Understanding and Evaluating Bureaucratic Politics: The Nexus Between Political Leaders and Advisory Systems

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Bureaucratic politics—for example, the "political" interaction between individuals and organizations in the executive branch of government—is a potentially significant force affecting the course and outcomes of governmental policymaking processes. In this article, an empirical and normative model and operationalization of bureaucratic politics is developed, treating it as a variable rather than as an immutable (and by definition problematic) property of policy decision-making. A conceptual model, linking the nature and intensity of bureaucratic politics in advisory systems to the characteristics of the political leaders served by them, is also developed. On the basis of earlier studies of presidential leadership (e.g., Preston, 1996), the leader's need for power, cognitive complexity, and prior policy experience/expertise are hypothesized to affect the organization and operation of the advisory system in terms of bureaucratic politics. Using Hermann's (1983) Personality Assessment-at-a-Distance (PAD) coding technique, theoretical assertions are illustrated in a detailed case study of two critical episodes in U.S. decision-making in the conduct of the Vietnam war in 1965 and 1968.

KEY WORDS: bureaucratic politics; presidential leadership style; personality; Lyndon Johnson; Vietnam.

On 17 July 1950, more than 3 weeks after the initial invasion of South Korea by the North and his decision to intervene militarily in the conflict, President Harry S. Truman directed his National Security Council (NSC) to prepare a report formulating what U.S. policy should be after North Korean forces were driven back to the 38th parallel. At the same time, the president circulated a memo to his staff

describing changes he intended to make in the structure and operations of his advisory group. No longer did Truman wish to have policy proposals on Korea brought to him directly; he instead ordered that they be recommended to him only through the NSC machinery.[1] Truman limited participation in NSC meetings to a small inner circle of his closest advisers, and he directed the members of this select advisory group to each nominate one member of a senior NSC staff group, who would then provide the final policy recommendations to the council. In restructuring his advisory system, Truman continued a pattern, seen throughout his presidency, of preferring inner-circle control over the policy process and of centralizing decision-making authority in the White House. His inner circle of advisers constituted a group that Truman knew well on an interpersonal basis and trusted to be loyal. Further, because of his lack of foreign policy expertise and dependence on expert policy advice, Truman tended to delegate the formulation of policy to trusted advisers and their staffs (Preston, 1997, in press-a).

This restructuring of Truman's advisory system before the 38th parallel debate would have an important impact on the decision to cross the 38th parallel, because it allowed bureaupolitical conflict between factions in the State and Defense departments to fundamentally shape the nature of the final policy recommendations reported back to the president. As a result, the critical debate over whether to cross the 38th parallel, and the formulation of the policy paper requested by Truman, took place not within the president's inner-circle group, but between NSC staffers from the State and Defense departments. Neither Truman nor Secretary of State Dean Acheson were involved or had input into this policy debate at the lower staff level.[2] Further, serious disputes over whether to cross the parallel were settled among the staff long before the final recommendation was reported back to the president.

Truman had unwittingly, through his own leadership style preferences and advisory system arrangements, released the forces of bureaupolitical conflict, pitting factions within departments who favored radically different policy approaches against each other to produce a joint report for the president. Indeed, bureaupolitical conflict—assisted by the structure of the president's own advisory system—played a key role in shaping Truman's decision to accept the final NSC recommendation by allowing the NSC to mute any criticism of the proposed action by those in the State Department who opposed it (Preston, 1996, 1997). Hence, bureaupolitical conflict surrounding the Korean decision resulted in a false policy consensus being reported back to the president, which failed to note (a) the potential problems or criticisms of the recommended policy approach, (b) the nature of the policy debate that had occurred between advocates and opponents at lower staff

[1] Harry S. Truman to Alben N. Barkley, 19 July 1950; President's Secretary's File, General File, Box 113, Papers of Harry S. Truman, Truman Library.

[2] Interviews with George Elsey and Paul Nitze (conducted by the first author, 28 March 1994 and 7 July 1995, respectively).

levels, or (c) the existence of multiple policy options (including that of *not* crossing the border) that were available for his consideration.

The second Korean decision is not a stand-alone case of flawed decision-making being the result of bureaucratic struggles within government. In fact, "bureaucratic politics" is frequently cited as a major explanation for conspicuous policy failures. Bureaucratic game-playing, factional bickering, and interpersonal manipulation within and among policymaking groups is said to have harmful, even catastrophic, consequences for the quality of policymaking and government in general (Gabriel, 1985; Niskanen, 1971). Even today, the very notion of bureaucratic politics evokes dismay and disapproval among bureaucratic and political elites. It implies that bureaucrats have overstepped the boundaries of their role, as prescribed by the politics-administration dichotomy that is one of the fundamental tenets of classical administrative doctrines. Bureaucratic politics also challenges important symbols of government, particularly the myth of the unitary state defending the public interest. This negative connotation of bureaucratic politics prevents a realistic assessment of its benefits and costs. Here, we advocate a more explicit, even-handed empirical and normative appraisal of bureaucratic politics. We are not alone in doing so: All along there have been analysts arguing for the benefits of duplication, overlap, and competition in the executive branch (Bendor, 1985; Landau, 1969). It has been shown that even in the context of crisis management, where decisive yet carefully considered and widely supported action is called for, bureaucratic politics may actually have beneficial effects (Rosenthal, 't Hart, & Kouzmin, 1991). These include, for example, safeguarding policymakers against rushed decisions and the false consensus produced by "groupthink" ('t Hart, 1997).

Some government leaders have even adopted structures and procedures of policymaking that seek to exploit rather than suppress the divergent viewpoints and interests promoted by different parts of the bureaucracy. An illustration of this can be found in the way another American president, Dwight Eisenhower, used his NSC staff to harness bureaucratic competition in a constructive manner (Greenstein, 1982; Preston, 1996). First, an impartial facilitator—NSC Adviser Robert Cutler—was appointed to ensure that all participants received a fair hearing on policy matters before the NSC and could effectively communicate their views (in opposition or support of policy) to the president.[3] Second, the NSC Policy Planning Board was established to develop in-depth staff papers for existing or potential foreign policy problems that could face the council. The planning board was expected not only to examine different contingencies, but also to provide the NSC with possible options to address them. Thus, the role of the planning board was not to arrive at a consensus regarding a specific policy recommendation, but to provide a variety of possible approaches or options that could be considered and debated by the president and his advisers.[4] Disagreements among staff over policy matters,

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[3] Oral history interview, Arthur S. Flemming, 2–3 June 1988, Eisenhower Library.
[4] Ibid.

unlike the false consensus found in the Truman Korean war case, were not papered over but were included in "splits" of opinion that were incorporated into the staff papers. In this way, Eisenhower and his advisers were instantly aware of differences of opinion among those within the bureaucracy, as well as of the wide variety of different ideas and options being proposed throughout it to address each specific policy problem (Preston, 1996, in press-a, in press-b).

These contrasting analytical claims and practical experiences suggest that bureaucratic politics is a multifaceted and ambiguous phenomenon. Comparing the Truman and Eisenhower examples makes one wonder where the cutoff point lies. Under what conditions do we see productive heterogeneity and competition in the executive branch? When and how does bureaucratic politics escalate into jealous rivalry, bureaucratic guerrilla warfare, and costly policy stalemates? The answers to these questions are, of course, vitally important for those who seek to curb and regulate bureaucratic politics.

As we argue below, the existing bureaucratic politics literature is insufficient to help us understand the contingent nature of bureaupolitics, both in empirical and normative terms. In this paper, we provide a new set of conceptual tools for a more systematic approach and apply them in an analysis of the impact of political leaders in shaping and managing bureaucratic politics in the policymaking process.

Bureaucratic Politics: Refocusing the Agenda

For the most part, the bureaucratic politics debate in international relations has been about the theoretical status and explanatory power of the bureaucratic politics approach.[5] Unfortunately, there has been a lack of progress in the bureaucratic politics debate among foreign policy analysts. Models formulated some 25 years ago (e.g., Allison, 1971; Halperin, 1974) still dominate today's discussion (Bendor & Hammond, 1992; Jones, 1994; Welch, 1992), despite their tentative, exploratory status at the time of their formulation, and despite major conceptual and methodological deficiencies already noted by early critics (Art, 1973; Ball, 1974; Bobrow, 1972). Foreign policy scholars today have produced little in the way of systematic empirical knowledge about the explanatory status of bureaucratic politics approaches. Spurred on by Allison's and Halperin's models, the tendency in international relations has been to treat bureaucratic politics exclusively as an independent variable explaining policy outcomes. However, as observed by many reviewers, the record of the bureaucratic politics approach in this respect is unimpressive (Welch, 1992). An important reason for this is that international relations scholars have tended to treat bureaucratic politics as an invariant feature of the foreign policy process instead of as a contingent phenomenon whose form and intensity vary across situations, policy domains, and national administrative

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[5] Portions of this section of the paper were adapted from P. 't Hart and U. Rosenthal, "Reappraising bureaucratic politics," *Mershon International Studies Review* (in press).

systems (cf. Grindle & Thomas, 1991; Rosenthal et al., 1991). If we accept that bureaucratic politics itself is variable, then its impact on policy is also variable.

Getting a better feel for why bureaucratic politics occurs in the form and extent to which it does—that is, treating it as a dependent variable—is necessary before one can correctly appreciate its impact. We should study why bureaucratic politics manifests itself more and differently in some issues, policy domains, or countries than in others (Hermann & Hermann, 1982). One way to put bureaucratic politics into perspective has been suggested by Rosati (1981). In his view, the nature of a given policymaking process depends on the decision structure (the degree of top-level involvement in the decision-making process) and the decision context (the critical and noncritical nature of the issue in the broader external setting). He hypothesized that bureaucratic politics is most likely to emerge in middle-range issues, where moderate issue salience causes executive involvement to be low, and, as a consequence, many bureaucratic actors will enter the decisional arena. Although Rosati was correct that bureaupolitics may more frequently occur in contexts of medium policy/issue salience within political systems, such conflicts can occur at any level of the political system and in high- as well as low-salience policy contexts. Indeed, when such conflicts occur at higher levels in more highly salient issue areas, even if such occurrence is less frequent, the impact of bureau-politicking can be quite pervasive, even more so than in cases where such disputes occurred at lower levels in less critical policy areas. For example, struggles between the Air Force and the CIA over who would pilot U-2 aircraft over Cuba resulted in a 10-day delay in spotting the Soviet nuclear missiles in 1962, which greatly exacerbated President Kennedy's predicament when the missiles were finally detected (Allison, 1971).

The ubiquity of bureaucratic politics in the policy process also raises complex normative questions about the legitimation and distribution of bureaucratic power in the administrative system. These questions are intensely debated by students of public administration (Wamsley, 1990), but are mostly begged by foreign policy scholars. If writers do make evaluative remarks, it is mostly to allege that bureaucratic game-playing is problematic because it means parochial organizational interests, rather than the overarching national interest, are guiding the formulation and implementation of national policy. Many keep referring to bureaucratic politics in terms of Miles' law ("where you stand depends on where you sit") and imply that this is a less than desirable way to make public policy.

Using the game metaphor as a frame for thinking about bureaucratic politics, as many foreign policy analysts do, locks us into a myopic view of executive policymaking as a win-or-lose struggle for power. One may, at best, respect the crafty gamesmanship of certain players, but underneath there is a fundamental unease with the idea of bureaucrats operating in self-consciously political ways. Of course, it is easy to see that the time-consuming, cumbersome, and often unpredictable course of bureaupolitical interaction does not help a state to achieve its aims cheaply and quickly, but that is not the whole story. Policymaking is also

a goal-seeking activity. In foreign policy, there tends to be considerable ambiguity about how "the national interest" ought to be defined in a given setting. There is plenty of room for diverging interpretations about what values are at stake and which goals ought to be given priority. Bureaucratic politics may fulfill a very useful function in this process, particularly because in foreign policy there is often a lack of broad-based political representation. Bureaucratic politics may well be a next best route to pluralist checks and balances. In fact, when it comes to dealing with messy problems and value-laden controversies, most of us are happy to trade off some effectiveness and efficiency in the machinery of policymaking for the safeguarding of qualities such as integrity, reliability, and resilience. Moreover, we may well accept that seemingly inefficient organizational structures may be the best way of ensuring that these qualities are met. There are multiple organizations whose personnel and resources serve as each other's backup systems, guardians, and competitors in domains where faultless performance (nuclear weapons systems, nuclear power plants), ethical soundness (law enforcement, public finance), and uninterrupted delivery of public services (defense, water, gas, electricity, emergency services) is essential (Landau & Chisholm, 1995). In sum, it is clear that we need a more versatile approach to evaluating the impact of bureaucratic politics.

Reconceptualizing Bureaucratic Politics

In this section, we attempt to lay the conceptual groundwork for the twofold agenda for the study of bureaucratic politics that we have outlined above. First, we conceptualize bureaucratic politics as a multidimensional variable. A conceptual framework is presented that enables us to assess the extent to which bureaucratic politics permeated the decision-making structure and process in any particular policymaking episode. Second, a similar framework is presented to evaluate the effects of bureaucratic politics on the quality of the decision-making process.

