan/Iran), threat (not issued/issued), and threat fulfilled (fulfilled, reneged). Structuring it in this way enables the assessment of some of the scope conditions of the audience costs argument; namely, do audiences differentiate between allies and adversaries?

All respondents received the following introduction:

The following story and questions are about the relations between the United States and other countries. You will read about a situation that the United States has faced many times in the past, and will likely face again. Different presidents have handled the situation in different ways. We will describe for you one approach taken by a U.S. president, and then ask you to respond to several questions.

Vignette: Increasingly concerned by nuclear developments in the region, [Japan, Iran] recently stepped up its efforts to develop a nuclear weapons program. This development is clearly against American interests as we have long been opposed to the spread of nuclear weapons. [Japan’s prime minister/Iran’s president], however, said economic sanctions would not deter them from developing nuclear weapons. A
successful [Japanese, Iranian] nuclear program would hurt American efforts to curb nuclear proliferation and could lead to instability in the region.

Subjects were then told that the president either did or did not threatened [Japan, Iran] with military force should they proceed, [Japan, Iran] continued to develop their nuclear weapons program, and as a result the president either did or did not use force to stop them.

There were several dependent variables for this experiment, each designed to tap the different instantiations of the audience costs argument. Subjects were ask both questions of approval and voting choice.

5.3.2 Experiment 2

The following story and questions are about the relations between the United States and North Korea. You will read about a situation that the United States has faced many times in the past, and will likely face again. Different presidents have handled the situation in different ways. We will describe for you one approach taken by a U.S president, and then ask you to respond to several questions.

Vignette 1: Despite continued protest from the United States, North Korea continues to develop a nuclear weapons program. North Korea recently enriched uranium to weapon-grade, and increased its plutonium stockpiles. North Korea’s nuclear program allows them to gain more power and influence in East Asia.

Do you (1) approve, (2) disapprove, or (3) neither approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled the situation? Branching questions were then used to assess whether the subjects held these opinions strongly or somewhat.

If the next presidential election were tomorrow, how would you vote? (1) For; (2) against; (3) neither for nor against; or (4) don’t know.
Subjects were then told

**Vignette 2:** Over the last year North Korea continued to develop a nuclear program. In fact, in October of last year intelligence sources indicated that North Korea was on the verge of conducting its first nuclear test. In response, the president went so far as to say that a North Korean nuclear test would be met with grave consequences.

As in the first experiment, the second also examines the two most common audience costs operationalizations in the literature: approval ratings\(^{281}\) and vote choice.\(^{282}\) The value of the second experiment is its examination of Fearon’s assumption that audience costs escalate with the escalation of the conflict.

### 5.3.2.1 Experimental 1 Results

The first step, then, is to establish if audience costs exist in the most basic experimental scenario – the easy case for the audience costs argument. By and large, I did not find audience costs in this case. Looking at the main effects for the three key manipulations – reneged, threat, and regime – I did not find a main effect for reneged (means = .48 and .52 for reneged and fulfilled, respectively) or threat (means = .49 and .51, threat not issued and threat issued, respectively), but did find a main effect for regime (means = .65 and .51 for Iran and Japan, respectively; F[1, 583] = 8.39,

\(^{281}\)Do you (1) approve, (2) disapprove, or (3) neither approve nor disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled the situation? Branching questions were then used to assess whether the subjects held these opinions strongly or somewhat. The variable was recoded such that 1 = disapprove strongly, 4 = neither approve nor disapprove, and 7 = approve strongly; this was done to match the theoretical relationship between threats and escalating audience costs. Finally, the variable was rescaled to range from 0 to 1.

\(^{282}\)If the next presidential election were tomorrow, how would you vote? (1) For; (2) against; (3) neither for nor against; or (4) don’t know. The analysis of the vote considers only those in the first two categories. 31 subjects failed to offer a decisive vote “for” or “against,” bringing the N down to 552.
p<.05). This seems to indicate that subjects understand allies and adversaries are to be treated differently, but that they are not quite sure what to do with threats and their fulfilment absent the context in which they are issued. So, let’s look at some of the interactions to see if they tell a more nuanced story.

In looking at the interactions, I did find some evidence of audience costs. Looking at the results from the first experiment, subjects were significantly less likely to support the president if he backed down from his threat to use force against Iran if it proceeded to develop a nuclear weapons program. Looking at the 2 X 2 X 2 ANOVA results for **Experiment 1**, I observed several significant interaction effects: threats against Iran received more support than those against Japan (means = .67 and .37, respectively; F[2, 583] = 5.49, p<.05). Moreover, the interaction effect for Iran x threat x reneged was significantly lower than Iran x threat x fulfilled (means = .46 and .77, respectively; F[2, 583] = 6.14, p<.05). Similarly, subjects in the Iran x threat x reneged condition rated the president handling of the situation significantly lower than those in the Iran x no threat x fulfilled condition (means = .46 and .59, respectively; F[2, 583] = 2.58, p<.05). This was not the case with Japan; ratings of the president’s handling of the situations were not significantly different when comparing those cases in which the president threatened to use force and those in which he did not.

In other words, subjects clearly treated threats made against an adversary differently than those made against an ally. However, absent the conditioning factor of a particular adversary or ally toward whom particular threats are directed, issued threats and failure to make good on them did not elicit approval ratings significantly different from no threat being issued at all or the actual employment of force. Let us
now turn to the regression results, which allow us to explore the impact of particular individual disposition and characteristics on approval.

Again, the dependent variable in this case is approving or disapproving of the way the U.S. president handled the situation, with responses anchored on a seven-point scale from “strongly disapprove” to “strongly approve.” The variable was rescaled to range from 0 to 1. (See Table 5.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regime Dummy</td>
<td>0.05* (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat Dummy</td>
<td>0.03 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilled Dummy</td>
<td>0.04 (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat*Reneged Dummy</td>
<td>-0.12 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime<em>Threat</em>Reneged Dummy</td>
<td>-0.23* (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime<em>Threat</em>Reneged Dummy*MA</td>
<td>-0.27* (0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalism</td>
<td>-0.01 (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Assertiveness (MA)</td>
<td>-0.04* (0.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Knowledge</td>
<td>0.22 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.23* (0.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R²</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entries are unstandardized coefficients from OLS regressions, with standard errors in the parentheses. All variables coded on a 0-1 scale. The measured variables are coded so that higher values represent higher perceived interests, higher levels of general support, orientations towards internationalism and militant assertiveness, and higher levels of knowledge. For the dummy variables, the regime dummy 1 = Japan, for the threat dummy 1 = threat issued, and for the fulfilled dummy 1 = threat fulfilled.

* p < .05, two-tailed.

Table 5.1: Approval of the president’s handling of the situation
Regression results were similar to those of the ANOVA – four of the results are notable. First, there is again a difference in approval by regime type; subjects are more supportive of the president’s handling of the situation when Iran is the target than when the target is Japan. Perhaps this is because Japan is an ally and they see the situation regarding their development of nuclear weapons to be far more benign.

Second, like in the ANOVA analysis, the interaction effects held in the regression results. This is to say that, subjects were least supportive of the president’s handling of the situation when the target state was Iran, when a threat was issued, and the president reneged. Again, turning back to a comparison of means, this is also evident in looking at the relative mean level of support for those in the Iran x threat x threat fulfilled cell (mean = .77) and those in the Iraq x threat x reneged cell (mean = .46).

Third, when subjects’ military assertiveness was interacted with regime type (Iran), threat (issued), and threat fulfilled, approval for the president’s handling of the situation was even higher. More generally, subjects who measured higher on military assertiveness were more likely to punish the president for failing to make good on a promised threat (as we’ll see shortly, they were also more likely to reward him for making good on it, too). For the other individual differences – political knowledge and internationalism – no significant effects were found.

Finally, males were more likely to disapprove of the president’s handling of the situation than females. This is finding is consistent with the general understand of gender differences in the use of force literature. Put differently, males in this case were more likely to punish a president for not using military force as promised. Though this is a slightly different way of looking gender than is common in the literature, it matches the general pattern of males being more supportive than females of the use
of force. For example, a May 1993 Gallup Poll questioning support for possible U.S. air strikes against Bosnian-Serb forces in order to protect Muslim enclaves revealed that such strikes were favored by 44 percent of the male and only 28 percent of the female respondents. Moreover, leading up to the Gulf War, women were nearly equally divided on possible U.S. military action, while men displayed much stronger support.283

The logit results (Table 5.2) present a similar picture in some respects, but most importantly differ in their support of the audience costs argument. In turning to the key interactions of interest – namely, that of regime type, whether a threat was issued or not, and whether that threat or non-threat was fulfilled or not – this is more clearly demonstrated. In particular, there was no relationship between the president fulfilling or reneging on a promised threat and subjects’ vote choice (Threat*Reneged Dummy), or was there any relationship when regime type was interacted with Threat*Reneged Dummy. In looking at the raw data, only subjects in the Iran x threat x reneged and who also strongly disapproved of the president’s handling of the situation indicated the greatest willingness to not vote for the president. Those who somewhat disagreed with the president’s handling of the situation to those who strongly agreed with it were not likely to vote the president out of office.

Additionally, in looking at subjects’ individual dispositions, this analysis tells a similar story to the regression analysis above. This is to say that those subjects rating higher in military assertiveness were more likely to vote the president out of office than those preferring to pursue policy options short of the use of military force. Also,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regime Dummy</td>
<td>0.18 (0.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat Dummy</td>
<td>-0.05 (0.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilled Dummy</td>
<td>0.17 (0.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat*Reneged Dummy</td>
<td>-0.69 (0.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime<em>Threat</em>Reneged Dummy</td>
<td>-1.18 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime<em>Threat</em>Reneged Dummy*MA</td>
<td>-1.27 (0.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalism</td>
<td>0.03 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Assertiveness (MA)</td>
<td>-0.21* (0.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Knowledge</td>
<td>0.22 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.23 (0.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>0.11 (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-223.81741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Entries are maximum likelihood (binomial logit) estimates, with standard errors in the parentheses. All variables coded on a 0-1 scale. The measured variables are coded so that higher values represent higher perceived interests, higher levels of general support, orientations towards internationalism and militant assertiveness, and higher levels of knowledge. For the dummy variables, the regime dummy 1 = Iran, for the threat dummy 1 = threat issued, and for the fulfilled dummy 1 = threat fulfilled. The dependent variable is coded 1 = vote for the president.

* p < .05, one-tailed.

Table 5.2: Vote for the president as a function of general approval of his handling of the situation
males were significantly more likely than females to tend toward voting a president out of office for what they presumably saw as his poor handling of the situation, but this finding was not significant.

As logit results are tough to interpret – especially with interaction effects – below are figures (5.1 and 5.2) comparing the probability of agreeing and with the president’s handling of the situation and the probability of voting for the president, respectively, by threat fulfilled/not fulfilled and regime type. Though I found subjects punishing the president for backing down from threats issued toward Iran, only did the probability of agreeing with the president’s handling of the situation drop below (and only just below) 50 percent. This was not the case with the probability of voting for the president, which, though it saw a drop from 73 percent to 54 percent, did not drop below 50 percent.

Those in the Japan conditions, interestingly, moved in the opposite direction than audience costs would expect. In other words, subjects were more likely to more positively evaluate the president’s handling of the situation and vote for the president when he failed to carry out a threat against Japan than when he fulfilled the threat. These differences, however, were not significant.

These findings square well with the predicted probability graph below, which examines the easiest test for the audience costs argument. The graph (Figure 5.3 below) illustrates the predicted probability of voting for the president by level of approval for those subjects (N = 63) in the Iran x threat x reneged condition. Recall Fearon’s argument: “principals who conduct foreign policy themselves may not be able credibly

Figure 5.1: Probability of agreeing with the president’s handling of the situation by threat execution and regime
Figure 5.2: Probability of voting for the president by threat execution and regime
to commit to self-imposed punishment (such as leaving power) for backing down in a crisis. In other words, because it would benefit the leader to tie his hands through audience costs, citizens will want to impose them.” In other words, subjects should remove the president from office for failing to carrying out the threat of force against Iran. In the end, only a small number of subjects behaved as Fearon would expect.

I also generated predicted probability profiles for those most and least likely to vote a president out of office for prior foreign policy choices. This probability is a function of the subject’s treatment condition, the subject’s approval rating of the president in this case, and the control variables. Again, I find a public not willing to vote a president out of office for reneging on his threat to use force. On average, the president is likely to retain office across all conditions. The profile most likely to vote the president out of office in this case is male, high in military assertiveness, who strongly disagreed with the president’s handling of the situation (64 percent voted against the president); the profile least likely to vote the president out of office in this case is female, low in military assertiveness, who strongly agreed with the president’s handling of the situation (22 percent voted against the president).

Overall, the results of Experiment 1 leave us with three strong conclusions: 1, audience costs (when operationalized as approval) were only realized in the easiest cases; 2, subjects were not willing to remove a president from office for failing to carry out issued threats, even against an adversary such as Iran; and 3, as subjects did not react significantly different when faced with a president carry out and reneging on a threat against a U.S. ally (Japan), it seems more work is required to assess the

Figure 5.3: Probability of voting for the president by level of approval
applicability of audience costs in cases where the U.S. is trying to compel or deter actions of friends.

5.3.2.2 Experimental 2 Results

Experiment 2 yielded similar results, though with some differences worth noting. As mentioned above, the goal of the second experiment was to investigate how audience costs cumulate (or not) over time; that is, as Fearon and others argue, as the crisis escalates audience costs escalate as well. The key group in this experiment, then, is that which continued on to the second vignette because the DPRK continued to develop a nuclear weapons program despite empty threats issued by the U.S. president. The subjects were measured on their disapproval/approval of the president’s handling of the situation, and then moved on to the second vignette where they found the DPRK continuing to develop nuclear weapons despite continued U.S. threats that they would face “grave consequences” if such behavior continued. Following a final threat, the president either carried out the threat or backed down.

Though the focus of this experiment is the change in audience costs over time, let’s first look at the ANOVA results from the first vignette as a check against the results from the first experiment. As with the first experiment, the ANOVA results presented only one main effect for the key manipulations of interest – threat/no threat, fulfilled/reneged, DPRK continues/stops development. This effect was for DPRK continues/stops development (means = .44 and .65; F[1, 583] = 8.24, p < .05).

This result seems to indicate that rather than focusing on the nature of the threat issued or not, subject’s were most concerned with the outcome of the crisis. Turning to the interaction effects, I did find a significant interaction effect for threat x reneged
x DPRK continues development condition when compared with threat x fulfilled x DPRK stopped development (means = .39 and .73, respectively; \( F[2, 583] = 5.83, p<.05 \)). This is to say that subjects were likely to punish (in terms of more negative evaluations) the president for issuing an *ineffective*, empty threat. What is more striking is the comparison of means between those in the no threat x fulfilled x DPRK continues to develop condition and those in the threat x reneged x DPRK continues development – there is no significant difference. As with the main effect for DPRK continues/stops development, these interaction effects also seem to indicate subjects were most concerned with the outcome of the crisis rather than the give-and-take that led to it.

Similarly, the logit results in Table 5.3, like those from Experiment 1, do not find a public overwhelmingly eager to remove a president from office for backing down from threats issued. Those who rated high in military assertiveness were again the most likely to remove the president from the office, but none of the other individual dispositions were significantly related to subjects’ vote choice.

Let’s now return to the focus on the potential escalation of audience costs. As one of the central tenets of the audience costs argument is that threats gain credibility and commitment over time as audience costs cumulate, those in the conditions where the DPRK continued to develop its nuclear program continued the experiment. According to the audience costs argument, we should observe negative change in subject’s evaluation of the president’s handling of the situation; this should be more extreme for those subjects originally assigned to the intervene x reneged x DPRK continues
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat Dummy                         0.09 (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilled Dummy                     0.12 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat*Reneged Dummy -0.45 (0.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat<em>Reneged Dummy</em>MA -0.89 (0.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalism                    0.13 (0.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Assertiveness (MA) -0.33* (0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Knowledge                  0.13 (0.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male                                -0.18 (0.13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval                             0.06 (0.05)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log likelihood -247.34526
N 503

Entries are maximum likelihood (binomial logit) estimates, with standard errors in the parentheses. All variables coded on a 0-1 scale. The measured variables are coded so that higher values represent higher perceived interests, higher levels of general support, orientations towards internationalism and militant assertiveness, and higher levels of knowledge. For the dummy variables, the threat dummy 1 = threat issued, and for the fulfilled dummy 1 = threat fulfilled. The dependent variable is coded 1 = vote for the president.

* p < .05, one-tailed.

Table 5.3: Vote for the president as a function of general approval of his handling of DPRK proliferation
development who again find themselves in the intervene x reneged x DPRK continues development condition (we'll call this IR2). Also, we should see audience costs, though somewhat milder in those who were originally assigned to no intervention x fulfilled x DPRK continues development who this time found themselves in the intervene x reneged x DPRK continues development condition (we'll call this IR1). Audience costs, however, were not plain in these conditions. When the president escalated but did not follow through, there was little change between those in the IR2 condition (means = .39 and .38), and only a minor cost paid in the IR1 condition (means = .48 and .42). These results appear to call into question the argument the audience costs cumulate as crises are drawn out.

These results were also born out in the analysis of the vote for those subjects who continued the experiment. Looking at the logit results presented in Table 5.4 below, I found a similar picture to the previous two vote analyses: a public not willing to remove a president from office for issuing empty threats. The major difference in this case was that males were significantly like to vote the president out of office.

