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ADVISORY SYSTEMS, CONTEXTS, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES

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Abstract

In examining the management of the foreign policy process, scholars have determined that variations in management style have implications for how the policy process is organized and how policy is deliberated. The research has been less attentive to how management varies depending on the issue area. This study examines the decision making of the Bill Clinton administration and compares the management of foreign policy on concurrent international economic and security issues. The study finds little variation between cases in management style, but important differences within cases resulting from advisor influence and contextual factors. By examining the potential variations between issue areas, it is possible to better understand the connections between decision-making process, context, and the effectiveness of certain management styles.

Key words: foreign policy, management style, advisers, Clinton administration.

Introduction

A critical component in the creation of foreign policy is the leader's choice of management style. Management style influences how the leader engages the policy-making process, who participates in the process, how information is processed, and how disagreements are resolved. The importance of these decisions has led practitioners and scholars alike to try to understand the differences between management styles, how they function, and their limitations in order to study how to improve the policy process. However, some of this research suffers from certain limitations, which raises some questions regarding the applicability of these explanations and their utility in explaining the policy process.

Noticeable in the foreign policy analysis research on management style is a tendency to focus on security issues and to look at a single decision within a given administration. As Paul 't Hart (1997) argues, there needs to be more research that looks beyond a "snapshot" view of decisions, toward analyses that compare decisions by the same group in the same context. Equally important, there is also a need for more studies that undertake a longitudinal analysis of how leaders manage the foreign policy process across time. The advantage of extending the research on management styles and structures in these directions is that it will improve our understanding of "the interplay between institutional, political, situational, and idiosyncratic forces" that can influence the policy process ('t Hart 1997, 334). In short, a deeper analysis of management styles can produce a richer understanding of the policy process.

One area that can contribute significantly to an improved understanding of the policy process is context. A focus on context, in particular, is necessary because presidents are subjected to different sets of pressures and actors when dealing with different types of issues. Issues that are of importance to domestic actors can potentially affect a president, as they must contend with the demands of important constituents or influential political actors.

This study addresses some of these gaps in the literature by way of an examination of presidential management during two different yet contemporaneous foreign policy decisions. Overall, the study has two goals. The first is to identify whether there is consistency in management style in different issue domains and what, specifically, causes it to change. Is change simply a reflection of the president's expertise or interests, or are there conditions or characteristics associated with the issues that place pressure on the president to change?

Comparing two decisions in a single administration will accomplish a second goal, which is to determine how sensitive the advisory system and its attendant processes are to context. Does a change in context alter the interaction among the members of the advisory system? If so, what are the circumstances that cause this to happen? What kinds of opportunities or constraints are created by a change in context that may affect policy deliberations?

The purpose of the research is to address the conditions under which presidential management of the policy process changes. However, the study does not examine all of the possible management styles available to decision makers; instead, it presents an in-depth analysis of the collegial advisory system. The collegial management style has been identified as increasingly common among presidents, and it is considered a normative ideal because of the way in which it allows for open discussion and the evaluation of a full range of options, both of which contribute to “better” policy outcomes (George 1980; George and George 1998; Walcott and Hult 2005).

This research anticipates that there should be variation in management style when there is a greater need for acceptability, meaning that in order for policy to be effective, it “must be acceptable to a minimum number of relevant groups” (Farnham 2004, 443). As Barbara Farnham (2004) argues, acceptability is necessary in any political context, but the level is not always the same—in particular, acceptability is linked to the type of issue. An international issue that is salient to an important domestic constituency will require a greater level of acceptability than one for which there are fewer domestic interests. Thus, if we were to compare a president’s management style in relation to a foreign policy issue that generates significant domestic interest with one that generates less, we should be able to observe a difference because, in the first case, the president has the extra burden of managing a process in which there are greater institutional and structural pressures present. This effect should be even more clearly at work in a collegial system, in which the process is more open and the president is apparently more interested in being exposed to alternative perspectives. Thus, of the different types of management styles, the collegial style should be the one for which context should have an observable effect. This can be contrasted with a formal style, in which the president desires to control the process in a hierarchical fashion—by way of a gatekeeper or a highly structured process—which has the implication of limiting who participates in the process and what perspectives are heard.

The research employs a structured-focused comparison and applies a congruence test of two instances of collegial decision making by the Bill Clinton administration. Structured-focused comparison calls for the application of a theoretically based set of standardized questions that are used to guide the researcher’s examination of each case (George and Bennett 2005). The theoretically based questions deal selectively with those aspects of the case argued to be relevant to the study’s objectives and data requirements. In other words, they are focused by the study’s theory or, in this research, the characteristics of the presidential management style under examination. The benefit of this approach is that it allows the researcher to collect comparable data across cases and to make stronger cases from a small-*N* sample. Because each case comprises multiple occasions for decision, each occasion is subjected to the structured questions. This approach has the benefit of increasing the number of observations and expanding the *N* for each case.

Further, the cases are subjected to congruence testing. In a congruence test, the researcher tests whether the predicted values of the dependent (management style) and independent (context) variables are congruent with those that are found in the case. This means that the focus of the test is on the independent and dependent variables rather than the intervening variables. The utility of congruence testing is that “we usually lack precise models of the value that the individual variables, individually and collectively, should produce in the dependent variable,” and it has the added benefit of ruling “out proposed necessary or sufficient conditions” of a theory (Bennett 2004, 24).

The specific instances of collegial decision making under examination are the decision to extend most-favored-nation status to China during 1993-94 and the deliberations on intervention in Bosnia during 1992-95. These cases were chosen because they represent two foreign policy issues for which a variance on the dependent variable, collegial decision making, is most likely because the issue of trade has far greater domestic salience for a range of political actors, which, in turn, increases the issue’s acceptability level when compared to an issue such as Bosnia, which has less domestic salience. If a variance in management style can be found for these cases, then we can, with greater certainty, expect that presidents will alter their management style when confronted with other foreign policy issues that are different in terms of context.

Before analyzing the two cases, the next section briefly examines the different approaches that scholars have taken to the study of advisory systems and management styles in relation to context. In examining this literature, it is clear that context does matter and that variations in context offer the decision maker different opportunities, but they also present new constraints. After identifying the key elements of the collegial management style, the instances of U.S. extension of most-favored-nation status to China and U.S. policy making toward the conflict in Bosnia will be assessed. Finally, the case studies are followed by an evaluation of the cases and the conclusions that can be drawn from them regarding management style and the impact of context.

Presidential Management Styles and Context

Alexander L. George (1980; George and George 1998), building on the work by Richard Tanner Johnson (1974), argues that presidential choice of management style is a product of an individual's attitude toward political conflict, preference for processing information, and feelings of efficacy. Based on these three personality characteristics, George proposes that presidents choose from three different management styles: collegial, competitive, and formalistic. With the collegial style, the president seeks to develop a "team-like" atmosphere in which he seeks out a diversity of policy opinions from his advisors. In this type of decision-making system, the president desires to be inclusive and encourages advisors to air disagreements. In contrast, a formalistic style emphasizes the president's desire to impose order and control over the policy process. With this style, the president creates an orderly, procedure-bound hierarchy in which policy is developed at lower levels and screened before options move to higher levels for choice. This style seeks to reduce the kind of bargaining that occurs with the collegial style. The competitive style, on the other hand, seeks a diversity of opinion, but it does so through organizational ambiguity and overlapping jurisdiction. The president may deliberately bring advisors into confrontation with one another over policy in order to elicit more information and options.

Borne of this research or working in the same tradition, a number of studies have examined different dimensions of the Johnson/George typology and its implications for policy (Crabb and Mulcahy 1986; Hermann and Preston 1994; Kowert 2002; Mitchell 2005a, 2005b; Orbovich and Molnar 1992; Pika 1988; Preston 2001). Little of this research has specifically focused attention of the effect of a leader's context on his or her management of the policy process. Conventional wisdom holds that during times of crisis, leaders have a tendency to narrow the number of individuals involved in decision making. The original articulation of groupthink by Irving L. Janis (1982) posited that a crisis environment could induce concurrence seeking, which would ultimately lead to defective decision making. Patrick J. Haney (1997), in a study directly focused on management style, examines how presidents manage policy making during crises and how well they manage that crisis with their chosen style. Haney's contribution is significant because he analyzes management styles in a particular context, which accounts for variations from the ideal types that result from a given context. The importance of this approach is that it moves away from the general idealized models and advances an understanding of the decision making that allows for greater contingency.