A Multifaceted Phenomenon

Whatever its heuristic potential, Miles' law is not a productive start for an empirical study of bureaucratic politics. It does not lend itself easily to robust empirical observation, because one needs to make inferences about what actors "really want" and whether they mean what they say. More important, perhaps, is that to describe bureaucratic politics solely in terms of actors' motivations (as in studies based on the Miles' law approach) is to miss out on what actually goes on when bureaucratic players interact. That interaction is better described in terms of its structural context and process features, which can be assessed by a range of techniques. Some structural configurations are conducive to bureaupolitical maneuvering, and others dampen it: The more actors are involved, the greater their differences, the more diffuse their power relationships, and the more likely that
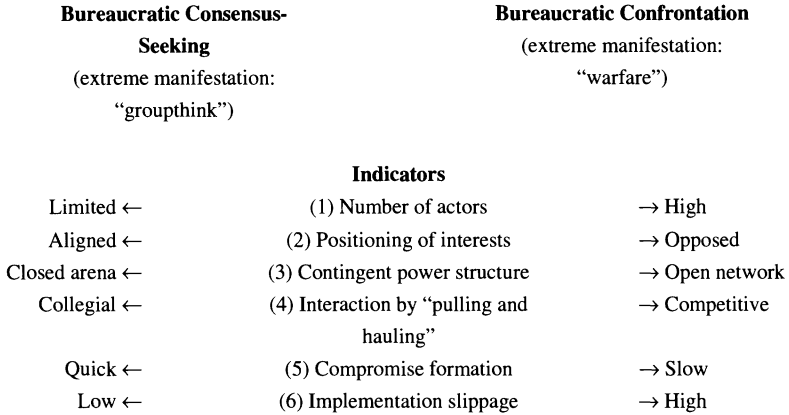
collective decision-making will involve game-playing. However, even if the structure of the policy arena is open, fragmented, and featured by groups of bureaucratic actors with sharply different views and interests, there may still be considerable variation in the extent to which the resultant interaction process actually involves "pulling and hauling" and the other antics commonly associated with bureaucratic politics. These considerations have led to an operational definition of bureaucratic politics that has the following key features:

1. There are multiple bureaucratic actors in the policymaking arena (structure).

2. These actors have diverging and conflicting interests, and they are involved in multiple-n game contexts with one another, requiring cooperation in areas of disagreement because of the necessity for future policy interaction (structure).

3. Power relationships between these actors are diffuse; for example, some institutional, bureaucratic, or inner-circle actors are more powerful than other actors in certain policy contexts, and not as powerful in others (structure).

4. Interaction is characterized by continuous "pulling and hauling" and bargaining between (clusters of) actors (process).

5. Decisions are reached by bargaining, coalition formation, and compromise building between different parties (process).

6. Decision outcomes tend to be sensitive to temporal slippage (e.g., time gaps and delays between decision-making and actual implementation) and content slippage (e.g., post-decisional modification of the content of the policy) (process).[6]

In any particular policymaking process, each of these characteristics may occur to a greater or lesser degree, and their relative importance may even vary at different points in time during a protracted decision-making process. In Figure 1, we therefore surmise that bureaucratic politics can be viewed as a continuum. Bureaucratic politics may be of a low intensity, with relatively few players whose views and interests diverge only gradually, bargaining toward consensus within a closed policy arena featuring clear rules of the game and a relatively transparent power structure. This low-intensity form of bureaucratic politics is referred to as *bureaucratic consensus-seeking*. At the opposite end of the spectrum we find *bureaucratic confrontation*, characterized by many players vigorously pushing their parochial viewpoints in a relatively open and ill-structured

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[6] In temporal slippage, a collective decision is made, but the bureaupolitical pulling and hauling continues, now focused on the division of responsibility, money, and other conditions of implementation, requiring further decisions and consuming more time. In content slippage, the post-decisional implementation bureaucratic politics substantially alters the de facto content of the government's actions (e.g., bureaucratic politics producing a gap between what the government says it will do and what it actually does).

Bureaucratic Consensus-Seeking (extreme manifestation: "groupthink")	Indicators	Bureaucratic Confrontation (extreme manifestation: "warfare")
Limited ←	(1) Number of actors	→ High
Aligned ←	(2) Positioning of interests	→ Opposed
Closed arena ←	(3) Contingent power structure	→ Open network
Collegial ←	(4) Interaction by "pulling and hauling"	→ Competitive
Quick ←	(5) Compromise formation	→ Slow
Low ←	(6) Implementation slippage	→ High

Note. Figure adapted from Rosenthal et al. (1991).

Figure 1. Degrees of bureaucratic politics: The empirical dimension.

constellation of forces. Under conditions of bureaucratic consensus-seeking, the necessary compromises are arrived at relatively quickly and survive post-decisional maneuvering relatively unscathed, but the costs and vulnerability of bureaucratic compromises are much higher. As a rule of thumb, one might say that bureaucratic confrontation takes place when an examination of an episode shows that at least four of the six indicators show up on the far right side of the continuum. Further, it should be understood that there are "productive" and "excessive" forms of bureaucratic consensus-seeking and confrontation. Thus, at the extreme far end of the continuum reside the excessive forms of bureaucratic consensus-seeking (i.e., groupthink) and of bureaucratic confrontation (i.e., warfare).

Toward a Contingent Evaluation

If the actual degree to which bureaucratic politics pervades the policymaking process is variable, the diverging evaluations of bureaucratic politics discussed above become less of a puzzle. We may, in fact, construct a second bureaucratic politics continuum, this time a normative one, highlighting the differential impact of bureaucratic politics on the quality of the decision-making process. The continuum is constructed using George's (1980) three process criteria:

Reality-testing: Does all the information available in the policymaking system reach the key decision-makers? Do decision-makers consider multiple options at any stage in the decision process?

Acceptability: Are the relevant stakeholders represented in the decision-making group? Does the decision-making group display a sensitivity to the ideas and concerns of outgroups and constituencies?

Efficiency: What costs does the decision-making process entail for decision-makers with respect to the amount of time, decision-makers' attention, or expenditure of organizational resources and political capital required to arrive at policy decisions?

In Figure 2, each criterion is again depicted as a continuum. The two extremes reflect different types of decisional pathologies associated with bureaucratic politics, whereas the more productive modes of interaction are located in the middle. On the criterion of reality testing, bureaupolitical oversimplification occurs when a dominant coalition emerges early on in the decision process, framing the problem and allowing only a narrow range of information and arguments to enter the discussion. Bureaupolitical distortion occurs when bureaucratic positions are so deeply entrenched that all actors will distrust, misrepresent, and discount any information their opponents bring to the table, impairing any significant pooling of information and collective analysis of the issues. On the acceptability criterion, the pathology of isolationism occurs when a winning coalition pushes through its pet project without adequate consideration of the support it enjoys in the wider political community. There is paralysis when bureaucratic polarization has been so intense and overt that it has spilled over into the wider community, with none of the alternatives considered enjoying a minimally necessary degree of outside support. On the efficiency criterion, the haste pathology occurs when high-speed, quick consensus decisions come back to haunt decision-makers during later stages when renewed controversy or implementation problems force the problem back on the agenda. The waste pathology is when the policymaking process keeps going around in circles indefinitely without producing any firm decisions or conclusive action.

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Optimal Process

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Bureaucratic Consensus-Seeking		**Bureaucratic Confrontation**
	Process Criteria	
	(1) Reality Testing:	
Bureaupolitical oversimplification←	Bureaupolitical deliberation	→Bureaupolitical distortion
	(2) Acceptability:	
Bureaupolitical isolationism←	Bureaupolitical compromise formation	→Bureaupolitical paralysis
	(3) Efficiency:	
Bureaupolitical haste←	Bureaupolitical economy	→Bureaupolitical waste
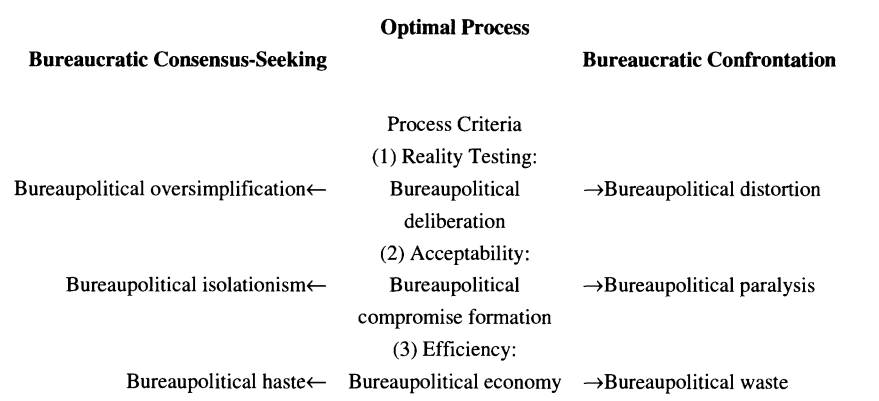
Figure 2. Bureaucratic politics: The normative dimension.

From Processes to Outcomes

Taken together, Figures 1 and 2 provide us with tools to establish the benefits and costs of different modes and levels of bureaucratic politics. They enable us to observe and categorize the structure and process of executive policymaking, and then evaluate its quality in terms of the George criteria. They can also provide the basis for theory-building. For example, using the conceptual apparatus presented here, hypotheses can be developed predicting the effects of particular structural configurations on the quality of bureaupolitical decision-making.

Explaining Bureaupolitical Variation: The Role of Political Leadership

We now turn to an important dimension of bureaucratic politics that has traditionally been ignored within the bureaucratic politics literature—namely, the role played by political leaders in shaping the structures and processes involved in governmental decision-making. As a growing body of research in the presidential field has already observed (see below), the issue is not *whether* individuals make a difference, but *under what conditions* they make a difference (Hargrove, 1993). Indeed, what presidents are like (i.e., their personal characteristics and styles of leadership) often plays a critical role in determining how advisory systems function, how policy decisions are made, and what actors from the surrounding institutional environment are likely to have meaningful access or input into the president's inner circle of decision (see Burke & Greenstein, 1991; George, 1980; Hermann & Preston, 1994a, 1994b, 1998; Preston, 1996). In the section below, we make the argument that political leaders have a significant impact on the occurrence and nature of bureaucratic politics in policy cases. We present a conceptual framework illustrating how leader characteristics affect (a) the occurrence or non-occurrence of bureaucratic politics within presidential advisory systems, and (b) the nature of the bureaucratic conflict (bureaucratic consensus-seeking or bureaucratic confrontation) that may result. By including such leader-based variables in our analysis, we begin to develop a more contingent, contextually sensitive model of bureaucratic politics.

However, in making the argument that leaders constitute an important variable for understanding bureaucratic politics, it is important to recognize that this is intended to be a limited claim. We do not argue that the role of political leaders is *always* important in *all* cases of bureaucratic politics, nor that it should always replace or subordinate the kinds of institutional, structural variables usually associated with bureaucratic politics models. Just as the impact of bureaucratic politics on policy is variable, so is the impact of leaders on bureaucratic politics. Further, it should be understood that the degree to which bureaupolitics becomes a problem varies significantly across different governmental structures, as does the importance of the role played by leaders as a variable affecting the characteristics of the bureaucratic process. For example, in the case of presidential inner circles,

especially in the U.S. context, policymaking groups tend to be more cohesive and loyal to the leader than those of parliamentary systems of cabinet government, particularly those with coalition cabinets, where a prime minister can sometimes be construed as first among equals (Baylis, 1989; Blondel & Muller-Rommel, 1993). In fact, many of the classical malfunctions resulting from overcohesiveness of groups are more likely to occur in presidential advisory groups than in collegial cabinets, primarily because centrifugal forces (including bureaupolitics) are more salient (George, 1980; Janis, 1972; Janis & Mann, 1977; 't Hart, 1994). But, at the same time, these structural differences between presidential and collegial systems can easily be overdrawn if one fails to recognize that institutional structures do not determine behavior, but only provide certain incentives and rules of the game to the players (Scott, 1995). Indeed, within bureaucratic politics, a significant role should always be reserved to people, specifically senior political leaders (presidents, prime ministers, governors, mayors), who interpret, manipulate, and alter the institutional rules of collective policymaking.

In this article, we focus on the U.S. presidential context to describe the impact of political leaders on the bureaucratic process. Although our primary illustration involves Lyndon Johnson's policymaking on Vietnam (1965–1968), the model of leadership style and bureaucratic politics presented below is intended to be broadly applicable across other presidents and policy cases as well. Unlike many works on leadership style (e.g., Barber, 1972; Johnson, 1974), our model does not merely "divine" the leadership styles or bureaucratic behaviors we predict on the basis of our descriptions of the policy case at hand. Instead, leader characteristics are operationalized and measured before the study of the policy case, using unrelated materials. Further, our model's predictions regarding leadership style and bureaucratic behavior are based solely on previous empirical research (Preston, 1996), which has carefully examined and tested the relationships between specific leader characteristics and policymaking behavior across modern U.S. presidents found in the archival record. By taking a bureaupolitical leadership cut on Johnson's Vietnam policymaking, we hope to illustrate generally the value of our approach and its ability to provide alternative interpretations of important instances of intersections between presidential leadership and bureaupolitics. However, before presenting our framework, it is useful to briefly review the existing literature relevant to political leaders and their styles, as well as the general research approach underpinning our model.

The Political Psychology of Presidents, Leadership Style, and Individual Differences

Presidential leadership.   Research on the impact of presidential personality or leadership style on advisory arrangements and decision-making in the White House has taken many forms. Some scholars have focused on aspects of the individual personalities of presidents to understand their behavior in the White

House (Barber, 1972; George & George, 1964; Glad, 1980, 1983; Hargrove, 1988; Hermann, 1983, 1989; Winter, Hermann, Weintraub, & Walker, 1991). Such treatments of the presidential personality range from early psychoanalytic studies exploring the "character" or psychological development of individual leaders (Barber, 1972; George & George, 1964; Renshon, 1996) to more recent, nonpsychoanalytic techniques of content analysis that measure more specific traits or characteristics of leaders derived from modern social psychology research to explain their behavior (Hermann, 1983, 1989, 1993; Lyons, 1997; Preston, 1996, 1997; Winter, 1987; Winter et al., 1991). Other studies have developed portraits of presidential style, through the use of archival evidence and interviews, that com- bine the personal qualities and backgrounds of leaders into distinctive styles in office (Burke & Greenstein, 1991; Greenstein, 1982; Hargrove, 1988; Jones, 1988). Still other researchers, focusing more on the differing organizational preferences of presidents, have analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of organizational arrangements (Burke & Greenstein, 1991; Campbell, 1986; Crabb & Mulcahy, 1986; George, 1980; Henderson, 1988; Hermann & Preston, 1994a, 1994b, 1998; Hess, 1988; Johnson, 1974; Pika, 1988; Porter, 1980). A common thread connecting these works, however, is the notion that what individual presi- dents are like matters, and that their personal qualities can significantly affect decision-making and policy.