Overall, the results of Experiment 2 leave us with two conclusions: 1, audience costs do not cumulate over crises; 2, subjects were no more willing to remove the president from office after several failed threats than they were after one. The first result is not entirely surprising given the literature on public support for military operations. Generally, after the initial phases of a crisis or war, the public’s enthusiasm and support for the effort drops sharply and then levels off over time. If this logarithmic relationship holds in the cases of the public’s support for crises that are drawn out over extended periods of time, it is not surprising to find significant differences.
## Model 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threat Dummy</td>
<td>0.13 (0.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilled Dummy</td>
<td>0.10 (0.12)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat*Reneged Dummy</td>
<td>-0.53 (0.41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threat<em>Reneged Dummy</em>MA</td>
<td>-0.59 (0.57)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internationalism</td>
<td>0.07 (0.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Assertiveness (MA)</td>
<td>-0.27* (0.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Knowledge</td>
<td>0.12 (0.17)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>-0.25* (0.09)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval 1</td>
<td>0.04 (0.07)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval 2</td>
<td>-0.01 (0.05)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Log likelihood: -123.83574  
N: 227

Entries are maximum likelihood (binomial logit) estimates, with standard errors in the parentheses. All variables coded on a 0-1 scale. The measured variables are coded so that higher values represent higher perceived interests, higher levels of general support, orientations towards internationalism and militant assertiveness, and higher levels of knowledge. For the dummy variables, the threat dummy 1 = threat issued, and for the fulfilled dummy 1 = threat fulfilled. The dependent variable is coded 1 = vote for the president.  
* p < .05, one-tailed.

Table 5.4: Vote for the president as a function of general approval of his handling of DPRK continued proliferation
between subjects’ approval ratings for vignettes 1 and 2. This could very well be an artifact of the experimental design, but in nonetheless indicates the notion of the cumulation of audience costs is worth exploring further in the case studies.

The second result also squares well with what we know about the public’s willingness to reward and punish presidents for good and bad foreign policy behavior – they typically do not do it at the ballot box. As John Mueller has noted, “On international affairs, Americans (and probably others as well) suffer from a collective attention deficit disorder...And as part of that phenomenon they do not seem to be very interested in rewarding – or even remembering – foreign policy success.” This held true for the successes of George H.W. Bush (“If George Bush found little lasting electoral advantage in a large dramatic victory like the Gulf War (or, earlier, for the successful Panama intervention), lesser accomplishments seem likely to be have been at least as unrewarding.”) and for the failures of Bill Clinton (“the deaths of 18 U.S. soldiers in Somalia in 1993 further stimulated a demand for withdrawal...by the time the 1996 election rolled around, the public had substantially forgotten about it.”). So, despite the fact that Fearon and others writing in the audience costs literature suspect otherwise, the Presidential Agency Model (and the empirical record) is not entirely surprised to find this result.

As with any experiment, I must ask whether these results are a product of the design and experimental protocol. There is certainly that possibility, though it is encouraging that the results held up across experiments. On this point others might

---

287 Ibid., 11.
288 Ibid., 9.
also question whether the failure to find results supporting the audience costs argument is due to failure of the experimental manipulations. Perhaps the vignettes lacked the realism necessary to compel subjects to punish the president by voting him out of office. One weakness of the experiments are their failure to incorporate party id into the design. Perhaps then we would find that punishment is contingent on party id (especially strong partisans) who are confronted with a president of the opposing party. This, clearly, is an area for further research. But in the absence of additional experiments to examine, perhaps two real-world cases can speak to the external validity of these experimental findings.

5.4 Case Studies

Robert Jervis observed that in international relations, “we are particularly interested in when threats protect the state and when, by contrast, they set off a spiral of counter-threats that leave both sides worse off than they would have been had the state adopted an alternative policy.” In particular, the cases studies that follow examine two crises in which the United States threatened to use force in order to deter North Korea (DPRK) from continuing to pursue a nuclear weapons program. Did threats issued by President’s Clinton and Bush protect the state or did events escalate through a serious of threats and counter threats? If we find the later to be the case, the ultimate question of interest here is whether there is ex post validity to the audience costs argument; that is, were presidents punished for issuing threats and failing to make good on them?

Whereas the process-tracing approach was more appropriate in the public influence cases (as I was primarily examining the behavior of one actor – the president),
here I employ within-case congruence procedures to compare the behavior of the DPRK predicated on the previous behavior of the United States. I try to adjudicate between conflicting pieces of evidence and conflicting narratives by comparing individual pieces of information to a coherent larger narrative. During the analysis of each crisis, I break down the timeline into discrete periods that begin and end either a particular decision or threat issued by either President Clinton or Bush, or a reaction by the DPRK to a particular decision or threat issued by either President Clinton or Bush. I trace the individual actions taken during each of these smaller periods in order to discern what events led up to the particular decisions to either threaten force, pursue economic sanctions, or pursue diplomatic negotiations, and the corresponding behavior of the DPRK to either continue the crisis or back down.

I distinguish between the differing expectations of the audience costs argument and the Presidential Agency Model by looking at the particular presidential decisions (to pursue diplomacy, sanctions, or threaten force), the public’s support or opposition to those decisions, and the resultant DPRK behavior. For example, North Korea responded to U.S. threats from March 1993 through May 1994 by threatening to withdraw from the NPT, but in June 1994, they responded by agreeing to negotiate; I examine intervening events to answer why these interactions changed. While all U.S. actions to some extent are likely to affect DPRK’s calculations, the clearest evidence for connections between actions and reactions comes when concrete threats or opportunities that are made by the U.S. This, of course, includes a keen eye turned toward the role of the American public in bolstering (or not) the credibility of U.S. threats.
I also examine the outcome of the subsequent presidential election in each case, as the audience costs argument expects president’s to be punished in the next election if they fail to make good on threats issued and not headed.

5.4.1 Bill Clinton and North Korea (1993-4)

President Clinton formally revealed his nonproliferation policy in a speech at the United Nations in New York, on September 27, 1993, affirming the top priority of nonproliferation in American foreign and national security policy. The policy initially included negotiating a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), strengthening the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), creating specially tailored non-proliferation strategies for problem states (North Korea, Pakistan, Iraq, in particular), negotiating an international ban on the production of highly enriched uranium or plutonium, and reforming U.S. export controls in order to remove impediments for U.S. exporters of high-tech goods.

Earlier that year, as President Clinton took office, North Korea’s nuclear weapons program was already a mounting concern for administration officials. The administration’s chief objective was to compel the DPRK from further efforts to develop a nuclear weapon; the initial means the administration chose for achieving this end-state was a combination of carrots, sticks, International Atomic Energy Agency inspections, and bilateral negotiations. This policy became known as “gradual escalation.”289 As events intensified in mid-1994, Clinton Administration officials spoke more clearly about coordinated international economic sanctions and undertook detailed planning for airstrikes on Yongbyon – North Korea’s central nuclear facility – and other key

nuclear facilities and infrastructure. Eventually, with the aid of former President Jimmy Carter, North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for renewed talks with the U.S. and security guarantees from Washington.

The case below traces these events in detail and examines in particular the Clinton Administration’s threats to use sanctions and force against the DPRK in order to compel them to halt their nuclear weapons program. Specific attention is paid to the publicly issued threats, the American public’s support or opposition to those actions, the crisis outcome, and the outcome of the 1996 presidential election. Recall that the audience costs argument suggests that democratic states can signal their willingness to use force by creating domestic political costs that would have to be paid for if they backed down.

If the audience costs argument is to hold true in this case, then, there are three possible outcomes consistent with the audience costs argument: 1, President Clinton publicly issues a threat against North Korea, the public cares deeply the issue at stake, and North Korea backs down; 2, President Clinton publicly issues a threat against North Korea, the public cares deeply about the issue at stake, North Korea does not back down, the President carries out the threat in order to compel North Korea to given up its weapons program; or 3, President Clinton publicly issues a threat against North Korea, the public cares deeply about the issue at stake, North Korea does not back down, the president does not carry out the publicly issued threat, and the president is subsequently voted out of office for engaging the national honor and backing down.

The Presidential Agency Model, on the other hand, expects otherwise. If the Presidential Agency Model applies in this case, there are two possible outcomes consist
with the model’s expectations: 1, President Clinton issues a threat against North Korea, the public does not monitor the president thoroughly and cares little about the issue, North Korea does not back down, and the president is not voted out of office because of his failure to carry out the threat issued; and 2, President Clinton issues a threat against North Korea, the public does not monitor the president thoroughly and cares little about the issue, North Korea backs down from the threat issued.

In order to assess the carrots and sticks offered by the Clinton administration, the resultant DPRK behavior, and the evaluation of these events by the American public, I break the case into four phases: 1, North Korea’s withdrawal from the NPT in March of 1993 until its subsequent rejoining in June 1993; 2, the back and forth negotiations between June and September 1993, including Clinton’s visit to South Korea; 3, October 1993 through March 1994, which includes an additional two rounds of negotiations, as well as increased tensions and the warning of war from the United States just as the U.S. primary season kicked off; and 4, the peak of the crisis from late March to June of 1994 until North Korea’s agreement to come into compliance with the NPT.

So, how did events play out?

5.4.1.1 DPRK Withdrawal, March - June 1993

In early 1993, newly elected President Bill Clinton faced a significant foreign policy challenge: an agitated North Korea trying to develop nuclear weapons. Faced with what it perceived to be increasing pressure from the U.S., South Korea and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the North Korean government claimed on
March 12 that the “Team Spirit” exercises\textsuperscript{290} were a “nuclear war rehearsal targeted against the DPRK (that) compelled our country to enter a semi-war state.” Furthermore, the North Korean government claimed that if it “submissively accept(ed) an unjust inspection by the IAEA, it would legitimize the espionage acts by the United States, a belligerent party – and set the beginning of the full exposure of all our military installations – our entire nation would be driven into confrontation and war.”\textsuperscript{291}

North Korea’s threatened withdrawal from the NPT was preceded by several months of back and forth between the IAEA, the United States, and the DPRK. The IAEA insisted that the DPRK was actively operating two undeclared nuclear sites while denying admission and oversight to IAEA inspectors. Moreover, North Korea repeatedly called for cancelation of the annual Team Spirit military exercises between U.S. and South Korean forces, calling them a threat to the long-term stability of the region. North Korea warned that IAEA inspectors would not be granted access to the two previously undeclared sites until the military exercises were canceled; the U.S. and South Koreans remained firm that once IAEA inspectors were granted access the military exercises (for that year, at least) would be canceled. Ultimately, the IAEA threatened to refer the DPRK to the U.N. Security Council for sanctions should it not cede to the demands of the United States and South Korea, and the Team Spirit exercise commenced on March 9\textsuperscript{th}. On March 12\textsuperscript{th}, North Korea announced its intention to withdraw from the NPT (on June 12.

\textsuperscript{290}A joint/combined exercise designed to evaluate and improve the interoperability of South Korean and U.S. forces.

Faced with the prospect of Pyongyang developing nuclear weapons in defiance of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, Washington responded with a combination of deterrence threats and proposed negotiation. President Clinton, partly due to the persuasive efforts of newly elected South Korean president, Kim Young Sam, was determined to provide assurances to North Korea that there were diplomatic solutions to the crisis short of economic sanctions and threats of force.\textsuperscript{292} North Korea was willing to meet bilaterally with the United States, though they first demanded security assurances to include a no-first-use declaration, as well as the removal of any U.S. nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula. Though President Clinton was prepared for bilateral talks, he was not yet prepared for talks with the DPRK under these conditions.

The President and his South Korean counterpart both believed they needed to continue to push hard on the DPRK for concessions, and only agreed to consider U.S.-DPRK bilateral meetings after the U.N. Security Council passed its resolution condemning the North’s threatened withdrawal from the NPT.\textsuperscript{293} The resolution, with China’s support, passed on May 11th “called on Pyongyang to meet its nonproliferation obligations and called for ‘all member states’ to ‘facilitate a solution.’”\textsuperscript{294} That same day – to reinforce the Clinton Administration’s policy of gradual escalation – U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense, Bill Perry, announced that the United


\textsuperscript{293}This was without the threat of sanctions, as China opposed them. See Joel Wit, Daniel Poneman, and Robert Gallucci. 2004. \textit{Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis}. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 42.

\textsuperscript{294}Ibid., 46. See also, Don Oberdorfer. 2001. \textit{The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History}. New York: Basic Books, 283.
States would not consider reductions of troops until the DPRK rejoined the NPT.\textsuperscript{295} In particular, newly appointed Defense Secretary Les Aspin appointed Assistant Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to work with the State Department in the event negotiations broke down. Carter “wanted the military options taken very seriously,” said a Defense Department official.\textsuperscript{296} Though the DPRK objected to both of these actions, it continued to seek negotiations and reconciliation.\textsuperscript{297}

Through a combination of lower-level negotiations throughout the later part of May, the United States and North Korea agreed to higher-level talks in New York in June. Robert Gallucci, Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs served as the chief U.S. negotiator; his North Korean counterpart was First Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kang Sok Ju. From the outset, Gallucci made clear that any agreement depended on Pyongyang’s acceptance of IAEA monitoring of North Korea’s Yongbyon reactor. Furthermore, Gallucci warned Kang that North Korean withdrawal from the NPT would lead to international sanctions; Kang called sanctions a “declaration of war.”\textsuperscript{298}

This made agreement between the U.S. and North Korea difficult to reach during the first days of the June 1993 talks. The U.S. terms, by forcing Pyongyang to accept intrusive IAEA inspections, were considered by the North Koreans to be an unacceptably costly loss of face.\textsuperscript{299} Furthermore, the level of transparency that the


\textsuperscript{296}Quoted in Ibid., 60.

\textsuperscript{297}Mazarr, \textit{North Korea and the Bomb}, 117.

\textsuperscript{298}Wit et al., \textit{Going Critical}, 55-56.

IAEA demanded would have led to the exposure of the full extent of North Korea’s nuclear activities. This would have led to two possibilities: either Pyongyang would have to reveal that it had acquired weapons-grade nuclear material (and thus violated its international obligations under the NPT), or this level of inspections would have revealed to the US the weakness of North Korea’s nuclear program. As the North Korean negotiators saw U.S. uncertainty about the status of the DPRK’s nuclear program as a major negotiating asset, they were unwilling to trade this for what they perceived to be limited concessions from the Clinton Administration. Nonetheless, the June 1993 talks turned out to be the key to the reassurance of North Korea, averting their threat to withdraw from the NPT.\\footnote{300Wit et al., Going Critical, 57.}

A combination of several elements enabled the deal with North Korea to return to the NPT. A complex multi-party deal was struck (China agreed not to veto a U.N. Security Council resolution on North Korea in exchange for South Korea’s acquiescence to the United States conducting bilateral talks with North Korea) that opened up a bargaining space which was then exploited by the United States. The United States offered the DPRK both international prestige and security benefits – bilateral talks that would treat North Korea as an equal; a willingness to address security concerns – while keeping the threat of disincentives (the possibility for future economic sanctions). Along with the IAEAs retreat on inspections, these tactics managed to get North Korea to suspend its withdrawal from the NPT.
5.4.1.2 Back and Forth Negotiations, June - September 1993

It proved difficult for Gallucci and Kang to achieve further progress in the aftermath of the Joint Statement of June 1993. Over the later part of June and early part of July, the IAEA variously pushed for additional inspections or acquiesced to whatever North Korea was willing to give them. And at this point, the DPRK was not in a giving mood – they refused to entertain the idea of readmitting IAEA inspectors until after talks with the United States resumed as scheduled in mid-July. Even though this was one of the principal U.S. goals articulated during the June talks in New York, the DPRK made it clear later fundamental disagreements persisted.301

These dynamics were also evident in later in July as Clinton visited South Korea. While there he warned that “it would be pointless for (North Korea) to try to develop nuclear weapons because if they ever use them it would be the end of their country.”302 As bilateral talks resumed only a couple days later Kang excoriated Gallucci for President Clinton’s remarks, claiming the U.S. had pledged not to threaten North Korea, “yet Clinton had publicly threatened them with annihilation while standing in military garb on their very border.”303

Although Clinton’s statement was primarily meant to reassure Seoul of the continued U.S. security commitment, it was nonetheless interpreted by the North Korean leadership as a veiled threat to attack North Korea with nuclear weapons. Providing

301 Some attribute this to differing interpretations of the outcome of the June agreement. The United States saw the DPRK, having now not withdrawn from the NPT, as still bound by its requirements for inspections and other requisite obligations of membership. The DPRK, on the other hand, saw their not withdrawing as a deferral of sorts, leaving them somewhat in a legal limbo and therefore not bound by the NPT requirements. For more on this point, See Mazarr, North Korea and the Bomb, 125-26.

302 Quoted Oberdorfer, The Two Koreas, 288.

303 Ibid., 288-89.
reassurances to allies and making credible threats of sanctions and the potential deployment and employment of military force, it turns out, is a fine line to walk—one that sometimes produces mixed signals. As Mazarr notes, in response “North Korea had proved itself to be fully capable of temporarily severing dialogue in response to a single idle remark.”

President Clinton and others in his administration were reluctant to continue this give and take—the door to readmitting inspectors would be subtly cracked and then slammed back in their face.

This pattern continued into the fall of 1993. IAEA inspectors returned to North Korea on August 3, but again were not allowed to visit the two suspected nuclear waste sites. South Korea attempted to hold out an olive branch and propose resuming the bilateral ROK-DPRK talks, which North Korea rejected (unless Team Spirit were to be cancelled). The U.S., in turn, told North Korea in mid-September that it would not resume high-level bilateral talks until North Korea resumed dialogue with both South Korea and the IAEA (working-level talks had continued in the meantime).

In response, North Korea threatened to withdraw again from the NPT on September 22.