What crises indicate is that presidents will alter their management of the policy process to a degree based on the salience of the issue. Presidents will rely on a preferred management style when they are dealing with a salient issue in situations in which they do not have a clear sense of the objectives or the means to achieve those objectives. This highlights the fact that, as Paul A. Anderson (1985) argues, different policy environments will produce differences in administrative solutions. The salience of the issue is of critical importance in this dynamic, as it compels engagement. This means that across an extended period of time, the president may move between management styles, in part in relation to the urgency of the issue and how well the issue is defined. This idea is reinforced by Jerel Rosati (1981), who, in critiquing the bureaucratic politics model, observes that bureaucratic interactions vary between critical and noncritical decisions. Rosati argues that the bureaucratic politics model, which describes the outcome of the decision-making process as a result of competition and bargaining between bureaucratic leaders who are driven by parochial interests, does not address the impact of context. Perhaps this is true to an extent, but Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, in *Essence of Decision* (1999), highlight that context can influence who participates and that deadlines and the "face of issues" have varying implications for different bureaucratic actors. Similarly, Charles F. Parker and Eric K. Stern (2002) assert that in bureaucratic interactions, different contexts elicit different interests from bureaucracies.

Whether one is dealing with a crisis, level of salience, or domestic versus international context, the impact that any of these variables has on the decision-making process will depend on the individual(s) and his or her ability to perceive these as relevant factors and to be influenced by them. Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult (1995) point out that across administrations, particularly in the arena of national security, the National Security Council has routinely been a combination of a collegial and a competitive organization. However, they caution that organizational factors are less critical in shaping management style in the National Security Council, as there is greater disagreement over the means and ends of foreign policy. The implication of this characteristic is that foreign policy—as compared to domestic policy—does not lend itself to fixed structures, and, by extension, individual factors can play a greater role in management.

Although not directly concerned with an examination of management styles, Farnham (2004) addresses the impact of context on decision making and argues that “the political context affects the decision-making behavior of those who are sensitive to it in distinct and identifiable ways, leading to the development of characteristic modes of analyzing and dealing with decision problems.” Context here refers to an area that has its own distinctive objectives and goals (Farnham 1990), which means that decision makers will take action suited to achieve those goals. For a decision maker, the domestic context has a different set of objectives than the international. Similarly, “intermestic” issues, which are both domestic and international in character, will also have a different type of characteristics when compared to international issues. Domestically, leaders require the ongoing support of actors who can help maintain them in office or bring about successful policy, which is not necessarily the case at the international level. Although, at the international level, the leader may want to generate support for a policy, international actors do not have the same kind of influence as those in the domestic context, particularly given electoral considerations. On international issues, the range of political actors who need to be satisfied may be of a smaller number, and the withdrawal of support or failure to make an agreement does not have the same kind of implications for a president as those at the domestic level.

When considering foreign policy, we should expect different levels of acceptability. Although all foreign policy serves domestic interests, policy can still differ according to its immediacy and salience for domestic political actors, which means that even with foreign policy, there will be variation in what Farnham refers to as the level of acceptability. Therefore, decision makers potentially have to adjust how they process information and manage the policy process when confronted with foreign policy issues with varying levels of acceptability. Specifically, an intermestic issue is, by its very nature, distinct from an issue that can be conceived of as more purely international.

The idea that decision makers must reconcile domestic and international factors is not new. The two-level game literature (Drezner 2003; Evans, Jacobson, and Putnam 1993; Putnam 1988) addresses how, in order to get an international agreement, decision makers must reconcile international and domestic win-sets. However, what is missing from the two-level game literature, and what Farnham and this research identify, is that differences in context are not the complete story. Contexts do impose different levels of constraint or acceptability, but the extent to which this is meaningful depends on the type of leader and his or her experiences, interests, personality traits, and cognitive abilities. Leaders vary in terms of their willingness to challenge constraints, their openness to information, and their motivation, and these traits influence not only their choice of management style but also the extent to which they will be responsive to external constraints, be they domestic or international (Hermann 1980; Hermann and Preston 1994; Hermann et al. 2001).

If different contexts produce different levels of acceptability, then presidents have to respond to those contexts in different ways. However, this does not occur in a deterministic fashion. The degree to which a president changes will in part be a function of his leadership style. A more open president can be expected to be more responsive and demonstrate greater variation between issues than one who is less sensitive to their environment. Consequently, presidents should alter their management style in order to meet the different demands placed on them by different contexts. An intermestic issue for which there is a higher demand for acceptability should produce a different management style than a more pure international issue with a lower need for acceptability.

As previously noted, of all these styles, the collegial style has been identified as being a normative ideal, and in fact, increasingly, administrations have moved to construct advisory systems that will replicate the best of collegial management. Presidents who choose a collegial form of management are leaders who are interested in hearing a range of opinions before making a decision, and they have a strong preference for building consensus.

Of the three traditionally conceived management styles, the collegial should exhibit the greatest level of change in light of variations in context. We should expect that, when confronted with an intermestic issue, the management style will differ from that of an international issue.

Analyzing Clinton's Advisory System

Bill Clinton has been characterized as employing a collegial management style with low centralization during his two terms in office (Burke 2000; Hermann 1994; Mitchell 2005b; Preston 2001), which provides an ideal test case. Compatible with someone who would adopt a collegial advisory system, Clinton is very open to information, which means that he is sensitive to what is going on in his environment. This means that contextual and structural factors are likely to have an influence on Clinton as he develops policy, which also increases the likelihood of an impact on the development of policy. In fact, he has been described as being very difficult to pin down on policy because of his ability to change in response to new information (Halberstam 2001).

For the purposes of this study, the advantage of focusing on the Clinton administration is that it will be clear how these exogenous variables are at work in the policy process. The specific cases of decision making during the Clinton administration selected for the purposes of this analysis are the war in Bosnia and China's most-favored-nation status. Clinton took positions on both issues during the 1992 campaign, and, once he was elected, both were simultaneously at the top of his foreign policy agenda. International economics had a priority in the Clinton administration; no longer was it considered purely a domestic issue, not on par with security affairs (Porter 1983). Increasing economic growth was one of Clinton's top priorities, and while deficit reduction was seen as a key element in improving the domestic economy, Clinton believed that this would be ineffective without expanding trade (Clinton 2004). Clinton, in the form of the National Economic Council (NEC), put in place a formal structure that was modeled along the lines of the National Security Council (NSC). So, at least as they appear on paper, the structures designed to develop security and economic policies were comparable.

The case studies are constructed using the structured-focused comparison method. The questions guiding the examination of the Clinton case are:

1. What role does the leader play within the advisory system?
 2. Who generates preferences in the system, and how is the final option chosen?
 3. What is the organization and functioning of the process? What are the procedures for managing the system?
- These questions are designed to address the theoretical interest of this study, which is to identify, in both cases, whether the advisory system is collegial and in what ways the system(s) might have changed. In addition to addressing these questions, the cases also identify how domestic and international variables influence the policy process and have implications for the organization and management of the policy process. If the Clinton advisory systems are collegial, then it is proposed that the cases should exhibit the following characteristics (Mitchell 2005a):
1. President pushes the group to assess range of options President has no regular mode of interacting with advisors
 2. President works with advisors to generate policy preferences
 3. President is active member of the group, but is willing to delegate authority to others who have expertise.
- Advisors are instrumental in guiding policy Emphasis on consensus building among advisors Conflict and bargaining between advisors.
Policy disagreements result in deadlock or a subset of the advisory group influences policy.

But if the variation in acceptability between the international and domestic contexts is meaningful, then a change should be seen in this management style. It is expected that because of the demands that exist on the president at the domestic level, there should be an alteration of the management process when compared to the international context.