   Individual differences and leadership.   A wealth of research also exists regarding the individual characteristics (or traits) of leaders and how these shape (both within and outside of groups) their styles of decision-making, interpersonal interaction, information processing, and management in office (Hermann, 1980, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b; Hermann & Preston, 1994a; Preston, 1996, 1997; Smith, Atkinson, McClelland, & Veroff, 1992; Stogdill & Bass, 1981; Vertzberger, 1990; Winter et al., 1991). For example, among the psychological studies of the charac- teristics of leaders are ones examining personal needs for power (Etheredge, 1978; Hermann, 1984, 1987a, 1987b; House, 1990; McClelland, 1975; Winter, 1973, 1987), personal needs for affiliation (Browning & Jacob, 1964; McClelland & Boyatzis, 1982; Winter, 1987; Winter & Stewart, 1977), cognitive complexity (Driver, 1977; Hermann, 1984, 1987a, 1987b; Suedfeld & Rank, 1976; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1977; Tetlock, 1985), locus of control (Davis & Phares, 1967; Hermann, 1984, 1987a, 1987b; Rotter, 1966), achievement or task/interpersonal emphasis (Hermann, 1987a, 1987b; Nutt, 1990; Rowe & Mason, 1987; Winter & Stewart, 1977), and self-confidence (Hermann, 1987a, 1987b; House, 1990; Winter et al., 1991). Recent archival research has found that three individual characteristics in particular—need for power, complexity, and prior policy experience—play a critical role in shaping presidential leadership style (Preston, 1996). Our analysis builds on these findings.

   Power.   The need for power (or dominance) is a personality characteristic that has been extensively studied and linked to specific types of behavior and interactional styles with others (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Sanford,

1950; Browning & Jacob, 1964; Donley & Winter, 1970; Etheredge, 1978; Hermann, 1980, 1987a,1987b; House, 1990; McClelland, 1975; Winter, 1973, 1987; Winter & Stewart, 1977). Specifically, one would expect leaders with progressively higher psychological needs for power to be increasingly dominant and assertive in their leadership styles in office and to assert greater control over subordinates and policy decisions. For example, research by Fodor and Smith (1982) found that leaders high in need for power were more associated with the suppression of open decision-making and discussion within groups than were leaders low in need for power. Similarly, a number of studies have found that, relative to leaders low in need for power, leaders high in need for power require a far greater degree of personal control over the policy process and the actions of subordinates (Etheredge, 1978; Hermann, 1980; Preston, 1996; Winter, 1973, 1987). In terms of interpersonal relationships, studies have also found that leaders high in need for power exhibit more controlling, domineering behavior toward subordinates than do leaders low in need for power (Browning & Jacob, 1964; Fodor & Farrow, 1979; McClelland, 1975; Winter, 1973, 1987; Winter & Stewart, 1977).

In a study examining the characteristics and leadership styles of past U.S. presidents in cases of foreign policy decision-making, Preston (1996) found that leaders high in need for power preferred formal, hierarchical advisory system structures designed to enhance their own personal control over the policy process. These leaders tended to centralize decision-making within tight inner circles of trusted advisers and to insist on direct personal involvement and control over policy formulation and decisions. Their policy preferences tended to dominate both the policy deliberations within advisory groups and the nature of the final policy decisions. In contrast, leaders low in need for power preferred less hierarchical advisory system structures and required less personal control over the policy process. Their policy preferences tended not to dominate advisory group deliberations or final decisions. As a result, the input of subordinates played a greater role in policymaking. Unlike these leaders low in need for power, leaders high in need for power were found to have assertive interpersonal styles in which they would actively challenge or seek to influence the positions taken by their advisers; further, these leaders were also more likely to override or ignore the conflicting or opposing policy views of subordinates.

Cognitive complexity.   The psychological literature has long argued that the cognitive complexity of decision-makers is an individual characteristic that has an important impact on the nature of decision-making, style of leadership, assessment of risk, and character of general information-processing within decision groups (Driver, 1977; Hermann, 1984, 1987a, 1987b; Stewart, Hermann, & Hermann, 1989; Tetlock, 1985; Vertzberger, 1990; Wallace & Suedfeld, 1988; Zaleznik, 1977). For example, Vertzberger (1990) noted that as the cognitive complexity of individual decision-makers rises, they become more capable of dealing with complex decision environments and information that may demand new or subtle

distinctions (Bieri, 1966; Scott, 1963; Suedfeld & Rank, 1976; Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1977). When making decisions, cognitively complex individuals tend to have greater cognitive need for information, are more attentive to incoming information, prefer systematic over heuristic processing, and deal with any overload of information better than do their less complex counterparts (Nydegger, 1975; Schroder, Driver, & Streufert, 1967). In terms of interactions with advisers and the acceptance of critical feedback, several studies have shown that cognitively complex individuals are far more interested in receiving negative feedback from others, and are more likely to incorporate it into their own decision-making, than those who are less complex (Hermann, 1984; Nydegger, 1975; Ziller, Stone, Jackson, & Terbovic, 1977).

Cognitive complexity has also been linked by scholars to how attentive or sensitive leaders are to information from (or nuances within) their surrounding political or policy environments (Hermann, 1984, 1987a, 1987b; Hermann, Preston, & Young, 1998; Preston, 1997). Hermann (1984) noted that the more sensitive the leader is to information from the decision environment, the more receptive the leader is to information regarding the views of colleagues or constituents, the views of outside actors, and the value of alternative viewpoints and discrepant information. In contrast, leaders with a low sensitivity to contextual information will be less receptive to information from the outside environment, will operate from a previously established and strongly held set of beliefs, will selectively perceive and process incoming information to support or bolster this prior framework, and will be unreceptive or closed-minded toward alternative viewpoints and discrepant information. Low-complexity individuals also tend to show symptoms of dogmatism, view and judge issues in black-and-white terms, ignore information threatening to their existing closed belief systems, and have limited ability to adjust their beliefs to new information (Glad, 1983; Hermann, 1984; Rokeach, 1954; Vertzberger, 1990).

Preston (1996) found that highly complex leaders preferred more open advisory and information-processing systems than did leaders lower in complexity; this likely reflects different needs for both information and differentiation in the policy environment. High-complexity leaders were far more sensitive than others to the external policy context as well as to the existence of multiple policy dimensions or perspectives on issues. During policy deliberations, they also engaged in broad information search routines that emphasized the presentation of alternative viewpoints, discrepant information, and multiple policy options by their advisers. Such leaders focused substantial discussion within their advisory groups on future policy contingencies and the likely views or reactions of other policy actors in the environment. In addition, they were less likely to use simplistic analogies, "black-and-white" problem representations, or stereotypical images of their opponents during policy deliberations. However, complex leaders had less decisive and more deliberative decision-making styles in office; this finding is consistent with the

heavy emphasis placed by such leaders on extensive policy debate and information search within their advisory groups.

Less complex leaders, with their lower cognitive need for extensive information search and examination of multiple policy perspectives, tended to be far less sensitive to both information and the external policy environment. This reduced sensitivity to information and to context manifested itself in limited information search and in limited emphasis on the presentation by advisers of alternative viewpoints, discrepant information, and multiple policy options. Such leaders were more likely to rely on simplistic analogies, black-and-white problem representations, or stereotypical images of their opponents during their policy deliberations. Further, given their limited interest in extensive policy debate or broad information search, low-complexity leaders were also found to have, according to the archival evidence, very decisive and less deliberative decision-making styles.

It is important to emphasize, however, that complexity *does not* relate to general intelligence or to overall level of political sophistication. Complexity should not be seen as pejorative because there are both advantages and disadvantages associated with leaders being either high or low in complexity. For example, there are many policy contexts, such as policy crises characterized by limited time for decision-making, in which the decisiveness of low-complexity leaders would provide strong leadership and a sense of policy direction. Complexity refers simply to individuals' general, cognitive need for information and the degree to which they differentiate their surrounding policy environment. Among presidents who have measured high in complexity are Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, George Bush, and Bill Clinton. Those who have measured low in complexity include Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, and Ronald Reagan.

Prior policy experience/expertise. Finally, the prior policy experience or expertise of leaders has a significant impact on presidential style, the nature of advisory group interactions, and how forcefully leaders assert their own positions on policy issues (Barber, 1972; George, 1980; Hermann, 1986; House, 1990). Hermann (1986) noted that past experience provides leaders with a sense of what actions will be effective or ineffective in specific policy situations, as well as which cues from the environment should be attended to and which are irrelevant. Relative to leaders with little policy experience, leaders with prior experience are more likely to insist on personal involvement or control over policymaking. Further, experienced leaders with expertise in a policy area are far less likely to rely on the views of advisers or to use simplistic stereotypes or analogies to understand policy situations. Such leaders are more interested in gathering detailed information from the policy environment, and they use a more deliberate decision process than do their less experienced counterparts (Preston, 1996). Conversely, leaders lacking experience or expertise find themselves far more dependent on expert advisers and more likely to use simplistic stereotypes and analogies when making decisions (Khong, 1992; Levy, 1994; Preston, 1996). Knowing whether a leader is approaching foreign policy as a relative expert or novice provides insight into predicting

how damaging such reliance on analogy might be to a particular leader's information management and information-processing styles.

Overview of the Research Approach

The research underpinning our model of leader-bureaupolitical interaction has been heavily influenced by recent scholarship emphasizing the need to study the presidency using only systematically collected data and explicit methodologies to test theoretical propositions (Edwards, 1981, 1989; Edwards, Kessel, & Rockman, 1993; Edwards & Wayne, 1983; George, 1982; Kessel, 1975, 1984; King, 1993; King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994; King & Ragsdale, 1988; Rockman, 1985). This emphasis on methodological considerations is especially critical for studies focusing on the role played by personality (or other leader-based variables) in presidential style. In large part, this is attributable to the long-standing criticism of such research as being composed primarily of descriptive case studies, in which the leadership style variables identified by authors were left unoperationalized, untested, or unsystematically studied (Greenstein, 1969; Moe, 1993; Sinclair, 1993). Here, we briefly summarize how the characteristics of leaders were measured and upon what empirical evidence we base our assumptions regarding the impact of leader characteristics on their decision-making behavior.

Measuring leaders' characteristics. The individual characteristics of presidents have been measured using Margaret Hermann's (1983) Personality Assessment-at-a-Distance (PAD) approach. This method uses content analysis of spontaneous interview responses by political leaders across differing time periods, audiences, and substantive topic areas to construct detailed personality profiles of individuals according to eight different traits: need for power, need for affiliation, ethnocentrism, locus of control, complexity, self-confidence, distrust of others, and task/interpersonal emphasis.[7] This approach has previously been used to construct detailed profiles of more than 100 political leaders in more than 40 different countries.[8] These data for a sizable number of leaders not only allow us to set out the range of each characteristic, thereby demonstrating what constitutes high and low scores for leaders, but also provide the means to compare empirically and interpret the scores for American presidents across these traits. In gauging leaders' policy experience or expertise, an additional measure was developed to reflect factors such as the nature of each leader's previous policy positions, the degree to which leaders focused on specific

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[7] For definitions and coding categories for personality characteristics in PAD, see Hermann (1983).

[8] The PAD technique has a long track record of use in previous research on political leaders. For examples, see Hermann (1980, 1983, 1984, 1987a, 1987b, 1989) and Preston (1996, 1997, in press-a, in press-b). The data set of 94 world leaders compiled with PAD and a broader argument linking the characteristics to the foreign policy orientations for these leaders is presented in Hermann et al. (1998).

policy areas, and the extent to which they had other relevant policy experience (Preston, 1996). As a result, PAD provides us with a more empirically justifiable measure of Lyndon Johnson's individual characteristics than do other potential approaches. Further, it allows us to completely separate our measures of Johnson's personality and leadership style from the materials we have used in our archival analysis of his Vietnam decision-making.

   Linking leader characteristics to behavior in the archival record.   In Preston (1996), the individual characteristics of four modern American presidents—Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson—were measured systematically and compared using the PAD technique. Hypotheses (based on existing psychological and presidential research) regarding the behavioral implications of these characteristics for leadership style, decision-making, and advisory system preferences were tested against the archival record and presidents' actual foreign policy decision-making. Archival documents covering all aspects of presidential interaction with advisers and decision-making in foreign policy cases were collected from the presidential libraries, including minutes of NSC or Cabinet meetings, memoranda between advisers and the president, diaries and memoirs chronicling interactions, telephone conversations, reports, etc. When possible, interviews with advisers were also conducted to provide both clarification of the archival record and independent assessments of the leader's personal characteristics being explored by the research. George's (1982) controlled-comparison case study approach was used to ensure that archival documents were coded consistently and systematically, enabling comparison across cases and presidents. Because the focus was on personal characteristics and their impact on leadership behavior, what was required were presidents who varied from one another in theoretically significant ways in their personal characteristics, and for whom the relevant archival data were available. Further, to have sufficient cases for comparison, a conscious decision was made to break down foreign policy cases into discrete units, called occasions for interaction (OCIs). The OCIs were slices of time throughout each policy case, during which presidents and their advisers met (both formally and informally) and had the opportunity to formulate and debate policy as well as make decisions. Each OCI begins with the start of any formal meeting of the president's main advisory group (such as the NSC, Cabinet, etc.). It continues on throughout all subsequent formal and informal interactions between the leader and his or her advisers until the beginning of the next meeting of the main advisory group. As a result, the testing of the theoretical hypotheses involved assessing how well the individual characteristics of presidents (measured by PAD) predicted behavior (in terms of leadership style, decision-making, interpersonal interactions, and advisory preferences) in all the OCIs across policy cases and presidents.