5.4.1.3 Increased Tensions and the Deployment of U.S. Forces, October 1993 - March 1994

The pattern of U.S. and IAEA pressure on the DPRK continued as 1993 came to a close. As talks closed in September, the DPRK failed to meet its initial obligations as agreed to in Geneva. At the general meeting of the IAEA on September 27, Director

304 Mazarr, *North Korea and the Bomb*, 126.
305 Wit et al., *Going Critical*, 79-84.
306 Ibid., 87.
Hans Blix put North Korea’s refusal to allow inspections at the top of the IAEA’s agenda; meanwhile, the commander of U.S. and allied forces in South Korea warned North Korea against developing nuclear weapons. General Gary Luck, Commander-in-Chief of United States Forces Korea/Combined Forces Command Korea, pressed the Clinton administration for more Patriot missile batteries to protect U.S. forces and bases in South Korea.307

This requested deployment (eventually approved) was part of a broader effort to strengthen coercive diplomacy. As Bill Perry recounts, “We were willing to risk war. We were not willing to initiate a war over this, and we did not believe it would be necessary. We felt if we could ratchet up on diplomatic pressure, we could probably stop this from happening. So we set off on a course of what could fairly be called “coercive diplomacy.” It was diplomacy, but it was diplomacy that was backed with a very credible threat of military force.”308 This was also backed by the Defense Secretary’s call for tough sanctions should North Korea fail to comply with the NPT and the agreement reached in Geneva.309 And President Clinton continued to leave open the option of using force there.310

With the DPRK continuing to stonewall inspectors, the IAEA moved back towards its previous hard-line policy on November 2 by refusing to send an inspection team unless North Korea permitted inspections of all sites, and the next day Les Aspin

307Wit et al., Going Critical, 101-07.
309Wit et al., Going Critical, 100.
310Interview with Tim Russert and Tom Brokaw. 1993. Meet the Press, November 7. Clinton even admitted a month prior, in an interview with Time magazine, noted that “You may actually lose some political mileage if there is no actual force: if bombs aren’t dropped and people aren’t shot and no one dies.” See Interview with President Bill Clinton. 1993. “Blending Force with Diplomacy.” Time, October 31, 36.
added back two requirements for further U.S. talks with North Korea: opening the
two suspect sites and opening dialogue with South Korea. North Korea countered
with its own deal a few weeks later, which excluded talks with South Korea. South
Korea promptly rejected it. **North Korea in response again threatened on
November 29 to leave the NPT.**

Talk of potential economic sanctions continued to circulate without raising the
usual amount of North Korean ire. However, the announcement on January 26 that
Patriot missiles would be deployed in South Korea escalated the conflict further,
which was promptly protested by North Korea, who threatened again five days later
that they might withdraw from the NPT, warning that it was prepared to renego on
all promises if the deployment continued.\(^ {311} \) President Clinton was aware that the
deployment of Patriot missiles could be seen as provocative by Pyongyang. However,
when weighed against the DPRK’s continued disregard for the NPT and previously
negotiated agreements, the president believed the threat of force to be the next logical
step in the administration’s policy of “gradual escalation.”\(^ {312} \)

Pyongyang interpreted this news as evidence that the U.S. was preparing for
more hostile action; it necessitated an assertive DPRK response. On January 30, Py-
ongyang released a press statement referring to the proposed deployment of Patriot
missiles as “an unpardonable, grave military challenge.”\(^ {313} \) **The North Korean gov-
ernment also threatened to withdraw from the NPT (again), and placed its**

\(^ {311} \) Oberdofer, *The Two Koreas*, 300.

\(^ {312} \) Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, 102.

military on a heightened alert.\textsuperscript{314} The DPRK publicly admonished the United States, claiming that it would not accept any pressure tactics from Washington, then followed up by informing the IAEA that it rejected nuclear safeguards inspections. The U.S., along with the United Kingdom, France and Russia all threatened sanctions against North Korea if IAEA inspectors were not allowed back by February 21. Furthermore, Pyongyang insisted on cancelation of Team Spirit as a precondition for permitting further IAEA access to the Yongbyon facility.\textsuperscript{315}

The Clinton administration, however, created a sense of urgency with its ultimatums regarding sanctions and its plans for continuing military exercises in the region. Tension only mounted further. Though North Korea granted access to IAEA inspectors to some of its nuclear facilities, it continued to deny access to the suspected plutonium reprocessing facility at Yongbyon. The DPRK leadership believed that they were being forced to surrender their main instrument of leverage – the uncertain status of its nuclear material – without gaining a quid pro quo as regards its own security fears over the Team Spirit military exercise.\textsuperscript{316} The Clinton administration, however, did not relent.

As the IAEA inspectors left on the March 15 without fully inspecting all seven sites declared nuclear sites, the United States canceled the resumption of talks and resumed planning for Team Spirit. With tensions escalating between Washington, Pyongyang and Seoul, inter-Korean talks on March 19 also collapsed when South Korean negotiator Song Young Dae threatened to seek sanctions against Pyongyang. His North Korean counterpart, Park Yong Su, retaliated by warning that “Seoul is

\textsuperscript{314}Wit et al. Going Critical, 126-27.
\textsuperscript{315}Ibid., 134, 136.
\textsuperscript{316}Oberdorfer, The Two Koreas, 303.
not far from here. If a war breaks out, it will be a sea of fire.”

Two days later after the sea of fire remark, North Korea again threatened to pull out of the NPT if the IAEA were to refer the North Korean issue to the Security Council and Team Spirit were to go as planned.

5.4.1.4 The Road to Agreement, March - June 1994

The same day that North Korea made its threat to pull out of the NPT, Clinton announced that the Patriot missiles would arrive in South Korea in about 30 days, and the United States presented a draft resolution to the Security Council calling for North Korea to accept additional inspections (without sanctions). The DPRK objected strongly to the U.N. resolution and later that April announced plans to shortly begin refueling its primary reactor at Yongbyon and refusing IAEA inspectors. The very next day, Defense Secretary Bill Perry announced that the Team Spirit Military exercises would be postponed until November at the earliest.

On May 2, the United States announced that they would abort all talks if North Korea removed the fuel rods without IAEA inspectors; the IAEA followed the next

Ibid., 304; and Wit et al., Going Critical, 149.


Wit et al., Going Critical, 176. As the Secretary noted at the time, “We must understand that every course of action we could take has consequences. Acquiescing now to an active North Korean nuclear program would invite a future crisis. Taking military action now would invite an immediate crisis. Even the course we’ve chosen – a course which combines diplomacy with military preparedness – is not entirely free of risk. It is possible that North Korea could misperceive these efforts as provocations. We must face that possibility, comparing that risk to the far greater risk of letting North Korea develop the capability of producing a nuclear arsenal or the risk inherent in not maintaining the readiness of our forces.” Quoted in Ibid., 176.
day, saying that it would be compelled to take the issue to the Security Council. On May 3, North Korea rejected the IAEA’s demand. That same day, Defense Secretary Perry briefed Clinton on the deployment of attack helicopters and mechanized infantry to the Korean peninsula, again further increasing the offensive capabilities of US forces in South Korea. Working talks continued with the United States nonetheless, although the United States threatened again to break off all talks. North Korea announced on May 12 that they would begin discharging the reactor immediately, and began removing the rods on the 14th.

The next day, the Clinton administration threatened to seek sanctions if North Korea removed the fuel from the rods in accordance with the agreement reached in New York almost a year before; Bill Perry declared the United States in a crisis. By the 27th of May, North Korea had removed almost half of the fuel in the reactor core without tracking the location of the rods. The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution on the May 30 urging that rods be set aside. On June 3, the Clinton Administration began planning for the imposition of sanctions. Just two days later, North Korea again threatened to leave the NPT. On June 8, the DPRK declared that “sanctions are war, and there is no mercy in war.” On June 10, the Clinton Administration began planning for the deployment of substantial reinforcements to South Korea.

321 Sigal, *Disarming Strangers*, 112.
322 Wit et al., *Going Critical*, 176.
326 Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas*, 311; and Wit et al., *Going Critical*, 213.
On June 12, lead U.S. negotiator Bob Gallucci threatened to implement escalating sanctions. In response, Pyongyang withdrew from the IAEA, and reiterated that sanctions.\textsuperscript{327} On 14 June, Washington began to contemplate the “Osiraq option” – in other words, a pre-emptive air strike to destroy the Yongbyon reactor.\textsuperscript{328} Two days later, the United States presented the four other permanent members of the Security Council with a resolution calling for sanctions on North Korea. Russia balked, however, and no resolution was passed. \textbf{Nonetheless, the DPRK perceived this to be a highly provocative action and summarily threatened to withdraw from the NPT.}

During the same time period, a second diplomatic track opened. On June 9, former President Jimmy Carter announced the next day that he would travel to North Korea. Just a few days prior the former president reached out to Clinton to express concern about the trajectory of the North Korean nuclear crisis. He believed a negotiated settlement was still possible and sought permission to travel to Pyongyang to seek a compromise.\textsuperscript{329} Ultimately, and against the counsel of some of his top advisers such as Secretary of State Christopher, President Clinton authorized Carter’s trip.

He arrived on June 15th; the next day, he met with President Kim Il Sung, who agreed to allow IAEA inspectors to remain at the Yongbyon reactor and to allow upkeep of monitoring equipment.\textsuperscript{330} Moreover, Kim Il Sung declared Pyongyang

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{327}Wit et al., \textit{Going Critical}, 210; and 1994. “U.S. Plans Escalating North Korea Sanctions.” \textit{Reuters News}, June 12.
\item\textsuperscript{328}Wit et al., \textit{Going Critical}, 208-14.
\item\textsuperscript{329}Ibid., 204-08.
\item\textsuperscript{330}For a more detailed account of these meetings, see Oberdorfer, \textit{The Two Koreas}, 326-32; and Wit et al., \textit{Going Critical}, 221-26.
\end{itemize}}

233
willing to “dismantle its graphite-moderated reactors if the United States would help it get new light-water reactors.”\textsuperscript{331} Former President Carter intimated he felt there was willingness in Washington to consider such an option if negotiations restarted. He was so convinced that we went on CNN and proclaimed “What is needed now is a very simple decision just to let the already constituted delegations from North Korea and the United States have their third meeting, which has been postponed. That’s all that’s needed now.”\textsuperscript{332} On the 23rd, North Korea not only announced that it would comply with its NPT obligations, but would freeze its entire nuclear program. Four months later, on October 21, the United States and North Korea signed a formal accord based on the negotiated settlement by Carter – the Agreed Framework.

At the height of the crisis, North Korea repeatedly threatened to leave the NPT while first warning of, then carrying out, the discharge of fuel rods from their nuclear reactor. Nonetheless, the DPRK was willing to return to negotiations if they received necessary security assurances – no sanctions, no Team Spirit exercises, and no U.S. operated nuclear weapons in South Korea – from the United States. Moreover, the ability of the DPRK to continually skirt the threat of sanctions was diminishing. The Clinton administration successfully managed to put together a consensus on action for sanctions against the DPRK in early June and followed through on its earlier promises to cancel talks if Pyongyang failed to live up to NPT requirements. Military threats (such as Clinton’s and Perry’s comments) did not seem to provoke a particular reaction from North Korea. Rather, the combination of the two former elements lent

\textsuperscript{331}Wit et al., \textit{Going Critical}, 224.

\textsuperscript{332}Oberdorfer, \textit{The Two Koreas}, 331.
more credibility to the threat of sanctions; by getting China, Russia and South Korea on board, the deterrent threat became credible to implement, since North Korea could no longer expect to escape the sanctions through threatening South Korea or circumventing the sanctions through Chinese and Russian support.\footnote{Wit et al., \textit{Going Critical}, 211-12.}

\section{The Public’s Preferences}

As tensions mounted in late 1993, polling organizations began querying the public regarding their feelings toward North Korea’s nuclear weapons program and potential U.S. policy responses. In December 1993 and January 1994, just as the Clinton Administration increased its tough talk regarding the potential use of force against North Korea, the public was moving in the other direction. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below present the public’s support for alternative policy options, including the use of force.

In a Gallup Poll conducted in early January 1994, just as the Clinton administration was making public its threats to pursue sanction via the U.N. Security Council and deploy Patriot missile batteries to protect U.S. forces, bases, and key ports in South Korea, found less than 1 percent of the public believed North Korea to be the most important problem facing the nation. When it came to laying out their priorities, the public placed 18 issues ahead of North Korea, including the environment. Similar results were found in December and September polls the previous year.

As the crisis escalated in the early months of 1994, additionally polling turned up similar responses. In a February Times/CNN poll respondents were asked “Do you think the United States has a great deal at stake in what happens in [North Korea], or don’t you think so? 45 percent responded that the United States had a great deal
If North Korea does not allow its nuclear production facilities to be inspected, to confirm whether it is building a nuclear bomb, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose the following actions.

Figure 5.4: Public Support for North Korea Policy Options, December 1993
If North Korea does not allow its nuclear production facilities to be inspected to confirm whether it is building a nuclear bomb, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose the following actions.

![Bar chart showing public support for North Korea policy options.]

Source: NBC News/Wall Street Journal
January 18, 1994

Figure 5.5: Public Support for North Korea Policy Options, January 1994
at stake in North Korea, 41 percent said they “don’t think so,” and 14 percent were not sure. A few weeks later in an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, respondents were posed the following option: “If North Korea does not allow its nuclear production facilities to be inspected to confirm whether it is building a nuclear bomb, please tell me whether you would favor or oppose the following actions. Increasing the number of U.S. troops in the region.” 44 percent were found in favor of increasing troops, 51 percent opposed, and 5 percent were unsure.

Americans were seeing and hearing a lot about North Korea in early 1994. From public pronouncements from key Clinton administration officials to searing op-eds from Charles Krauthammer, Brent Scowcroft, and Bill Safire, the public was bombarded with the threat that North Korea posed to U.S. interests in the region and the increasing likelihood that the use of military force would be required to resolve the crisis.334

Later that year, in June, the public was asked, “If North Korea does not allow its nuclear production facilities to be inspected after we have imposed economic sanctions, would you favor or oppose launching a military strike to destroy North Korea’s ability to build a nuclear bomb?” 44 percent were found to be in favor of military strikes, 45 percent opposed, and 11 percent were unsure.

All of this, too, may be giving the public too much credit. As others have noted, one of the chief artifacts of polling data is inflated awareness of the issue simply by having been asked about it. Whereas, as Mitchell Reiss writes,

Unlike Operation Desert Shield/Storm, which addressed a clear-cut, immediate threat to a vital national interest easily understood by most Americans - oil supplies - the North Korean dispute was in many ways

much harder to comprehend. The DPRK had violated an international agreement that was virtually unknown to the American people. If Pyongyang posed a longer-term risk to stability in Northeast Asia and more generally to international security by its export of nuclear technology and materials to countries around the world, this was but a distant and still hypothetical threat.\footnote{Mitchell Reiss. 1995. \textit{Bridged Ambition: Why Countries Constrain Their Nuclear Capabilities.} Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 281-82.}

Again, most opinion polls at the time of the key events highlighted in the case reflect a public that was, if interested at all in the matter, most concerned with finding a negotiated solution to the conflict. At most, they were willing to support U.N.-backed economic sanctions. This is hardly the overly patriotic and war-favoring public required by the audience costs argument. In the end, the Agreed Framework was announced approximately two weeks prior to the November mid-term elections in 1994 – hardly a sign that President Clinton feared losing political capital over having reached a negotiated solution with North Korea.

5.4.1.6 The 1996 Presidential Election Outcome

5.4.1.7 Analysis

Opinions at the time remained divided as to whether the Clinton administration was fully prepared to implement any of the various military options. However, according to the audience costs argument, there should have been little ambiguity – the president would have to continue to escalate or execute one of the threatened options unless his wanted to risk his political future for issuing empty threats. Moreover, let’s recall that the Clinton administration on several occasions also made explicit threats to impose economic sanctions on North Korea should the continue to cultivate a nuclear weapons program – this was an act the North Koreans publicly equated to an
Figure 5.6: 1996 Presidential Election Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EC</th>
<th>EC%</th>
<th>PV</th>
<th>PV%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill Clinton</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>47,402,357</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Dole</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
<td>39,198,755</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EC = Electoral College; EC% = percentage of the Electoral College; PV = popular vote; PV% = percentage of the popular vote
act of war. However, as Ted Koppel asserted on ABC’s *Nightline*, the Clinton administration “is becoming notorious for making [threats] against countries all over the world, making threats and then backing down.”

The Republican Congress criticized the agreement and accused the Clinton administration of succumbing to nuclear blackmail. Many believed that North Korea was fleecing the United States – securing immediate gains in oil shipments and diplomatic recognition while all the while planning to cheat the deal and retain a secret nuclear program.

Moreover, had former President Carter not succeeded, President Clinton’s preferred military option most likely would have authorized. As Wit et al. recount: “...on June 16 the president would have authorized the largest proposed buildup, sending 50,000 more Americans to defend South Korea. That was the recommendation of his senior military advisers – Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili – and none of the other principals had either the credentials or any apparent inclination to argue for anything less. The president would have gone on television to explain to the nation why American troops were being deployed to the distant Korean Peninsula, and why the specter of nuclear weapons’ proliferation there justified the most forceful American response. Counter-to-fact, had Carter not gone to Pyongyang, would the most public and overwhelming of the Clinton administration’s threats awoken the patriotism in the American public?

---


338 Wit et al., *Going Critical*, 243.
In a Time/CNN poll conducted that same month, when asked, “Do you think it is worth risking war with North Korea to prevent North Korea from manufacturing nuclear weapons, or don’t you feel that way?” 48 responded “yes” they felt that way, 42 percent did not, 11 percent were unsure. And in a July NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, Americans were asked, “If North Korea does not allow its nuclear production facilities to be inspected after we have imposed economic sanctions, would you favor or oppose launching a military strike to destroy North Korea’s ability to build a nuclear bomb?” 44 percent responded favorably, 45 percent were opposed, and 11 percent were unsure. It seems unlikely that the American public would have been banging the drums of war.

