

Bureaucratic Politics, Presidential Leadership Style and Crisis Decision-Making: Why Obama said Yes to Libya and no to Syria

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***Abstract:** This article examines why the Obama administration in 2011 decided to commit U.S. armed forces into Libya and in 2013 decided to seek congressional authorization for the use of military force in Syria. This paired comparison illustrates how the combined effects of bureaucratic politics and the president's leadership style contributed to the decision-making process of two different decision-making outcomes. The study finds mixed empirical support for the explanatory power of the bureaucratic politics model in both cases. The study also finds that the extent of presidential preeminence in the decision-making enables the understanding of yes in Libya and no in Syria.*

***Keywords:** Odyssey Dawn, Syria, the United States, bureaucratic politics, presidential leadership, foreign policy decision-making, military intervention*

Introduction

Two of former president Barack Obama's significant foreign policy decisions were when he ordered U.S. military forces to launch Operation Odyssey Dawn (OOD) against Libyan military targets in 2011, and when he decided to force a vote in Congress on whether to use force or not against Syria in 2013. A variety of explanations have been offered of the Libya intervention, including the viability of NATO, humanitarian interventions, and international law. Some have questioned if the operation meant the implementation of a so-called "Obama Doctrine" in US foreign policy, OOD's

constitutionality, ramifications for presidential war powers, and the implications of airpower-centric strategy for forthcoming US military interventions.¹ The Libyan decision received widespread media coverage, revealing the key Administration players and their associated policy preferences as well as the highly political nature of the debate. It soon became clear that Obama's national security advisors were highly divided over what course of action to pursue.² The decision also confronted both scepticism and reluctance in Congress, while drawing at best moderate support from the American public.

The Syria decision has received considerable coverage in the press along with few scholar examinations. The latter have for example, discussed the presidential war powers, deterrence and transatlantic relations, and the energetic executive, but not the US decision making in detail.³ The Syria decision has been routinely characterized to include internal divisions, bureaucratic inertia and a sign of the scattershot decision-making process within president Obama's foreign-policy apparatus.⁴ Some have argued that more than in any other region in the world, U.S. presidential policy in the Middle East is hampered by institutional, bureaucratic, and domestic politics.⁵ In fact, a common verdict by commentators is that this episode was a failure, or even President Obama's "worst blunder."⁶

The aim of this article is to demonstrate how differences in leadership style and bureaucratic politics contributed to the differences in outcome of

- 1 Ben Barry, 'Libya's Lessons', *Survival* 15, vol. 53, no. 5 (2011): 51–60; Bruce Jones, 'Libya and the Responsibilities of Power', *Survival* vol. 53, no. 3 (2011): 5–14; Daniel Drezner, "Does Obama Have a Grand Strategy? Why We Need Doctrines in Uncertain Times", *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 90, issue 4 (2011): 57–68; Ryan Hendrickson, "Libya and American War Powers: War Making Decision in the United States", *Global Change, Peace and Security* vol. 25, no.2 (2013): 175; Christopher Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi: Libya and the Limits of Liberal Intervention*, New York: Cambridge University Press (2014).
- 2 James Mann, *The Obamians: The Struggle Within the White House to Redefine American Power* (New York, 2012): 286.
- 3 See Charles Tiefer and Kathleen Clark, "Congressional and Presidential War Powers as a Dialogue: Analysis of the Syrian and ISIS Conflicts", *Cornell International Law Journal*, Vol. 49 Issue 3, (2016); Jeffrey Lewis & Bruno Tertrais, "The Thick Red Line: Implications of the 2013 Chemical-Weapons Crisis for Deterrence and Transatlantic Relations", *Survival*, Vol. 59, Issue 6, (2017); Chris Edelson and Donna G. Starr-Deelen, "The Law: Libya, Syria, ISIS, and the Case against the Energetic Executive", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45, Issue 3, (2015): 581–601.
- 4 Derek Chollet, "Obama's Red Line Revisited", *Politico Magazine*, (July 19, 2016).
- 5 Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Obama approach to the Middle East: the end of America's moment?" *International Affairs*, Volume 89, Issue 2, (2013): 299–323.
- 6 Chollet, "Obama's Red Line Revisited".

the Libya and Syria decision-making. Hence, the bureaucratic dynamics of the executive branch and president Obama's leadership style are factors that further the understanding of the decision-making processes in these two cases. The bureaucratic politics model (BPM) focuses on the perceptions, interests, and ambitions of individual governmental officials and the president is often portrayed as just another player in the bureaucratic game. Governmental policy, ultimately, is the result of bargaining and compromise between individuals and coalitions of individuals.⁷ Leadership style typologies instead suggest that the role of the president, his decision-making style, and his political needs are crucial variables.⁸ In this view, presidents are viewed as unique individuals and each decision-making system must be tailored to the idiosyncratic needs of the particular president. Presidential leadership style and bureaucratic politics models are often seen as mutually exclusive or competing models. The position held here is that individually these models only produce partial explanations and that they hold more explanatory power if they are seen as complimentary. The strategy adopted here is to identify the theoretical conditions under which each set of decision dynamics is more likely to occur.

Hence, in the context of U.S. foreign policy decision-making, the framework presented here accounts for two interlinked sources of decision-making structures. First, it identifies the BPM as a starting point for understanding small group decision making, for explaining president Obama's Libya and Syria decisions.⁹ Second, it complements the BPM with an evaluation

7 See e.g. Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision-Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (Boston: Little Brown & Co, 1971); Morton Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1974); Charles Hermann, Janice Gross Stein, Bengt Sundelius, Stephen Walker, "Resolve, Accept, or Avoid: Effects of Group Conflict on Foreign Policy Decisions", *International Studies Review*, Volume 3, Issue 2, (2001): 133–168; Kevin Marsh, "Obama's Surge: A Bureaucratic Politics Analysis of the Decision to Order a Troop Surge in the Afghanistan War", *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol 10, issue 3, (2013):1-24.

8 See e.g. Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decision-making in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980); Richard Johnson, *Managing the White House*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); William Newmann, *Managing National Security Policy: The President and the President*, (University of Pittsburgh Press 2003); David Mitchell, *Centralizing Advisory Systems: Presidential Influence and the U.S. Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process*. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 1, no. 2, (2005): 181–206.