It is also important to examine the collegial system because of the way in which it is understood to be a preferred way of decision making. The advisory system adopted by President John F. Kennedy during the Cuban missile crisis is often considered an ideal example of how well the collegial system can work. But as George (1980) argues, although there are clear advantages to this system, there are also limitations—specifically, this model may not be an adequate choice for presidents who are unable to be highly engaged with the policy process. Moreover, the irregular mode of presidential interaction and the lead that advisors take in creating policy can potentially prove problematic.

Nonetheless, as a type of management style worthy of emulation, policy makers ought to fully understand how and why an advisory system may or may not function in different contexts.

Overview of the Issues: Delinking MFN and Bosnia

Clinton had to deal with two controversial and important foreign policy issues upon entering office. In June 1989, Sino-American relations under George H. W. Bush were jolted because of the Chinese government's crackdown against prodemocracy demonstrations at Tiananmen Square. Human rights groups and Democrats in Congress put pressure on the Bush administration to link continuance of most-favored-nation (MFN) status to China's human rights record. However, Bush—not wanting to damage relations with China—resisted by vetoing all such legislation. Since the Carter administration, extension of MFN had been linked to China's record on human rights, and each year, MFN was granted relatively without controversy, but the events of 1989 brought this into doubt. During the campaign, candidate Bill Clinton took advantage of what was seen as an inconsistency in the Bush policy toward China and critiqued Bush's policy as “coddling” an undemocratic regime that violated international law. Clinton claimed that once elected, he would reverse the relationship between the United States and China by elevating the issue of human rights and punishing the Chinese by withholding MFN.

Once in office, however, Clinton began to reevaluate his categorical position on China and shifted to a more moderate one in which MFN would be conditioned on China's behavior. The administration began an interagency review of policy, and it was quickly acknowledged that Clinton could neither renege on his campaign promises nor sever the United States' relationship with China (Dietrich 1999). Clinton and his foreign policy team were influenced by the realization that the relationship with China was too strategically important to sacrifice for human rights, and that the policy they advocated was not practical (Hyland 1999). Clinton also had to contend with constituencies inside and outside the government that had different interests. On the one hand, he confronted the Business Coalition for U.S.-China Trade, a pro-China lobbying group, and, on the other hand, members of Congress, such as George Mitchell and Nancy Pelosi, who asserted a strong position on human rights. In addition, there were advocates in the administration, such as Winston Lord, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, and John Shattuck, secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, who supported a tougher stance against the Chinese. As a compromise, in May 1993, Clinton signed an executive order that linked MFN to China's improvement of policy in six areas, one of which was human rights. But even this compromise did not quell the opposition to linkage. In fact, Clinton's actions elicited a vigorous response from opposition that wanted to see full engagement with China.

The inclusion of Congress in the policy development stage proved successful, as Clinton won the support of the moderate members of Congress, which allowed the administration to proceed with engagement with China. The Commerce Department moved ahead to create programs to develop trade, and in November 1993, Clinton met with Chinese president Jiang Zemin at the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference. Despite these positive developments, the relationship with China was turbulent at times as the United States challenged China on other issues, such as apparent violations of the Missile Technology Control Regime and the sale of precursor chemicals to Iran (Dietrich 1999). Consequently, the United States found itself both engaging and challenging China simultaneously on a range of issues, which served to keep alive the connection of Chinese human rights behavior to MFN. The linkage was also, in part, kept alive by the schisms in the administration between the Commerce Department, the Treasury Department, and the National Economic Council, on the one hand, and the State Department and United Nations ambassador Madeleine Albright, on the other. This division was important, as the administration had to begin the process of determining whether it would continue to extend MFN status to China in 1994.

The internal division manifested itself in a chaotic trip by Secretary of State Warren Christopher to China in March 1994. Christopher emphasized the importance of human rights for U.S.-China relations, going so far as to say that the relationship depended on how the Chinese treated its citizens (Hyland 1999). The Chinese rejected Christopher's statements and reasserted its sovereign right to noninterference. Christopher's comments were likewise criticized in the United States by the business community and some members of the administration for the seemingly extreme position on human rights. The trip proved to be momentous, as it signaled Clinton's final move to delink human rights and MFN permanently. Congress had already shifted in the direction of allowing delinking, and key members of the administration, including the president, realized that the continued linkage of these issues was counterproductive to administration objectives. Thus, in May 1994, Clinton decided to delink the two issues.

As in the case of MFN status for China, Bosnia was another issue on which Clinton took a strong policy position during the campaign. While Bush chose to avoid involvement in the Bosnia conflict—citing no compelling national interest or clear exit strategy—Clinton argued for U.S. intervention that would include the use of force. Clinton called for greater U.S. engagement in the Balkans, in particular supporting the use of air strikes against Bosnian Serbs in order to protect the efforts of relief agencies. Shortly after taking a public position on air strikes, Clinton advocated that the United States take the more controversial step of lifting the arms embargo on the warring parties, which would allow Bosnian Muslims to acquire arms. Once in office, however, Clinton altered his position, recognizing that the forceful policy he had originally advocated would prove problematic to implement.

The administration was confronted with the reality that its European allies were unwilling to participate in or support any intervention that required the use of force because of the threat this posed to European peacekeepers already on the ground in Bosnia. This put Clinton in a very difficult situation, as he could not use force in the way he wanted, but it also meant that he was left with only undesirable alternatives. Clinton could not ignore the issue, given his stance during the campaign, nor was he willing to accept the existing diplomatic solution, the plan devised by Cyrus Vance and David Owen. The Vance-Owen plan called for the division of Bosnia into cantons, and Clinton felt that this political arrangement meant rewarding the Serbians, who were understood to be the aggressors in the conflict. Complicating matters was the fact that internal divisions existed among Clinton's advisors. The military leadership believed that force would be ineffective in Bosnia, as there was no clear objective and exit strategy. Others in the administration favored either more aggressive action—such as Ambassador Albright—or the limited use of force—such as Secretary Christopher.

In early 1993, Clinton chose a policy that was an amalgam of several different ideas that were each less assertive than what he had pledged. Clinton decided that the United States should ask the United Nations for authority to enforce the no-fly zone, tighten economic sanctions, appoint an envoy to the talks with Vance and Owen, and reaffirm the Bush administration's warnings about Serbia's expansion of the conflict into Macedonia and Kosovo (Drew 1994, 146). The policy proved disappointing, as it had little impact on the course of the conflict. Consequently, domestic pressure increased for the administration to adopt a policy of "lift and strike." Many within Congress supported this policy, which called for lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnians and using NATO strikes to enforce cease-fires. In an effort to be more assertive, Clinton sent Christopher to Europe to persuade the Europeans to support a lift and strike policy, but Christopher's half-hearted attempts to convince the Europeans were rejected, as they remained opposed to jeopardizing the lives of the peacekeepers on the ground.

The failure of the Christopher mission led to more than a year of stagnation in the administration's attempts to develop policy. Conditions worsened as the administration was unable to develop any meaningful policy for the rest of 1994, aside from supporting the United Nations' plan to protect a series of safe havens. It was not until early 1995 that efforts were renewed to construct policy that would ultimately contribute to the ending of the conflict. The change was driven by a series of intense assaults by the Serbians on UN safe havens, most notably the massacre at Srebrenica of men and young boys. These efforts to develop policy were led by National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and resulted in the president choosing a policy that called for the implementation of a variety of military and diplomatic options designed to be used as leverage on the warring factions. These carrots and sticks included using military force to relieve Sarajevo, encouraging third-party arms shipments to Bosnia, unilateral lifting of the arms embargo, redeployment of the United Nations Protection Force, air strikes against Serbia, the exchange of territory, international assistance for all sides after settlement, and limited autonomy for Bosnian Serbs in a new Bosnian state. Given the worsening conditions and clear signs that the United States was committed to bringing the war to an end, Clinton was able to gain the support of the Europeans and to set in motion the events that would lead to a settlement four years after the outbreak of fighting.

With this overview of both cases, the aspects of the policy process can be addressed. In the following sections, the structured-focused comparison questions are applied to both cases. Each case is divided into individual episodes of decision making, and the questions are asked of each episode. This approach increases the number of observations of decision making and the number of instances to observe variations in the policy process across time.