5.4.2 George W. Bush and North Korea (2002-4)

When in 2002, U.S. negotiators reportedly presented North Korean officials with evidence of a clandestine uranium enrichment program, DPRK officials first confirmed this fact privately, then denied it publicly. The conflict quickly led to the breakdown of the Agreed Framework. The Bush administration argued that North Korea was in “material breach” of its obligations and, after agreement with South Korea, Japan, and the European Union, stopped the next shipment of heavy fuel oil due to North Korea under the terms of the Framework. In response, North Korea kicked out international monitors, broke the seals at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, and restarted its reactor and reprocessing plant after an eight-year freeze.

North Korea set off another nuclear crisis with its eventual admission of its renewed nuclear program. Subsequent to (again) withdrawing from the NPT, North Korea tampered with stored fuel rods, which are a source of weapons-grade plutonium;
announced plans to restart the experimental reactor; and conducted ballistic missile tests. All of these suggest deliberate and purposeful moves in the direction of producing nuclear weapons. In response, the Bush administration made plain that it would not negotiate with North Korea until it halted all activity related to weapons production. Over the course of about 16 months, the tension between Washington and Pyongyang escalated to a crisis. Ultimately, China (with the support of the United States) intervened to provided a diplomatic avenue short of war in the form of six-party talks.

The case below traces these events in detail, examining in particular the Bush Administration’s threats to use sanctions and force against North Korea in order to compel them to halt their nuclear weapons program. Particular attention is paid to the publicly issued threats, the American public’s support or opposition to those actions, the crisis outcome, and the outcome of the 2004 presidential election. If the audience costs argument is to hold true in this case, there are three possible outcomes consistent with the audience costs argument: 1, President Bush publicly issues a threat against North Korea, the public cares deeply the issue at stake, and North Korea backs down; 2, President Bush publicly issues a threat against North Korea, the public cares deeply about the issue at stake, North Korea does not back down, the President carries out the threat in order to compel North Korea to given up its weapons program; or 3, President Bush publicly issues a threat against North Korea, the public cares deeply about the issue at stake, North Korea does not back down, the president does not carry out the publicly issued threat, and the president is subsequently voted out of office for engaging the national honor and backing down.

The Presidential Agency Model, on the other hand, expects otherwise. If the Presidential Agency Model applies in this case, there are two possible outcomes consistent with the model’s expectations: 1, President Bush issues a threat against North Korea, the public does not monitor the president thoroughly and cares less about the issue than the president, North Korea does not back down, and the president is not voted out of office because of his failure to carry out the threat issued; and 2, President Bush issues a threat against North Korea, the public does not monitor the president thoroughly and cares less about the issue than the president, North Korea backs down from the threat issued.

I discuss the second nuclear crisis in a slightly different manner from the first, in part because a thorough historical and political account of this crisis has yet to be published. As with the previous case, though, in order to assess the congruence of events – President Bush’s threats and carrots, the resultant DPRK behavior, and the American public’s evaluation of these events – I break the case into three phases: 1, laying the groundwork for conflict, January 2001 - January 2002; and 2, DPRK named to the “Axis of Evil” and the run-up to the crisis, January - October 2002; and 3, the threat of conflict from October 2002 - May 2003.

5.4.2.1 Laying the Groundwork, January 2001 - January 2002

The DPRK’s nuclear intentions remained unclear after more than a decade of agreements, negotiations, and coercive bargaining. The new administration expressed doubt very quickly both about the Agreed Framework and North Korea itself, freezing ties with North Korea while they completed a policy review. When George W. Bush took office in January 2001, the hard line position toward North Korea had been
expected given the administrations highly skeptical view of prior Clinton administration policy initiatives toward Pyongyang.\textsuperscript{340} Bush issued a statement on June 6, 2001, outlining the United States’ new policy objectives over North Korea’s nuclear and missile program, as well as its conventional forces. Bush also stated that if North Korea took positive actions in response to his policy, the United States would be willing to ease sanctions (which had been in place since the later part of the 1990s). This was far from the policy continuity with the Clinton administration hoped for by Kim Jong Il.\textsuperscript{341}

The administration called for a “comprehensive approach,” encompassing “a broad agenda that includes missile, nuclear, and conventional force issues and humanitarian concerns. . . . [I]f the DPRK takes serious steps to improve relations with the United States, we are prepared to expand our efforts to help the North Korean people, ease sanctions, and take other political steps.”\textsuperscript{342} From the outset the administration felt that Pyongyang had taken advantage of the Agreed Framework for too long. Thus, the administration sought an approach that “improved implementation of the Agreed Framework,” “verifiable constraints” on North Korean missile development, and “a


less threatening conventional military posture.”\textsuperscript{343} As the United States put any near-term dialogue with the DPRK on hold, Pyongyang was clear that it was fully prepared for “both dialogue and war.”\textsuperscript{344}

In March 2001, the Bush administration also cast public doubt on the Sunshine Policy,\textsuperscript{345} insisting on the necessity of a policy review before any further Unite States-North Korea negotiations could take place. On March 7, President Bush openly states his distrust of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il: “I do have some skepticism about the leader of North Korea. We're not certain as to whether or not they're keeping all terms of all agreements.”\textsuperscript{346} On March 15, Pyongyang accused the Bush administration of “escalating its provocative and reckless diatribe.”\textsuperscript{347}

In the first official U.S. DPRK meeting since the Bush administration entered office, Special Envoy Charles Pritchard outlined this new policy and requested a meeting with the North Korean Vice Foreign Minister.\textsuperscript{348} The North Korean response on June 18 was to continue to insist that the main issue to be discussed between the two sides was compensation for the lack of electricity due to the delay in the U.S. provision of two light-water nuclear reactors. Pyongyang continued throughout the summer to argue that determining the agenda of the talks before meeting was

\textsuperscript{343}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{345}A policy between North and South Korea aimed at achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula through reconciliation and cooperation with the North.
\textsuperscript{348}Alex Wagner. 2001. “Bush Outlines Resuming Talks with North Korea.” \textit{Arms Control Today}, \url{http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2001 07-08/northkoreajul aug01.asp}. 246
equivalent to putting preconditions on talks, and contrary to equal treatment. In their minds, it was the United States who was in violation of the terms of the Agreed Framework.

The events of September 11th and the resultant conflict in Afghanistan on served to increase tensions between the U.S. and the DPRK. Redeployments of aircraft from the USS Kitty Hawk to South Korean air bases prior to deploying the carrier to the Indian Ocean in support of operations in Afghanistan were met with criticism.349 This was followed by a vague threat when Bush warned North Korea “not to think that because we happen to be engaged in Afghanistan we will not be prepared and ready to fulfill our end of our agreement with the South Korean government.” He also stated that “I’ve been disappointed in Kim Jong Il not rising to the occasion, being so suspicious, so secretive.”350 This was only the beginning of escalatory rhetoric from both sides.

5.4.2.2 The Run-up to Crisis, January - October 2002

Relations continued to worsen through October 2002, as North Korea was identified as a potential target in the Nuclear Posture Review, part of an “axis of evil” in President Bush’s state of the union address in January, and as a “rogue state” in the National Security Strategy. In June, the Bush administration finally attempted to schedule a high-level meeting with North Korea. However, a naval dispute in late 2001. “U.S. arms buildup in S. Korea condemned.” Korean Central New Agency, October, http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/2001/200110/news10/21.htm

June scuttled any chance of talks until October, which were preceded by administra-
tion officials briefing allies on evidence that North Korea had been pursuing an highly
enriched uranium program.

A succession of policy pronouncements by the administration, beginning with
President Bush’s State of the Union address characterizing North Korea as part
of the “axis of evil,” diminished further the prospects for renewed high-
level exchanges with Pyongyang. On June 10 Colin Powell said, “First, the
North must get out of the proliferation business and eliminate long-range missiles
that threaten other countries...The North needs to move toward a less threatening
conventional military posture...and living up to its past pledges to implement basic
confidence-building measures.”351 Other members of the administration, including
National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice352 and Undersecretary of State for Arms
Control and International Security John Bolton, also criticized North Korea around
the same time for conducting covert programs for weapons of mass destruction and
missile proliferation.353

As the outlines of the Bush administrations policy toward the DPRK became
more clear over the first few months of 2002, Pyongyang became more unnerved.
In addition to the rhetorical escalation, official, high-level contacts had diminished
(near nonexistent at this point) – access was something prized by the North Koreans


352Rice had made an earlier statement that made plain her views on North Korea. In a 2000
Foreign Affairs article she wrote, “if they do acquire WMD, their weapons will be unusable because
any attempt to use them will bring national obliteration. See Condoleezza Rice. 2000. “Campaign

Times, August 29.
and something they felt was guaranteed by the Agreed Framework. As Johnathan Pollack characterized the relationship: “Various North Korean officials had grown increasingly frustrated by what they deemed inattention, unreasonable slights, or outright threats by the Bush administration.” They also saw the ambiguity created by the postponement of safeguards inspections as an important bargaining chip, and regarded the protocol defining when such inspections could be done as sacrosanct. The new demand by the Bush administration to move IAEA inspections forward only increased North Korean suspicions. Pyongyang saw the Bush administration’s new policy as a major change, “an attempt of the U.S. to disarm the DPRK through negotiations.”

On June 29, North and South Korean naval forces exchanged gunfire in disputed waters west of the Korean peninsula, resulting in four deaths and sunk ship on the South Korean side and about 30 deaths on the North Korean side. This brought to a halt diplomatic efforts to arrange a meeting between the United States and North Korea. This only made the North Koreans more sensitive to other events; for example, the July 14 missile interceptor test by the United States and the fourteenth sub-critical nuclear test carried out by the U.S. at its Nevada test site were not taken lightly. North Korea also bristled at the slow pace of construction on the

355 Ibid.
two light-water nuclear reactors promised them under the Agreed Framework. In August the DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman warned that “the Agreed Framework stands at the crossroads of abrogation or preservation due to the substantial delay in the provision of the LWRs.”

Despite the increasing tensions between Washington and Pyongyang, no overt nuclear moves occurred during this time, although evidence indicates that during the first year of the Bush administration, North Korea accelerated their uranium enrichment program. The CIA reported in its July-December 2001 report on the progress of various proliferators that “The North has been seeking centrifuge-related materials in large quantities to support a uranium enrichment program. It also obtained equipment suitable for use in uranium feed and withdrawal systems.”

In October 2002 Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, James Kelly, accompanied by a delegation of Bush administration officials, set off for two days of talks in Pyongyang with their North Korean counterparts. The Bush administration felt that the Clinton administration had been far too solicitous to North Korea and that additional, more aggressive steps were required to achieve verifiable and lasting threat reduction. Gary Samore aptly described this approach as demanding more and offering less than the previous U.S. administration. This trip was the first effort on the part of the administration to let North Korea know that they were indeed watching.

359 Quoted in 2002. “North Korea’s Stance Regarding the Agreed Framework.” Vantage Point (Seoul), November, 15.


Kelly wasted no time and quickly informed the North Koreans of U.S. intelligence evidence regarding North Korean activity around their uranium enrichment facilities and that the U.S. suspected North Korea of having abrogated its responsibilities under the Agreed Framework.\footnote{A special, untitled report by the CIA, released on November 19, 2002, stated “we assess that North Korea embarked on the effort to develop a centrifuge-based uranium enrichment program about two years ago.” Central Intelligence Agency Nonproliferation Center. 2002. Untitled CIA Estimate to Congress, November 19. \url{http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/dprk/nuke/cia111902.html}.} Though the North Koreans initially denied all accusations,\footnote{The North Koreans would later deny these accusations again. In December, North Korea denied it had acknowledged the existence of a uranium enrichment program, claiming that Kang had merely asserted North Korea’s right to have such a program. For a more complete account, see Selig Harrison. 2005. “Did North Korea Cheat?” \textit{Foreign Affairs}, 84:January/February.} the next day they came clean to Secretary Kelly that, indeed, they had started to enrich uranium.\footnote{Assistant Secretary Kelly provided a comprehensive accounting of his meeting on the PBS \textit{NewsHour} with Jim Lehrer on Nov. 5, 2002, in an interview with Margaret Warner, in which he detailed his conversations in Pyongyang. \url{http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/military/july-dec02/}.}

\textbf{5.4.2.3 The Threat of Conflict, October 2002 - April 2003}

North Korea’s uranium enrichment program was interpreted as a substantial breach of trust. Although technically not a breach of the Agreed Framework which was concerned only with plutonium, it was nevertheless incompatible with commitments under the Agreed Framework, and it did violate the NPT. President Bush subsequently demanded that North Korea halt all nuclear weapons activity as a precondition to the resumption of high-level diplomatic dialogue.\footnote{The Bush administration preferred dialogue to negotiation because there was to be no negotiation until North Korea halted its nuclear weapons program. Any discussions leading up to this objective therefore considered dialogue as there was no negotiating this precondition.} Bush used a multilateral approach without ruling out economic and military sanctions and employed a hard line approach to North Korea. The main components of Bush’s policy include:

(1) terminating the Agreed Framework; (2) no negotiations with North Korea until
it dismantles its nuclear program; (3) assembling an international coalition to apply economic pressure on North Korea; (4) planning for future economic sanctions and military interdiction against North Korea; and (5) warning North Korea not to reprocess nuclear weapons-grade plutonium, and asserting that “all options are open,” including military options.\textsuperscript{366}

Also notable is the reinvigoration of the “axis of evil” phrase after the October 2002 meeting. The phrase had several effects on the North Koreans: 1, it linked them together with the Iraqis and the Iranians, thus making US policy towards these other countries even more salient than it would have been; 2, the phrase itself suggests the necessity of regime change; while a “rogue” might be brought back into the international community, an “evil” regime requires removal; and 3, it could and probably was used by hard-line elements in North Korea as a reason to reject diplomatic solutions.

In November 2002, the IAEA adopted a resolution requesting North Korea clarify its reported uranium-enrichment program. Pyongyang rejected the resolution, alleging that the IAEA’s position was biased in favor of American interests. North Korea announced that it was reactivating the nuclear facilities it had frozen under the Agreed Framework since 1994, ordered international monitors to leave the country, and later withdrew from the NPT.\textsuperscript{367} They also accused the United States of violating the Agreed Framework because of the failure to deliver the light water reactor on time and to provide formal assurances that it would not threaten or use nuclear weapons against North Korea.\textsuperscript{368} At the end of November,

\textsuperscript{366}For a more detailed explanation of the planning that went into each of these options, see


\textsuperscript{368}North Korea’s (implausible) claim, however, was that restarting the reactor was required in order to produce electricity to compensate for the fuel oil suspension.
the IAEA called on North Korea to cooperate with them to settle its safeguards commit-
ments and clarify reports of the uranium enrichment program, to which the North
Korean Foreign Minister replied that due to threats from the United States, it could
not, and accused the IAEA of being a pawn of the United States.\footnote{369}

In December 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell said, “We cannot suddenly
say ‘Gee, we’re so scared. Let’s have a negotiation because we want to appease your
misbehavior.’ This kind of action cannot be rewarded.” Secretary of Defense Donald
Rumsfeld remarked that month that the North Korean leaders were “idiotic . . .
We are capable of . . . swiftly defeating [it]. Let there be no doubt about it.” The
next month, a senior U.S. official was quoted as saying, “First is regime change. It
need not necessarily be military, but it could lead to that.”\footnote{370} Moreover, in arguing
against direct talks with North Korea, Vice President Cheney was even more blunt:
“I have been charged by the president with making sure that none of the tyrannies
in the world are negotiated with. We don’t negotiate with evil; we defeat it.”\footnote{371} On
December 21, North Korea began removing seals and disabling cameras
at the 5 mega-watt reactor site; followed by the storage facility for the
8000 spent fuel rods the next day, and the main reprocessing laboratory
the day after that.\footnote{372}


\footnote{370}Quoted in Kang, “The Unavoidable Crisis in North Korea,” 497-98.

\footnote{371}Quoted in Warren P. Strobel. 2003.Administration Struggles to Find Right Approach to N.
Korea Talks.” \textit{Knight Ridder}, December 20.

the right course for now, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld warned North Korea not to assume
that the United States was incapable of confronting it militarily, even as Washington prepares for
possible war with Iraq.”

253
Pyongyang nonetheless signaled interest in entering discussions with the United States, but the Bush administration did not want to enter dialogue with North Korea “under duress.” Rather, in early 2003 the Bush administration and the IAEA sought to place further pressure on the North Koreans, referring the issue of their possible withdrawal from the NPT to the U.N. Security Council. As IAEA Director Mohamed El-Baradei claimed: “The current situation clearly sets a dangerous precedent because what we are trying to do it to make sure that the NPT becomes universal in character rather than open the door for countries to walk away from nonproliferation and arms control obligations.”373 The Bush administration was not quite so worried in this regard. Indeed, when expressing their apprehension over the consequences of North Korea’s nuclear weapons program rarely did these included concern for the fate of the NPT and the regime it supports. The administration instead placed its strategy on the need for “a full range of operational capabilities” should the IAEA, NPT, and broader nonproliferation efforts fail.374

On January 13, the Bush administration offered its first significant positive inducement: Secretary of State Kelly said during a visit to South Korea that the United States was willing to talk, and mentioned potential economic assistance to North Korea after its nuclear program is dismantled.375 More moderate voices within in the administration, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell and his Deputy, Richard


Armitage, continued to press for continued diplomacy and to resume negotiations. Instead, the administration backed up it carrot with a couple sticks: the USS Carl Vinnison left its home port in late January bound for the Sea of Japan in order to monitor developments in and around Pyongyang. Approximately a week later, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld placed 24 long-range bombers on alert for possible employment on February 3, and labeled North Korea a “terrorist regime.” North Korea condemned the aforementioned actions and on February announced that it had resumed normal operations at the Yongbyon reactor.