9 For examples of case studies of this model see Lauren Holland, "The U.S. Decision to Launch Operation Desert Storm: A Bureaucratic Politics Analysis", *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 25, Issue 2, (1999): 219-242; Qingmen Zhang, "The Bureaucratic Politics of U.S. Arm Sales to Taiwan", *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol.1, issue 2, (2006): 231-265.

of president Obama's executive leadership style to understand the final "yes" and "no," respectively. This essay suggests that an analysis based on bureaucratic politics and executive leadership style within the U.S. government offers a promising avenue to examine the context and nature of these two decisions.

This article intends to make four overall contributions. First, on the basis of leadership typologies and BPM, it intends to conduct an in-depth empirical investigation of the Libya and Syria decision making. These decision-making processes have not been previously investigated by scholars. There is no comparative case study examining why the United States decided to use force against Libya and abstain from doing so against Syria that would take as its point of departure formal theories of foreign policy decision-making. Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is therefore confronted with a research gap regarding the Libya and Syrian decision-making processes.

Second, the majority of earlier leadership style and BPM research has concentrated on single case studies. Thus, the comparative orientation of this project is one of its distinctive marks and strengths. By using a comparative approach, which includes two cases with different outcomes, the way in which presidential leadership style and bureaucratic politics impacts on foreign policy can be better assessed.¹⁰ Typically, one case study from an administration's tenure in office is used as a representative example of how the administration made decisions for its entire term in office. However, the decision making is not a static process, but rather a dynamic one that evolves and matures in important ways during a president's term in office.¹¹ Hence, these two cases provide an opportunity to identify similarities and differences during the two tenures of a single president. In so doing, this study contributes to the understanding of the way presidents make national security decisions over time and whether that process changes. In previous research, such endeavors are rare.

Third, critics of the BPM usually assert that a serious weakness in its explanatory power is that the model is less effective in explaining crisis decision-making than it is at offering insights to the workings of govern-

10 Alexander L. George and Andrew. Bennett. "Case Studies and Theory Development.", (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

11 William W. Newmann, *Managing National Security Policy*, (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003).

ment in calmer and more settled times.¹² Hence, the evaluation of these two decisions contributes to the debate on these issues by advancing the understanding of the extent to which these models can explain crisis decision making.¹³

Fourth, by including Syria, this article focuses on an overlooked aspect of crisis decision-making, presidential leadership style, and bureaucratic studies: the decision not to use force.¹⁴ Previous studies have largely ignored non-events in the use of force and BPM literature. However, the study of non-events can make theory richer by broadening its explanatory power. Thus, the subsequent evaluation seeks to gain additional insight into the strength and weaknesses of the BPM by examining two tough cases that critics of the BPM would regard unlikely to support the model. In so doing, this article contributes to the study of U.S. foreign policy, FPA, and to the literature on BPM and presidential leadership style.

Because the Obama administration recently left office, any records needed to answer these questions conclusively remain classified. The sources available are public documents such as public speeches, press conferences, press releases, memoirs, and media coverage. Even with these constraints, this essay argues that the numerous sources presented here corroborate one another.

This article proceeds as follows. At first, the key elements and propositions of the BPM are introduced and linked to presidential leadership style. In the next section, each case study is organized in a narrative that identifies the issues of the basic organizational dynamics and presidential leadership style within the administration. Finally, this study summarizes its primary argument and discusses the need for further research.

12 See e.g. Stephen Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland)", *Foreign Policy*, no.7, (1972); Jerel Rosati, "Ignoring the Essence of Decision making. Essence of Decision by Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow", *International Studies Review*, vol. 3 Issue 1, (2001): 178-181.

13 Crisis-decision making is in this article defined as a foreign policy crisis is a situation which threatens the most important and the primary aims of the political unit, and limits the time for thinking, planning, and responding in order to change the probable outcome. See for example: Charles F. Hermann, "Some Consequences of Crisis Which Limit the Viability of Organizations", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (1963): 64.

14 Karl DeRouen Jr., "The Decision Not to Use Force at Diehn Bien Phu: A Poliheuristic Perspective", in Alex Mintz (ed.) *Integrating cognitive and rational theories of foreign policy decision making*, (New York: Palgrave, 2003).

Research Design

The bureaucratic politics paradigm is closely associated with Graham Allison's work on decision-making within the Kennedy administration during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.¹⁵ Allison's model III, known as the governmental or BPM, introduced the concept of bureaucratic role, role position, and organizational mission and essence into the calculus of decision making. Actors can be expected to favor policy options that fulfill their bureaucratic role and enhance their power. Thus, the mission of the bureaucratic actors is to pursue and realize the interests of their organization.¹⁶ Government actions are political and the president is often portrayed as yet another player in the bureaucratic game. The approach for applying the BPM here is to infer from its core assumptions a set of expected behaviors and match them against the facts.¹⁷

The first assumption is that players' stands will directly derive from their role and position and is neatly summarized in the well-known aphorism "Where you stand depends on where you sit." Thus, players' policy preferences on issues will derive chiefly from their positions within government and we would expect players from different bureaucracies to assume different preferences and players from the same bureaucracy to assume similar ones.¹⁸

Proposition 1: Key actors' policy preferences can be predicted from their bureaucratic position and interest. The first test in the case studies evaluates whether actors' policy preferences can be predicted from their position within government. For example, when comparing the preferences the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State, we will expect that they will "differ radically" based on the pressure and nature of their positions.¹⁹ The difference in bureaucratic roles here is that the Secretary of Defense, formally represented within the Department of Defense as the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), is responsible for managing the Pentagon bureaucracy as well as managing the military.²⁰ The State Department, op-

15 Graham Allison and, Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision-Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, (2nd. ed.) (New York: Longman, 1999).

16 Allison, Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*.

17 The assumptions are based on the propositions established by Allison, *Essence of Decision* and Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*.

18 Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*.

19 Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, p.311.