China: What Role Does the President Play in the Policy Process?

(January 1993-May 1993)

Beginning in 1993, Clinton distanced himself from the issue of China policy, as he believed there were no clear domestic political gains to be had (Lampton 2001). The initial policy was discussed among mid-level officials from the foreign policy and economic bureaucracies with little attention from senior officials, including the president himself (Bradsher 1993). Subsequently, Clinton did not try to reconcile the different policy perspectives on engagement with China that existed within the administration. Although Clinton sympathized with both the human rights advocates and those who had a concern for commercial relations, he was at the same time supportive of those who viewed MFN through a security prism. Clinton threw his weight behind none of these positions (Tucker 2001). Inadvertently, Clinton's inattention allowed for the emergence of a policy that sought to make trade relations contingent on improvements in human rights (Harding 1994).

As the process moved beyond the interagency process to involve members of Congress, the president remained relatively disengaged and allowed lower-level advisors to develop policy. For example, between April and May 1993, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord and National Security Advisor Anthony Lake negotiated the parameters of the administration's policy with Representative Nancy Pelosi and Senator George Mitchell (Mann 1999). Clinton participated in making the final decision to move forward with the policy that developed out of these discussions.

(May 1993-May 1994)

According to Winston Lord, Clinton was inattentive during the first year of deliberations on MFN, and this was also true of the second year, which eventually led to the decision to delink human rights from MFN (Rothkopf 2005). The inattention to MFN policy, however, is not equivalent to a complete disengagement from the process. Clinton's participation in the process became more active as the initial decision to link MFN and human rights encountered difficulties in the period before the 1994 deadline for renewing the MFN status.

Early in the summer of that year, after his advisors had developed a limited set of options, Clinton attended meetings with the National Security Council. In these meetings, Clinton encouraged debate and sought a wide variety of views as he wrestled with the domestic and international pressures on the MFN policy. These circumstances resulted in an extensive debate that did not yield a final decision. Congressional liaison Howard Paster characterized Clinton as always "trying to pick out a new course" (Lampton 2001, 321). Notably, he tried to reconcile the pressures, on the one hand, from members of Congress who had developed an expectation that Clinton would take a strong stand on human rights when considering trade relations and, on the other, from the business community, which believed that the issue of human rights undermined the development of productive economic relations. In the end, the business community's views—which had the support of Clinton's economic advisors and matched his own interest in economic expansion—proved more persuasive.

Throughout fall 1993 and spring 1994, the 1993 policy was beginning to rapidly unravel. This came at a time when there were an increasing number of voices in the administration calling for Clinton to change policy. Clinton's role at this point in the process was open as he listened to a variety of views on MFN and China. The president attended a series of principals' meetings in May, where he finally agreed, on May 26, to delink and adopt a policy of comprehensive engagement (Rothkopf, 2005). In addition to these internal consultations, Clinton met with members of the business community and with Henry Kissinger and Jimmy Carter, all of whom advocated for the delinking of MFN from human rights (Mann 1999).

China: Who Generates Preferences in the System That Will Be Deliberated and Finally Chosen?

(January 1993-May 1993)

During his election campaign, although Clinton took a strong stand on human rights and China—arguing that the Bush administration was too willing to accommodate Chinese human rights violations—this stance was not motivated by a true preference. Instead, it was driven by the expediency of electoral politics (Hyland 1999). Once in office, Clinton did not assert a strong preference in relation to the issue, leaving the administration's preferences to be generated among the president's advisors. Policy preferences in the administration were in fact split between the president's foreign policy and economic advisors. From the very beginning, Winston Lord, Warren Christopher, Anthony Lake, and Deputy National Security Advisor Sandy Berger supported a policy of engagement with China; however, they did not want this engagement to come at the expense of the defense of human rights.

Their belief was that U.S. economic strength could be effectively used as leverage to alter the Chinese government's behavior on the treatment of dissidents, Tibet, and a range of other human rights concerns. As Lord testified before Congress, "We will seek cooperation from China on a range of issues. But Americans cannot forget Tiananmen Square" (Mann 1999, 277).

As it turned out, Lord was in the ideal position to shape administration policy because he was one of the few experts on China in the administration. This expertise served to strengthen those in the administration, such as Lake, who were proponents of conditioning trade with China (Tucker 2001). However, Lord and the NSC's policy preferences would not go unchallenged, as the members of the newly formed National Economic Council, such as National Economic Advisor Robert Rubin, Chair Laura Tyson of the Council of Economic Advisers, Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen, and Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, sought an alternative policy. This group did not believe that the current and future economic relationship between China and the United States should be prevented from developing because of human rights concerns (Dietrich 1999).

Lord sought to reconcile the preferences of those who wanted to take a hardline posture on the connection between human rights and trade and those who saw value in "commercial engagement." In developing an executive order on MFN, Lord, most importantly, had to come to terms with the preferences of the members of Congress who were strong advocates of withholding MFN. He was able to convince Pelosi and Mitchell to make a number of concessions, such as separating out arms control from human rights and weakening the language on the release of political prisoners, which put in place a policy that conditioned trade but was not so onerous that China would not be able to comply. These negotiations established the parameters of the executive order that Clinton signed in May.

(May 1993-May 1994)

It was not long after the decision to condition MFN that the policy began to be rethought. Preferences in the administration were still a reflection of Clinton's national security advisors; however, the economic advisors' preferences were slowly adopted by other members of the administration as result of Chinese intransigence and the increasing recognition of the value of commercial engagement. Thus, from summer 1993 to spring 1994, preferences slowly moved into alignment between the two halves of the administration. Unlike the previous period, in which the economic advisors had preferences but did not make them felt in the policy process, these advisors now entered discussions and sought to advance their preferences over those who supported conditionality. The convergence of the preferences of the Defense Department and economic advisors significantly contributed to the pressure to shift administration policy. The shift in preferences from the pro-MFN human rights link to the ending of conditionality evolved over time, but was largely a response to failing policy and the complications that this created for Sino-American relations in general. The Pentagon became dissatisfied with administration policy because it complicated relations with the Chinese, whose cooperation was understood to be essential if the United States was going to be able to deal with the mounting nuclear crisis in North Korea (Garrison 2005).

Added to the voices of Clinton's economic advisors were those of the business community, which had mobilized to protect trade interests. Business groups lobbied the president directly and worked through Clinton's economic advisors to make their preferences known in the process (Mann 1999). The efforts of this "New China lobby" added intensity to the preferences being voiced by Clinton's economic advisors, which enhanced their impact on Clinton's consideration of a change of policy. Michael Armacost, chief executive officer of Hughes Aircraft and a friend to the president, for example, personally lobbied the president to rescind sanctions applied against China in response to the Chinese sale of M-11 missiles to Pakistan, a violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime. In another instance, Maurice Greenburg, chairman of American Insurance Group, and Henry Kissinger met with members of the Treasury and Commerce departments, as well as with Anthony Lake, in order to influence as many individuals around Clinton as possible (Mann 1999).

These conditions prompted the administration, in summer 1993, to initiate an interagency review of the administration's policy toward China on a range of issues. The outcome of this review was that there needed to be more engagement, principally more dialogue, with the Chinese and that there was a need to try to overcome problems, but the link between trade and human rights remained. This very much reflected the continuing split in preferences among Clinton's advisors.

The renewed effort at engagement with the process meant that more individuals had an opportunity to influence policy and advance their policy interests (Garrison 2005). In short, this created an opportunity for Clinton's economic advisors to begin to more strongly assert their preferences and redirect policy.

The change was complete with the marginalization of Warren Christopher, which resulted from his failed diplomatic trip to China in March 1994. Christopher's failed efforts to pressure the Chinese signaled the failure of State Department preferences, which diminished the role of the secretary of state and subsequently that of Winston Lord, who was no longer in a position to manage the process. By May 1994, the president's advisors held a dominant preference for not revoking MFN and extending it unconditionally (Dietrich 1999). Significant in the emergence of the economic advisors' preference was the role of the business community, which mobilized after the 1993 executive order conditioning MFN.