As tensions mounted between the United State and North Korea in early 2003, the United States led a group of 11 countries meeting in Madrid in early March 2003 to begin discussing an interdiction program that would police potential shipments of nuclear materials bound for and emanating from North Korea. Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security John Bolton, for example, warned Pyongyang to “get out of the proliferation business or risk having your cargoes of terror interdicted.” Later that month, President Bush also “ordered several attack

---


380 This was in large measure born out of an incident in December 2002, when Spanish and U.S. forces intercepted and searched a North Korean ship, So San, bound from North Korea to Yemen that was found to have been carrying a shipment of Scud missiles. For a more detailed account of the event and the initiative spawned by it – the Proliferation Security Initiative – see Andrew Winner. 2005. “The Proliferation Security Initiative: The New Face of Interdiction.” The Washington Quarterly, 28:129-143.

planes, as well as some B-1 and B-52 bombers, to the U.S. Air Force base in Guam, well within range of North Korea. The clear intent was to signal a possible impending air strike on the reactor.” Bush even remarked that if administration efforts regarding North Korea’s nuclear program “don’t work diplomatically, they'll have to work militarily.” These events were followed two days later by remarks by Rumsfeld, who mentioned that the Defense Department was looking at ways of reducing the vulnerability of the 37,000 troops in South Korea. On March 9, North Korea test-fired a surface-to-ship missile. 

After a brief interlude including the commencement of the Iraq war, in early April North Korea moved even closer to nuclear acquisition by arguing that only a “tremendous military deterrent” would be needed to protect the DPRK from U.S. threats. The Bush administration at this point backed away from its position on passing a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning Pyongyang, while China indicated that it would be willing to assist with dialogue between the United States and the DPRK. As the Chinese took on a more prominent role in the crisis and applied pressure to Pyongyang, North Korea agreed not to insist upon solely bilateral talks with the United States, and the Bush administration

---


agreed to talks without prior conditions with North Korea (with China moderating) a few days later.\textsuperscript{387}

5.4.2.4 The Public’s Preferences

Shortly following President Bush’s State of the Union in January 2002, the public was asked, “In his (State of the Union) speech, President Bush named three countries - Iran, Iraq, and North Korea - as an “axis of evil” who were developing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.\textsuperscript{388} Do you think what the president said was a serious threat that the US is prepared to attack these countries because of their policies and efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction or a warning to let them know we are keeping a close watch on their activities or mostly just tough talk for domestic political purposes?” 19 percent claimed the president’s remarks to be a “serious threat,” 64 percent thought it a “warning,” and 10 percent said it was just “tough talk.”\textsuperscript{389}

More evidence that this was not a serious threat as assessed by the American public comes from a Ipsos-Reid poll conducted in early February 2002. The poll asked, “In his State of the Union address, President Bush indicated three countries by name, Iran, Iraq and North Korea, as being the axis of evil in the world. Should the United States commit to a war against these three countries, like the war it fought against the Taliban in Afghanistan?” 39 percent responded “yes” the United States


\textsuperscript{388}Given the time period of interest in this case, it would be ideal to have the public’s policy preferences and evaluations of the President and North Korea back to early 2001. However, few polls asked about the threat presented by North Korea before President Bush’s Axis of Evil speech in 2002.

\textsuperscript{389}Newsweek Poll, conducted January 31 - February 1, 2002.
should commit to war, 53 percent said the U.S. should not, and 8 percent did not know.

Over the course of 2002, the American public’s attitudes toward North Korea deteriorated significantly. Favorable opinions of North Korea had halved to 12 percent, while unfavorable opinions had climbed to 80 percent, with more than half of these being “very unfavorable.” Negative feelings peaked in March 2003 when “very unfavorable” climbed another 11 points to reach 53 percent. Though American tended toward very negative evaluations of North Korea, they still were not overwhelmingly (or even a majority) in favor of backing the Bush administrations threats to use force if required to rid the DPRK of its nuclear weapons program.\footnote{The American public were near ambivalent when it came to deciding how to proceed in this case. More so than in the other categories, responses as to the appropriate course of action varied greatly over time and by question wording.} (See Figure 5.4 below.)

Similar results are found in a CBS News poll conducted in the same time period – 91 percent favored the use of diplomatic means to prevent North Korea from developing nuclear weapons, while only 6 percent preferred using military force.\footnote{The question wordings were the following: “As you may have heard, North Korea has resumed its production of nuclear weapons. What do you think the United States should now do with respect to North Korea: use military force in some way or try to find a diplomatic solution?”} In other words, President Bush did not have the support of a warmongering public. Rather, it appeared they preferred the president exercise diplomatic options before threatening force or sanctions.

5.4.2.5 The 2004 Presidential Election Outcome

For what was on the public’s mind just prior to the election, let’s examine some polling data. First, in August 2004, when asked, “Which comes closest to your view:
How about when it comes to resolving its problems with North Korea? Would you support or oppose the United States using...

Source: ABC News/Washington Post

Figure 5.7: Public Support for North Korea Policy Options, March 2003
Figure 5.8: 2004 Presidential Election Outcome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EC</th>
<th>EC%</th>
<th>PV</th>
<th>PV%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Bush</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
<td>62,040,610</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Kerry</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>59,028,444</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EC = Electoral College; EC% = percentage of the Electoral College;
PV = popular vote; PV% = percentage of the popular vote.
North Korea poses an immediate threat to the United States, North Korea poses a long-term threat to the US, but not an immediate threat, or North Korea does not pose a threat to the United States at all?” the majority of Americans – 62 percent – said that North Korea’s nuclear program was a long-term threat to the United States. Only 15 percent saw North Korea’s attempts to acquire and develop nuclear weapons as an immediate threat.

5.4.2.6 Analysis

In July 2003, the American public was asked by NBC News/Wall Street Journal, “Which of the following should be the top foreign policy priority for President Bush and his administration? The problem of nuclear weapons in North Korea/ peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians/ rebuilding Iraq/ completing the war on terrorism/ dealing with states that border Iraq, such as Iran and Syria.” 19 percent of respondents said “nuclear weapons in North Korea” should be the top foreign policy priority, as many as said that all were “equally important,” and 7 percentage points fewer than those who said the war on terrorism should receive top billing.

So, even at the height of the nuclear crisis in North Korea in 2003, as many Americans saw it as equal to all other foreign policy priorities as saw it as the top priority, and the war on terrorism outpaced them all still. Also, when asked, “If the United States government produces proof that North Korea is building nuclear weapons, do you think we should or should not take military action to destroy its nuclear weapons facilities?” as many said the United States should not take military action (41 percent) as those who said the United States should.
The American public in this case was much more likely to prefer diplomatic solutions to the crisis. Though they increasingly came to view North Korea as a threat to U.S. interests, particularly the public preferred policies directed toward nonproliferation and stability in East Asia, their support for employing any measure of force threatened by President Bush was never manifest; they never credibly committed to punishing the president for backing away from those threats. Thus, as the Presidential Agency Model expected, the public did not care deeply about this issue to overwhelmingly back President Bush’s threats to use force to resolve the crisis; it is no surprise then that the President was able to walk away from those threats with few, if any, costs and pursue a negotiated solution instead.

5.5 Conclusions

If, as Snyder and Diesing argue, bargaining power is a “function of perceived comparative resolve,” then these results suggest that the American public is unlikely to appreciable contribute to the credibility of U.S. threats to use force. As Mueller as previously noted, “there is little or no long term political loss from international failures when the perceived stakes are low – unless the failure becomes massively expensive. This means the U.S. can abruptly pull out of many failed missions without having to worry too much about loss of face or effective political back-biting.”

In both of the experimental tests, though subjects held comparatively lower evaluations of the president’s handling of a crisis when he backed down from a publicly


issued threat, those costs were mitigated if the issue was ultimately resolved and subjects did not have an overwhelming desire to remove presidents from office for such behavior. Though males who rated high in military assertiveness and strongly disapproved of the president’s reneging on threats were willing to vote the president out of office for engaging the national honor and backing down, they seemed to be only segment of the public willing to do so. These correlate with what we observed in the empirical cases as well. Both Presidents Clinton and Bush were able to walk away from threats issued without risking their political futures.

The Presidential Agency Model comes out well in these cases. Given the public did not hold strong preferences on the issues at stake, did not appear to be monitoring either President Clinton or Bush thoroughly over the course of the crisis events, and did not punish either president for backing down (on several occasions) from threats issued or, in the case of President Clinton, for choosing a costly settlement worse than the original status quo, the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model were much more closely met than were those of the audience costs argument. In light of these findings, further critiques and suggests about the link between the American public’s foreign policy preferences and the credibility of U.S. threats are offered in the conclusion of the dissertation.
CHAPTER 6

Conclusion
This work has investigated under what conditions the American public affects U.S. national security decisions, and whether the traditional argument tying audience costs to threat credibility holds in the case of the United States. Drawing on the principal-agent problem developed in economics, I argue that presidents (the agent) often constrain the range of options presented to the public (the principal), often “going alone” and conducting foreign policy without the support of the mass public. Theories of democratic responsiveness and liberal theories of international relations, hold that presidents ought to be paying attention to the interests and concerns of the public. This dissertation has argued that there is no institutional mechanism other than elections to ensure such a state of affairs. Rather, American presidents generally have great leeway in determining national security policy, marshaling the public to at least tolerate those policies, and avoiding electoral punishment for either poor foreign policy choices or for engaging the national honor and backing down. There are acute conditions under which the public is more likely to influence policy decisions; those conditions – such as the public’s casualty sensitivity and partisanship – are discussed further below. I tested this argument through quantitative data analysis, experimental tests, and cases studies.

What remains is four fold. In the first section I summarize the cases and data analysis and outline the dissertation’s principal findings. The second section contains final ruminations on the argument, last thoughts on alternative perspectives, and areas for future inquiry. The third section explores the normative implications of the theoretical argument and empirical findings; namely, what do they suggest about the state of American democracy. And the fourth section is devoted to policy implications. I conclude with some final thoughts.
6.1 Principal Findings

This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the relationship between the president and the American public as it relates to various aspects of the foreign policy process. For instance, within the context of the foreign policy process – from foreign policy option generation and selection, to implementation and termination – it considered many mechanisms by which the public might play a meaningful part in the foreign policy making process. This was not a single-minded approach (or, at least, it was not intended to be) that argued either the public influences the president or it does not. Rather, as the data in the empirical chapters demonstrate, the public’s role in the foreign policy decision making process is rarely chronic, but there are acute bouts where the public’s (latent) preferences are paramount.

Though the statistical tests found that 1, the public expressed foreign policy preferences had little relationship with those of policymakers (the foreign policy disconnect, as some have called it\textsuperscript{394}), and 2, the public’s concern regarding foreign policy issues and their overall approval of the president had little relationship with presidents’ foreign policy and behavior, these are only on average. Thus, questions remain as to the scope conditions of the Presidential Agency Model – the cases serve to clarify (some) of these. For example, the hard test of the case of Iraq is not wholly consistent with the Presidential Agency Model. And even though President Clinton carried out the initial decision to use force against Serb forces in Kosovo with only lukewarm public support, questions remain regarding the public’s influence over the modality of force (airpower versus ground troops) employed. These issues and more are summarized in the following two subsections.

\textsuperscript{394}Page with Bouton, \textit{The Foreign Policy Disconnect}
6.1.1 Public Influence

6.1.1.1 Statistical Results

Over a broad range of empirical tests, the chief argument of this dissertation held up well. In analyzing CCFR public opinion surveys, the findings were generally consistent with the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model; namely, the public’s preferences did not correlate with the foreign policy preferences of the president (in this case, executive branch officials serving as a proxy for the president’s preferences.) If the president were acting as trusted agent of the public, we would have expected to observe a significant correlation between the public’s preferences and those of the president; if the president was shirking, however, we would not expect a significant correlation between their preferences. The data clearly support that later expectation; given the incentives in a principal-agent relationship, on average we should not expect (and should not find) the public foreign policy preferences to correlate with the foreign policy preferences of the president.

I then explored what these results meant for presidential foreign policy behavior; specifically, how do divergent preferences between the public and the president related to decisions to deploy troops abroad? This initial set of empirical findings, coupled with this dissertation’s theoretical expectations, led me to expect that we would not observe a significant relationship between president decisions to deploy troops abroad and the president’s standing with the public. Indeed, the public overall evaluation of the president did not have a significant relationship with presidential decisions to deploy troops abroad. This finding was somewhat surprising given a number of scholars have demonstrated previously that presidents are likely to “gamble for
resurrection” – and benefit from the typical “rally ’round the flag” effect experienced at the outset of a conflict – and use major force when their approval rating is low or declining. However, in these data related to troop deployments, at least, I did not find this relationship.

I did, however, find that in re-election years presidents were less inclined to undertake military actions that required a major deployment of troops – this is not entirely surprising when considered in the context of this dissertation’s expectations. As the Presidential Agency Model expects the public’s preferences to have a significant relationship to troop deployments when it is monitoring the president thoroughly, such monitoring conditions are much more likely to hold in presidents’ bid for re-election. Moreover, given that major uses of force are likely to receive both more press coverage and higher public visibility, it is unsurprising that in a re-election year the president would be cautious about contravening the preferences of the public on these issues. Otherwise, as noted, the three mechanisms of public influence explored – their overall evaluation of the president, their concern for foreign policy issues, and their power of the ballot box – under most conditions did not have a significant relationship with presidents’ decisions to deploy the United States’ military forces.

In sum, I found broad support for this dissertation’s argument. The public on average does not significantly influence the president foreign policy preferences or behavior. Moreover, given the conditional expectations of the Presidential Agency Model, when the public does not monitoring thoroughly and and holds weak foreign

policy preferences, the chances of a president shirking and pursuing his preferred policies increases significantly.

6.1.1.2 Case Analyses

The theoretical argument was also explored over time and space in two cases. The first case is President Bush’s decision making regarding the initial decision to use force to remove Saddam Hussein from power, as well as subsequent force deployment and employment decisions over the remainder of this time in office; this is a hard case for the Presidential Agency Model. That is, the model would expect to find more working and less shirking in this case given the high level of public interest and expressed preferences regarding whether or not (and how) to use force to remove Saddam Hussein from power. From the analysis of primary and secondary sources and polling data,

Though the public was monitoring the president thoroughly in the lead up to the initial decision to use force, they ultimately had little influence over his policy choice and how and when he implemented it. The public as early as November 2001 supported the use of ground troops to remove Saddam from power and rid Iraq of its alleged caches of WMD. As the use of force appeared imminent, however, the public slipped away from supporting a unilateral employment of ground troops to do the job, increasingly favoring a U.N. sanctioned or otherwise multilateral effort.

Despite the persistent and thorough monitoring of the president’s decision, he choose policy in line with his preferences: to construct what he came to call a “coalition of the willing” in order to remove Saddam from power, rather than to continue to pursue another U.N Security Council resolution explicitly authorizing the use of
force (what the public preferred). Moreover, over the course of the conflict the public continued to actively monitor the president and his decisions regarding troop deployments and uses of force, and with increasing intensity came to oppose President Bush’s options and believe the war to have been a mistake. As John Mueller writes, “For support to rise notably, many of those now disaffected by the war would need to reverse their position, and that seems rather unlikely: polls that seek to tap intensity of feeling find that more than 80 percent of those opposed to the war “strongly” feel that way. If you purchase a car for twice what it is worth, you will still consider the deal to have been a mistake even if you come to like the car.”

Given these circumstances, the Presidential Agency Model would expect this to be a case in which a president is more likely to be caught shirking and punished accordingly. However, in this case the only place the public chose to punish the president was in opinion polls. When it came to the voting booth in 2004, much of the public decided that, though Iraq was a key issue, they were not going to change “horses in wartime.” As Weisberg and Christenson find, “Bush not only did about as well [in 2004 as compared to 2000] among strong Republicans as he had four years earlier, but there were nearly 5% more voters within that category.” Gary Jacobson also finds attitudes regarding the war to have been deeply divided along party lines; this is how it played out in the voting both. Republic loyalty, it seems, saved the day for the President Bush in the 2004 election.

Counterfactually, given the candidates took sufficiently different positions on the Iraq war, had Republican not turned out in such great numbers, the likelihood that

---

396 Mueller, “The Iraq Syndrome.”
Figure 6.1: Party Identification and Support for the Iraq War

Source: Jacobson, *Divider, Not a Uniter*
Bush would have been punished at the voting booth most certainly would have been higher.\footnote{For the most thorough take on the partisan nature of support for the Iraq war, see Jacobson, Diviner, Not a Uniter.} Figures 6.1 and 6.2 below chart the relationship between the public's support for the Iraq war and the 2004 vote.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 6.2: Opinions on the Iraq War and the 2004 Vote**
Relying on data from the National Election Study, Jacobson paints this partisan picture:

The polarized atmosphere and partisan mobilization efforts produced the highest level of party line voting in the 52-year history of the NES, eclipsing the previous record set in 2000...Because the proportion of independent voters also matched its all-time low in 2004, the proportion of the electorate comprised of loyal partisans – 84.8 percent – was also the highest the NES has ever recorded...The NES survey also found a tight relationship between support for the war and the presidential vote that remains
when party identification is taken into account...In total, 89 percent of Democrats and 82 percent of Republicans and independents cast a presidential vote consistent with their views on whether or not Iraq was worth the cost.\(^{399}\)

Therefore, a plausible argument exists that partisanship overpowered the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model in this case. Had Bush not received overwhelming support from Republicans (who were more inclined by several orders of magnitude to support the Iraq war), the likelihood of him losing office in 2004 may have been significantly higher.

The second case is theoretically the easier case for the Presidential Agency Model. Kosovo was not a conflict that captivated the public’s interest. To be sure they were interested, though really only after the initial decision to use force had already been implemented. It is unsurprising then, that the public’s preferences regarding whether or not to use force there did not play a significant role in President Clinton’s decision making. The public, it appears, did not play a much of a role in the initial decision to use force or its timing. Recall, President Clinton threatened Milosevic with the use of force on several occasions (first, in October 1998) and it was Milosevic’s decision to cede ground that stalled the tides of war.