   As this brief review of Preston (1996) illustrates, the assumptions regarding the linkages between the individual characteristics of leaders and subsequent bureaucratic behavior in the decision process (outlined below in Figures 3 and 4) have a solid basis in previous archival research. Although continued research across more

Leadership Style Variable		Impact Upon Leader Interactions with Advisers/Bureaucracy	Resulting Nature of Leader Involvement in Bureaucratic Process
Need for Control Over Policy/Decision Environments (Affected by need for power and prior policy experience/expertise)	High Need for Control (high power & policy expertise)	• Unwillingness to delegate policy/decision authority to subordinates or bureaucracy. • Distrust of bureaucracy, emphasis on subordinate loyalty, & reduced bureau autonomy. • Centralization of policymaking in inner circle. • Leader policy preferences dominate outputs.	Active Involvement
	Low Need for Control (low power & policy expertise)	• Willingness to delegate policy/decision authority to subordinates or bureaucracy. • Comfortable working with bureaucracy, reduced emphasis on subordinate loyalty, & enhanced bureau autonomy. • Less centralization of policymaking in inner circle. • Inner circle advisory group (majority rule) preferences dominate outputs.	Less/No Active Involvement

Need for Information/Sensitivity to Context (problem & policy environment)
 	
(Affected by leader cognitive complexity)
	High Need for Information/Sensitivity to Context
	(high complexity)
		• High sensitivity to policy context.
		• High sensitivity to multiple policy dimensions & perspectives.
		• Deliberate, less decisive decision style.
		• Open advisory system & broad information search.
		• Open information processing pattern with regard to data on outside actors/groups.
		• Substantial sensitivity toward information about nature/needs of other groups/actors.
			If Actively Involved
			• Emphasis on in-depth discussion & debate over policy issues with advisers taking into account multiple & competing perspectives.
			• Avoidance of final decision until leader has obtained all available information & views of advisers and outside actors.
			• Sensitivity and awareness of needs/views of bureaus and other outside actors.
			    If Less Actively Involved
			    • Emphasis placed on views of expert advisers or bureau heads—willingness to delegate policy formulation & decisions to them.

	Low Need for Information/Insensitivity to Context
	(low complexity)
		• Low sensitivity to policy & problem context.
		• Low sensitivity to multiple policy dimensions & perspectives.
		• Decisive, less deliberative decision style.
		• Limited leader openness to advice or information search.
		• Closed information processing pattern with regard to data on outside actors/groups.
		• Lack of sensitivity toward information about nature/needs of other groups/actors.
			If Actively Involved
			• Leader policy preferences tend to prevail and little emphasis is placed on in-depth discussion & debate over issues with advisers or the consideration of multiple perspectives.
			• Leader consults limited number of close advisers (few or no outside actors/bureaus) and makes final decisions based on own preferences.
			• Lack of sensitivity or awareness of needs/views of bureaus and other outside actors.
			    If Less Actively Involved
			    • Emphasis placed on views of expert advisers or bureau heads—substantial delegation of policy formulation & decisions to them.

Figure 3. Leader characteristics affecting involvement in bureaucratic process.

High Need for Information/
Sensitivity to Context

Administrative Leadership Style
(Leader actively involved in
policymaking with open advisory network)

Bureaucratic Compromise Formation,
  Deliberation, & Economy:
• Broad range of advisers participate in
  policy formulation & decision (not
  limited to inner circle).
• Emphasis on broad information-
  search & detailed staff work.
• Leader active in guiding policy process,
  but seeks consensus among advisers.
• Tolerance of conflict: Multiple policy
  options & views debated prior to policy
  decisions.

Group Consensus Leadership Style
(Leader minimally involved in policymaking
with open advisory network)

Bureaucratic Compromise Formation
  & Deliberation:
• Broad range of advisers participate in
  policy formulation & decision (not
  limited to inner circle).
• Emphasis on broad information-
  search & detailed staff work.
• Leader inactive in guiding policy
  process, seeks consensus among
  advisers as non-directive participant.
• Tolerance of conflict: Multiple policy
  options & views debated prior to
  policy decisions.

Bureaupolitical Waste:
• Lack of directive leadership leads to
  overanalysis of policy problems &
  decision-making inefficiency.

High Need
for Control

Low Need
for Control

Predominant Leadership Style
(Leader personally dominates
policymaking with closed
advisory network)

Bureaupolitical Oversimplification,
  Isolationism, & Haste:
• Lack of broad information/advice
  gathering & leadership/inner circle
  dominance results in narrow, limited
  analysis of policy.
• Leader/inner circle dominance leads to
  policymaking isolated from broader
  political environment.
• Emphasis on leader/inner circle
  preferences leads to quick policy
  consensus.

Bureaupolitical Distortion, Paralysis, &
  Waste:
• Over time, restrained competition policy-
  making results in bureaupoliticking
  within broader political system.

Laissez-faire Leadership Style
(Leader absent/minimally involved in
policymaking with closed
advisory network)

Bureaupolitical Distortion, Paralysis,
  & Waste:
• Lack of broad information/advice-
  gathering network or policy guidance
  from leader leads to superficial,
  distorted policy analysis.
• Lack of directive leadership &
  delegation of policy
  formulation/decision to lower-level
  subordinates encourages intense,
  paralyzing bureau-conflict.
• Lack of directive leadership leads to
  overanalysis of policy problems,
  indecisiveness, & decision-making
  inefficiency.

Low Need for Information/
Sensitivity to Context

Figure 4. Leaders and bureaupolitical variation: The normative dimension.

presidents and policy cases will be needed to refine the model's theoretical predictions, our approach provides scholars interested in the leadership-bureau-political nexus with a useful starting point for measuring and analyzing this important relationship.

Presidential Characteristics and Their Impact on Bureaupolitics: A Model

In the U.S. foreign policy decision context, presidents play a major role in structuring the advisory systems in which policy will be debated. They determine formal and informal access channels; they decide who will become advisers and what information will be valued. More specifically, leaders' need for control affects the degree to which they will become actively involved personally in the policy process, and the extent to which subordinates or bureaus will have policy authority delegated to them (over which they can then enter into bureau-conflict). As noted by Preston (1996, in press-a, in press-b), several individual characteristics are important for determining leaders' need for control over their policy or decision-making environments: their need for power and their prior degree of foreign policy experience or expertise.

On the other hand, the sensitivity of leaders to context (in the problem and policy environments) and their need for information affect how much policy detail they will want to be presented with by their advisory systems, and this helps to further characterize the nature of their involvement (or lack thereof) in the inter-departmental policymaking process. Complexity is the individual characteristic most important in determining leaders' sensitivity to context (Preston, 1996).

As shown in Figure 3, leaders' individual characteristics can cause them to vary greatly in terms of their need for control over the policy/decision environment and in their sensitivity to context (see Hermann, 1986; Hermann & Preston, 1994a, 1994b; Preston, 1996).

Linking Leaders to Bureaucratic Processes

The impact of these leader characteristics (need for control and sensitivity to context) on the nature of bureaucratic politics within particular administrations can be very significant. Indeed, as shown in Figure 4, the decisional pathologies associated with bureaucratic politics (Figure 2) can be linked theoretically with presidential leadership styles derived from leader characteristics.

For example, leaders with high need for control and high sensitivity to context are more likely to have an *administrative leadership style* in which they are actively involved in policymaking and use an open advisory network (characterized by broad information search and open access channels for advice that both supports and opposes the leader's policy views). As a result, more efficient bureaucratic processes of compromise formation, deliberation, and economy are prevalent within such leaders' advisory systems. The combination of active involvement and

openness to information/sensitivity to context serves to minimize the impact of decisional pathologies related to either bureaucratic consensus-seeking or bureaucratic confrontation. Indeed, leaders high in need for control and information may be most likely to avoid the pathological aspects of bureaupolitical conflict and best meet the George (1980) process criteria for quality decision-making.

Leaders who are highly sensitive to information and context, but low in need for control, tend to evidence the *group consensus leadership style* in which they are less involved in policymaking, but use open advisory networks. Although the openness to information/context places a premium on positive bureaucratic processes of compromise formation and deliberation, the lack of directive leadership tends to lead to the decisional pathology of bureaupolitical waste characteristic of bureaucratic confrontation. Despite this weakness, this style still avoids many of the pathologies associated with bureaucratic consensus-seeking and bureaucratic confrontation by meeting many of the George criteria.

On the other hand, leaders characterized by a high need for control and a low sensitivity to context tend to evidence a *predominant leadership style* in which the leader personally dominates policymaking and uses a closed advisory network (characterized by limited information search, open access channels for advice supporting the leader's policy preferences, and limited access channels for contradictory advice). As a result, such leaders' inner circles are often characterized by decisional pathologies associated with *both* bureaucratic consensus-seeking and bureaucratic confrontation. For example, the lack of an open advisory network combined with the leader's high need to control the process results in the bureaucratic consensus-seeking pathologies of bureaupolitical oversimplification, isolationism, and haste. These pathologies not only seriously compromise the policymaking process in the short run, but also worsen over time. Indeed, in cases of continued policymaking on the same issue or lengthy policy implementation, the pathologies of bureaucratic consensus-seeking give rise to even more serious ones associated with bureaucratic confrontation: bureaupolitical distortion, paralysis, and waste. These pathologies become particularly severe if the policy adopted earlier by the leader becomes controversial or difficult to implement.

Finally, leaders characterized by both low need for control and low sensitivity to context evidence a *laissez-faire leadership style* in which the leader is absent or minimally involved in policymaking and uses a closed advisory network. Such styles move directly to the more serious decisional pathologies found in bureaucratic confrontation (i.e., bureaupolitical distortion, paralysis, and waste). Given the absence of an active or informed leader, bureaucratic conflict in such contexts becomes heightened and more intense, because it now represents the primary vehicle available to policy actors for resolving policy disputes, making policy, and reaching authoritative decisions. Indeed, because the laissez-faire leader plays little or no role in policy formulation or decision, these tasks are left primarily to subordinates to resolve through bureaucratic conflict. As a result, within laissez-faire styles, bureaucratic conflict in the policy environment is more widespread and intense than if found in any other style.

Figures 3 and 4 suggest that what leaders are like influences both the occurrence and form (i.e., bureaucratic consensus-seeking vs. bureaucratic confrontation) of bureaucratic politics within presidential advisory systems. The exact nature and extent of this impact is, of course, variable and situation-specific. In some cases, the styles of leaders and their individual characteristics may encourage or actively instigate bureaucratic conflict; an example is Roosevelt's use of a competitive style in his policymaking, using overlapping areas of adviser jurisdiction and the encouragement of active advocacy among his staff (George, 1980; Johnson, 1974). In others, the characteristics of leaders may eliminate, or at least mitigate, the pathological qualities of bureaucratic conflict as they affect the policy process by introducing more collegial advisory systems that reduce the kinds of conflict found in the competitive model, while still gathering immense amounts of information from the environment. An example would be Eisenhower's use of his NSC or Kennedy's use of collegial, ad hoc groups for policymaking purposes (Greenstein, 1982; Preston, 1996). Yet even among leaders who don't intentionally nurture bureaucratic conflict as did Roosevelt, their individual characteristics may encourage the development of bureaucratic conflict, ranging from bureaucratic consensus-seeking to full-blown bureaucratic confrontation.

Leadership Style and Bureaucratic Politics: Lyndon Johnson and U.S. Policymaking on Vietnam

To illustrate more fully the value of exploring the leader-bureaupolitics nexus, we now present a case study—drawing on newly available archival materials—of the foreign policy decision-making of the Johnson administration on Vietnam from 1965 to 1968. On the basis of PAD measurements of Johnson's individual characteristics, we would predict that he would be characterized by the predominant leadership style, which would be expected to initially give rise to the pathologies of bureaucratic consensus-seeking (i.e., bureaupolitical oversimplification, isolationism, and haste) in his advisory system. However, given Johnson's leadership style and the subsequent nature of his advisory system dynamics, our model would also anticipate that should policymaking (and efforts at policy implementation) continue on the same issue over a prolonged period, the pathologies of bureaucratic consensus-seeking found within Johnson's initial policymaking process would eventually deteriorate into those of bureaucratic confrontation (i.e., bureaupolitical distortion, paralysis, and waste). The core claim of our case study is that these hypotheses were confirmed and that LBJ's lack of prior foreign policy experience and expertise, his low complexity, and his high need for control led to a dependence on expert advisers, limited information search, and a reliance on inner-circle confidants during his Vietnam decision-making.[9] Further, our case study strongly illustrates that, as a result of these

[9] As assessed by PAD, Lyndon Johnson was found to have a high need for power, an external locus of control, and low cognitive complexity. Johnson was also coded as being low in prior foreign policy experience/expertise relative to other U.S. presidents. For a profile of Johnson and a more detailed examination of his leadership style, see Preston (1996).

personal characteristics and his subsequent leadership style, Johnson's policy process was beset by a pathology of bureaucratic consensus-seeking during the July 1965 period of escalating U.S. involvement in the war, and later by a pathology of bureaucratic confrontation by the time of the November 1967–March 1968 policy debates over the possible de-escalation or withdrawal of U.S. forces from the conflict.

However, before applying our model to the Vietnam case, it is important to describe what we see as the value of taking a leader-bureaupolitical cut on Johnson's policymaking, especially given the immense amount of existing literature on the Vietnam decisions. What do we contribute by adding yet another interpretation?

First, although many authors have provided interpretations purporting to "explain" Johnson's Vietnam policymaking, Richard Immerman (1994, pp. 58–59) has rightly observed that there is a wide "diversity of opinion among students of Johnson and Vietnam" regarding explanations of the conflict and the decisions of both 1965 and 1968.[10] For example, among the many competing explanations for the 1965 decision to escalate American involvement in Vietnam have been arguments that the decision was essentially a manifestation of post-1945 containment policy (e.g., Herring, 1979), that it was motivated by domestic factors such as Johnson's need to appear strong internationally so that Congress would continue to support his Great Society agenda (e.g., Berman, 1982; Kearns, 1976), or that cognitive failings of various kinds among the policymakers were to blame (e.g., Jervis, 1976; Khong, 1992). Yet despite these well-argued explanations, there is no consensus among Vietnam scholars regarding the complete correctness of any single interpretation. Instead, it is generally accepted that a combination of these factors affected Johnson's decisions. Thus, one value of our approach is that it provides a useful synthesis of many of these competing interpretations of Johnson's decisions. By adopting the leader-bureaupolitical approach on Vietnam policymaking, one combines insights from the leadership and personality literatures (encompassing the cognitive failure interpretations) with a sensitivity to the bureaupolitical context in which the policymakers operated (encompassing interpretations focusing more on domestic political or institutional influences on policy).