China: What Is the Organization and Functioning of the Process? What Is the Nature of the Decision-Making Process? What Are the Procedures for Managing the System?

(January 1993-May 1993)

The responsibility for developing policy was delegated to Lake and Christopher (Hargrove 2008). In turn, the principals delegated responsibility to deputies to begin the process of reviewing the administration's MFN policy toward China. As discussed earlier, policy options in the administration were developed first among the principals' deputies and then moved up the hierarchy. The guiding principle for these deliberations was that decision making should be collegial and that final decisions should be based on consensus among the principals in the NEC and the NSC and their deputies (Rothkopf 2005).

Randall B. Ripley and James M. Lindsay (1997) note that the desire to build consensus was strongest among the deputies rather than among the principals. Lake, in particular, did not feel a strong need to build consensus. The policy, as well as the process, at the beginning of the MFN issue was not driven by the president but instead by the president's advisors. This was compatible with the overall low level of engagement that Clinton had with the policy process. Lampton (2001) notes that Clinton's distance from the policy process enhanced Lord's position as an important source of administration preferences in an administration in which the principals did not agree on policy. In support, Lake worked to defend the emerging policy from those within the administration who sought a greater degree of engagement, whether on economic or on security issues. Chas Freeman, assistant secretary of defense for regional security, has recounted that Lake rejected Les Aspin's proposal to engage China on a range of defense issues, including North Korea. Lake's grounds for doing so were that it was unacceptable to deal at all with China.

The State Department and Lake served as the conduit for Pelosi and Mitchell, the two most ardent advocates for conditioning MFN, to influence the administration. Lake and Lord recognized that they had to come to terms with those members of Congress who were willing to hold the administration's feet to the fire on human rights. Clinton played a role at the end of the process, as he was responsible for making a decision on the policy developed among his advisors. Clinton's involvement was driven by the necessity of having to make a choice, as time had expired for the administration and the deadline for renewal was at hand (Lampton 2001). The final policy reflected the preferences of the advisors, who were given the authority to construct the policy, which, in turn, was tempered by their interactions with outside individuals and groups, most notably members of Congress. The final decision produced in 1993 by the administration was a compromise solution that attempted to fulfill the promises that Clinton had made going back to the campaign, but also accounted for the opposition in the administration and the increasing recognition of China's growing strategic importance.

(May 1993-May 1994)

During this period, the president continued to delegate policy to his advisors; however, as tensions mounted with China and there seemed to be no appreciable change on China's human rights behavior, the president called for a "broader framework" to deal with China (Lampton 2001, 135). During the summer, this led to another round of interagency meetings led by Lake and Lord, who were willing to accept a more comprehensive engagement, although they continued to have considerable reservations regarding dialogue (Garrison 2005). Clinton's call for Lord to reformulate the policy was motivated by the fact that the president was being exposed to the views of the China lobby and the Department of Defense, which were expressing dissatisfaction with his May decision.

The change in policy was also a reflection of greater activity on the part of the NEC in the process. No longer were Clinton's economic advisors playing a passive role; instead, they were more aggressively challenging the "pro-conditions" elements in the administration and asserting their preferences. Chief of Staff Leon Panetta asserted that the NEC sought to build a partnership with the Department of Defense (Garrison 2005). Mann notes that "in internal meetings within the administration, in background briefings to reporters and sometimes in public as well, Clinton's economic advisers made clear their strong unhappiness with the linkage between trade with China and human rights" (1999, 294). Divisions also began to emerge among the NSC, as well as among members of the NSC staff; notably, Deputy National Security Advisor Sandy Berger supported the NEC's position (Rodman 2009). Thus, bargaining was still taking place in the administration over the appropriate direction for China policy, but increasingly, the changing circumstances gave a bargaining advantage to the NEC. Recognizing the divisions in the administration and the weakening position of those in support of linkage, the Chinese became even more recalcitrant as they sought to exploit the differences (Tucker 2001).

Warren Christopher's ill-fated trip to Beijing permanently shifted the locus of decision making away from the State Department and toward the NEC, which steered the president toward delinking MFN from human rights (Rodman 2009). The NEC and other economic departments specifically blamed Lord's initiatives as the main source of the failing policy (Garrison 2005). Subsequently, China policy was now being managed by Berger, who met regularly with Deputy National Economic Advisor Bo Cutter. The new NSC/NEC interagency meetings were held two or three times a week and sought to build an effective consensus (Rothkopf 2005). The implication of this change on the final decision to delink human rights was that a consensus was emerging around Clinton. This consensus convinced the president to extend trade benefits to China, but the question was left open as to how this should be done. This elicited a round of negotiations within the administration over what the president should say in regard to China's progress on human rights in the previous year, and whether some minor sanctions should be applied in response. Once again, these debates primarily took place in interagency meetings, and human rights advocates attempted to reassert themselves in the debate. A consensus emerged that the administration would openly address the continuing repression practiced by the Chinese government; however, the president rejected the policy of applying any kind of sanctions (Mann 1999).

Peter W. Rodman (2009) notes that both the NSC and the NEC steered Clinton in the direction of abandoning linkage. Clinton still sought the advice of individuals beyond the administration, such as Henry Kissinger and Jimmy Carter, both of whom recommended delinking MFN status from human rights (Mann 1999). What is notable about this inclusion of external voices is the time in which this took place. As the deadline to make a decision got closer, the president came under increasing pressure both from the pro-human rights community (both inside and outside Congress) and the business community, which wanted a permanent reversal of the administration's policy. Because the decision to delink was a significant departure from previous U.S. foreign policy and an important development in Sino-American relations, the president sought additional advice from a diverse set of voices outside the administration. Only after achieving this additional policy feedback and political support did Clinton move forward and permanently delink Chinese MFN from human rights.

Bosnia: What Role Does the President Play in the Policy Process?

(January 1993-May 1993)

In a reversal of Bush administration policy, Clinton determined during the campaign that strong intervention was required on the part of the United States to help resolve the conflict in Bosnia. Once in office, the means to ending the conflict were left to Clinton's advisors, and at various times, he delegated authority to the Principals Committee or to selected individuals. The Principals Committee, for example, met on February 5, and the president and vice president arrived and participated at the end of the meeting. Clinton argued that not acting in Bosnia would jeopardize American leadership and that the United States should at least participate in the humanitarian efforts. Clinton then decided in the meeting that the United States should engage in a series of measures that included (1) asking the United Nations for authority to enforce the no-fly zone, (2) tightening economic sanctions, (3) appointing an envoy to the talks being held by Vance and Owen, and (4) reaffirming the Bush administration's warnings about Serbia's expansion of the conflict into Macedonia and Kosovo (Drew 1994, 146).

In March, the Serbs initiated offensive operations against specific Bosnian towns. In particular, the ferocious attacks on Srebrenica attracted heightened media attention. Lake decided to call a Principals Committee meeting on March 25 so that the advisors could figure out some new ideas to end the offensive and get the Bosnian Serbs to negotiate. The principals, with the participation of the president, arrived at two different options. Secretary of Defense Aspin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell supported the idea of calling for a cease-fire and offering protection to Muslim enclaves. The alternative was to resort to a mixture of lifting the arms embargo combined with air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. The cease-fire option, Clinton argued, was at odds with the overall stated objectives of the administration in that it was perceived to reward Bosnian Serb aggression. As at the previous meeting, the Principals Committee failed to arrive at any firm conclusion because of a lack of confidence in any one of the policies. Thus, the ineffective policy that was announced in February remained in place.

Deliberations among Clinton's principal advisors continued into April, with the president attending several meetings early in the month. The president was an active participant and constantly pushed and probed his advisors for more information about the options they were discussing. Drew observes that "Clinton would press each advocate: What are our objectives with that option? What is the limiting principle? How do we extricate ourselves if we do x? What is controllable and uncontrollable with that option?" (1994, 149–50). Despite the fact that the president was focused on and involved in the process, he was unable to come to a final decision. Part of the reason that Clinton was unable to decide on a course of action was the influence of Stan Greenberg, the administration's pollster, who informed the president that the American public was generally not supportive of the United States taking action in Bosnia and that any action taken must be conducted multilaterally (Drew 1994, 150).