Though a review of the decision making process leading up to the first bombs dropped in Kosovo reveals that the public did not seem to play a role in this initial decision, Arguably, the one point of contention is over the modality of force chosen – airpower over ground troops. Many argue Clinton was constrained by the public’s unwillingness to incur casualties, especially for a conflict they saw as loosely related to

\(^{399}\)Ibid., 191, 193.
the national interest. Evidence presented in Chapter 4 certainly supports this argument. However, the choice over airpower over ground troops appears overdetermined, thus making it more difficult to discern the exact impact of the public’s casualty sensitivity on the Clinton administration’s decision making in this case. The choice of airpower can also be explained by 1, the belief by key personnel in the DoD of efficacy of airpower; 2, the Services unwillingness to risk incurring casualties, and 3, NATO’s intra-institutional machinations and ally preferences for airpower constrained fairly early the range of options to airpower only. Thus, though it is clear that the public’s casualty sensitivity impacted Clinton’s decision to support an air-only campaign, it is unclear exactly how much this concern over the public’s latent opinion (the one area where the conventional wisdom appears to have something substantive to say is anything but clear.

In sum, though there were some deviations from the broader expectations of the Presidential Agency Model in these two cases, it certainly fares well. In neither of the cases did the public influence the timing of the initial decision to use force, nor did they influence the prior decisions to deploy forces into the theater to prepare for these operations. And at least in the case of Kosovo, it was events on the ground that determined when the war ended; not the demands of a war weary American public.\textsuperscript{400} Though the war in Iraq continues, this seems consistent with the Iraq war, too. Had the war been terminated on any of the number of occasions at which the

\textsuperscript{400}It could be argued, however, that if Milosevic had not ceded when he did, had NATO introduced ground troops late in the summer of 1999, and had U.S. casualties been taken, the public would withdraw its support for continuing operations in Kosovo. Thus, the Clinton administration avoided this non-event by heeding latent public opinion and not placing ground troops in Kosovo and by conducting the bombing campaign from safer yet less militarily effective altitudes.
public declared the effort to no longer be worth the costs, the war would have ended a couple years ago.

6.1.2 Audience Costs

Audience costs, as this dissertation has covered, are argued to arise when mass public’s sanction their leaders (in the case of the United States, the American public voting presidents out of office) for issuing public threats or making public commitments and failing to fulfill them.\textsuperscript{401} The mass public, according to the argument, places high value on national honor and presidents’ foreign policy competence and is willing to remove presidents from office if they fail to prove their mettle in a crisis. As Fearon puts it: “These costs arise from the action of domestic audiences concerned with whether the leadership is successful or unsuccessful at foreign policy.”\textsuperscript{402}

Recall the expectations of the Presidential Agency Model: the costs of the public monitoring foreign policy related events and decisions are high; the reliability of non-intrusive monitoring regimes is relatively low; and, the president does not expect to be punished when he is caught shirking. But this requires the public to credibly commit to punishing the president in these cases. Moreover, as a credible commitment to punish the president requires either divergent preferences over foreign policy goals, or evidence that the public actually shares similar preferences over foreign policy goals but 1, cares more about them, and 2, estimates greater reputational loses should they not be secured. In other words, the public actually cares more than the president

\textsuperscript{401}Recall that for Fearon audience costs are activated by threats which engage “national honor” – audience costs are incurred when presidents fail to uphold it.

\textsuperscript{402}Fearon, “Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Conflict,” 577.
about the consequences for backing down after escalation. Accordingly to the Presidential Agency Model, neither of these conditions are probable, thus the removal of a president from office in either instance is unlikely.

So, which account was closure to the empirical record?

6.1.2.1 Experimental Results

The empirical support for audience costs argument is to date nebulous; the findings of this dissertation serve to clarify scope conditions of audience costs a bit, at least with respect to U.S. foreign policy. As noted in Chapter 5, evaluating the presence of audience costs is difficult because of issues of partial observability and strategic selection. One way around that is to explore them within experiments. Experiments afford the ability to control manipulation of key variables of interest and therefore provide an appropriate analytic vehicle for analyzing the internal validity of the audience costs argument.

As documented in the previous chapter, the experimental results confirm the public’s willingness to punish a president under very narrowly defined conditions. This is to say that those subjects “punished” the president for failing to carry out a publicly issued threat. In Experiment 1, those subject in the threat X reneged condition had significantly different and lower approval ratings than those in the threat X fulfilled and no threat X reneged conditions. However, there was no main effect for presidents’ reneging on a promised threat as Fearon and other audience costs proponents would expect.

These two findings are important when taken together because that indicate that, though audience costs were not operative across a broad range of conditions, they were
manifest under some. For instance, I found that subjects treated Japan differently than Iran. When comparing those cases in which the president threatened to use force and those in which he did not, ratings of the president’s handling of the situation for the threat and no threat conditions in the case where Japan was the proliferant were not significantly different; they were, however, for Iran. With allies like Japan, then, it seems that threats of force against them do not activate the audience costs mechanism in ways that Fearon would expect.

This experiment also investigated some individual dispositions, to see if some individuals were more likely than others to punish presidents’ who sullied the reputation of the United States and fail to carry through with the threats they issued; it did so across two possible manifestations of audience costs: disapproval of the president’s handling of the situation and voting him out of office. In both cases, those subjects who rated high in military assertiveness opted to both withdraw support for the president and vote him out of office for failing to uphold the national honor and backing down from threats issued in a crisis. If there is an audience capable of credibly threatening future punishment should its agent back down, highly militarily assertive types are a key constituent of it.

Additionally, at least when it came to withdrawing support for the president’s handling of the situation, I found males were much more likely than females to do so when the president backed down. In other words, males in this case were more likely to punish a president for not using military force as promised.

It is not entirely surprising that the audience capable of acting as the audience costs argument is so small – males and those who are high in military assertiveness. Recall the requirements of the audience noted in Chapter 2: 1, it must prepared to
jettison whatever attachments it may have to the president on other issues, throwing its support behind the opposition regardless of the latter’s composition and possibly even before opposition candidates are known. In essence, the audience must *ex ante* pledge itself to assuming the character of a retrospectively judgmental one-issue electorate, assigning its allegiance solely on the basis of presidential behavior in a single international contest. As others have noted, this audience is a curious animal. The findings of this dissertation suggest that if there is a segment of the population capable of acting as Fearon would expect, it appears the most likely candidates are males who are militarily assertive and strongly disapprove of president’s backing down from threats against adversaries such as Iran.

But to avoid the risk of claiming to much, a few caveats regarding the experimental protocol and results are in order. Perhaps most importantly, the experiments did leave out some important variables that could impact subjects’ evaluation of the president’s handling of the situation and their propensity to vote him out of office for backing down from issued threats. These variables are party identification and military service. Previous research has found partisan cleavages on issues related to the use of military force, and party id has played a clear role in previous elections. Thus, it is possible that party id might moderate subjects’ evaluate of the president and the likelihood of their voting for or against the president.

403 Take the 2004 election, for example. President Bush was re-elected largely because of high Republican turnout and strong Republican support for the Iraq war. Thus, even if a majority of Americans disapprove of the way the president has handling an international crisis, it may be less likely that he is punished in the voting booth if he has strong support from his party.
As Gelpi and Feaver point out, civilians and the military often express different views about the use of military force, and this opinion gap shapes American foreign policy.\textsuperscript{404} Indeed, in Tomz’s experimental study of audience costs, he found a gap between those with military experience and those without: “...respondents with military experience disapproved at a substantially higher rate than civilians when the president escalated and backed down. The estimates are necessarily imprecise, given that 84 percent of the sample had no military experience, but the finding, if replicated with more data, could imply that audience costs grow with the share of veterans in the policymaking elite and the population at large.”\textsuperscript{405} Thus, an experiment that oversampled on military service could more accurately investigate these potential divergent propensities to punish the president for backing down in a crisis.

In Experiment 2, similar results were found. Recall that the goal of the second experiment was to investigate how audience costs cumulate (or not) over time; that is, as Fearon and others argue, as the crisis escalates audience costs should escalate as well. However, I first examined the results to see if they conformed with the results of the first experiment, and they did. Against, there was not a main effect for president’s reneging on an issued threat, and subject’s were not overwhelmingly eager to remove a president from office for backing down from threats issued.

As for the cumulation of audience costs, little evidence was found to support this claim as well. We did not observe a significant negative change in subject’s evaluation of the president’s handling of the DPRK’s continued proliferation, and

\textsuperscript{404}Feaver and Gelpi, \textit{Choosing Your Battles}.

subjects were reluctant still to vote the president out of office for continually escalating and ultimately backing down.

Perhaps the more intriguing finding across both experiments is that U.S. presidents are not likely to incur audience costs in the traditional sense; that is, there is not empirical support that presidents are voted out of office for issuing threats and subsequently backing down. Though there is some evidence of this in one of the experimental scenarios, this effect is ameliorated when subjects were subsequently told the bluff turned out to be successful. Thus, though some support was found for the audience costs argument in the experimental results, this support was primarily contained to approval rating rather than vote outcomes, and the approval rating effect was mitigated by ultimate success of the foreign policy implemented.

6.1.2.2 Case Analyses

The case study analyses of the audience costs argument examined President Clinton’s threat to use force against North Korea in 1994 to compel them to halt their nuclear weapons program, and the same for President Bush in 2003. The cases also serve to illustrate that audience costs lack efficacy as a mechanism for attributing credibility and resolve to threats issued by U.S. presidents. In both the hard and easy cases, the president was not punished for issuing a threat and subsequent failing to exercise the use of force. Fearon argued that a leader need not fear punishment for reckless actions, only “cowardly” ones. This dissertation finds, however, that even cowardly ones are tolerated.

406 This formulation is similar to Tomz, but fails to connect the behavior with the foreign policy outcome.
Recall that the audience costs argument posits that audience costs increase with the escalation of the conflict. This in turn makes it harder for the states issuing threats to make concessions within a crisis – their bargaining space so narrows that in theory they should prefer war to a negotiated solution. These expectations were not consistent with the case study findings. President Clinton sent Patriot batteries and mobilized forces in South Korea as late as June 1994, yet at the eleventh hour accepted a negotiated solution that did not even bring the U.S. and DPRK back to the old status quo. Rather, the U.S. made serious concessions. If the audience costs mechanisms actually conveys commitments and resolve, President Clinton should have been voted out of office in 1996 – this was not the empirical outcome.

Similarly, in the case of President Bush and North Korea in 2002-2003, we observe a president going unpunished for issuing threats and subsequently backing down and agreeing to six party negotiations. Though this is a harder case for the audience costs argument as the escalation ladder was much shorter than that for the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis, it is still one where the audience costs argument would expect punishment. Given the public nature of the military threats issued by President Bush, particularly the deployment of forces to the region and long-range bombers to the Guam, the “national honor” theoretically was engaged.

However, as we saw in the public opinion polls regarding the crisis with North Korea, as well as the eventual election outcome in 2004, the public did not attach overwhelming importance to the issue. Even after President Bush’s “axis of evil” speech almost a fifth of the American public held no opinion on the issue. Moreover, of those that did hold opinions, most agreed a North Korean nuclear program to be a threat to U.S. interests in the region, though they did not believe military force
to be the most appropriate policy for resolving the conflict. Rather, a majority felt diplomatic courses of action were preferable. Despite issuing threats and repeatedly claiming it would not enter negotiations with the DPRK until it relinquish its weapons programs, that is exactly what the administration did. And despite engaging the national honor and backing down, President Bush was not punished for it.

To make a final point, let us turn back for a moment to Fearon’s seminal argument. Fearon describes the “standoff leading to the 1991 Gulf War” a “prototypical case” of audience costs. He specifically cites “Bush’s many declarations on Kuwait in 1990 (including the “this will not stand remark)” as clear examples of a leader generating audience costs. It is of course difficult to say what would have happened should Bush have backed down – as we know Bush stood firm, prevailed, and then the following year failed to get re-elected. But one can hazard a somewhat systematic guess that there certainly would have been political fallout for letting Hussein stand triumphant and unpunished. In the opinion polls, it seems almost certain. However, would that have made it more likely that he was removed from office in his removal from office? This seems not to be the case.

408 Ibid., 582.
All of this calls into questions the validity of the audience costs mechanism for generating credible threats, alliance commitments,\textsuperscript{409} and for controlling the escalation of crises.\textsuperscript{410} Yes, birds of a feather flock together, and democracy’s more often than not are more likely to form alliances with other democracies. Audience costs do not, however, render them any more durable or more militarily effective. The argument and findings of this dissertation support what Desch states quite plainly: “The level of public support within democracies for foreign attachments varies widely; in cases where the public is not seriously engaged, there are no audience costs for failure to honor an obligation. Indeed there is considerable evidence that democratic publics are not particularly attentive to international affairs, which means that more often than not audience costs play little role in the calculations of democratic leaders. Even in those cases where the public strongly supports a commitment to another state, such support can evaporate quickly.”\textsuperscript{411} Moreover, as evidenced in the review above of this dissertation’s empirical findings, the audience costs mechanism does not appear to lend greater credibility to U.S. threats and foreign policy commitments. The American public does not appear to punish presidents as audience costs would expect (and require).


\textsuperscript{410}For the most recent and well argued treatment on escalation control, see Forrest Morgan et al. 2008. \textit{Dangerous Thresholds: Managing Escalation in the 21st Century}. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. Audience costs, it should be noted, never appears in the monograph.

6.2 Final Reflections on the Argument

At the outset, four main objectives were put forth: 1, to clarify some of the conditions under which the American public might play a role in presidents’ foreign policy decisions and the credibility of public threats and international commitments; 2, generate a plausible and persuasive argument regarding the president-public relationship in American foreign policy decision-making; 3, unpack the behavior of the audience expected to produce audience costs; and 4, explore the normative implications of the theoretical argument and empirical findings. I have mostly addressed above numbers 1 through 3; however, I do have a bit more to say about these below. The next section then takes up the normative implications of this dissertation’s argument and findings.

I argued that to date, mainstream research in international relations – and to a degree, American foreign policy research as well – has not offered as sustained theoretical and empirical analysis of public opinion. Many accounts of particular foreign and national security policy decisions make implicit, partial, and obtuse assumptions about both the nature of public opinion regarding foreign policy, and the relationship between public opinion and policy. My argument sought to link these directly. In so doing I claimed that we should not expect the public to play a significant role president’s foreign policy decisions most of the time – they simply lack the political incentives, will, and institutional mechanisms for doing so on a regular basis. In the short-run, the public can influence events if the president believes public input and support matters, but this is an acute condition not a chronic one. So long as the president prefers to follow his policy preferences instead of the public’s (especially when they are incongruous), there are few mechanisms outside of opinion polls and the voting booth for the public proactively influence policy decisions.
The public can avail themselves of the power of the voting booth and remove from office those president’s who fail to execute the foreign policies the public prefers. However, even in this case, it is only first term presidents that we should expect to be constrained by this concern; second term presidents most likely less so (though they may be similarly constrained by such things as legacy and reputation concerns). Rather, they will be most concerned with executing those policies that most closely accord with their preferences. By and large, these expectations a limited role of the public in American foreign policy decisions conform to the empirical findings of this dissertation.

I also argued that the relationship between audience costs and the credibility of American foreign policy commitments is obscure – it remains so, more generally, but some clarity has been brought to this relationship. For this relationship to hold true – that is, audience costs produce more credible commitments – the public must be willing and able to remove a leader from office for moral hazard. At least through two experiments and two case studies, I did not find this to be the case. Rather, audience costs impact on the credibility of threats to use force may indeed be very small or nonexistent empirically.

My argument was that American presidents generally have great leeway in determining national security policy, marshaling the public to at least tolerate those policies, and avoiding electoral punishment for either poor foreign policy choices or for engaging the national honor and backing down. Through four case studies, quantitative data analysis, and experiments, the argument found support. If correct, the argument is critical of many of the major paradigms of public opinion and audience costs research, highlights avenues for further research, and bears significant policy
relevance. And yet, the argument may still be thought a letdown, a killjoy, indeed, normatively disappointing. Let me offer another view.

6.3 Normative Implications

The theoretical argument and empirical findings in this dissertation will surely disappoint strong adherents to democratic theory. The public under most circumstances was not found to have played an important role in either 1, decisions to use force, or 2, the credibility of American foreign policy commitments. Rather, when the public did affect the president’s behavior, it was most often influencing how the president presented particular policy options to the public, not how they influenced the substance and timing of foreign policy decisions in any meaningful way. This is, as shocking as it may seem, not as dire as it sounds.

Recall from the literature review the two primary (and well supported) conclusions from this body of research that proved useful in guiding the theoretical expectations of the Presidential Agency Model: 1, as John Mueller and other traditionalists in the area of public opinion on foreign policy note, with respect to foreign affairs the public generally tends toward inattention; and 2, that when public does pay attention to foreign affairs, they typically respond—through the use of heuristics and information shortcuts—rather sensibly to cues from the political environment. Though the literature does not go to great lengths to empirically investigate how either of these general conclusions affects policy, the Presidential Agency Model does. Namely, as the public tends toward inattention with respect to foreign affairs, the Presidential Agency Model expects there to be a low probability that they will constantly monitor
the foreign policy options available to, and the foreign policy choices of, their leaders. Also, when the public does decide that monitoring is worth the associated costs, they should make sensible decisions when deciding whether to reward or punish the president for his foreign policy choices.

The public, according to this argument, is offered a voice at the voting booth. As Riker argues, “the essential democratic institution is the ballot box and all that goes with it.”412 Is this a normatively unreasonable arrangement and expectation? The public takes reasonable actions to attempt to influence the president’s foreign policy preferences and choices when it pays attention to specific policy decisions, considers monitoring the president’s behavior thoroughly to be worth the costs, and expresses some degree of interest in the decision at hand. Otherwise, the public tends not to pay much attention to foreign policy, and when their attention is called to the subject its preferences are often weakly held.