At the same time, the leader-bureaupolitics focus highlights aspects of the policy process that are often underemphasized or ignored by traditional explanations of the conflict. For example, how did the *measurable* personal characteristics of Johnson help to create the advisory system structures and processes that shaped the nature of information processing, advising, and decision-making on Vietnam

[10] Examples of literature exploring the 1965 decision from various alternative perspectives include Kearns (1976), Herring (1979), Thompson (1980), Berman (1982), Kahin (1986), Gibbons (1988), Vandemark (1990), Burke and Greenstein (1991), and Khong (1992). Similarly, the 1968 decisions have sparked a number of works seeking to explain Johnson's bombing halts from a variety of competing viewpoints, including Oberdorfer (1971), Braestrup (1977), Herring (1979), Cable (1991), Schandler (1983), Berman (1989), Wirtz (1991), and Preston (1996).

between 1965 and 1968? Although many explanations focus on group malfunctions (such as misperception, faulty information processing, or inappropriate use of analogies) within Johnson's inner circle (e.g., Jervis, 1976; Kearns, 1976; Khong, 1992), none have actually empirically linked Johnson's specific individual characteristics to the subsequent patterns of his decision-making or the interaction within his advisory group.

In addition, as we have previously argued, bureaupolitical group malfunctions can have potentially serious impacts on the policy process and should not be ignored by analysts. Unfortunately, many of the traditional interpretations of Vietnam policymaking ignore bureaupolitics as a relevant variable, even though the essential interactions throughout the 1965–1968 policy process involved Johnson, his advisory system, and numerous bureaucratic actors (such as the Pentagon). By ignoring the potential relevance of bureaupolitics, existing scholarship loses a potentially powerful lens for understanding the interactions within (and evolution of) the Vietnam policy process over time. For example, as our case study illustrates, the bureaupolitical dynamics created within Johnson's advisory system on Vietnam resulted initially in a pathology of bureaucratic consensus-seeking in 1965, but by 1967–1968 had solidified into one of bureaucratic confrontation. As will be discussed below, the bureaupolitical process (and the pathologies involved) helps to explain why Johnson and his advisory group did not reconsider existing policy on Vietnam and change course in 1967 (or immediately after Tet in January 1968), despite the presence of damning information in the system (such as the August 1967 CIA report on bombing ineffectiveness or Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's November 1967 memo) calling into question existing policy.[11] As our model illustrates, these changes over time in the bureaupolitical interaction patterns among the Vietnam policymakers, and the subsequent pathologies invoked within the policy process, were predictable given Johnson's individual characteristics and the nature of the Vietnam policy context.

Thus, relative to traditional interpretations focusing on either 1965 or 1968, our approach provides a rival (or at least deeper) explanation regarding Johnson's advisory system dynamics over time, especially by 1967–1968. Indeed, the wealth of recently declassified archival materials and memoirs by participants "demonstrate that the president's inability to get out of Vietnam reflected the dynamics of his policy and the advisory system that produced it throughout his tenure" (Immerman, 1994, p. 59). By taking a leader-bureaupolitical approach, we believe that we greatly enhance our chances of understanding across time the critical advisory

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[11] Richard Helms to Lyndon Johnson, 29 August 1967, "Effects of the Intensified Air War Against North Vietnam," "Vietnam 3H(2) 1967, Appraisal of Bombing in NVN-CIA/DIA" folder, National Security Files, Country File–Vietnam, Boxes 83–84, Johnson Library; Robert S. McNamara to Lyndon Johnson, 1 November 1967, "A Fifteen Month Program for Military Operations in Southeast Asia," "Vietnam [19 March 1970 Memo to the President "Decision to Halt the Bombing" with copies of documents] 1967, 1968" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 127, Johnson Library.

system and policy process dynamics pointed to by Immerman that served to shape decision-making on Vietnam.

The 1965 Case

The political situation facing Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam at the time of the July 1965 decision was a complicated one. The president felt compelled to stay the course in Indochina not only because of the weight of existing American foreign policy doctrine, but also because of the ghost of his slain predecessor John F. Kennedy, whose policies had increased the pace of U.S. involvement in the conflict. Further complicating Johnson's perceptions of the political situation in Vietnam were his own lack of foreign policy expertise and experience, and a limited worldview that led him to see the conflict in simple, black-and-white terms, reinforced by an adherence to the Munich 1938 analogy (see Kearns, 1976; Khong, 1992). Once this powerful analogy was activated, it tended to dominate the framing of the situation, not only by Johnson but by his inner circle of advisers who shared his generation's experiences of the 1930s (see Khong, 1992; McNamara, 1995).

In addition, Johnson had also inherited Kennedy's foreign policy team of Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Defense Secretary McNamara, and National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy, all of whom strongly emphasized to the president from 1963 onward the vital nature of Vietnam to U.S. national security interests and the need to do whatever was necessary to prevent its fall to the communists (see Ball, 1982; Berman, 1982; Clifford, 1991; McNamara, 1995). Like Truman before him, Johnson was very dependent on his expert advisers for policy guidance because of his own lack of foreign policy experience/expertise:

> (Johnson) had a lot of confidence in his foreign policy advisers. I think that part of this was that he thought that John Kennedy was a foreign policy expert. And he kept President Kennedy's foreign policy team. He thought that they were in total command of the situation and he found it very, very difficult to figure that they may have been wrong.[12]

Johnson consistently moved toward a more active U.S. military role in Vietnam as the situation continued to deteriorate on the ground for Saigon from 1963 to 1965. Lengthy policy debates occurred within the administration over whether to escalate or de-escalate the bombing—debates that showcased key inner-circle advisers [Bundy, McNamara, Rusk, and General Earl Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)] who favored escalation against lower-ranking officials (Undersecretary of State George Ball, Ambassador Llewelyn Thomson, Vice President Hubert Humphrey) who opposed it.[13] Despite memos from Ball criticizing

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[12] Interview with Paul Warnke (conducted by the first author, 6 July 1995).

[13] For detailed reviews of these early Vietnam policy debates, see Berman (1982), Ball (1982), Rusk (1990), Clifford (1991), and McNamara (1995).

any expansion of U.S. involvement, Johnson decided in favor of those supporting continued bombing, and by the end of April 1965, he had agreed with the recommendations of his key advisers meeting in Honolulu to send an additional 48,500 troops to Vietnam—raising the total of U.S. forces in the South to 82,000.[14]

Even as Johnson and his advisers were agreeing to substantial increases in American forces, reports from U.S. Ambassador Maxwell Taylor in Saigon and General William Westmoreland in South Vietnam began to paint a bleak picture of the future unless the size of the planned deployment was significantly expanded. In early June 1965, Westmoreland (supported by the JCS) communicated to the White House his view that unless an additional 44 battalions of ground troops (more than 125,000 men) were sent to Southeast Asia immediately, South Vietnam would fall. After considerable debate, Johnson agreed with his civilian advisers (McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk) who had argued against the military's position and in favor of a deployment capped at 95,000 troops (Berman, 1982).

However, after a contentious NSC meeting on 23 June, in which his advisers strongly disagreed over the next course of action in Vietnam, Johnson asked both Ball and McNamara to develop their separate proposals in detail over the next week (McNamara, 1995). Ball, who had consistently been working with limited success through numerous memos since 1964 to convince Johnson and his advisers to avoid further involvement in the war, immediately drafted a pair of memos—one seeking to limit any deployment, and one actually advocating the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam. On 23 June, Ball sent Johnson a paper forcefully arguing that regardless of how many hundreds of thousands of troops the United States deployed, there was no assurance that these would prove effective in either winning the war or forcing the Viet Cong to the negotiating table. Ball noted that "our involvement will be so great that we cannot—without national humiliation—stop short of achieving our complete objectives. Of the two possibilities, I think humiliation would be more likely than the achievement of our objectives—even after we had paid terrible costs."[15] Ball followed up this paper with another on 29 June, entitled "Cutting Our Losses in South Vietnam," which more emphatically argued against large-scale U.S. deployments of ground forces or the likelihood that such deployments would significantly alter the deteriorating situation. Ball made the case for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam given the unacceptable long-term costs, win or lose, of any large-scale deployments and escalation of the conflict.[16]

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[14] Robert S. McNamara to Lyndon Johnson, 21 April 1965, "Memorandum for the President," "Vietnam 2EE 1965-78, McNamara Recommendations [65-66]" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Boxes 74–75, Johnson Library.

[15] George W. Ball to Lyndon Johnson, 23 June 1965, "A Compromise Solution for South Vietnam," "Vietnam Memos (A) 7/65, Vol. 37" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 20, Johnson Library.

[16] George W. Ball to McGeorge Bundy, 29 June 1965, "Cutting Our Losses in South Vietnam," "Vietnam Memos (C), 6/16-30/65, Vol. 35" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 19, Johnson Library.

While Ball continued to argue against escalation, McNamara put forward the argument (in a 26 June memorandum, "Program of Expanded Military and Political Moves with Respect to Vietnam") that, in order to prove to the Viet Cong that they could not win the war, expanded military action against the North was required, along with the deployment of 175,000 troops in 1965 (and an undetermined additional number in 1966).[17] Reacting to the Ball and McNamara papers, Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy produced yet a third paper advocating a "middle way" course to Johnson that avoided the large deployments and reserve call-ups of McNamara's plan and the withdrawal of Ball's plan. Instead, Bundy argued for a deployment of 75,000 to 85,000 troops and holding off further deployment decisions until the effects of this initial step could be ascertained over the summer, while at the same time continuing the existing bombing campaign.[18]

Interestingly, NSC Adviser McGeorge Bundy, in a 1 July memo to Johnson that summarized the positions of all the paper writers, advocated a scaled-down version of McNamara's proposal, noting: "My hunch is that you will want to listen hard to George Ball and then reject his proposal. Discussion could then move to the narrower choice between my brother's course and McNamara's. The decision between them should be made in about ten days . . ." (Berman, 1982, pp. 93–94). Also throwing his weight behind a large-scale troop deployment to Vietnam that day was Secretary of State Rusk, who seldom committed his thoughts to paper or even verbally during meetings (see Ball, 1982; Clifford, 1991; Schlesinger, 1965; Sorensen, 1965). In a memo to Johnson, Rusk argued forcefully:

> The integrity of the U.S. commitment is the principal pillar of peace throughout the world. If that commitment becomes unreliable, the communist world would draw conclusions that would lead to our ruin and almost certainly to a catastrophic war. So long as the South Vietnamese are prepared to fight for themselves, we cannot abandon them without disaster to peace and to our interests throughout the world.[19]

By 20 July, McNamara had completed another memo for Johnson, entitled "Recommendations of Additional Deployments to Vietnam," which argued that a favorable outcome in the conflict could be obtained through the additional deployment of 175,000 ground troops and the call-up of about 235,000 men in the Reserve and National Guard. Further, McNamara noted that "it should be understood that the deployment of more men (perhaps 100,000) may be necessary in early 1966, and that the deployment of additional forces thereafter is possible, but will depend

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[17] Robert S. McNamara to Lyndon Johnson, 26 June 1965, "Program of Expanded Military and Political Moves With Respect to Vietnam," "Vietnam Memos (C) 7/65, Vol. 37" folder, National Security File (CF-VN), Box 20, Johnson Library. Also, McNamara (1995), p. 193.

[18] William P. Bundy to McGeorge Bundy, 30 June 1965, "Holding On in South Vietnam," "Vietnam Memos (C), 6/16-30/65, Vol. 35" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 19, Johnson Library.

[19] Dean Rusk to Lyndon Johnson, 1 July 1965, "Vietnam," "Vietnam Memos (C) 7/65, Vol. 37" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 20, Johnson Library.

on developments."[20] It was this proposal by McNamara that served as the main topic of conversation during the 21 July NSC meeting.

At that meeting, Johnson emphasized that he wanted a thorough discussion of all of the options by his advisers "so that every man at this table understands fully the total picture."[21] Although Johnson critics such as Berman (1982) and Kearns (1976) have emphasized the lack of focus on the Ball withdrawal option during this meeting as indicative of a purely perfunctory meeting on the president's part, the reality is that Johnson had not yet made up his mind regarding all the critical policy questions. Indeed, although (for reasons previously noted) Ball's argument was unlikely to convince Johnson to make such a radical break from the previous pattern of American foreign policy, Johnson had yet to decide on the exact nature of the deployment, whether reserves would be called up, and how U.S. forces would be used once in Vietnam.

During this meeting, Johnson listened to the McNamara proposal as well as Ball's concerns regarding the ultimate effectiveness of such military escalation on the course of the conflict. Ball engaged in a more elaborate critique of the assumptions underlying the calls for escalation. Throughout a meeting marked by a great deal of give-and-take between Ball on the one side and the president and his advisers on the other, the final debate over escalation occurred. It was soon clear, however, that Ball's argument had failed to sway his opponents. As Bundy observed regarding Ball's argument toward the conclusion of the meeting: "The difficulty in adopting it now would be it is a radical switch without evidence that it should be done. It goes in the face of all we have said and done."[22]

The next day, Johnson returned to the NSC for one final meeting in which strategies for approaching Congress, selling the policy to the public, and the calling up of Reserves were discussed.[23] At this point, Johnson felt that calling up the Reserves would not stand out politically as a change of policy and appeared to be in favor of it.[24] Further, Johnson emphasized that while military actions were being implemented, he expected diplomatic efforts to be made simultaneously.[25] Indeed, during Johnson's interactions with his advisers, there was clearly a great deal of concern regarding how American actions would be perceived both at home and abroad. Later, at Camp David on 25 July, Johnson met with a smaller group of

[20] Robert S. McNamara to Lyndon Johnson, 20 July 1965, "Recommendations of Additional Deployments to Vietnam," "Vietnam 2EE 1965-67, McNamara Recommendations [65-66]" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Boxes 74–75, Johnson Library.

[21] Meeting on Vietnam in Cabinet Room, 10:40 a.m., 21 July 1965, "July 21-27, 1965 Meetings on Vietnam" folder, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, Meetings Notes File, Box 1, Johnson Library.