20 OSD must ensure that the armed forces of the United States are capable of fulfilling the missions asked of them by the president.

positely, coordinates and directs the civilian diplomacy of the United States and works with ambassadors to implement diplomacy and provide advice and recommendations to the president on foreign policy issues.²¹

We would also expect that the preferences of Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) will not be the same on all issues. The CJCS is formally designated as the president's personal military adviser and acts as the senior representative of the armed forces. Yet, they will not have considerably different preferences since they face different bureaucratic pressures within the Department of Defense.

Proposition 2: The stronger bargaining advantages a key actor holds, the greater the extent of influence in the decision-making process. A second key assumption is that players will not only hold different policy preferences, they will also endorse different recommendations, bargain over outcomes and generate conflict. Bargain influence in this analysis means that some actors influence decisions more than the rest. That is because they can gain the confidence of the president. They are willing to assume responsibility and their staff is skilled in performing functions of the bureaucracy.²² Actors, such as The National Security Council (NSC) and the White House Office (WHO), are both expected to seek flexibility and political protection for the president. The role of the NSC commands that it seeks to develop multiple policy options, provide advice and information to the president, managing the interagency process and ensuring that the president's foreign policy preferences are realized. The WHO includes the Office of the Vice President and the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff is the head of the WHO, usually the president's closest personal adviser. The Vice President has little formal role and no official bureaucratic constituency but can become influential in foreign policy decision making.

Proposition 3a: The greater the prevalence of political pulling and hauling in the decision-making process the greater the probability that the final decision outcome results in a political resultant or compromise. A third assumption is that the decision-making process will produce decisions that reflect a political resultant or compromise: typically, a combination of inputs representing the views and stands of different players. Since political resultants represent multiple, competing, and sometimes ad hoc inputs that

21 Morton Halperin, Priscilla Clapp, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2006): 35-37.

22 Halperin and Clapp, *Bureaucratic Politics*.

results from bargaining and compromise, no one actor is expected to dominate them or to be able to predict the outcome.²³ Rather, the outcome is a function of loose, bureaucratic politics.

Proposition 3b: The greater the president's own personal interest and involvement in decision-making process, the more likely the final decision outcome will reflect the head of state's imprimatur. Since the publication of Richard Neustadt's work on presidential power, proponents have argued that the president is more than just a glorified player in bureaucratic politics.²⁴ The president as an influence on decision making is traditionally a function of three different factors: presidential leadership style, presidential management strategy, and political strategy.²⁵ Leadership style generally refers to the president's choices about how deeply he wishes to participate in decision making and how he relates to his advisers individually and as a group. Management style refers to his preferred design for administrative decision making in terms of information flow and organizational and bureaucratic roles of key agencies and officials. Political strategy emphasizes that the president's policy choices are deeply dependent on his overall political beliefs and goals.

Informed by this literature, it is expected that foreign policy decisions, instead of a resultant, reflect a preeminent president's interest and worldview, i.e. "the politically relevant beliefs that condition perceptions, thinking, and judgment."²⁶ In such an environment, it is assumed that the stronger the policy advocacy of the president, the less likely the decision structure is prone to deteriorate into bureaucratic politics. Indicators of this process might be a low level of multiple advocacy. Thus, "instead of utilizing centralized management practices to discourage or neutralize internal disagreement over policy, an executive can use a multiple advocacy model to

23 Allison, Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, p.171-73.

24 Neustadt, R.E., *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership From Roosevelt to Reagan*. (New York: Free Press, 1960/1990).

25 See e.g. Cecil W. Jr. Crabb and Kevin V. Mulcahy. *Presidents and Foreign Policy Making: From FDR to Reagan*. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986); Hermann, Margaret G., and Thomas Preston. *Presidents, Advisors and Foreign Policy: The Effect of Leadership Style on Executive Arrangements*. *Political Psychology*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1994): 75-96; Joseph A. Pika, "Management Style and the Organizational Matrix: Studying White House Operations", *Administration and Society* vol. 20, no. 1, (1988): 3-29; Thomas Preston *The President and His Inner Circle*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

26 James David Barber, (1977) *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977).

harness diversity of views and interests in the interest of rational policy making”.²⁷ The process might also be characterized by the lack of an honest broker in the decision-making. This concept implies “a managed process relying on an honest broker to insure that interested parties are represented and that the debate is structured and balanced”.²⁸ As a result, this expected unbalanced decision-making might also cause surprise among other decision makers because they are largely aware of their participation in generating a resultant. Thus, individual or non-committee decision-making can take place unbeknownst of other decision-makers and generate decisions that surprise not privy players.

Evaluating the Cases: Libya and Syria

Proposition 1: Key actors’ policy preferences can be predicted from their bureaucratic position and interest.

By the end of February 2011, president Obama had begun a series of discussions on how to handle Libya. The actors broke down into two distinct camps. On the critical side were top-level Pentagon and White House advisers who were skeptical of further military intervention, given the continued U.S. presence in Afghanistan and Iraq.²⁹ This group included Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, who dubbed calls for intervention as “loose talks.”³⁰ From the outset, Gates was among the most vocal skeptics against the proposal of a no-fly zone over Libya.³¹

Gates had a clear bureaucratic interest in not supporting the intervention. In the role of the Secretary of Defense he managed the armed forces and safeguarded that the military was capable of securing and defending U.S. national security interests. Gates was facing impending series of major defense spending cuts in response to the economic downturn and debt crisis that paralyzed the American political system throughout the spring and summer 2011.³² These heavy reductions placed an immediate constraint on

27 Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Power in Organizations*, (Harper Collins: 1981).

28 Roger, Porter, *Presidential Decision Making*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

29 David Sanger, *Confront and Conceal: Obama’s Secret Wars and Surprising use of American Power* (New York, 2012).

30 Robert Gates, “Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations House of Representatives”, Senate Armed Services Committee, 112th Congress, 2 March, (2011).