President Clinton called a meeting again on April 29 with the intention of coming to a final decision. Clinton asked very direct questions about the use of force because of his concern of becoming ensnared in the conflict and the risk to civilian lives (Wayne 1997, 200–201). The meeting produced no final decision other than the president committing to making a final decision the next day. On May 1, the same group met again for five hours and discussed a list of 12 options and objectives compiled by Lake. The president concluded that a policy of lift and strike was the best position for the administration to take, and shortly thereafter, Warren Christopher left for Europe to convince U.S. allies that lifting the arms embargo and engaging in limited air strikes was the best strategy (Drew 1994, 155).

(May 1993–December 1993)

The Europeans refused to participate in any policy that jeopardized the peacekeepers they had on the ground; they were especially opposed to any use of force given U.S. unwillingness to commit ground troops. After Christopher returned from Europe, Clinton met with his foreign policy team on May 8 to hear Christopher's report and to formulate a new plan of action (Hyland 1999, 37). After Christopher recounted his trip, the meeting touched on a variety of issues (Drew 1994, 158). As the meeting wandered, there was no consensus among the advisors, and Lake was unable to push the president to make a final decision and choose a policy (Warner and Clift 1993).

Christopher was of the opinion that the Bosnia policy was not viable, and he tried to get the issue off the table by advocating the idea of containment. Outside the Principals Committee, he worked to convince individuals close to the president of the virtues of containment, with the intention of persuading the president to adopt this approach (Drew 1994, 160; Wayne 1997, 203). The president, after the Christopher meeting with the Europeans, became convinced that lift and strike would not work and supported Christopher's efforts to find a containment solution.

In July, the situation progressively deteriorated, as Bosnian Serbs escalated their artillery assault on Sarajevo, thus producing an intensification of the humanitarian crisis within the city. Clinton told Christopher and Lake that he wanted his foreign policy team to think of options that would bring relief to Sarajevo, including the deployment of ground troops (Daalder 2000, 19; Wayne 1997, 204). On July 21, Lake presented his plan at a meeting attended by the president, vice president, and George Stephanopoulos; in addition to detailing the two-phase plan, Lake explained that the United States would have to use its leverage on the Bosnians to make a deal. The president felt that lifting the arms embargo was a better policy, but he was willing to consider the plan and wanted to hold a meeting the next day to make a final decision. At the next day's meeting with Lake and Stephanopoulos, the president decided that the administration should try the Lake plan.

The result was that on August 2, the North Atlantic Council issued a communiqué stating that the alliance would carry out air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs around Sarajevo with the approval of NATO and the UN Protective Forces command.

(December 1993-November 1994)

Despite this decision, the policy proved ineffective, and the administration was facing increasing pressure from Congress and the Europeans to take greater action to change the situation in Bosnia. In response, the State Department and National Security Council staff, in January, began to think about new approaches to creating a settlement and producing relief in the safe areas. An NSC meeting at the end of January that included Clinton, Lake, Christopher, and Perry produced a consensus for a more aggressive policy that included the use of diplomacy and air strikes (Daalder 2000, 24).

Subsequently, Christopher was directed by the president to construct a coherent strategy based on the ideas put forth in the meeting. However, before Clinton could make any decision, the process of rethinking administration policy was interrupted because of a mortar attack in Sarajevo's main market on February 5 that killed 68 civilians. The president met with his foreign policy team that day and decided to move forward with a plan proposed by Christopher that sought a comprehensive settlement. Clinton also asked for a more immediate plan to deal with the Bosnian Serb assault on Sarajevo. Christopher returned with a plan proposed by the French that called for air strikes and the enforcement of a demilitarized zone spanning a radius of 30 kilometers around Sarajevo. Two meetings were held among Clinton's principal advisors without the president present, at which all in attendance agreed on a modified version of the plan advanced by the French.

(January 1995-June 1995)

During the early part of 1995, fighting continued between the Serbs and Muslims, but the fighting was not as intense as in previous winters. Attempts by the United States and the Europeans to open up negotiations with the Bosnian Serbs produced no results because the latter lacked an interest in negotiations. In February, Lake began a review of the administration's Bosnia policy in anticipation of renewed fighting as the weather improved (Daalder 2000, 87-88). The work of the Bosnia Working Group was completed by March and reviewed by the Principals Committee; the president was not in attendance.

On May 28, the president's foreign policy team met to discuss the direction of U.S. policy. The meeting was chaired by Sandy Berger because Lake was not in attendance. There was a consensus that the United States should support the Rapid Reaction Force proposal, with the understanding that the United States would not have to supply troops. Consensus also was achieved on the issue of U.S. troop nonparticipation in the redeployment of UN forces protecting the various safe areas. Secretary of Defense Perry and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili argued that the United States should deploy troops for the purpose of redeploying UN troops that were in vulnerable positions and thus strengthen allied resolve (Daalder 2000, 51-52). Lake then sent a memo on May 29 requesting that the president approve the suggested policy discussion among his foreign policy team the day before. In a meeting on May 30, Clinton approved the plan presented in the memo, stating that he agreed with the policy "as you have set forth" (Daalder 2000, 53).

The administration's discussion of Bosnia policy continued, as the overall direction of policy had not been settled in the following months. Clinton discussed with his most senior advisors the issue of U.S. policy toward Bosnia in a meeting that was in preparation for a meeting with French president Jacques Chirac on June 14. Clinton demanded that he and his advisors had to get the administration's policy straight because it was evident that there was no clear mission.

Lake told Clinton that he wanted to develop an "endgame strategy" and presented the president with the broad strokes of a new policy that sought a long-term solution to the Balkan war. He also told the president that there were significant risks attached to this strategy because it required the deployment of troops and, in the event the plan failed, would prove to be embarrassing to the administration. The plan Lake was proposing was exactly the kind of new thinking about Bosnia that Clinton believed would give the administration a clear mission and give the president greater control over events (Daalder 2000, 91; Woodward 1996, 257-58). Lake, Perry, Christopher, Albright, and Shalikashvili met on July 17 to discuss proposals. Lake had arranged for the president to stop by at the meeting, so he could impress upon the other advisors that long-term policy was necessary and that the short-term, day-to-day, responses to each new crisis were no longer adequate.

Clinton arrived toward the end of the meeting and told the group that he did not like the current state of U.S. policy because it harmed the overall reputation of the United States and that a more forceful policy was necessary. The president pointed out that any success U.S. policy had achieved occurred when NATO was used as a real threat against the Serbs (Woodward 1996, 263). With Clinton's presence and commentary on what he thought were the consequences of continued policy drift, he signaled to the other advisors that he wanted to proceed with the plan advocated by Lake.

Bosnia: Who Generates Preferences in the System That Will Be Deliberated and Finally Chosen?

(January 1993-May 1993)

Lake, Christopher, Albright, and Vice President Al Gore supported the option of lifting the arms embargo and using limited air strikes to prevent the Serbs from engaging in offensive operations until the Bosnian Muslims were strong enough to defend themselves (Daalder 2000, 13). Defense Department officials, both civilian and military, though, advocated for a cease-fire. Colin Powell gave no specific policy position, but he constantly raised concerns about the ineffectiveness or limitations of military options in Bosnia, indicating apprehension at using force (Harris 2005). The early split in the administration proved to be the essential divide within the administration, with the exception of Christopher, who very early on shifted his support away from an aggressive strategy to a position of containment.

The influence of the advisors is demonstrated early in spring 1993 as a tentative consensus emerged among Clinton's advisors for a lift and strike strategy. Clinton accepted the proposal advanced by his advisors; however, events afterward demonstrated that there was not a full consensus. Despite the chosen policy the diplomatic effort failed because of Christopher's lack of support for the policy and unwillingness to push the issue with European partners (Rothkopf 2005).