[22] Meeting on Vietnam in Cabinet Room, 12 p.m., 21 July 1965, "July 21-27, 1965 Meetings on Vietnam" folder, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, Meetings Notes File, Box 1, Johnson Library.

[23] Meeting with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 12 p.m., 22 July 1965, "July 21-27, 1965 Meetings on Vietnam" folder, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, Meetings Notes File, Box 1, Johnson Library.

[24] Meeting on Vietnam in Cabinet Room, 3 p.m., 22 July 1965, "July 21-27, 1965 Meetings on Vietnam" folder, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, Meetings Notes File, Box 1, Johnson Library.

[25] Ibid.

advisers on Vietnam policy, including Clark Clifford. Interestingly, Clifford picked up where Ball had left off, arguing that he did not believe that the United States could win in South Vietnam and that he couldn't see anything "but catastrophe for my country."[26] Although Clifford's remarks did not change Johnson's mind, it did elicit a note from Ball stating, "I'm glad to have such an eloquent and persuasive comrade bleeding on the same barricade."[27]

On 27 July 1965, Johnson met with his NSC to make the final decision regarding the nature of the U.S. troop deployment and the question of Reserve call-ups. Johnson, having heard the debate over increasing involvement and the likely impact on domestic politics and public opinion, now moved as a *predominant leader*. Having within his hands the ability to authoritatively commit the United States to a course of action in Vietnam, Johnson delayed no longer. After Rusk and McNamara had summarized the political and military situation in South Vietnam, and the Defense Secretary had renewed his call for bringing up the Reserves, Johnson decisively stepped in to frame the situation for his advisers. LBJ proceeded to lay out the policy choices (as he saw them) to his advisers, dismissing each in turn as unworkable or unwise, until finally arriving at his own preferred option.[28] Although advisers ranging from Ball to McNamara had strongly advocated several of the dismissed positions in earlier meetings, no further open discussion or debate was allowed by Johnson. Supported by inner-circle advocates of an expanded U.S. role in Vietnam (i.e., Rusk, Bundy, McNamara, and Wheeler), LBJ's final decision was to send 44 battalions to Vietnam to reinforce Westmoreland. In doing so, Johnson did not envision the Ball scenario of a long, drawn-out war. Instead, he envisioned an initial U.S. deployment to stabilize the deteriorating situation in the South and further deployments to place pressure on the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese to come to the negotiating table.

The 1965 Vietnam case would be described in Figure 1 as a case of bureaucratic consensus-seeking. The number of actors involved in the decision process was limited, their interests were aligned, the debate took place in a closed arena characterized by collegial interactions among participants, compromise formation was quick, and implementation slippage was low. As such, Figure 2 would predict that in such cases, decisional pathologies of bureaupolitical oversimplification, bureaupolitical isolationism, and bureaupolitical haste should be present. Finally, as Figures 3 and 4 would have predicted, given Johnson's high need for control (resulting in centralization of policy debate within the White House inner circle) and his low need for information/sensitivity to context (resulting in limited search

[26] Meeting at the Camp David–Aspen Lodge, 5 p.m., 25 July 1965, "July 21-27, 1965 Meetings on Vietnam" folder, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, Meeting Notes File, Box 1, Johnson Library.

[27] George Ball to Clark Clifford, 26 July 1965, "Mr. Clifford's Penciled Notes, Vietnam" file, Papers of Clark Clifford, Vietnam Files, Box 1, Johnson Library.

[28] "Summary Notes of 553rd NSC Meeting, 27 July 1965, 5:40 p.m.–6:20 p.m.," "NSC Meeting, Vol. 3, Tab 35, 7/27/65, Deployment of Additional U.S. Troops in Vietnam" folder, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, National Security File, NSC Meetings File, Box 1, Johnson Library.

outside of the inner circle for information/advice critical of the preferred policy), the Vietnam policy debate was captured by a dominant coalition of LBJ's closest advisers who supported escalation. Further adding to this problem was Johnson's lack of prior foreign policy experience/expertise, which greatly increased his dependence on his "expert" advisers. Thus, just as Figure 4 would predict, Johnson's policy process was characterized by the decisional pathologies associated with bureaucratic consensus-seeking.

   Bureaupolitical oversimplification. In the 1965 case, a dominant coalition of inner-circle advisers (McNamara, Bundy, Rusk, and Wheeler) emerged early on in the decision process, successfully framing the Vietnam problem for Johnson and narrowing the range of information and arguments entering into policy discussions. Although Ball did send numerous policy memos to the president from November 1964 until the final decision to escalate U.S. involvement was taken in July 1965, the impact on Johnson was severely limited by the continuing rebuttal of Ball's arguments by his closest inner-circle advisers. Although Ball and later Clifford were given their "day in court," no other significant critics of the policy approach favored by the inner circle received a hearing. Given that Johnson's own views mirrored those of his inner circle, and that his high need for control over the policy process had resulted in a centralized advisory structure that restricted the Vietnam debate to his inner circle, Ball's and Clifford's lone arguments were overwhelmed by the tide of support arising from McNamara, Bundy, and Rusk for a policy of escalation. Within Johnson's inner circle, the voices of policy supporters dominated the discussions, framed the problem, and limited the ability of dissonant voices to be heard. Thus, in terms of the George (1980) process criterion of reality testing, the Johnson process clearly resembled one of bureaupolitical oversimplification.

   Bureaupolitical isolationism. While Johnson's inner circle advisers were rebutting Ball's criticisms of escalating U.S. involvement in Vietnam, the dominant coalition (which now included the president) pushed through their favored policy without adequate consideration of the support it enjoyed (or would enjoy in the long term) in the wider political community. Throughout the NSC debates, the continued support of the Congress and the American public was taken for granted, especially given the overly optimistic military assessments that were being used. Indeed, during the 21 July NSC meeting, the issue was purely one of developing strategies for approaching Congress and selling the policy to the public. Within the president's inner circle, support for expanding U.S. involvement was so strong that it was assumed that domestic political support would follow naturally from the correctness of the policy and the likelihood of military pressure leading to nego- tiations. Not receiving an adequate hearing within the isolationism of the inner circle were Ball's and Clifford's concerns about both the likelihood of maintaining long-term domestic political support for the war and the chances of military success in Indochina. Although other critics of U.S. policy existed within the administration, such as Vice President Humphrey, these actors were not brought into the debate.

In terms of the process criterion of acceptability, the Johnson process resembled one of bureaupolitical isolationism.

Bureaupolitical haste.   Because of the rapidly deteriorating situation in South Vietnam, and the perceived need for an immediate American response by Johnson and his advisers, the debates of June and July 1965 consisted of relatively high-speed, quick-consensus decisions to escalate. During this period, there was inadequate discussion within the decision group of the negative aspects of the decision to escalate the war. In fact, despite Ball's repeated efforts to raise the possibility of events not going as planned, Johnson's inner circle avoided detailed discussions of worst-case scenarios or the impact of a long, drawn-out conflict on domestic political support for the war. As a result, this policy decision came back to haunt Johnson and his advisers from 1965 onward, as the policy became more controversial and implementation problems (e.g., the inability to win the war on the ground or force the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese to the negotiation table through the bombing campaigns of Operation Rolling Thunder) forced the problem back onto the policy agenda in late 1967 and early 1968. In terms of the process criterion of efficiency, the Johnson process resembled one of bureaupolitical haste.

The 1968 Case

Although Johnson in late 1967 had offered to halt the bombing if the North Vietnamese would engage in productive negotiations and not take military advantage of a pause, tremendous pressure was being placed on the administration from a variety of sources to escalate, not de-escalate, the conflict at that time. For example, the JCS stated that a bombing halt would be a "disaster" and argued for the reverse—a stepped-up bombing campaign and the removal of the restrictions that had been placed by the administration on attacking civilian targets such as Hanoi and Haiphong (McNamara, 1995). Indeed, the Stennis Committee in the Senate harshly criticized both McNamara and the administration's bombing policy for months of hearings and were unanimous in their call for expanding the campaign. Thus, the political context facing Johnson in late 1967 left the president with few palatable alternatives:

> [Once it was done. And once he had put the troops in. The option of saying, "well, this really is not a good idea, perhaps we ought to get out" wasn't there!] We were there! It was too late, we had grunts on the ground, hundreds of thousands of them getting shot at and thousands of them being wounded and killed—and you couldn't say, at that point, in '66, '67, "gee whiz, we tried to do our best here, but I guess we didn't do the right thing, I guess we made a mistake, I guess we screwed up on this"—it just wasn't possible! So he had his foot down on the pedal.[29]

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[29] Interview with Harry C. McPherson (conducted by the first author, 7 July 1995).

Finally, in a 1 November 1967 memo that amounted to a virtual resignation, McNamara broke with the president on Vietnam policy, stating that a continuation of the present policy (i.e., bombing and heavy commitment of ground forces) would not only be dangerous and costly in lives, but also unsatisfactory to the American people.[30] Emphasizing that there was "no reason to believe" that either increased ground forces or bombing would result in the defeat of North Vietnam in the foreseeable future, McNamara pointed out not only that the existing bombing campaign was ineffective at reducing the North's ability to fight, but that the U.S. public did not appear to have the will to persist in a long struggle.[31] As a result, McNamara argued that a bombing halt was a "logical alternative to our present course in Vietnam," a move that would not only gain valuable domestic and international political support but would place great pressure on the North to come to the negotiating table.[32]

        In response, Johnson immediately sent the memo out to several of his closest advisers for comment, without revealing the author's identity, and received a nearly universal negative reaction. Among the heavy critics of McNamara's position, NSC Adviser Walt Rostow argued that a halt would be seen as a "mark of weakness" by the North at a time when the United States was, in fact, winning the war.[33] Arguing that 67% of the American public wanted continued bombing of the North, Rostow warned that to pursue a halt would allow the Republicans to "move in and crystallize a majority around a stronger policy."[34] Similarly, Maxwell Taylor, the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam, argued that a halt would be taken as a sign of weakness and "probably degenerate into an eventual pullout" from Vietnam.[35] Further, Taylor warned that a halt not only would discourage U.S. allies abroad, but also would provoke a large, previously silent, U.S. "public majority" who supported the bombing to criticize the administration at a level that would surpass the present level of criticism by bombing opponents.[36]

        Indeed, this belief that the war was being won and that the public would stand behind existing policy was further emphasized by LBJ confidant Abe Fortas, who wrote to Johnson that "we *should not* assume that the American public are unwilling

[30] Robert S. McNamara to President Lyndon Johnson, 1 November 1967, "A Fifteen Month Program for Military Operations in Southeast Asia," "Vietnam [19 March 1970 Memo to the President "Decision to Halt the Bombing" with copies of documents] 1967, 1968" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 127, Johnson Library.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Walt Rostow to Lyndon Johnson, 2 November 1967, "Vietnam [19 March 1970 Memo to the President "Decision to Halt the Bombing" with copies of documents] 1967, 1968" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 127, Johnson Library.

[34] Ibid.

[35] General Maxwell Taylor to Lyndon Johnson, 3 November 1967, "Vietnam [19 March 1970 Memo to the President "Decision to Halt the Bombing" with copies of documents] 1967, 1968" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 127, Johnson Library.

[36] Ibid.

to sustain an indefinitely prolonged war."[37] Instead, Fortas argued that there was a need to increase, not decrease, the pressure on the North Vietnamese, noting that he could "think of nothing *worse*" than pursuing McNamara's proposal. Johnson's other close advisers—Clark Clifford, Dean Rusk, Ellsworth Bunker, General William Westmoreland, and McGeorge Bundy—all weighed in as strongly opposed to McNamara's proposal for much the same reasons.[38] The manner in which McNamara's memo was dealt with by Johnson was very typical of his pattern of response to dissenting views within his advisory group. Johnson avoided opening up the Secretary of Defense's argument to broader debate outside of his inner circle, particularly by the Wise Men group (Isaacson & Thomas, 1986).[39] All of the inner-circle advisers chosen by the president to react to McNamara's memo had a long record of support for existing policy in Vietnam, including the bombing campaigns. Given that the new proposal represented a drastic change in American policy, Johnson could not have been altogether surprised at his advisers' negative reaction to it.

In addition, although the Wise Men had been reconvened at the White House on 2 November to provide the president with a new review of Vietnam policy, they were not provided with a copy of McNamara's memo (McNamara, 1995).[40] Further, Johnson avoided providing the Wise Men with any of the reports on Vietnam that he had received over the previous months that raised awkward questions about the effectiveness of the bombing campaign or the likelihood of military victory. For example, the group was not provided with the most recent CIA analysis of the effectiveness of the air campaign sent to the president by CIA Director Richard Helms, which pointed to the general ineffectiveness of the bombing in weakening the resolve of the North to fight or its ability to continue supplying its forces in the South. As the study noted, despite increased bombing, "essential military and economic traffic continues to move" and "Hanoi continues to meet its own needs and to support its aggression in South Vietnam."[41] Neither were they supplied with a report sent to Johnson by Rear Admiral Gene La Rocque,

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[37] Abe Fortas to Lyndon Johnson, 5 November 1967, "Vietnam [19 March 1970 Memo to the President "Decision to Halt the Bombing" with copies of documents] 1967, 1968" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 127, Johnson Library.

[38] Clark Clifford to Lyndon Johnson, 7 November 1967, "Vietnam [19 March 1970 Memo to the President "Decision to Halt the Bombing" with copies of documents] 1967, 1968" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 127, Johnson Library; Dean Rusk to Lyndon Johnson, 20 November 1967, Ibid.; Walt Rostow to Lyndon Johnson, 20 and 21 November 1967, Ibid.

[39] The Wise Men were a select group of former high-level U.S. government officials experienced in foreign affairs convened by Johnson in 1964, 1967, and 1968 to advise the administration on Vietnam policy.

[40] The November 1967 meeting of the Wise Men consisted of Dean Acheson, George Ball, Omar Bradley, McGeorge Bundy, Clark Clifford, Arthur Dean, Douglas Dillon, Abe Fortas, Cabot Lodge, Robert Murphy, and Maxwell Taylor.