31 Gates, “Hearings before a Subcommittee”.

32 In April 2011, President Obama proposed cutting defense spending by around \$500 billion over 10 years.

current and future U.S military operations.³³ Gates believed that a Libya intervention was not a vital national interest for the United States and he expressed concerns for how overstretched and tired the military was.³⁴ In meetings, Gates would ask, “Can I just finish the two wars we’re already in before you go looking for new ones?”³⁵

Sharing these concerns was CJCS Admiral Michael Mullen who, as the senior representative of the armed forces, maintained a bureaucratic interest in arguing against the Libya intervention. Mullen was responsible for providing the president with military advice and generating various options for strategy. Overall, Mullen shared Gates’ view that the military was overextended, and additional manpower demands represented a threat to its capabilities.³⁶ Thus, the policy preferences of Mullen revolved around a concern over military’s ability to fulfill its core mission.

Also, National Security Adviser (NSA) Tom Donilon leaned towards Gates’ position, remaining skeptical and urging for caution.³⁷ Others who shared this concern included Vice President Joe Biden, who thought that getting involved in Libya was politically unwise.³⁸ Chief of Staff William Daley sided with Biden and expressed concern of how to explain to the American people “why we’re in Libya.”³⁹

The State Department had all along been divided on how to act in Libya and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was also distrustful of any military actions.⁴⁰ At first, she stuck with Gates and worried that if an intervention failed to remove Qaddafi, or failed to gain enough international support, it would jeopardize American credibility.⁴¹ Yet, On March 1, she said that a no-fly zone was not off the table.⁴² From March 12 onward, after the Arab

33 Kevin Marsh, “Leading from Behind: Neoclassical Realism and Operation Odyssey Dawn”, *Defense and Security Analysis*, vol. 30, issue 2, (2014): p.127.

34 Robert Gates, “Hearing to Receive on Operation Odyssey Dawn and the Situation in Libya”, Senate Armed Services Committee, 112th Congress, 31 March, (2011).

35 Robert Gates, *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, (NY, 2014): 511-512.

36 Michael Mullen, “Hearing to Receive testimony on Operation Odyssey Dawn and the Situation in Libya”, Senate Armed Services Committee, 112th Congress, 31 March, (2011).

37 Tom Donilon, “Briefing by National Security Advisor Tom Donilon and Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes on Libya and the Middle East”, White House, Office of the Press Secretary, March 11, (2011); Mann, *The Obamians*, p.286.

38 Michael Hastings, “Inside Obama’s War Room,” *Rolling Stone* (13 October 2011)

39 Michael Lewis, “Obama’s Way,” *Vanity Fair* (October 2012).

40 Helene Cooper and Steven Lee Myers, “Obama Takes Hard Line with Libya after Shift by Clinton”, *The New York Times*, (March 18, 2011).

41 Hillary Clinton, *Hard Choices: A Memoir* (New York: Simon and Schuster): p.367.

42 Hillary Clinton, “Secretary of State Hillary Clinton: Opening Remarks on FY2012 Budget Given before

League had requested action from the UN, Clinton seemed to have decided to split from Gates and work actively for an intervention in Libya. The rapid developments on the ground, Clinton's traveling in Europe and North Africa and her private meeting with the National Transitional Council of Libya representatives in Paris, made Clinton shift her view.⁴³ In an interview, Clinton stated that the UN backed intervention in Libya is "a watershed moment in international decision-making."⁴⁴

As Secretary of State, Clinton was expected to favor policy options emphasizing diplomacy and enhancing the role, prestige, and power of the State Department, yet Clinton ultimately supported the intervention. Essential for this change were three preconditions: two diplomatic and one humanitarian.

First, on March 12, the Arab League came out in favor of a no-fly-zone. Over the following days on a trip to Paris, Cairo and Tunis, Clinton met with both Arab leaders and with those of the Libyan opposition. She reported back to Obama that the leaders in the region were serious and even willing to take part in the military operation.⁴⁵ According to Clinton, this was not just "hollow calls for action."⁴⁶ Second, British and French officials privately made clear that they not only wanted but expected America to join them. For Clinton, British Foreign Secretary William Hague's positive stand on a military intervention "counted for a lot."⁴⁷ Third, in Libya, Gaddafi's forces were approaching Benghazi where a large group of civilians could soon be left defenseless at the hands of the Libyan troops. At a minimum, the Secretary of State had a responsibility to insist on multilateralism and it was, thus, decisive for Clinton to reach consensus with U.S. allies and get legal support for any military actions.⁴⁸

UN ambassador, Susan Rice played a major role in the passing of UN Resolution 1973.⁴⁹ On March 16, Rice, one of the most vocal interven-

Senate Foreign Relations Committee", Senate Foreign Relations Committee, (March 1, 2011).

43 Clinton, *Hard Choices*, p.367.

44 ABC News: "This Week Transcript: Hillary Clinton, Robert Gates and Donald Rumsfeld", March 27, (2011).

45 Clinton, *Hard Choices*, p.370.

46 Interview with Ben Rhodes, quoted in Mann, *The Obamians*, p.290.

47 Clinton, *Hard Choices*, p.368.

48 Clinton, *Hard Choices*, pp.364, 367; Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi*, p.55. Clinton argued that absent international authorization, the U.S. would be stepping into a situation whose consequences are unforeseeable.

49 Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist", *The New Yorker*, (May 2, 2011).

tionists from the outset, signaled publicly for the first time that the Obama administration supported the Security Council's discussion of further international steps, including a no-fly zone in Libya. According to Rice, it was necessary to be prepared to contemplate steps that might go beyond a no-fly zone, given that a no-fly zone has inherent limitations in terms of protection civilians at immediate risk.⁵⁰ Rice was, as a "permanent representative," part of the larger State Department bureaucracy and had used her first statement in the UN Security Council to endorse the principle of "the responsibility to protect."⁵¹ In early March, Rice and her team at the UN began preparing a resolution that called for international action in Libya. Instead of bureaucratic interest, they rather viewed Libya as an opportunity to enact a new form of humanitarian intervention, one they had been sketching out for nearly a decade.⁵² This group strove to ensure that the president heard alternative options to those voiced from Pentagon and the military. Obama was thus confronted with conflicting views within his administration between proponents of "realism," who urged him to stay out of Libya, and proponents of "humanitarian interventions," who wanted him to act.⁵³

In Syria, Obama had since the conflict started in 2011, kept the conflict at arm's length. In 2012, Director of Central Intelligence (D/CIA) David Petraeus advised him to equip and train the rebels, a strategy strongly endorsed by then Secretary of State Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. With deep reservations, President Obama eventually approved a limited, covert CIA rebel-training program.⁵⁴ At the time, the White House believed in diplomatic and economic means to pressure the Assad regime.⁵⁵ Hence, president Obama's White House and the Pentagon still shared a similar vision on Syria: all options should be on the table, but diplomatic and economic means were to be preferred.