Moreover, with respect to the audience costs portion of the dissertation, retrospective voting behavior has been the bedrock of democratic theory, as well as a key assumption anchoring the behavior of audiences in the audience costs literature. The theory is attractive because it offers a compelling argument linking presidents and their audiences, and it also rescues voters from the claim that their are too ill informed and disengaged to play a meaningful role in the democratic process. The beauty of the retrospective voting argument is that audiences need not have detailed policy preferences against which they evaluate and judge their leader. Rather, audiences need only remember past behavior of presidents and their evaluation of the resultant

outcomes. Whether the American public measures up to this seemingly reasonable arrangement, is another normative question entirely.

6.3.1 Ignoring the Public

In the case of both the public influence and audience costs arguments, this dissertation found that presidents can get away with ignoring the public’s foreign policy preferences most of the time. For democratic theorists, this is undoubtedly disconcerting. Though any president seeking re-election is likely to at some time pay attention to and head the foreign policy preferences of the public, we do not often observe a strong public with certain and overwhelming foreign policy preferences. However, for the sake of argument, consider the recent case of Iraq – opinions regarding the costs of the war effort in the run up to the election in 2004 held these preferences strongly. Even then, exit polling found only 19 percent of those polled said the Iraq war was the most important issue influencing their vote choice. Quite simply, the empirical record does not find a public strongly interested in foreign affairs and willing to select and punish president’s based on their foreign policy preferences. If the public is so disinterested and their foreign policy preferences are held weakly and with a great deal of uncertainty, what is the logical argument that following them will provide for a stronger, more effective foreign policy?

The findings of this dissertation are consistent with others’ findings regarding the long-term influence of the public in foreign affairs – they simply don’t have it. Nor, does it seem, do they want it. As Mueller has documented well, their interest in foreign affairs is often fleeting, they rarely reward presidents for successful foreign policies (e.g., George H.W. Bush and Iraq 1992 and Clinton and Kosovo 1999), and
they rarely punish president’s for poor foreign policies (e.g., Bush and Iraq 2003) or for issuing empty threats (e.g., Clinton and North Korea 1994 and Bush and North Korea 1994). Though at times the public is found to have acute influence over particular foreign policy choices, rarely have they exhibited a chronic and strong influence over a presidents’ foreign policy decisions. When it came to decisions to deploy force abroad, I found that the president’s preferences predominated over those of the public.

As John Mueller has mused, “Democracy clearly does not require that people be generally well informed, responsible, or actively attentive,” and it is often characterized by “majority rule and minority acquiescence.”[^413] Zaller offers some powerful examples from the Clinton administration that are instructive here. Contrary to the preferences of the public, the president chose to sign the North American Free Trade Agreement, send Marines to Somalia in 1993, send troops to Haiti in 1994, and deploy forces to Bosnia in 1995.[^414] In most of these cases the public had poorly formed opinions and policy preferences and likely lacked the knowledge necessary to form stable evaluations of these issues – the president thus chose to implement his policy preferences with the understanding that the public would have the opportunity to sanction him for unwise or poorly implemented policies in the 1996 election if they so chose. In terms of likely policy effectiveness, normatively this seems to be a good arrangement.


6.4 Implications and Policy Recommendations

This work has also touched topics for future research. This is just one model of the president-public relationship in foreign policy decision making. Moreover, as this dissertation examined only decisions to use force, the model could be extended to and tested in other foreign policy domains. Moreover, this dissertation also suggests the use of experiments (and, it follows, public opinion surveys with embedded experiments) are valuable instruments for exploring the scope conditions of the audience costs in American foreign policy. As the experiments employed in this dissertation did not examine all possible variables that might bear on the audience costs argument, further experimentation and study is required to more clearly identify the conditions under which audience costs are likely to be operative in American foreign policy.

As far as implications are concerned, we learned that the public is not one that can be brought along easily on policy. Consistent with findings by Mueller and Edwards, the public can be rather stubborn once it has accepted the costs as simply being too high and turned against a war effort. That said, we also learned this does not mean wartime policy making must change significantly. As we saw in the Iraq case, though over time the American public came to question Bush's decision making there, they had few mechanisms outside of lower approval numbers to affect substantive policy change. Indeed, even when the public had their ultimate lever of change available to them – the voting booth – they chose to keep Bush in office.

Though, the failure of the public to remove Bush from office in 2004 also says something about the validity of audience costs as a mechanisms of signaling resolve in American foreign policy. The audience costs argument contends that publics punish leaders who bluff by escalating a crisis and then backing down. If this were truly
the case, then Bush should not have been voted out of office for poor foreign policy
decisions in Iraq, but for failing to make good on a threat to use force against North
Korea for continuing to pursue a nuclear weapons program.

As Fearon has argued, because the ability to commit in a crisis may be so benefi-
cial, “if the principal [citizens] could design a ‘wage contract’ for the foreign policy
agent [leader], the principal would want to commit to punishing the agent for esca-
leting a crisis and then backing down . . . principals who conduct foreign policy
themselves may not be able credibly to commit to self-imposed punishment (such as
leaving power) for backing down in a crisis.”415 In other words, leaders are judged on
their foreign policy competence and how well they represent the audience.

This, however, has not historically been the case in American foreign policy.
Rather, presidents typically enjoy fleeting successes and failures in their foreign forays
and are rarely judged later for them. Thus, though presidents should be aware of the
public’s opinion (current and latent) little empirical evidence suggests they should
risk following the public’s preferences when they disagree – ultimately, with time the
public will tolerate the chosen path. Take President Clinton’s first term in office:
he issued empty threats toward North Korea and failed horribly in Somalia, yet was
re-elected two years later. And with President Bush, at the time of the 2004 election
much of the American public disagreed with the course of action being pursued in
Iraq, yet not enough (apparently) to remove him from office for what the majority of
Americans judged to be his poor performance there.

President’s should not consider the public a key mechanisms for issuing credible
threats; at least, not as proposed by Fearon and other audience costs proponents. If

audience costs provide any credibility to U.S. threats to use force, they are purely in the mind of the beholder. (More work is needed in this area – perceived audience costs.) Audience costs in American foreign policy are rarely ever realized as the American public continually fails to credibly commit to punishing presidents for bluffing.

6.5 Conclusion

I have argued that the president enjoys a great deal of latitude in the realm of foreign policy decision making. Through statistic analyses and case studies the Presidential Agency Model found support, trying in the process to shed new theoretical light and trend new empirical ground. If correct, the argument is critical of many contemporary arguments regarding the influence of public opinion on foreign policy, the validity of democratic peace arguments regarding the pacifying constraint of democratic publics, and the role of the American public in generating more credible foreign policy commitments. Along the way, this dissertation’s argument and empirical findings also highlight avenues for future research and bears significant policy relevance.

Few arguments are liable to be more honeyed than those regarding the strength of American democracy and the influence of the American public over their representatives and over policy choices. This work has argued that this rosy view of the relationship between the president and the American public in the course of foreign policy decision making requires some amending. Rather than enjoying a chronic influence over presidents’ foreign policy choices, the public has the opportunity at
times to play an acute role. While this may offend the ideals of a democratic society, it need not. As outlined above, this seems a reasonable arrangement consistent with the design of the American republic. Moreover, it provides the foundation for more logical expectations concerning the potential role of the American public in the foreign policy decision-making process.
APPENDIX A

Poll Questions
A.1 Iraq War Support Questions

This list was compiled by Gary Jacobson.\textsuperscript{416}

A.1.1 Pre-War Support

- Do you approve or disapprove of the United States taking military action against Iraq to try to remove Saddam Hussein from power? (\textit{CBS News/New York Times})

- Do you support or oppose U.S. military action to remove Iraqi President Saddam Hussein? (\textit{Fox News})

- Would you favor or oppose having U.S. forces take military action against Iraq to force Saddam Hussein from power? (\textit{ABC News/Washington Post})

- Would you favor or oppose invading Iraq with U.S. ground troops in an attempt to remove Saddam Hussein from power? (Gallup)

- Would you favor or oppose taking military action in Iraq to end Saddam Hussein’s rule? (Pew Center for the People and the Press)

- Would you favor or oppose sending American troops back to the Persian Gulf in order to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq? (Gallup)

- Do you think that the United States should or should not take military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq? (\textit{ABC News/Washington Post})

• Do you think that the United States should or should not take military action against Iraq and Saddam Hussein? (*NBC News/Wall Street Journal*)

• Do you think the United States should take military action in order to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq, or not? (*Los Angeles Times*)

• Do you think removing Saddam Hussein from power is worth the potential loss of American life and the other costs of attacking Iraq, or not? (*CBS News/New York Times*)

• Would you support or oppose the United States going to war with Iraq? (*ABC News/Washington Post*)

• Would you support or oppose a U.S. invasion of Iraq with ground troops? (*ABC News/Washington Post*)

• Would you support using military force against Iraq, or not? (*Newsweek*)

• Currently, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose a war against Iraq? (*Zogby*)

• Do you favor or oppose taking U.S. military action against Iraq? (*Chicago Tribune*)

**A.1.2 War Support**

• Do you support or oppose the Bush Administration’s decision to take military action against Iraq at this time? (*Los Angeles Times*)

• Do you support or oppose the United States having gone to war with Iraq? (*ABC News/Washington Post*)
• Do you approve or disapprove of the United States’ decision to go to war with Iraq in March 2003? (CNN/Gallup)

• Looking back, do you think the United States did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq, or should the U.S. have stayed out? (CBS News/New York Times)

• Considering everything, do you think the United States did the right thing in going to war with Iraq or do you think it was a mistake? (ABC News/Washington Post)

• Do you think the U.S. made the right decision or the wrong decision in using military force against Iraq? (Pew Center for the People and the Press)

• Do you think going to war with Iraq was the right thing for the United States to do or the wrong thing? (Fox News, Quinnipiac College)

• From what you know now, do think the United States did the right thing in taking military action against Iraq last year, or not? (Newsweek)

• Do you think the United States was right or wrong in going to war with Iraq? (Time)

• Do you think the U.S. made the right decision or the wrong decision in going to war against Iraq? (PIPA)

• All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war in Iraq was worth fighting or not? (ABC News/Washington Post)
• All in all, do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq, or not? (Gallup)

• All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not? (Annenberg/Los Angeles Times)

• All things considered, do you think the United States going to war with Iraq has been worth it or not? (Fox News)

• Generally speaking, do you think the outcome of the war in Iraq has been worth the cost in U.S. military lives, or not? (Los Angeles Times)

• Do you think the result of the war was worth the loss of American life and other costs of attacking Iraq, or not? (CBS News/New York Times)

• In your view, is the war against Iraq worth the toll it has taken in American lives and other kinds of costs, or isn’t the war worth these costs? (Time)

• When it comes to the war in Iraq, do you think that removing Saddam Hussein from power was or was not worth the number of U.S. military casualties and the financial cost of the war? (NBC News/Wall Street Journal)

• Do you think removing Saddam Hussein from power was worth the loss of American life and other costs of attacking Iraq, or not? (CBS News/New York Times)

• Generally speaking, do you think the outcome of the war in Iraq has been worth the financial cost to the U.S., or not? (Los Angeles Times)

• In view of the developments since we first sent our troops to Iraq, do you think the United States made a mistake in sending troops to Iraq, or not? (Gallup)
• Generally speaking, do you support or oppose the U.S. military action in Iraq? 
  (*Investors Business Daily*)

• Do you favor or oppose the U.S. war with Iraq? (Gallup)

• Do you support or oppose the United States taking military action to disarm Iraq and remove Iraqi President Saddam Hussein? (*Fox News*)

• Do you think that the United States should or should not have taken military action to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq? (*NBC News/Wall Street Journal*)

• In general, do you approve or disapprove of current military policy in Iraq? (*Time*)

• Do you approve or disapprove of the United States’ current occupation of Iraq? (*CBS News/New York Times*)

• Do you support or oppose the current U.S. military presence in Iraq? (*ABC News/Washington Post*)

**A.1.3 Bush Performance on Iraq**

• Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling policies to deal with the threat posed by Iraq and its leader Saddam Hussein? (*Newsweek*)

• Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq? (*CNN/USA Today*)

• Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq? (*CBS News*)
• Do you approve or disapprove of the job George W. Bush is doing handling the situation with Iraq? (Fox News)

• Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is dealing with the war in Iraq? (Pew)

• Do you approve or disapprove of the way Bush is handling the situation in Iraq? (ABC News)

• Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is the handling the situation in Iraq? (Newsweek)

• Do you think President Bush is doing a good job or a poor job handling the situation in Iraq? (CNN/Time)

• When it comes to the situation in Iraq, do you approve or disapprove or have mixed feelings about the way George W. Bush is handling that issue? (AP/IPSOS)

• In general, do you approve or disapprove of the job that George W. Bush is doing in handling the situation in Iraq?” (NBC/Wall Street Journal)

A.2 Kosovo War Support Questions

A.2.1 Pre-War Support

• Would you support or oppose the US, along with its allies in Europe, sending in ground forces to try to enforce a peace treaty in Kosovo?
• If the Serbs launch an armed offensive against the Kosovo Albanians, should the United States intervene by sending ground troops into battle?

• If the current NATO air and missile strikes are not effective in achieving the United States’ objectives in Kosovo, would you favor or oppose President Clinton sending U.S. ground troops into the region to stop the Serbian attack on Kosovo?

• Would you favor or oppose sending American ground troops into Kosovo?

• If the current NATO air and missile strikes are not effective in achieving the United States’ objectives in Kosovo, would you favor or oppose President Clinton sending U.S. ground troops into the region along with troops from other NATO countries?

• If the air strikes do not stop Serbian military attacks in Kosovo, would you favor or oppose sending U.S. ground troops to Kosovo along with troops from other NATO countries to try to end the conflict in Kosovo?

• If NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) decides to send ground troops to Kosovo, do you favor or oppose sending US (United States) ground troops as part of the NATO force?

• If the air strikes are not effective in stopping the Serbian attacks, would you favor or oppose President Clinton sending U.S. ground troops into Bosnia to join ground troops from other Western European countries?

• Should the U.S. send ground troops into combat against the Serbian Army in Kosovo?
• Now thinking about the current situation in Kosovo, would favor or oppose sending U.S. ground troops, along with troops from other NATO countries, to serve in a combat situation in the region right now?

President Clinton has been arguing for the U.S. to participate in NATO bombing in the Kosovo dispute. In your opinion, has President Clinton adequately explained the case for U.S. involvement in Kosovo?

• Do you think (Bill) Clinton has said enough to explain the US (United States) military involvement in the Kosovo situation, or not? (ABC News)

A.2.2 War Support

• How much more time should the United States and its European allies give the air strikes to work before sending in ground troops (to Kosovo)—a week or so, a few weeks, about a month, a few months, or longer than that?

A.2.3 Clinton Performance on Kosovo

• Do you think President (Bill) Clinton did the right thing or the wrong thing by initially ruling out (using United States) ground troops (in Kosovo)?

• How do you rate President Clinton’s handling of the Kosovo situation?

• When it comes to the situation in Kosovo, do you think Bill Clinton has a clear plan for his policy or do you think he is just reacting to events as they occur?

• Do you consider President Clinton’s recent actions concerning Kosovo to be a significant U.S. foreign policy achievement, or don’t you think so?
As you may know, President Clinton made a speech to the nation this evening concerning the situation in Kosovo. About how much of the President’s speech tonight did you happen to hear or watch: all of the speech, some of it, only a little, or none at all? (Gallup)
APPENDIX B

Experiment Materials
B.1 Questionnaire

B.1.1 Introduction

Thank you for coming in today. Today’s study looks at peoples’ attitudes regarding presidents’ foreign policy decisions. Researchers have assumed how the public generally reacts to presidents’ foreign policy decisions, but no one has studied exactly how the public reacts in these specific cases. We will show you a few foreign policy stories. Please read these stories carefully, and then we’ll ask you for your reactions to them.

We’d like to remind you again at this point that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide any point that you do not wish to continue, you may withdraw from the study without penalty. Also keep in mind that we will do everything in our power to protect the confidentiality of the data you provide. If you’re agreeable to all this, please press the button below to continue. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to ask your experimenter.

B.1.2 Independent Variables

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.

B.1.2.1 Cooperation

1. Generally, the more influence America has on other nations, the better off they are.

2. The best way to ensure world peace is through American military strength.
3. The use of military force only makes problems worse.

4. Rather than simply reacting to our enemies, it’s better for us to strike first.

5. Military strength and the will to use it is still the best measure of a country’s greatness.

6. The United States could learn a lot by following the example of other countries.

Measure: (1) Agree strongly, (2) agree somewhat, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree somewhat, (5) disagree strongly.

B.1.2.2 Mercantilism

1. The best way to promote prosperity for Americans is to remove all trade barriers between countries.

2. We should do more to limit immigration in order to give U.S. workers more jobs.

3. Curbs should be put on all imports.

4. Americans should always buy American-made products instead of imports.

5. If other countries are allowed to sell their goods in the US without restrictions, your family’s well-being will be negatively affected.

Measure: (1) Agree strongly, (2) agree somewhat, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree somewhat, (5) disagree strongly.
B.1.2.3 Isolationism

1. America needs to cooperate more with the United Nations in settling international disputes.

2. The United States must work with other nations to solve problems, such as overpopulation, hunger, and pollution.

3. The United States government needs to play an active role in solving conflicts around the world.

4. The U.S. government should just try to take care of the well-being of Americans and not get involved with other nations.

5. The United States should provide very little economic aid to other countries.

Measure: (1) Agree strongly, (2) agree somewhat, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree somewhat, (5) disagree strongly.