[41] Richard Helms to Lyndon Johnson, 29 August 1967, "Effects of the Intensified Air War Against North Vietnam," "Vietnam 3H(2) 1967, Appraisal of Bombing in NVN–CIA/DIA" folder, National Security Files, Country File–Vietnam, Boxes 83–84, Johnson Library.

which emphasized that a military victory in Vietnam was highly unlikely. Several of the Wise Men who had participated in the 1965 meeting were, as McNamara recalls, "uninvited because they were known to be against Johnson's Vietnam policy" (McNamara, 1995). Explaining his rationale for rejecting McNamara's argument in a memo for the file, Johnson noted that:

> . . . under present circumstances, a unilateral and unrequited bombing stand-down would be read in both Hanoi and the United States as a sign of weakening will. It would encourage the extreme doves; increase the pressure for withdrawal from those who argue "bomb or get out"; decrease support from our most steady friends; and pick up support from only a small group of moderate doves. I would not, of course, rule out playing our bombing card under circumstances where there is reason for confidence that it would move us towards peace.[42]

The events of early 1968 only further complicated the political situation for the Johnson administration on the Vietnam issue. Not only was public opposition to the war mounting, but the president's public approval rating for his handling of the war had dropped to only 28% (Califano, 1991). The shock waves created by the Tet Offensive on 31 January, in which about 80,000 North Vietnamese regulars and guerrillas attacked simultaneously more than 100 cities throughout South Vietnam, and the continued heavy fighting throughout February, forced the Johnson administration to review its policy approach. JCS Chairman Wheeler sent to the president a report supporting General Westmoreland's request that an additional 205,000 troops be sent immediately to Vietnam in order to regain the strategic initiative (and thereby asking LBJ to exceed his publicly stated maximum cap of 525,000).[43] Sensing the political ground slipping beneath their feet, Johnson and his advisers had reached a crossroads. A new debate over the direction of American policy in Vietnam, and over a bombing halt, was about to begin.

Westmoreland's request for such a large number of additional troops, and the political ramifications it entailed, placed Johnson in the precarious situation of either drastically escalating American involvement in the conflict or refusing the military the troops it said it needed to successfully conduct the war. Both Clifford and Rostow advised the president against making any immediate decision on the Westmoreland request until after a more in-depth policy review could be carried out (Clifford, 1991).[44] Seeking further support, Johnson summoned Dean Acheson,

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[42] "Memorandum of President for the File, December 18, 1967, 1:40 p.m.," "Vietnam [19 March 1970 Memo to the President "Decision to Halt the Bombing" with copies of documents] 1967, 1968" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Box 127, Johnson Library.

[43] "Memorandum for the President from General Earle G. Wheeler, February 27, 1968," "Military Situation and Requirements in South Vietnam," "Memos on Vietnam: February–August 1968" folder, Papers of Clark Clifford, Vietnam Files, Box 2, Johnson Library.

[44] Walt Rostow to Lyndon Johnson, Tuesday, 27 February 1968, 6:45 p.m., "Vietnam 3E(2) 1/68-8/68, Future Military Operations in VN" folder, National Security Files (CF-VN), Boxes 81–82, Johnson Library.

who had always been a strong hawk on the war, to the White House on 27 February to obtain his view of the military's request.

Since his participation in the November Wise Men meetings, Acheson had begun to sense that the briefings he was being provided on Vietnam were being slanted in such a way as to convince the president's outside advisers of the correctness of existing policy (Isaacson & Thomas, 1986). Acheson emphasized to Johnson that his opinion would be of little value because it was based on the misinformation he had been given in the Pentagon's canned briefs before Tet. When Johnson persisted, Acheson responded: "With all due respect, Mr. President, the Joint Chiefs of Staff don't know what they're talking about!" After Johnson replied that he found this statement "shocking," Acheson noted, "Then maybe you should be shocked" (Brinkley, 1992, pp. 256–257). After repeatedly refusing to provide the president with any assessment of post-Tet policy unless he was given complete access to all data on Vietnam and allowed to carry out his own, unhampered analysis, Johnson finally relented and gave Acheson his approval to carry out such a study (Brinkley, 1992). In allowing Acheson's study, LBJ did not anticipate any recommendations for a drastic shift in Vietnam policy—especially in view of Acheson's prior hawkish stances on the war—but only the provision of additional ideas for successfully advancing stated U.S. policy goals in Vietnam.

However, on 14 March, Acheson returned to the White House with his review of Vietnam policy. Noting that Westmoreland's plan would take at least 5 years to work, require unlimited resources, and place a heavy drain on finances, Acheson bluntly stated, "Mr. President, you are being led down the garden path" (by the JCS) (Brinkley, 1992; Isaacson & Thomas, 1986). Commenting that the American public would not be prepared to accept this kind of burden in Vietnam, Acheson argued that the U.S. objective in the war should now be to enable the South Vietnamese government to survive long enough to be self-supporting, but to otherwise disengage from the conflict (Brinkley, 1992). In addition to suggesting that he reconvene the Wise Men, Acheson emphasized to Johnson the need for him to learn the information on his own by reaching down into the ranks of the departments, as Acheson had done, and not to rely on Rostow or the military for the data (Berman, 1989; Brinkley, 1992; Isaacson & Thomas, 1986).

At the 19 March Tuesday Lunch, Johnson addressed the issue of reconvening the Wise Men group. Initially expressing concern that reconvening the group could be damaging because it might look as if he were doubtful about his policies, Johnson argued that Acheson's proposal would open him to the charge that he was hand-picking the committee and could further alienate the public. Fortas countered that it was necessary to "get to work to mount public support for what we are doing," and that reconvening the Wise Men would be a useful public relations move, as long as it was kept "from being excessively hawkish." Similarly, Rusk and Wheeler both argued in favor of calling the same group again, with Rusk noting that there was "safety" in reconvening a group that Johnson had met with before. Clifford noted that the group was "very hawkish" and, because of this, recommended using

it only as "a confidential advisory group." As a result of this advice, Johnson agreed to reconvene the Wise Men that weekend.[45]

On the evening of 25 March, the Wise Men reconvened at the White House to be given a new briefing on the war, and it was apparent almost immediately that their views had radically altered since November 1967. Indeed, now both Clifford and Acheson spoke out against the conflict and, unlike the November briefings, the Wise Men were now given an unvarnished accounting of the situation in Vietnam by representatives from the JCS, CIA, and State Department. Both George Carver from CIA and Philip Habib of the State Department reported that it would take much longer to achieve U.S. objectives in the war, with Habib estimating that it would take at least 5 to 7 years to make any lasting progress (Clifford, 1991). In addition, both analysts presented very candid, and bleak, views regarding the government of South Vietnam and its future viability. In the midst of these critical assessments, asked by Clifford if he thought a military victory could be won, Habib responded "not under present circumstances." Following up on this statement, Clifford then inquired of Habib what he would do if the decision were his, to which Habib replied, "stop the bombing and negotiate" (Clifford, 1991, pp. 512–514).

Clifford outlined to the group three possible policy options in Vietnam: (a) increase the number of troops, expand the bombing, and escalate the war; (b) muddle along with the present strategy; or (c) pursue a reduced strategy incorporating a total or partial bombing halt and use of U.S. forces in South Vietnam as a defensive shield during negotiations (Clifford, 1991). Stating that he favored the third option, Clifford gave way to Acheson, who stated his own belief that it was impossible to achieve U.S. policy objectives in Vietnam militarily and that the war should be de-escalated (Clifford, 1991). The change of view of Acheson and Clifford, and the more straightforward presentation of the data on the war, greatly affected the other members of the group. As Douglas Dillon would later recall, "In November, we were told that it would take us a year to win. . . . Now it looked like five or ten, if that . . . I knew the country wouldn't stand for it" (Isaacson & Thomas, 1986, p. 700).

Having heard that the previous evening's Wise Men meeting had tilted strongly against the war, Johnson met with JCS Chairman Wheeler, General Creighton Abrams (who was replacing Westmoreland in Vietnam), and Rusk on the morning of 26 March to prepare the military's testimony to the group in advance. Although Johnson emphasized that he wanted the military to provide to the Wise Men "all the things that are true" and factual regarding the war, the president went on to comment that the pro-involvement argument needed to be presented in a convincing manner. As Johnson observed regarding the other proposals before the group: "(U.N.) Ambassador Goldberg wants us not to bomb

North Vietnam for 3 weeks. Secretary Clifford has a plan to stop above the 20th parallel . . . we must have something." Reporting that the South Vietnamese military's morale and performance were good, Wheeler emphasized to Johnson that "our basic strategy is sound" in Vietnam, but that it was not possible to fight a war on the defensive and win. Agreeing with Wheeler's statement, Abrams argued that in his view, the administration did not need to change its strategy in the war at the present time. Further, both criticized what they described as biased reporting of the war in the press for the mistaken view at home that it was going badly. Encouraging them to stress these points to the Wise Men, Johnson complained that it was "the civilians that are cutting our guts out," remarking that "if you soldiers were as gloomy and doomy as the civilians you would have surrendered."[46]

Intent on presenting the argument for continuing the existing U.S. military strategy in Vietnam as strongly as possible, and on putting a more positive interpretation of the war before the group, Johnson decided to personally direct the discussion with the Wise Men at which Wheeler and Abrams testified that afternoon. Arguing that Westmoreland had turned the Tet situation around, that there was now no danger of a general defeat, and that the South Vietnamese military was on the offensive with very high morale, Wheeler told the group that he saw "no reason for all the gloom and doom" in the U.S. press. Further, emphasizing that the only setback from Tet was a purely psychological one at home, Wheeler assured the Wise Men that he felt good about the way things were going in the war.

Continuing to direct the meeting, Johnson then asked Abrams what should be expected in Vietnam over the coming year. Abrams replied that there would be an "all-out effort" by the enemy, but that although there would be some hard fighting, the enemy forces would face high attrition and the South Vietnamese military would improve their performance. In addition, Abrams noted that the North was now unable to attack Khe Sanh because of the effectiveness of the U.S. bombing campaign. When asked by Johnson whether this all-out push by the North represented a change in strategy, Abrams responded that it did, and that the change was brought about because "he was losing under the old strategy. He was losing control of people."[47] It should be noted that Johnson dominated both the presentation and the discussions within the meeting, controlling it so that only a positive report on the war was provided to the group. But, although the Wise Men listened to the presentation, they asked few questions of the two generals, and adjourned briefly before returning to meet with the president to report their recommendations.

[46] "Notes of the President's Meeting with General Earle Wheeler, JCS and General Creighton Abrams," "March 26, 1968—10:30 a.m. Meeting with General Wheeler, JCS, and Gen. Creighton Abrams" folder, Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 2, Johnson Library.

[47] "Notes of the President's Meeting with his Foreign Policy Advisers," "March 26, 1968—1:15 p.m. Foreign Policy Advisers Luncheon—regulars plus added group—Vietnam" folder, Tom Johnson's Notes of Meetings, Box 2, Johnson Library.

Upon their return, Johnson asked McGeorge Bundy to summarize the group's views. Bundy began by stating that "there is a very significant shift in our position" from that which the group held in November, when they had seen reasons for hope. However, on the basis of briefings the previous night, Bundy noted that the picture of the situation that had emerged was now not nearly so hopeful. As he reported to Johnson:

> Dean Acheson summed up the majority feeling when he said that we can no longer do the job we set out to do in the time we have left and we must begin to take steps to disengage. That view was shared by: George Ball, Arthur Dean, Cy Vance, Douglas Dillon, and myself [McGeorge Bundy]. We do think we should do everything possible to strengthen in a real and visible way the performance of the Government of South Vietnam. There were three of us who took a different position: General Bradley, General Taylor, Bob Murphy. They all feel that we should not act to weaken our position and we should do what our military commanders suggest. . . . On negotiations, Ball, Goldberg and Vance strongly urged a cessation of the bombing now. Others wanted a halt at some point but not now while the situation is still unresolved in the I Corps area. On troop reinforcements the dominant sentiment was that the burden of proof rests with those who are urging the increase. . . . We all felt there should not be an extension of the conflict. This would be against our national interest.[48]

General Matthew Ridgeway, Cyrus Vance, and Douglas Dillon immediately agreed with Bundy's summary of the group's views, and Acheson noted: "Neither the effort of the Government of Vietnam or the effort of the U.S. government can succeed in the time we have left. Time is limited by reactions in this country." Agreeing with Acheson's view that a change of policy would need to occur no later than the end of summer, Vance pointed out to Johnson that "unless we do something quick, the mood in this country may lead us to withdrawal." General Omar Bradley, agreeing that "people in the country are dissatisfied," noted that a bombing halt would be better if suggested by U Thant or the Pope, so that the North Vietnamese would not get the impression "in any way that we are weakening."[49]

However, not all of the Wise Men had changed their opinions of the war. Objecting to the majority view of the group, Robert Murphy emphasized that he was "shaken" by the views of his associates, and argued not only that this would look bad in Saigon and weaken our position, but that it was a "give-away" policy. Taylor also commented that he was "dismayed" by the view being expressed by the group, stating: "The picture I get is a very different one from that you have.

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[48] "Continuation of Meeting with Foreign Policy Advisers in the Cabinet Room (Summary)," "March 26, 1968—3:15 p.m. Meeting with Special Advisory Group, Cabinet Room" folder, Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson, Meeting Notes File, Box 2, Johnson Library.
[49] Ibid.