50 Susan Rice, "Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at the Security Council Stakeout on Libya", New York, NY, (March 16, 2011).

51 Susan Rice, "Remarks by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative, on the UN Security Council and the Responsibility to Protect, at the International Peace Institute Vienna Seminar, New York, NY, (June 15, 2009), <http://usun.state.gov/briefing/statements/2009/125977.htm>.

52 Sanger, *Confront and Conceal*, p.339; Hastings, "Inside Obama's War Room".

53 Mann, *The Obamians*, pp: 266-289.

54 Kilic Bugra Kanat, "A Tale of Four Augusts: Obama's Syria Policy", (SETA Publications, 2015).

55 Elisabeth, Bumiller, "Military Points to Risks of a Syrian Intervention", *The New York Times*, (March 11, 2012).

This reluctance on the part of the administration to intervene appeared to change when evidence of a large-scale chemical weapons attack against Ghouta emerged on August 21, 2013.⁵⁶ The next day, a sharply divided Obama administration met and began weighing potential military responses to al-Assad's forces. Options ranged from a cruise missile strike to a more sustained air campaign. The meeting broke up amid signs of a deepening division between those who advocated sending the Assad regime a harsh message and those who argued that military action now would be reckless and ill-timed.⁵⁷

On August 24, Obama met with the NSC to consider options for an American military response. By all accounts, the President appeared to lean against a decision to order a limited series of military strikes against the Assad regime for its use of chemical weapons.⁵⁸ He said that: "This is the scenario we had been worried about" and the discussion turned immediately to what do we do about it.⁵⁹ The strong sentiment inside the administration was that Assad had earned dire punishment. Two days later Secretary of State John Kerry said there was "undeniable" evidence of a large-scale chemical weapons attack in the Ghouta area, with U.S. intelligence strongly pointing to Assad's government as the guilty party. Kerry's statement marked the clearest justification for U.S. military action in Syria up to this date.⁶⁰

On Wednesday August 28, talks at the UN Security Council on a formal response to the chemical weapons attack broke down in the face of a Russian and Chinese veto of any resolution for military action. The same day, President Obama told reporters he was "war-weary" and had not made a final decision but appeared to be leaning toward an attack.⁶¹ The following day, U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron shockingly lost a vote in the House of Commons to authorize the use of force and members of Congress were also increasingly demanding a voice in Syrian policy. As of Au-

56 Loveday Morris & Karen DeYoung, Syrian Activists Accuse Government of Deadly Chemical Attack Near Damascus, Washington Post (August, 22, 2013).

57 Mark Landler, Mark Mazzetti and Alissa Rubin, "Obama Officials Weigh Response to Syria Assault", The New York Times, (August 22, 2013).

58 Adam Entous & Carol L. Lee, "At the Last Minute, Obama Alone Made Call to Seek Congressional Approval", Wall Street Journal, (September, 1, 2013).

59 Interview with Ben Rhodes, quoted in Nina Burleigh, "Obama VS. Hawks", Rolling Stone Magazine, (April 1, 2014).

60 "U.S. Military "Ready to Act, Hagel says", CBS NEWS, (August 27, 2013).

61 Rebecca Shabad, "140 House members say Obama needs approval from Congress on Syria", The Hill, (September 29, 2013).

gust 29, 140 members, including 21 Democrats, had signed a letter calling on Obama to seek congressional authorization before ordering a military strike.⁶²

On August 30, Secretary Kerry publicly labelled Assad “a thug and a murderer,” and suggested that Assad should be punished in part because the “credibility and the future interests of the United States of America and our allies” were at stake.⁶³ Ninety minutes later, a U.S. intervention seemed finally on the table. After ruling out a prolonged air campaign, President Obama addressed the nation from the White House and reinforced Kerry’s message to prepare the American people for a limited air campaign in Syria.⁶⁴

However, Pentagon had shown a consistent preference for non-intervention in Syria. On multiple occasions, Pentagon officials warned against, or reacted with caution, to proposals coming from the White House and the State Department. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel had clear bureaucratic interests in not supporting the intervention since he saw several tough challenges for intervention in Syria. Hagel thought the White House lacked a clear strategy on Syria.⁶⁵ While Hagel agreed with Obama’s reluctance to deploy a large ground force to Syria or Iraq, he also wanted the administration to hammer out a plan for a diplomatic settlement in Syria and to clarify whether Assad needed to go and under what circumstances. According to Hagel, the White House’s policy deliberations on Syria, run by Rice and her deputies seemed to lead nowhere since politics was the priority, not national security or a coherent foreign policy.⁶⁶ In retrospect, Hagel has said that not to follow through with use of force when it was announced in August was a decision that dealt a severe blow to the credibility of both the president and the United States.⁶⁷

As the senior representative of the armed forces, CJCS Martin Dempsey also maintained a bureaucratic interest in arguing against the intervention. He had been sceptical about a U.S. strike on Syria ever since it was an-

62 Shabad, “140 House members say Obama needs approval”.

63 “Full Transcript: Secretary of State John Kerry’s remarks on Syria on Aug. 30”, Washington Post, (August 30, 2013).

64 Barack Obama, “Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Syria”, The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, (September 10, 2013).

65 Dan De Luce, “Hagel: The White House Tried to ‘Destroy’ Me”, Foreign Policy, (December 18, 2015).

66 De Luce, “Hagel: The White House”.

67 De Luce, “Hagel: The White House”.

nounced. As accountable for ensuring that the military was capable of satisfying the demands placed upon it by the Administration, Dempsey was concerned about an escalation of the conflict to the wider region.⁶⁸ Any form of backlash in Syria would present a threat to the bureaucratic role and interests of the armed forces. Thus, concern for the ability of the military to fulfil its core mission of protecting American national interests influenced his policy preferences.