B.1.2.4 Political Knowledge

INSTRUCTIONS: Next is a series of questions about political knowledge. Please answer to the best of your ability. If you do not know the answer to a question, type “don’t know” and continue to the next question.

1. Who is the current Vice President of the United States?

   Dick Cheney

   1=correct

   0=incorrect
2. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?

2/3

1=correct

0=incorrect

3. Which political party currently has the most members in the House of Representatives?

Democrat

1=correct

0=incorrect

4. Which political party is more conservative?

Republican party

1=correct

0=incorrect

5. Whose responsibility is it to determine whether a law is constitutional or not: the President, the Congress, or the Supreme Court?

Supreme Court

1=correct

0=incorrect

6. Which party would you say is more conservative?
7. Who is the current speaker of the House of Representatives?
   Nancy Pelosi
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

8. Who is the current Secretary of State?
   Condoleezza Rice
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

9. Who is the current Secretary of Defense?
   Robert Gates
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

10. Who is the current President of Russia?
    Vladimir Putin
    1=correct
    0=incorrect
11. Who is the British Prime Minister?

Tony Blair

1=correct

0=incorrect

12. What does NAFTA stand for?

North American Free Trade Agreement

1=correct

0=incorrect

13. What does EU stand for?

European Union

1=correct

0=incorrect

B.1.2.5 Foreign policy approval

In general, do you approve or disapprove of the way President Bush is handling foreign policy?

Measure: (1) Approve strongly, (2) approve, (3) approve somewhat, (4) neither approve nor disapprove, (5) disapprove somewhat, (6) disapprove, (7) disapprove strongly.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements.
B.1.2.6 Rep representation

The Republican Party represents the interests of a majority of Americans.

Measure: (1) Agree strongly, (2) agree somewhat, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree somewhat, (5) disagree strongly.

B.1.2.7 Dem representation

The Democratic Party represents the interests of a majority of Americans.

Measure: (1) Agree strongly, (2) agree somewhat, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) disagree somewhat, (5) disagree strongly.

B.1.2.8 Ideology

A lot of people talk about politics in terms of liberal and conservative. Where would you place yourself on this scale?

Measure: (1) very liberal, (2) liberal, (3) somewhat liberal, (4) Moderate/Middle of the road, (5) somewhat conservative, (6) conservative, (7) very conservative

B.1.2.9 Party ID

A lot people talk about politics in terms of political parties. In general, do you consider yourself to be a (1) Democrat, (2) Republican, or an (3) Independent?

[If Democratic]: Do you consider yourself to be a strong Democrat or a weak Democrat?

[If Republican]: Do you consider yourself to be a strong Republican or a weak Republican?
[In Independent]: Do you lean toward either political party? Lean Democrat, lean Republican, don’t lean either way.

B.1.2.10 Party ID certainty

How certain are you of your party identification? In other words, how certain are you that you are a Democrat, Republican or an Independent?
Measure: (1) extremely certain, (2) pretty certain, (3) somewhat certain, (4) not that certain, (5) not certain at all

B.1.2.11 Casualty estimate

What is your best guess as to the number of U. S. soldiers killed in international conflicts and missions, since the Gulf War in 1990 (your estimate should include the number you think died in the 1990 Gulf War mission)?

B.1.2.12 Age

In what year were you born?

B.1.2.13 Race

What racial or ethnic group best describes you?
Measure: (1) White/Caucasian, (2) Black/African American, (3) Asian, (4) Native American, (5) Hispanic or Latino, (6) Other

B.1.2.14 Sex

Are you (1) male or (2) female?
B.1.2.15  Region

To which of these geographical groups would you say you belong first of all?
Measure: (1) Rural or (2) Urban

B.2  Experimental Scenarios

B.2.1  Experiment 1

This experiment focuses on three variables: the targets state (Japan/Iran), threat (not issued/issued), and threat fulfilled (fulfilled, reneged).

All respondents received the following introduction:

The following story and questions are about the relations between the United States and other countries. You will read about a situation that the United States has faced many times in the past, and will likely face again. Different presidents have handled the situation in different ways. We will describe for you one approach taken by a U.S president, and then ask you to respond to several questions.

Vignette: Increasingly concerned by nuclear developments in the region, [Japan, Iran] recently stepped up its efforts to develop a nuclear weapons program. This development is clearly against American interests as we have long been opposed to the spread of nuclear weapons. [Japan’s prime minister/Iran’s president], however, said economic sanctions would not deter them from developing nuclear weapons. A successful [Japanese, Iranian] nuclear program would hurt American efforts to curb nuclear proliferation and could lead to instability in the region.

Respondents are sorted by state id assignment, and then randomly assigned to the following:
Sender1.v1: The president said America would stay out of the conflict with Iran. Iran continued its efforts to develop a nuclear program. In the end, the president did not use military force to stop them from developing a nuclear program.

Sender1.v2: The president said America would stay out of the conflict with Iran. Iran continued its efforts to develop a nuclear program. In the end, the president used military force to stop them from developing a nuclear program.

Sender1.v3: The president said America would use military force to prevent Iran from developing its nuclear program. Despite this threat, Iran continued its efforts to develop a nuclear program. The president then used military force to stop them.

Sender1.v4: The president said America would use military force to prevent Iran from developing its nuclear program. Despite this threat, Iran continued its efforts to develop a nuclear program. In the end, the president did not use military force to stop them.

Sender1.v5: The president said America would stay out of the conflict with Japan. Japan continued its efforts to develop a nuclear program. In the end, the president did not use military force to stop them from developing a nuclear program.

Sender1.v6: The president said America would stay out of the conflict with Japan. Japan continued its efforts to develop a nuclear program. In the end, the president used military force to stop them from developing a nuclear program.

Sender1.v7: The president said America would use military force to prevent Japan from developing its nuclear program. Despite this threat, Japan continued its efforts to develop a nuclear program. The president then used military force to stop them.

Sender1.v8: The president said America would use military force to prevent Japan from developing its nuclear program. Despite this threat, Japan continued its efforts
to develop a nuclear program. In the end, the president did not use military force to stop them.

**Audience Costs Operationalizations**

1. Sender1.app.disapp.dv1: Do you (1) approve, (2) disapprove, or (3) neither approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled the situation?

2. Sender1.app.dv1: Do you approve (1) very strongly, or only (2) somewhat?

3. Sender1.disapp.dv1: Do you disapprove (1) very strongly, or only (2) somewhat?

4. Sender1.lean.dv1: Do you lean toward (1) approving of the way the U.S. president handled the situation, (2) lean toward disapproving, or (3) you don’t lean either way?

5. Sender1.vote.dv1: If the next presidential election were tomorrow, how would you vote? (1) For; (2) against; (3) neither for nor against; or (4) don’t know.

6. Sender1.vote.dv2: Please explain why you chose to vote the way you did.

**B.2.1.1 Subexperiment**

Sender2.v1: What if we told you that the president’s actions were successful in stopping their nuclear program?

Sender2.v2: What if we told you that the president’s actions were not successful in stopping their nuclear program?

**Audience Costs Operationalizations**

1. Sender2.app.disapp.dv1: Do you (1) approve, (2) disapprove, or (3) neither approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled the situation?
2. Sender2.app.dv1: Do you approve (1) very strongly, or only (2) somewhat?

3. Sender2.disapp.dv1: Do you disapprove (1) very strongly, or only (2) somewhat?

4. Sender2.lean.dv1: Do you lean toward (1) approving of the way the U.S. president handled the situation, (2) lean toward disapproving, or (3) you don’t lean either way?

5. Sender2.vote.dv1: If the next presidential election were tomorrow, how would you vote? (1) For; (2) against; (3) neither for nor against; or (4) don’t know.

6. Sender2.vote.dv2: Please explain why you chose to vote the way you did.

B.2.2 Experiment 2

All respondents received the following introduction:

The following story and questions are about the relations between the United States and North Korea. You will read about a situation that the United States has faced many times in the past, and will likely face again. Different presidents have handled the situation in different ways. We will describe for you one approach taken by a U.S. president, and then ask you to respond to several questions.

Vignette 1: Despite continued protest from the United States, North Korea continues to develop a nuclear weapons program. North Korea recently enriched uranium to weapon-grade, and increased its plutonium stockpiles. North Korea’s nuclear program allows them to gain more power and influence in East Asia.

Respondents are randomly assigned to the following:

Sender3.v1: The president said this was a threat to the United States and our interests in the region, but that we would not intervene to stop
North Korea from developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president
did not use military force to stop them. North Korea continued to develop
its nuclear program.

Sender3.v2: The president said this was a threat to the United States and our
interests in the region, but that we would not intervene to stop North Korea from
developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president did not use military force to
stop them. North Korea stopped developing its nuclear program.

Sender3.v3: The president said this was a threat to the United States
and our interests in the region, but that we would not intervene to stop
North Korea from developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president
used military force to stop them. North Korea continued to develop its
nuclear program.

Sender3.v4: The president said this was a threat to the United States and our
interests in the region, but that we would not intervene to stop North Korea from
developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president used military force to stop
them. North Korea stopped developing its nuclear program.

Sender3.v5: The president said this was a threat to the United States
and our interests in the region, and that we would intervene to stop North
Korea from developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president did
not use military force to stop them. North Korea continued to develop its
nuclear program.
Sender3.v6: The president said this was a threat to the United States and our interests in the region, and that we would intervene to stop North Korea from developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president did not use military force to stop them. North Korea stopped developing its nuclear program.

Sender3.v7: The president said this was a threat to the United States and our interests in the region, and that we would intervene to stop North Korea from developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president used military force to stop them. North Korea continued to develop its nuclear program.

Sender3.v8: The president said this was a threat to the United States and our interests in the region, and that we would intervene to stop North Korea from developing nuclear materials. In the end, the president used military force to stop them. North Korea stopped developing its nuclear program.

[R1, R3, R5, and R7 are measured on the DV and then move on to Vignette 2. R2, R4, R6, and R8 are measured on DV only.]

Variable name: More NK Info 1= moved on 0= straight to DV

Vignette 2: Over the last year North Korea continued to develop a nuclear program. In fact, in October of last year intelligence sources indicated that North Korea was on the verge of conducting its first nuclear test. In response, the president went so far as to say that a North Korean nuclear test would be met with grave consequences.

Sender3.2.v1: The president said more recently the Untied States would use military force to prevent North Korea from conducting further nuclear tests. Despite
this threat, they continued their efforts to conduct additional nuclear tests. As a re-
result, the president used military force to stop North Korea from developing a nuclear
program, but was unsuccessful. In the end, North Korea continued developing its
nuclear program.

Sender3.2.v2: The president said more recently the Untied States would use mili-
tary force to prevent North Korea from conducting further nuclear tests. Despite this
threat, they continued their efforts to conduct additional nuclear tests. As a result,
the president used military force to stop North Korea from developing a nuclear pro-
gram, and was successful. In the end, North Korea stopped developing its nuclear
program.

Sender3.2.v3: The president said more recently the Untied States would use mili-
tary force to prevent North Korea from conducting further nuclear tests. Despite this
threat, they continued their efforts to conduct additional nuclear tests. The president
ultimately did not use military force to stop North Korea from developing a nuclear
program, and was unsuccessful. In the end, North Korea continued developing its
nuclear program.

Sender3.2.v4: The president said more recently the Untied States would use mili-
tary force to prevent North Korea from conducting further nuclear tests. Despite this
threat, they continued their efforts to conduct additional nuclear tests. The president
ultimately did not use military force to stop North Korea from developing a nuclear
program, but was successful. In the end, North Korea stopped developing its nuclear
program.

Audience Costs Operationalizations
1. Sender3.app.disapp.dv1: Do you (1) approve, (2) disapprove, or (3) neither approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. president handled the situation?

2. Sender3.app.dv1: Do you approve (1) very strongly, or only (2) somewhat?

3. Sender3.disapp.dv1: Do you disapprove (1) very strongly, or only (2) somewhat?

4. Sender3.lean.dv1: Do you lean toward (1) approving of the way the U.S. president handled the situation, (2) lean toward disapproving, or (3) you don’t lean either way?

5. Sender3.vote.dv1: If the next presidential election were tomorrow, how would you vote? (1) For; (2) against; (3) neither for nor against; or (4) don’t know.

6. Sender3.vote.dv2: Please explain why you chose to vote the way you did.

**B.3 Measurement of Predispositions**

**B.3.1 Internationalism**

1. America needs to cooperate more with the United Nations in settling international disputes.

2. It is essential for the United States to work with other nations to solve problems such as overpopulation, hunger, and pollution.

3. The United States needs to play an active role in solving conflicts around the world.

4. The United States government should just try to take care of the well-being of Americans and not get involved with other nations. (*)
B.3.2 Militant Assertiveness

1. The best way to ensure world peace is through American military strength.

2. Rather than simply reacting to your enemies, it’s better for us to strike first.

3. The use of military strength only makes matters worse (*)

4. Generally, the more influence America has on other nations, the better off they are.

B.3.3 Political Knowledge

1. Who is the current Vice President of the United States?
   Dick Cheney
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

2. How much of a majority is required for the U.S. Senate and House to override a presidential veto?
   2/3
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

3. Which political party currently has the most members in the House of Representatives?
   Democrat
4. Which political party is more conservative?
   Republican party
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

5. Whose responsibility is it to determine whether a law is constitutional or not: the President, the Congress, or the Supreme Court?
   Supreme Court
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

6. Which party would you say is more conservative?
   Republican
   1=correct
   0=incorrect

7. Who is the current speaker of the House of Representatives?
   Nancy Pelosi
   1=correct
   0=incorrect
8. Who is the current Secretary of State?

Condoleezza Rice

1=correct

0=incorrect

9. Who is the current Secretary of Defense?

Robert Gates

1=correct

0=incorrect

10. Who is the current President of Russia?

Vladimir Putin

1=correct

0=incorrect

11. Who is the British Prime Minister?

Tony Blair

1=correct

0=incorrect

12. What does NAFTA stand for?

North American Free Trade Agreement

1=correct

0=incorrect
13. What does EU stand for?

European Union

1=correct

0=incorrect

Note: * = reverse-coded. The percentage values after the knowledge items are the percentage in the sample who gave the correct answer.
APPENDIX C

Supporting Materials
C.2 Project for the New American Century –

Letter to President Clinton

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing you because we are convinced that current American policy toward Iraq is not succeeding, and that we may soon face a threat in the Middle East more serious than any we have known since the end of the Cold War. In your upcoming State of the Union Address, you have an opportunity to chart a clear and determined course for meeting this threat. We urge you to seize that opportunity, and to enunciate a new strategy that would secure the interests of the U.S. and our friends and allies around the world. That strategy should aim, above all, at the removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime from power. We stand ready to offer our full support in this difficult but necessary endeavor.

The policy of “containment” of Saddam Hussein has been steadily eroding over the past several months. As recent events have demonstrated, we can no longer depend on our partners in the Gulf War coalition to continue to uphold the sanctions or to punish Saddam when he blocks or evades UN inspections. Our ability to ensure that Saddam Hussein is not producing weapons of mass destruction, therefore, has substantially diminished. Even if full inspections were eventually to resume, which now seems highly unlikely, experience has shown that it is difficult if not impossible
to monitor Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons production. The lengthy period
during which the inspectors will have been unable to enter many Iraqi facilities has
made it even less likely that they will be able to uncover all of Saddams secrets.
As a result, in the not-too-distant future we will be unable to determine with any
reasonable level of confidence whether Iraq does or does not possess such weapons.

Such uncertainty will, by itself, have a seriously destabilizing effect on the entire
Middle East. It hardly needs to be added that if Saddam does acquire the capability to
deliver weapons of mass destruction, as he is almost certain to do if we continue along
the present course, the safety of American troops in the region, of our friends and
allies like Israel and the moderate Arab states, and a significant portion of the world’s
supply of oil will all be put at hazard. As you have rightly declared, Mr. President,
the security of the world in the first part of the 21st century will be determined largely
by how we handle this threat.

Given the magnitude of the threat, the current policy, which depends for its
success upon the steadfastness of our coalition partners and upon the cooperation of
Saddam Hussein, is dangerously inadequate. The only acceptable strategy is one that
eliminates the possibility that Iraq will be able to use or threaten to use weapons of
mass destruction. In the near term, this means a willingness to undertake military
action as diplomacy is clearly failing. In the long term, it means removing Saddam
Hussein and his regime from power. That now needs to become the aim of American
foreign policy.

We urge you to articulate this aim, and to turn your Administration’s attention
to implementing a strategy for removing Saddam’s regime from power. This will
require a full complement of diplomatic, political and military efforts. Although we
are fully aware of the dangers and difficulties in implementing this policy, we believe the dangers of failing to do so are far greater. We believe the U.S. has the authority under existing UN resolutions to take the necessary steps, including military steps, to protect our vital interests in the Gulf. In any case, American policy cannot continue to be crippled by a misguided insistence on unanimity in the UN Security Council.

We urge you to act decisively. If you act now to end the threat of weapons of mass destruction against the U.S. or its allies, you will be acting in the most fundamental national security interests of the country. If we accept a course of weakness and drift, we put our interests and our future at risk.

Sincerely,

Elliott Abrams • Richard L. Armitage • William J. Bennett
Jeffrey Bergner • John Bolton • Paula Dobriansky
Francis Fukuyama • Robert Kagan • Zalmay Khalilzad
William Kristol • Richard Perle • Peter W. Rodman
Donald Rumsfeld • William Schneider, Jr. • Vin Weber
Paul Wolfowitz • R. James Woolsey • Robert B. Zoellick
BIBLIOGRAPHY


330


Lemann, Nicholas. 2002. “The Next World Order: The Bush Administration may have a brand-new doctrine of power.” New Yorker, April


Pomper, Miles. “Reluctant White House Urged to Send Troops to Province of Kosovo.” *CQ Weekly*, June 13


349


Press.


351


352