Let's not concede the home front; let's do something about it." At this point, Abe Fortas emphasized to Johnson that

> The U.S. never had in mind winning a military victory out there; we always have wanted to reach an agreement or settle for the status quo between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. I agree with General Taylor and Bob Murphy. This is not the time for an overture on our part. I do not think a cessation of the bombing would do any good at this time. I do not believe in drama for the sake of drama.[50]

Immediately objecting to this remark by Fortas, Acheson turned on him and strongly noted to the president that

> The issue is not that stated by Fortas. The issue is can we do what we are trying to do in Vietnam. I do not think we can. Fortas said we are not trying to win a military victory. The issue is can we by military means keep the North Vietnamese off the South Vietnamese. I do not think we can. They can slip around and end-run them and crack them up.[51]

Disagreeing strongly with Acheson, General Wheeler then argued that the United States was not seeking a military victory, but merely trying to help the Vietnamese avoid a communist victory. Infuriated, Acheson replied:

> Then what in the name of God are five hundred thousand men out there doing—chasing girls? This is not a semantic game, General; if the deployment of all those men is not an effort to gain a military solution, then words have lost all meaning.[52]

It is interesting that throughout these heated exchanges between his advisers, and despite his normal desire for consensus among them, Johnson did not intervene or attempt to modify the dispute. Though he had tried to influence the group, as he had during the first Wise Men meetings in November 1967, to support the war, it was quite obvious to Johnson by this point that this had failed. Turning to the president, Arthur Dean noted:

> Mr. President, all of us got the impression last night listening to General DePuy, Mr. Carver, and Mr. Habib that there is no military conclusion in this war—or any military end in the near future. I think all of us here very reluctantly came to the judgment that we've got to get out, and we only came to it after we listened to the briefing last night.[53]

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid.

Although Johnson replied in a joking manner that "the first thing I am going to do when you all leave is to find those people who briefed you last night," he passed a note to both Clifford and Rusk asking that they meet with him outside of the conference room. Once outside, the president angrily asked both men, "Who poisoned the well with these guys? I want to hear those briefings myself" (Clifford, 1991). After the meeting, Johnson met several group members outside and pressed them as to what had changed their minds in the briefing. Asking Taylor, "What did those damn briefers say to you?," Johnson grumbled to George Ball: "Your whole group must have been brainwashed and I'm going to find out what Habib and the others told you" (Ball, 1982; Isaacson & Thomas, 1986). Indeed, Rostow later emphasized to the president a similar view that the Wise Men had been affected by an unfair briefing.[54] However, even after this onslaught of disconfirming evidence and advice, Johnson continued to resist a change in his Vietnam policy. Over the next 5 days, advocates and opponents of the conflict continued to try to influence LBJ's thinking during debates over the content of the president's scheduled 31 March speech to the nation. Finally, faced with the mounting evidence and changing views of many of his closest advisers (particularly Clifford, Bundy, and Acheson), Johnson reluctantly decided not only to de-escalate the war, but to not seek a second full term in the White House.

The 1967–1968 Vietnam case would be described in Figure 1 as a case of bureaucratic confrontation. The number of actors involved in the decision process was high, their interests were opposed, the debate took place in an open arena characterized by competitive interactions among participants, compromise formation was slow, and implementation slippage was high. As such, Figure 2 would predict that in such cases, decisional pathologies of bureaupolitical distortion, bureaupolitical paralysis, and bureaupolitical waste should be present.

Bureaupolitical distortion.   By late 1967, the bureaucratic positions of those supporting and opposing the war had become so deeply entrenched that all actors distrusted, misrepresented, and discounted any information their opponents brought to the table. This significantly impaired the pooling of information and collective analysis of Vietnam policy. The extent to which bureaupolitical distortion dominated the later stages of the Vietnam policy debate is exemplified by the difficulty of opponents of the war (such as McNamara, McPherson, and Clifford) in obtaining a hearing for their views, and the hostility their dissent often evoked from supporters of the war (such as Johnson, Rostow, and Rusk). Another example is the purposeful distortion of the information presented to the November 1967 Wise Men group by Johnson and Rostow in order to garner their support for a continuation of existing administration policy. This dynamic served to create immense obstacles blocking the path to a review or reconsideration of Vietnam policy. In terms of the George (1980) process criterion of reality testing, the

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[54] Oral history interview, George Ball, 9 July 1971, p. 14, Johnson Library.

Johnson process had clearly shifted over time from one of bureaupolitical oversimplification to one of bureaupolitical distortion.

Bureaupolitical paralysis. By late 1967, the political conflict between the Johnson administration, Congress, and the public over Vietnam policy had become so intense that no policy alternatives available to the president enjoyed significant outside support. Conservative hawks demanded a more aggressive war than Johnson could accept, liberal doves demanded a withdrawal from the war in part or in total, and other segments of society wanted measures somewhere in between. Because of the dominance of a small White House inner circle (including the president) who strongly supported the war, a pathology of isolationism set in (discussed in the 1965 case) in which Johnson and his advisers continued to make policy decisions escalating the conflict while increasingly large segments of the political world outside of the Oval Office were growing ever more hostile and disillusioned with both the war and existing U.S. policy. In terms of the George process criterion of acceptability, the Johnson process had shifted over time from one of bureaupolitical isolationism to one of bureaupolitical paralysis.

Bureaupolitical waste. Between 1966 and 1968, a waste pathology set in over Vietnam policy as Johnson's policymaking went around in circles indefinitely without producing any firm decisions or conclusive action. In terms of the George process criterion of efficiency, the process had shifted over time from one of bureaupolitical haste to one of bureaupolitical waste. As additional troops or bombing failed to bring about an end to the war or drive the North Vietnamese to the bargaining table, Tuesday Lunch discussions at the White House continued to avoid the question of whether the United States was in an unwinnable war and should de-escalate. Instead, policy debate centered around gradual increases in both troop strength and bombing—decisions that avoided the more difficult, underlying question regarding Vietnam policy. Further, the increases in troop strength or bombing were not conclusive actions in terms of the war, but merely a continuation of existing U.S. policy that was geared toward raising the costs of further military action for the North to such a level that a negotiated settlement would be preferable for the communists (Ball, 1982; Clifford, 1991; McNamara, 1995; McPherson, 1972). The two sets of Wise Men meetings that occurred in 1967 and 1968 are an example of this circular policymaking within the Johnson administration.

The November 1967 meeting was arranged by Johnson and Rostow not to consider alternative courses of action, but to provide a visible show of "expert" support for the administration's policies. Information damaging to existing policy was kept from the group. As a result, the findings of the Wise Men supported the administration's policies. In the later March 1968 meeting, essentially the same policy questions about Vietnam were asked, with the only difference being the ability of Secretary of Defense Clifford and other opponents of the war to provide the Wise Men with a less biased (more damaging) portrait of the conflict. As a result, the Wise Men completely changed their views and urged a de-escalation of the war and U.S. withdrawal from the conflict.

However, as Immerman (1994, pp. 78–79) pointed out, Johnson and the administration hawks did not anticipate this second Wise Men meeting resulting in a different recommendation than they had obtained in November. Clearly, it would be inaccurate to interpret Johnson's willingness to accept Clifford's recommendation for a second Wise Men gathering as evidence of a sudden desire for alternative policy views on the president's part. Indeed, Johnson firmly believed that the group would again support his own policy views in favor of continuing the war and provide him with political cover against those whose support was weakening (both inside and outside the administration). Further, as shown by the subsequent political struggle over the contents of Johnson's 31 March speech, LBJ was still resisting the conclusions of the Wise Men and had continued to proceed with what Clifford (1991, pp. 520–521) described as the "war speech" as late as 28 March! In fact, there is some support for the view that Johnson, even after the 31 March speech, did not really change his policy views on Vietnam. As Herring (1979) observed in relation to Vietnam policy through the end of 1968, "Johnson's speech did not represent a change of policy . . . but a shift of tactics to salvage a policy that had come under bitter attack" (p. 208). What is clear, however, is that in terms of the overall Vietnam policy process from 1966 to 1968, the dominance of Johnson and several key inner-circle advisers (Rusk, Bundy, and Rostow) resulted in a bureaupolitical waste pathology that continued for nearly 3 years, during which time the policy debate had essentially run in circles.

As Figures 3 and 4 would have predicted, throughout this case Johnson, consistent for a low-complexity leader, remained highly resistant to incoming information that was inconsistent with his existing beliefs, and demonstrated high rigidity in terms of altering his long-held positions. Further, having decided to reconvene the Wise Men again, fully expecting feedback consistent with what he had received in November, Johnson reacted with disbelief that the group's position could have changed without the assistance of some outside force, such as biased briefers. In addition, Johnson did not actively seek out advice or information from sources throughout this period that he knew would be in disagreement with his existing Vietnam policy, but despite his preferences, he had such feedback forced on him by advisers who had now changed their own policy views. Thus, although Johnson's advisory system was not structured to be open to such feedback but to reflect the president's views and control over the process, a shift in the perspectives of those whom he had selected to form his inner circle of advice resulted in a change of advice, and ultimately, to a change in policy. Just as Figure 4 would predict for a lengthy policy process with a leader with Johnson's characteristics (i.e., predominant leadership style), the administration's policy process came to be characterized by the decisional pathologies associated with bureaucratic confrontation.

Discussion and Conclusions

By pointing to the existence of bureaupolitical dynamics and pathologies within a given policy process, readers should not interpret our argument as suggesting that "good" policy outcomes are not possible in such circumstances, or that an existing "poor" policy based on these pathologies will be continued indefinitely by decision-makers. Instead, our approach explains how the interaction between leaders and their advisory groups may create bureaupolitical dynamics that affect (in either a positive or negative manner) how these groups function and how the policy process is likely to evolve over time. Further, as scholars of group dynamics have long observed, process and outcome variables are not necessarily correlated (see George, 1980; Janis, 1972; 't Hart, 1994). "Good" processes may enhance one's likelihood of obtaining a "good" policy outcome, but history is replete with examples of "good" processes resulting in "bad" outcomes, as well as "bad" processes resulting in "good" outcomes. Sometimes policymakers are just plain lucky or unlucky. For this reason, our argument focuses principally on the policy process itself, not the nature of the policy outcome. At the same time, as is illustrated above in our Vietnam case studies, bureaucratic pathologies significantly affect the nature of the policy process over time and the character of the resulting policy outcomes. Indeed, although it is common among scholars to view the March 1968 decision on the partial bombing halt as a "good" decision (e.g., Berman, 1989), this should not lead us to assume that a "good" process led to this decision.

Indeed, although it could be argued that Johnson finally saw the light after Tet (or the Wise Men meetings, or Rusk's congressional testimony of early 1968, etc.), these events still fail to explain why Johnson continued to resist a change in Vietnam policy until just before his 31 March 1968 speech. Why didn't Johnson change policy direction in 1967 rather than wait for March 1968, especially given the negative information existing in the system in late 1967, such as the CIA bombing report and McNamara's memo? Why weren't policy opponents, such as Ball, and later Helms, McNamara, McPherson, and Clifford, able to convince Johnson to change policy direction until after a long series of bureaupolitical maneuvers and conflicts? Rather than representing a change in the "quality" of the policy process in 1967–1968, or a change of heart by Johnson, the final change in Vietnam policy in March 1968 is more accurately understood as the bureaucratic confrontation pathologies of distortion, paralysis, and waste finally being overwhelmed (albeit slowly) by a tide of change from the external policy environment beyond Johnson's individual control. Indeed, there comes a point where almost any government policy, no matter how strongly adhered to, will buckle under the weight of contradictory evidence indicating policy failure and strong political opposition from the policy environment.

Our argument regarding Vietnam policy from 1965 to 1968 is simply that had Johnson's personality been different and led to the formation of a different type of

advisory structure—and had the resulting bureaucratic pathologies (of bureaucratic consensus-seeking and bureaucratic confrontation) not been so powerful—it is conceivable that the 1965 decision might have taken a different direction or that U.S. policy on Vietnam would have been changed by the administration in late 1967 rather than mid-1968. Clearly, what the leader is like matters, and shapes the nature of the policy process and the bureaupolitical dynamics that are likely to exist. By providing a leader-bureaupolitical lens through which to view Johnson's Vietnam policymaking, our model contributes to the traditional literature by providing an important cut that enhances our understanding of the dynamics of the Vietnam policy process.

Bureaucratic politics is a ubiquitous yet still only partially understood phenomenon in the policymaking process within government. This is partly because of its complexity: Its occurrence, forms, and impact on policy seem to be contingent on a range of factors. It also has to do with its subtlety. The Johnson case study episodes show how even vehement debates between top-level officials may or may not be spontaneous or contrived, and how they sometimes are essential to understanding the resultant policy choices, and sometimes are best understood as an epiphenomenon, if not a manipulated ritual performed to maintain support and keep the administration together (see Hoyt & Garrison, 1997; Maoz, 1989). When bureaucratic politics is studied in its own right, rather than as an a priori negative symbol for various excesses of public-sector bureaucracy that critics of "big government" are eager to point out, it quickly becomes apparent that simple maxims such as Miles' law do not necessarily help us to understand the pivotal nuances of bureaucratic politics in real cases of crucial decision-making. Miles' law betrays an opportunistic view of administrative man and a deterministic view of organizational life. This may well be useful in predicting general patterns and trends across a universe of cases, but it is most likely an impediment to explaining the nature and significance of bureaucratic politics in those cases where the costs of flawed decision-making are momentous.

This article has outlined a conceptual map that facilitates the systematic description (see, e.g., Figure 1) and evaluation (Figure 2) of bureaucratic politics. Our approach explicitly allows for the contingent nature of bureaucratic politics. Normatively, it shows that *both* excessive bureaucratic politics and its extreme counterparts increase the likelihood of defective decision-making. It also highlights the possibility of moderate forms of bureaupolitical interaction contributing to balanced deliberation of policy problems and options. Furthermore, we have sought to provide some theoretical foundations for at least one important political-psychological perspective on bureaucratic politics, namely the role of political leaders as its instigators and mitigators—and ultimately its beneficiaries, or, in Lyndon Johnson's case, its victims.

To arrive at a more fully rounded political psychology of bureaucratic politics, it will be necessary to develop several additional dimensions. One such dimension is the role of adviser orientations. Because leadership is not a one-way street, future

research should seek to incorporate the interaction between the styles of leaders and particularly influential advisers. For example, in the Nixon-Kissinger tandem, the evolution of Kissinger's style was probably of equal importance to Nixon's in determining the character or impact of bureaucratic politics on Nixon's foreign policy team. Future research should also focus on dealing with the dynamics of inter- and intragroup relations within the executive branch of government (see Kaarbo & Gruenfeld, in press; 't Hart, 1994). Combined and integrated, the leader-oriented and group-oriented perspectives on bureaucratic politics may well prove to be political psychology's new and successful challenge to the still-dominant rational choice approach to governmental decision-making (see Bendor & Hammond, 1992; Welch, 1992).

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