As Secretary of State, Kerry wanted to pursue an assertive foreign policy that would change the situation on the ground. He argued loudly for action.⁶⁹ On several occasions, Kerry had asked Obama to launch missiles at specific regime targets since he believed that military strikes would convince Assad to take peace negotiations more seriously.⁷⁰ On August 30, he declared that: “As previous storms in history have gathered, when unspeakable crimes were within our power to stop them, we have been warned against the temptations of looking the other way.”⁷¹ At a minimum, Kerry had a responsibility to insist on multilateralism and it was, thus, decisive for him to reach consensus with U.S. allies. From August 26 onwards, Kerry contacted numerous allies in Europe and the Middle East and worked hard with the president to shore up support.⁷²

Chief of Staff Denis McDonough was philosophically in tune with the president since both of them were reluctant toward military interventions. McDonough was an enthusiastic executor of the president’s plan for running foreign policy: concentrating as much decision-making power in the West Wing national security staff as possible.⁷³ From McDonough’s position a Syria intervention represented a significant risk to Obama’s popularity and also threatened support for other signature domestic policy initiatives.

As the head of the interagency process, Susan Rice should ensure that alternative options were presented to the president. Before the chemical attack, she supported a no-fly zone for Syria and was wary of arming the

68 Ernesto Londono, “U.S. military officers have deep doubts about impact, wisdom of a U.S. strike on Syria,” *The Washington Post*, (29 August, 2013).

69 Kanat, “A Tale of Four Augusts.”

70 Jeffrey Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine”, *Atlantic*, April (2016).

71 “Full Transcript: Secretary of State John Kerry’s remarks on Syria on Aug. 30,

72 “U.S. Military “Ready to Act, Hagel says”, *CBS NEWS*.

73 Glenn Trush, “Obama’s Obama”, *Politico*, (Januari 7, 2016).

more liberal elements of Syria's opposition.⁷⁴ She also made a broader strategic case for striking Syria and argued that the chemical attack prompted the White House to seek military action against that regime. In line with her role as NSA, she painted a broader picture and also argued that North Korea and Iran cannot be allowed to think that the U.S. will let a chemical weapons attacks go unanswered.⁷⁵ In retrospect, however, she has argued that it was the right choice for U.S. interests not to intervene since "we were able to find a solution that actually removed the chemical weapons that were known from Syria in a way that the use of force would never have accomplished."⁷⁶

Vice President Biden had before the chemical attack argued against arming the rebels in Syria. After the attack, however, he supported a Syrian air strike based on credibility grounds for the president and, as argued above, stated there was "no doubt" Assad was behind the attacks. He also signalled that the U.S., with its allies, was ready to act.⁷⁷ However, Congress's clear ambivalence convinced Biden that Obama was correct to fear the slippery slope. He also underscored that "You need the support of the American people."⁷⁸

Proposition 2: The stronger bargaining advantages a key actor holds, the greater the extent of influence in the decision-making process.

Hillary Clinton developed an obviously effective bargaining position within the administration since she represented a large sector of the Democratic Party that Obama was unwilling to provoke.⁷⁹ Thus, Clinton's membership in the intervention coalition may have pressured Obama to strongly consider a military alternative.

74 Josh Rogin and Eli Lake, "Susan Rice and John Kerry Will Battle for Obama's Ear", *The Daily Beast*, (June 6, 2013).

75 Susan Rice, "Remarks As Prepared for Delivery by National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice" *The White House, Office of the Press Secretary*, (September 9, 2013).

76 "Obama Adviser Susan Rice Cites Syrian War As Biggest Disappointment", *NPR*, (January 16, 2017), available at: <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=510047606>; "Susan Rice Still Thinks Not Intervening In Syria Was A Good Call, *BuzzFeds*, December 28, (2016), available at: https://www.buzzfeed.com/hayesbrown/susan-rice-still-thinks-not-intervening-in-syria-was-a-good?utm_term=.obzDgw3zn#.lr0m2GKZy

77 Stephanie Condon, "Biden: "No doubt" Assad responsible for Syria Chemical Attack, *CBS News*, (August 27, 2013).

78 Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine".

79 Bob Woodward, "Obama's Wars", *New York: Simon & Schuster*, (2010), p.254.

Ambassador Rice enjoyed an especially significant bargaining influence of closeness to the president. Rice's opinion was crucial for the president and he had made her position a Cabinet-level post, meaning that she reported directly to the president.⁸⁰ Also the advocates within the NSC, Samantha Power, Ben Rhodes and Gayle Smith, enjoyed the bargaining influence of closeness to the president. These actors maneuvered its political advantages as they were united in support of intervention.⁸¹

Moreover, during Obama's campaign, Power served as one of his closest foreign-policy advisers and it is clear that Power enjoyed a "special relationship" with the president. Obama tended to make his final decisions with Rice, Power, Rhodes and Smith and the aides were sometimes sent off to inform State or Defense officials what Obama wanted or decided. When Obama decided to take action against Gaddafi, he turned to Power's humanitarian "toolbox" on how to prevent mass killings. When he went to the U.N. Security Council to join with British and French in seeking international sanction against Libya, he worked through Rice.⁸²

However, other actors' closeness to the president was not powerful enough to overcome the bargaining influence enjoyed by the advocates. It is clear that Obama valued Gates and was reluctant to break with the Defense Secretary.⁸³ Gates and Mullen engaged media in order to outmaneuver intervention advocates and increase their influence. At different occasions during early March, they publicly disagreed over all military alternatives in Libya. However, Gates experienced a pronounced decline in political influence as he was leaving office. Moreover, Biden and Donilon, while close to the president, found themselves in weak political positions since the president decided to side with the advocates.