Throughout the spring, the administration continued to deliberate, and preferences continued to emerge from discussions among advisors or were expressed by single individuals—such as Christopher—who were in a position to influence administration policy. After the March 18 meeting, discussions continued among Clinton's advisors, with sporadic attendance by Clinton at the meetings. By mid-April, discussions were taking place among the advisors who were unable to arrive at a consensus. But by the end of April, the administration had a list of 12 options, excluding the deployment of U.S. combat forces. The individual members of the foreign policy team essentially stuck to their positions, with Powell notably arguing the ineffectiveness of force in striking Bosnian Serb artillery (Drew 1994, 155). Although Clinton's advisors had different opinions, those with differing views understood that all available options were less than perfect. Drew cites one policy maker who stated that the whole situation was a “no-winner,” or, as the president—quoting Richard Holbrooke—termed it, “the greatest security failure of the West since the 1930s” (Clinton 2004, 512; Drew 1994, 155).

(May 1993-December 1993)

After Christopher's failed attempt to generate European support for lift and strike, the administration had to reassess its policy. No new policy emerged after the initial discussions following the secretary of state's return from Europe. In this intervening period, Christopher took measures to shift the direction of the administration's policy (Drew 1994, 159). He met George Stephanopoulos for dinner to sell him on the idea of containment, and then, a few days later, he met with Stan Greenberg and emphasized the dangers to the administration if the United States became too entrenched in Bosnia. At the same time, Christopher appealed directly to the president by holding private meetings with Clinton without the knowledge of any of the president's other advisors (Drew 1994, 160–61). By the time the NSC reconvened in late May, the president had been convinced by Christopher and asserted his desire to adopt a containment policy.

The ineffectiveness of the administration's policy led to further deliberations after the attacks on Sarajevo by the Serbs. The president's principal advisors held a series of meetings beginning on July 13, and the deliberations among the principals resulted in a consensus being formed around a two-phase plan that called for the threat and/or use of force to break the siege of Sarajevo and force a settlement (Daalder 2000, 9; Wayne 1997, 204). This plan was then presented to the president as the best available option, and the following day, Clinton decided to move forward with this option.

(December 1993-November 1994)

Administration policy continued to be ineffective despite the fact that these internal discussions among the principals continued in order to deal with the pressure coming from European allies and Congress. At the beginning of 1994, the NSC, including the president, reached a consensus that the policy needed to be more aggressive (Daalder 2000, 24). This collective decision was further refined by Christopher, Albright, Lake, and the new secretary of defense, William Perry, who created a policy that called for presenting the Bosnian Serbs with the alternatives of negotiations or air strikes. However, these deliberations were interrupted by events on the ground in Bosnia.

In response to the mortar attack in Sarajevo, two policies emerged. First, the president decided with his advisors that the administration needed to adopt a comprehensive plan developed by Christopher. Second, Clinton's advisors decided that in order to deal with the immediate threat to Sarajevo they would adopt a modified version of a French plan that called for air strikes and the enforcement of a demilitarized zone spanning a radius of 30 kilometers around Sarajevo.

(January 1995-June 1995)

With the anticipation that fighting would be renewed in the beginning of the year, the Principals Committee, absent the president, reviewed administration policy. Based on a set of options generated by the Bosnia Interagency Working Group, it was concluded that more aggressive action would destabilize the region. Lake agreed with the decision of the Principals Committee, but he still believed that this measure was inadequate and that the administration needed to rethink policy in order to find a longer-term solution.

In June, Lake decided that he would attempt to convince Clinton of a plan that had been developed earlier in the year. However, it is clear that Lake decided to hold a series of meetings in late June with the intent of formulating a new direction in U.S. policy toward the war in Bosnia. Lake then proceeded to work with Albright to develop the ideas into an overall strategy, while at the same time holding meetings with his staff to fully develop a coherent strategy (Daalder 2000, 93-94). Given the paucity of options and the desire to find a solution to Bosnia, Clinton ultimately agreed with Lake's plan and supported this preference.

Bosnia: What Is the Organization and Functioning of the Process?
What Are the Procedures for Managing the System?

(January 1993-May 1993)

Upon entering office, Warren Christopher and Anthony Lake agreed that they would avoid the conflict that had plagued the Carter administration by deciding that Lake would not be a spokesman for the administration on foreign policy, thus leaving diplomacy to Christopher. Christopher's style of deliberation was very reserved; he preferred to let others recommend policies and debate points, and, afterward, he liked to address the risks associated with a particular policy (Drew 1994, 80). For the administration, the implication of this prior relationship meant that the president's main advisors were well acquainted with one another and willing to engage one another on issues. Elizabeth Drew cites a member of the Clinton team who asserted that "it makes it all very pleasant, but people interrupt each other and there's not enough discipline. We're there not as people brought together as representatives of institutions but as people who've been around tables with each other for a long time" (Drew 1994, 145).

At this early stage in the policy process, policy was discussed in a series of Principals Committee meetings from January into May (Halberstam 2001). Meetings were conducted primarily by the members of the NSC, at which there was a high degree of discussion of the type discussed earlier. The president was an intermittent participant throughout January and February. When he finally had decided on a policy, it resulted in the choice of policy that was an aggregate of a number of discussed proposals. As the months passed and the conditions in Bosnia worsened in the face of administration efforts, the Principals Committee continued to meet, but this time Clinton was increasingly more involved in the discussions. However, meetings resulted in deadlocked policy, such that the administration was unable to resolve difference and advance an agreed on policy (Daalder 2000, 13; Drew 1994, 152). The administration was divided between the cease-fire and lift and strike options, and Clinton chose the option advocated by the Lake, Aspin, and Berger subset of the administration. The principal advisors met frequently to discuss policy, but Clinton's attention and participation fluctuated between being heavily involved in early April to being nonexistent during other times.

(December 1993-November 1994)

Policy throughout 1994 was incoherent and ineffective. Madeline Albright has said of this period that “we employed a combination of half-measures and bluster that didn’t work” (Chollet 2005, 5). In January, a principals meeting produced a consensus that the administration needed to develop a more aggressive policy toward the conflict in Bosnia. After that meeting, Clinton delegated authority to Warren Christopher to construct a strategy that was based on the NSC discussions. Christopher was then in a position to guide the direction of the administration, with some input from Albright and Perry. Even though other advisors were included, there is no evidence that consensus was sought in formulating the final report that went to the president. Clinton, in the aftermath of the shelling of Sarajevo, finally made a decision after having consulted further with all of his advisors. He decided to have Albright work through the United Nations to find those responsible for the attack, and Christopher was responsible for consulting with European allies. Further meetings were then held in which a consensus developed on the French plan.

(January 1995-June 1995)

Attempts by the United States and the Contact Group to open up negotiations with the Bosnian Serbs produced no results because the latter lacked an interest in negotiations (Chollet 2005). In May, fighting intensified and NATO carried out limited air strikes against Bosnian Serb mortars and artillery. In anticipation, Lake had initiated a review of the Bosnia policy, and the results of that interagency work led to deliberations in the Principals Committee. A consensus developed among Clinton’s advisors that a longer-term cease-fire was needed that could allow for negotiations to take place with Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic (Daalder 2000, 82-88).

During May, the Principals Committee, minus the president, engaged in lengthy discussions regarding what to do if the European peacekeepers had to be removed from the country and regarding U.S. participation in a Rapid Reaction Force. The outcome of these meetings was a consensus on the deployment of combat troops and safe areas. With this consensus, Lake then informed the president and requested his approval, which he gave (Daalder 2000, 53).

Because the overall direction of policy was not settled in the following months, Clinton demanded that he and his advisors had to get the administration’s policy straight because it was evident that there was no clear mission (Chollet 2005). Beginning in June, a variety of different groups of advisors, from the principal to the deputy level, began meeting in order to find a solution to the administration’s Bosnia problem. What characterized these discussions was the fact that they took place outside the formal interagency process. Notable about these discussions was that they did not include Clinton. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott hosted a series of meetings at his home that primarily comprised advisors at the deputy or undersecretary rank from the State Department, in addition to some members from the NSC staff. In a separate effort, Madeleine Albright began drafting a report that was a renewal of previous lift and strike proposals. In a meeting at the White House, Albright unexpectedly proposed the plan, which was well received by the president, but he made no final commitment (Chollet 2005).