In the Syrian case, McDonough, appointed chief of staff in January 2013, built his career in foreign policy and had served on the NSC in the first term. He enjoyed the especially significant bargaining influence of closeness to the president. Thus, he had the closest ties to the President and was the top national security aide and confidant on the toughest decisions.⁸⁴ Besides, McDonough has played a far more active role in national security than pre-

80 Hastings, "Inside Obama's War Room".

81 Hastings, "Inside Obama's War Room".

82 Mann, *The Obamians*, pp.143,286.

83 Woodward, *Obama's Wars*, p.136.

84 Burleigh, "Obama VS. Hawks".

vious chiefs of staff have. There is nobody within the Obama administration who had a genuine “czar status”, though, McDonough came closest.⁸⁵

As NSA Rice worked hard to preserve her relationship with the president while serving as U.S. ambassador to the U.N. for four years, she spent more time in Washington than any of her predecessors.⁸⁶ She had been with the president as his premier foreign policy adviser since the 2008 presidential campaign and was his favorite for the Secretary of State job. Thus, Rice also enjoyed the especially significant bargaining influence of closeness to the president. As the president, she also had long appeared reluctant for the United States to intervene militarily in Syria, fearing it was too risky.

Secretary Kerry and Secretary Hagel found themselves in weaker political positions regarding Syria. They both struggled to penetrate the tightly knit circle around the president and carve out a place in the administration. Kerry’s advocacy for strikes against the Assad regime targets had put him at odds with the president and Biden.⁸⁷

Hagel had largely ceded the stage to Dempsey and his problems with penetrating the president’s inner circle carried echoes of the two past defense secretaries Robert Gates and Leon Panetta. Hagel was not close with the president or members of his national security team. Moreover, Kerry and Hagel’s weaker political positions are not least illustrated by the fact that neither of them were at the August 30, 2013, meeting in which Obama opted not to order a military strike and were not informed of the president’s decision until the night of the meeting. Finally, Obama valued Dempsey and Biden. However, while close to the president, they found themselves in somewhat weaker political positions since the president and McDonough made the final call in this decision.⁸⁸

85 Trush, “Obama’s Obama; Mark Landler, “Obama Could Replace Aides Bruised by a Cascade of Crises”, *New York Times*, (October 29, 2014).

86 Rogin and Lake, “Susan Rice and John Kerry”..

87 Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine”..

88 Jonathan Alter, “Barack and Joe’s Secret Code,” *Politico*, (January 19, 2017)

Proposition 3a: The greater the prevalence of political pulling and hauling in the decision-making process the greater the probability that the final decision outcome results in a political resultant or compromise.

Proposition 3b: The greater the president's own personal interest and involvement in decision-making process, the more likely the final decision outcome will reflect the head of state's imprimatur.

President Obama relied heavily upon his own small informal network of close aides in both cases. Obama installed these aides primarily at the NSC, and he often worked with and through them in formulating ideas and dealing with the foreign policy bureaucracies.⁸⁹ Under Obama, the White House, not the State Department or other agencies, had become the power center for the administration's foreign policy decision-making.⁹⁰

Regarding Libya, president Obama meets with members of his NSC in the Situation Room late in the afternoon on March 15, 2011. During the meeting, Gates and Mullen cautioned the president against going to war. A stalemate emerged when the camps were unable to agree on how to handle Libya.⁹¹ Obama did not indicate his support for a military option until this last meeting. The NSC meeting restarted at nine and this time the president was presented a range of military options. One was to use no American force at all, but simply to provide intelligence and other support for the French and the British. Another was the no-fly-zone. The third was to go beyond the no-fly-zone by sending out planes to strike at Libyan targets at the ground. Finally, the president chose the third military option.⁹² According to Obama, acting would be the right thing to do, in order to prevent a massacre, and because the people of Libya, their Arab neighbors and the UN wanted it. He also added that failing to intervene would be a "psychological pendulum, in terms of the Arab Spring, in favor of repression."⁹³

Mullen acknowledged later that the impositions of a no-fly zone and limited air-campaign were within the capabilities of the armed forces.⁹⁴ Donilon also emphasized the limited approach of the operation when facing criticism for not including Congress.⁹⁵ Rice and the NSC advisers argued

89 Mann, *The Obamians*, p.xviii.

90 Gates, *Duty*, p.513.

91 Sanger, *Confront and Conceal*, p.346.

92 Mann, *The Obamians*, p.xiii.

93 Hastings, "Inside Obama's War Room".

94 Mullen, "Hearing to Receive testimony".

95 Mann, *The Obamians*, p.294.

that a no-fly zone would lead to unavoidable further military action, and this aspect should therefore be permitted in any UN resolution.⁹⁶ A view shared by Clinton, and her diplomatic efforts was a key for making the intervention come about.⁹⁷ Others agreed and by March 21, a consensus was forming in Washington.⁹⁸

With regard to Syria, the most critical meeting took place on Friday afternoon August 30 and had only two participants: McDonough and the President. When most observers expected him to launch the strikes. Obama surprised nearly everyone and determined that he was not prepared to authorize a strike. Instead, the President decided to force a vote in Congress.⁹⁹ He was worried that Assad would place civilians as “human shields” around obvious targets and U.S. missiles would not be fired at chemical-weapons depots, for fear of sending plumes of poison into the air.¹⁰⁰

After a walk with McDonough, they summoned a team of close advisers, including Rice, her deputies Rhodes and Anthony Blinken, NSC Chief of Staff Brian McKeon, senior adviser Dan Pfeiffer and several legal advisers into the Oval Office. All present assumed the president would be giving the go-ahead to attack Assad.¹⁰¹ When the president announced his decision the resistance from the group was immediate. The advisers expressed concerns that the President could lose the vote, that it could complicate other legislative priorities and that international support for a military operation was unlikely to improve.¹⁰² Several key principals were not included in the meeting, the president telephoned Kerry and Hagel to tell them of his plans.¹⁰³ The next morning, President Obama called together a contentious meeting with his top-level national-security advisers, this time including Kerry and Hagel. The president wanted to avoid the political costs of intervening alone with another military strike in the Middle East and wanted Congress to take some responsibility.¹⁰⁴ The example of the “no” vote in Great Britain

96 Nigel Morris and David Osborne, “Cameron frustrated with Obama’s refusal to act”, *Independent*, (March 17, 2011).

97 Joby Warrick, “Hillary’s war: Clinton credited with key role in success of NATO airstrikes, Libyan rebels”, *Washington Post*, (October 31, 2011).

98 Chivvis, *Toppling Qaddafi*, pp.74-75.

99 Kanat, “A Tale of Four Augusts”, p. 97.

100 Goldberg, “The Obama Doctrine”.

101 Mark Lander, “President Pulls Lawmakers Into Box He Made”, *The New York Times*, (August 31, 2013).

102 Interview with Ben Rhodes.

103 Lander, “President Pulls Lawmakers”.

104 Kanat, “A Tale of Four Augusts”, p. 100.

convinced him that it was important to have this support.¹⁰⁵ Secondly, the U.S. could not risk the UN inspectors on the ground. The third factor was that the U.S. could not, through a missile strike, eliminate the chemical weapons themselves. Thus, after consulting only McDonough, the president decided to call off planned air strikes against the Syrian government.

The analysis offers weak evidence for proposition 3a. In both cases, Obama's White House staff reinforced his tendencies toward centralization and careful deliberation as well as personal control of the details of policy. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Obama's decision-making style was his personal involvement in the details of policy.¹⁰⁶ Careful, and lengthy, deliberation marked Obama's style of decision making and demonstrated his determination not to rush into major additional commitments of U.S. troops. Foremost, in Libya he insisted on multiple advocacy by requiring his staffers to argue their cases in front of him.¹⁰⁷ In both cases, president Obama also acted as his own honest broker.¹⁰⁸

Hence, none of these cases reflects a collage as predicted by the BPM but rather a preeminent, yet, reluctant president. However, there are differences between the cases. The Libya decision was a clear victory for the advocates and a defeat for the opponents. It is also important to note that Clinton's reach out for international support was central for changing the reluctant president's decision. The Syria decision reflects top-down decision making that caused surprise among other decision-makers. It also illustrates a preeminent president ignoring bureaucratic resistance, lacking international support and making the final call alone unbeknownst of other central players.

Conclusion

According to the BPM's stand an actor's bureaucratic interest is to execute the interests of his/her organization. In Libya, the stance of the opponents and Clinton could be inferred from their bureaucratic positions. There is lit-

105 "Office of the Press Secretary, Text of a Letter from the President to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate", The White House, (March 21, 2011).

106 Pfiffner James P., "Decision Making in the Obama White House", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 41, Issue 2, (2011): 247.

107 Pfiffner, "Decision Making in the Obama White House".

108 Pfiffner, "Decision Making in the Obama White House".

tle to suggest, however, that individuals like Rice, Power and Smith would have changed their established views on Libya, whichever bureaucratic position they had taken. In Syria, the stance of Hagel, Dempsey, Rice, Biden, McDonough, and Kerry could be inferred from their bureaucratic positions. Thus, where one sat was partly influential on where one sat in both cases.

The bargaining proposition holds that the decision-making processes are best characterized as political bargaining processes. This proposition has validity with regard to Clinton, Rice and the NSC advisers in Libya. In Syria, this proposition has validity with regard to McDonough in particular, but also to Rice, Dempsey and Biden.

However, neither of these two decisions was a compromise as expected in proposition 3a. If the BPM was an accurate guide, the bargaining processes are expected to be unintended compromise solutions that no actor originally pursued. Yet, in Libya the final decision was a win for the advocates and a defeat for the opponents, and, hence, not a compromise. In Syria, it was largely president Obama's intended decision. Hence, one implication of these two cases is the empirical support for proposition 3b and presidential influence on the decision. In both cases, Obama's management style was involved and encouraged careful consideration of various policy options. Thus, the empirical findings highlight an important point made by critics of the BPM; the role of hierarchy in the U.S. government and whether the president merely is another actor in the governmental bureaucracy or the one who "creates much of the bureaucratic environment which surrounds him".¹⁰⁹ The findings of this case lend some support to the latter view. As illustrated above, the president was a supreme player and was highly involved in the decision-making process of these important national security issues.

What are the comparative implications of these two case studies and how should the "yes" in Libya and "no" in Syria be interpreted? First, the decisions offer many similarities such as a sceptic Secretary of Defense, NSA, CJCS and a more "interventionist" Secretary of State. In Libya, along bureaucratic interest and presidential preeminence, Clinton's diplomatic efforts were a key for making the reluctant president change his view. In Syria, the extent of presidential influence stands out since no group of advisers debated the final decision. Quite the contrary, it surprised them. For-

109Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important?"

mer members of the Obama administration describe Obama's approach as one that encourages deliberation but is highly centralized featuring Obama as his own honest broker and sometimes the exclusion of key actors from deliberations.¹¹⁰ Noticeable in this case are also the marginalized secretary of state and the influence from McDonough, who played a far more active role in national security than previous chiefs of staff.¹¹¹ However, the president used him as a confidant rather than as a broker. Besides, during his second term the president's network of close aides seemed to have even larger influence in an administration without weighty voices like those of Gates or Clinton.¹¹²

Hence, the policy leading towards the final decision to force a vote in Congress was driven by a preeminent president with pre-existing ideological commitments against humanitarian intervention. Accordingly, president Obama's personality and ideology played an even more significant role in Syria than in Libya.¹¹³ Hence, a second implication is that the crisis decision making atmosphere tends to highlight the importance of personality and ideology. Personality and ideology are of crucial significance for the debates around the BPM and critics have argued that Allison exaggerated the importance of bureaucratic logic.¹¹⁴

In sum, this case study leaves us with some critical questions unanswered. Further studies of comparable episodes of crisis decision making would, therefore, be welcome in order to examine the incoherence between institutional and individual interests of actors, the role of the president, and crisis decision-making.

110 See Clinton, *Hard Choices: Gates, Duty*; Vali Nasr, *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*, (New York: Doubleday, 2013).

111 Glenn Trush, "Obama's Obama", *Politico*, Januari 7, (2016); Mark Landler, "Obama Could Replace Aides Bruised by a Cascade of Crises", *New York Times*, (October 29, 2014)..

112 Robert G. Kaufman, *Dangerous Doctrine: How Obama's Grand Strategy Weakened America*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2016).

113 See e.g. Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine".

114 Barton Bernstein, "Understanding Decision-Making, US Foreign Policy, and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *International Security*, Vol. 25, Issue 1, (2000): 134-64); Krasner, "Are Bureaucracies Important?"