On June 24, Lake, who was committed to changing administration policy, met with members of the NSC staff and they developed a plan that became known as the “endgame strategy.” Lake then met with Clinton in a series of private meetings at which he convinced the president that the endgame strategy was the best approach. Once Lake was assured of the Clinton’s support, he told Perry, Albright, Christopher, and Shalikashvili that the president wanted a reevaluation of administration policy and an assessment of what U.S. policy should be in six months. Clinton arrived at this meeting and essentially confirmed his preference for the plan laid out by Lake, which set administration policy for the rest of the conflict.

Collegial Decision Making: Considering Context

When considering Bill Clinton’s management style, during these two episodes of decision making, it is clear that the president’s style was similar in both cases. The variation in levels of acceptability does not seem to have had an observable effect on Clinton’s management of the process, which is contrary to expectations. Clinton’s role in the policy process was the same in both cases. Clinton was inattentive to the policy process, particularly at the beginning, when options were being formulated. It was only after a number of feasible options had been developed that Clinton engaged the process and chose the best option. When Clinton did participate in deliberations, he was willing to evaluate a range of options and listen to opposing sets of views, and he was also interested in building a consensus. The need for consensus in a number of instances complicated the process, as the desire for consensus overrode the president’s ability to choose the best course of action or resulted in a papering over differences among advisors.

As both cases demonstrate, Clinton was often compelled to make a decision because of the necessity of meeting a deadline or external developments. An important implication of Clinton's inattentiveness, and his willingness to remove himself from the formulation stage of the policy process, was that his advisors had a significant amount of influence over the process.

In both cases, preferences emerged predominantly from Clinton's advisors. In some instances, the preferences emerged from collective discussions among the advisors, or it was the product of a subset of advisors or an individual who was able to influence Clinton's views on an issue. The efforts by Christopher and Lake in the Bosnia case perfectly demonstrate how individuals can be the source of administrative preferences. To the extent that Clinton was setting preferences, he was often influential in setting a general orientation, but not specific policy. Clinton would call for more aggressive or more effective policy, but the particular type of policy or range of options was determined by his advisors.

Decision making in both cases conformed to what one would expect from a collegial policy process. Policy development was delegated to the president's advisors. As these advisors engaged in the development of policy, there was a high degree of conflict and bargaining in an effort to build a consensus. In some cases, consensus was built, while in others, the failure to arrive at a consensus caused policy to deadlock. A significant difference between the MFN and Bosnia cases is that toward the end of the Bosnia case, the advisors began to work outside the formal process. Increasingly, there was less interest in building a consensus, and individuals sought to independently influence the president by making direct appeals at the expense of other advisors. For the Clinton administration as a whole, building consensus was a positive objective in the policy process, which meant that it was often a guiding principle, whether Clinton invoked it or not. At other times, advisors, such as Lake, attempted to manage the process in order to build consensus, but this clearly had limits, as advisors, when they believed the policy had stagnated or the process was deadlocked, sought to influence policy without building a consensus.

Clinton's management style was clearly collegial when he was fully engaged in the process, but the collegiality that characterized the process when Clinton was not engaged was not created by Clinton or produced on Clinton's instructions. Two separate factors can explain the consistency of a collegial development of policy in both of these cases. First, the type of policy-making structure used in these cases was designed to encourage collegiality. The Clinton administration formulated and developed policy in two primary committees, which were meant to allow for full representation of administration views at the principal and deputy levels. This organizational model was also used during George H. W. Bush's administration, when it was also chosen because it would focus deliberations and allow for open debate. What is important to understand about this "multiple advocacy" type of structure is that it was chosen because it was understood to be the most effective way to develop foreign policy, regardless of individual style. This is compatible with the arguments advanced by institutionalists, such as Walcott and Hult (1995), who argue that there has been a movement among presidents toward collegial-competitive decision-making styles that transcend personality and cognitive traits.

Another explanation for the lack of variation in management style can be found in the high degree of salience of these issues for the administration. These were issues where the stakes were high enough that the president had to engage with them, and he relied on the management style with which he was most comfortable. However, Clinton was not always engaged in the policy issues, and this is where variation occurred. The process most closely approximated the ideal collegial process when external pressure was placed on the administration. In these instances, Clinton was forced to focus and increase his participation in the process. When Clinton was not engaged, his advisors tended to drive policy, and Clinton played a role at the end of the process when he had to make a final choice, which more closely resembles a formal type of management style. This highlights the need to distinguish between policy processes that take place when the issue is considered routine and those that are more exceptional or urgent. Routine decisions can be managed according to established procedures that are not specific to the president or determined by key advisors. Other types of issues that are novel or create crisis environments can compel greater presidential attention, which means the process more closely reflects their idiosyncratic style.

But does the fact that Clinton did not change his management style between the two issues with different levels of acceptability mean that context had no meaning for management of the policy process? The answer here is no. Collegial advisory systems are designed in the interest of creating environments in which different views and policy preferences can be aired and accounted for in the process.

In these two cases, acceptability had implications for the dynamics among the principals within the administration that altered the policy process in ways unintended by its members.

Although both issues dealt with international affairs, the economic issue of China's MFN status had the greatest implication for domestic politics, specifically for members of Congress and the business community. These actors had the ability to influence policy because there were advocates in the administration who were in a position to directly influence policy. These domestic actors had the means to influence the process by way of advisors who held similar sets of preferences. As the administration was split, and creating a consensus proved difficult, these domestic actors were afforded more time and opportunity to try to influence the political process. In line with the bureaucratic politics model, these advisors could use domestic actors as means to gain bargaining advantages over other members of the administration. This demonstrates that a high need for acceptability is one pathway to intensified bureaucratic bargaining, which is not something typically associated with bureaucratic politics, as noted by Rosati (1981). The impact was even greater with a president who was sensitive to the need for acceptability and willing to engage domestic constituents and account for his views and opinions on administration policy. While domestic factors influenced the administration, so did international factors. The administration recognized the importance of the strategic relationship with the Chinese, and the tensions that emerged in 1994 sent a signal to the administration that the policy of attaching conditions to trade relations was counterproductive. This international situation only served to reinforce the prerogatives of domestic constituencies and advisors who advocated a change in policy.

The Bosnia case displays a different pattern. In Bosnia, there were members of Congress who were calling for a policy of lift and strike, and the administration had staked itself on taking action on a humanitarian issue. But in the development of policy, domestic actors were not the central consideration, and far less influential relative to the China case. In the Bosnia case, international factors such as the support of allies and the conditions in Bosnia influenced the policy process. Again, this is not surprising given the nature of collegial systems, but it is clear that what was occurring at the international level was of greater salience for the development of policy. Here, too, bureaucratic politics was evident; however, domestic actors were not the contributing factor—instead, the prolonged deadlock and the inability to decide on a resolute strategy encouraged advisors to attempt to influence the process from outside established procedures. The international context, with a lower need for acceptability, means that advisors cannot use it as a means to influence policy and instead will need to turn to other bargaining advantages in order to “win” the policy.

An administration that chooses a collegial management style on domestic issues creates conditions in which external actors, notably domestic actors, will have increased ability to influence policy, which can be a positive or negative development depending on the nature of the issue. Unfortunately, sometimes these actors may contribute to the divisions within an administration as advisors use this external support to hold fast to preferred policy, thus making it difficult for the administration to overcome disagreements. Alternatively, this could also prove to be something positive, as the external pressure can help overcome deadlocks and superficial consensus by changing the balance of power among advisors. From either perspective, the process is influenced by actors beyond the administration.

Conclusion

This analysis of the Clinton administration concludes that management styles are less variable than expected, even in different contexts and with varied levels of acceptability. However, the context does have implications for the implementation of a given management style and the resulting policy process. The context creates sources of opportunity and constraint on the president and his advisors that influences how the process will develop. Most importantly, this can lead to a policy process that does not resemble that which is expected from a management style. The implication is that different explanations of management style or models of policy process need to better account for the specific contexts of decision making, thus moving away from overly idealized conceptualizations that are based solely on personality traits or cognitive abilities. This means that for the management style typology to be of use, more research needs to be done on these styles to systematically account for variations in context. Perhaps what is required is for future research to build context specific typologies, which will refine our understanding of the policy process.

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