RESOURCE EVALUATION AND PRESIDENTIAL DECISION-MAKING:
PREDICTING THE USE OF FORCE BY U.S.
PRESIDENTS, 1976 - 1988

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Peter A. Waterman, B.A.
Denton, Texas
May, 1997
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In order to explain presidential decisions to use force, a model is developed that incorporates three distinct decision-making environments. The results indicate the president is responsive not only to domestic and international environments, but also to the resource evaluation environment. Past research shows that both international and domestic factors are responsible for presidential decisions to use military force. The evidence here demonstrates that while these two environments are important the president can’t use force arbitrarily; rather, his evaluation of resources available for the use of force can limit his ability to engage the military during crisis situations. Presidential popularity, the severity of a crisis, and the amount of money set aside for defense spending are statistically related to presidential decisions to use force.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

1. THE POLITICAL USE OF MILITARY FORCE:
   AN INTRODUCTION ........................................ 1

2. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .......................... 11
   The Use of Force: The Demands
   The Supply of the Use of Military Force

3. THEORY BUILDING ....................................... 30
   The Cybernetic Model, Cognitive Processes,
   and the Use of Military Force
   The Cybernetic Approach to the Use of Force
   Decision Premises
   The International President
      Prior Use of Force
      International Tension
      Crisis Severity
   The Domestic Leader
      Presidential Popularity
      Elections
   Resource Evaluator
      Military Spending
      Troop Levels

4. DATA ANALYSIS ......................................... 60
   General Findings
   False Negatives and False Positives
   A Comparison with Past Research

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS ............. 76
   Key Findings
   Opportunities to Build

APPENDIX .................................................. 82

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................ 86
CHAPTER I

THE POLITICAL USE OF MILITARY FORCE:

AN INTRODUCTION

During the late 1950's, at the height of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, these two adversaries were faced with an evolving crisis situation over the post-war security of Berlin. The Soviet Union had issued an explicit political ultimatum directed at the U.S. and its wartime allies - give up allied occupation of West Berlin or face the possibility of a Soviet use of force. The United States was thus confronted with an arduous political decision, one that could directly affect the balance of power between the American-led Western bloc and Soviet-led Eastern bloc in Europe. Should the United States acquiesce to Soviet demands in Berlin, thereby possibly facilitating the spread of communism into Western Europe and beyond? Or should the U.S. take a hard-line stance against the Soviet threat, thus inviting the possibility that U.S. and Soviet troops could become involved in direct armed conflict? While it is difficult to spell out precisely the reason behind president Eisenhower's decision, the United States eventually choose not to engage the military in an attempt to alter Soviet intentions and the situation was eventually resolved through political and diplomatic
channels.

One popular explanation for Eisenhower's decision against the use of force suggests that the president was somewhat opposed to the foreign policy strategy developed by his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles. Dulles was a strong advocate of the doctrine of "massive retaliation," or an all-out attack with U.S. strategic air power employing nuclear weapons, against Soviet threats or aggression (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978), and Eisenhower may have felt this policy was inappropriate given the circumstances in Berlin. Eisenhower was also in favor of avoiding the use of force on a limited scale for limited objectives (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978), which was a potentially real consequence of the Berlin crisis. While this was due in part to Eisenhower's personal beliefs about the use of military force, general American predispositions about engaging in limited war also led to this policy stance (Halperin, 1963; Kahn, 1965). In fact, Halperin (1963, 19) notes the "American approach to war has been much more hospitable to attempts to abolish rather than limit violence."

While these factors may have played an important role in Eisenhower's final decision, it potentially fails to recount the president's entire decision-making process. Another decidedly less apparent factor may also have played a key role in the president's decision not to use force in Berlin. Eisenhower was acutely worried about the effect
that a possible increase in military action might have on the state of the economy, especially the United States budget (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978). He was particularly sensitive to fiscal considerations based on his long-term view of the U.S.-Soviet relationship (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978). Eisenhower was convinced that "a major Soviet goal in precipitating the [Berlin] crisis was to force the United States into additional military expenditures that would unbalance the budget."(Blechman and Kaplan, 1978, 362)

Thus, Eisenhower may have found himself constrained in his ability to use limited military force during the Berlin crisis due in part to his personal fear of overextending government expenditures.

This description highlights just one of many examples where the United States recognized that the opportunity to use military force during an international crisis was a viable policy tool. In fact, between the years of 1948-1988, Meernik (1994) has catalogued 458 crisis situations where limited military force could have been undertaken abroad to fulfill political goals. And while the United States refrained from using military force to achieve political outcomes in this case, it has actively employed limited military force in order to achieve political

According to the November 23, 1958 issue of the New York Times, Eisenhower, on November 19, instructed all heads of federal departments and agencies to operate within the budgets assigned to them for fiscal year 1960.
objectives over two hundred times (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978; Meernik, 1994; Zelikow, 1986). These are not cases where the United States was committed to a long-term or drawn out military war; rather, the distinguishing features of these opportunities to use force are that U.S. involvement was relatively short in duration and intended to affect politically both the United States and the initial actors involved in the crisis situation.

Yet the example of the Berlin crisis in 1958-1959 highlights a very important factor, that is, the effect resource availability can have on the presidents ability to use military force. This aspect has largely been neglected or overlooked in the study of presidential decision-making and the limited use of military force by the United States. It is generally reasoned in past inquiries that U.S. presidents, acting implicitly as the final arbiter of the use of military force by the United States, encounter a host of divergent environmental stimuli perceived as conditions which could possibly serve political ends (James and Hristoulas, 1994; Meernik, 1994; Oneal and Lian, 1992; Ostrom and Job, 1986). The threat by the Soviet Union in the Berlin case is just one example of this. Academics have spent a great deal of time analyzing the circumstances that potentially drive the president to send the military overseas. The primary links that have been established suggest both domestic and international factors play a
significant role in influencing presidential decision-making, although a debate still rages about which environmental context is more important to the president when making decisions to use force. Researchers have assumed that the president can use force whenever and wherever he wants (Fordham, 1995; James and Hristoulas, 1994), and have thus implicitly emphasized that the center of scholarly focus should be placed on the motivating conditions behind these uses of force by the president.

This is a very appealing area of study, one that has generated interesting findings and a solid foundation from which future research needs to proceed. Yet this body of research fails to capture the full range of concerns the president evaluates when calculating whether force should be used during a crisis situation. The Berlin crisis illustrates this argument well. This paper suggests that while domestic and international factors are indeed important in understanding presidential decision-making, a substantial and serious gap exists in the theoretical tenets developed by those who study the use of force by the United States. Research must account for certain factors that potentially constrain uses of force and hence needs to incorporate into a model of presidential decision-making and military force as a policy tool the resources available for military purposes.

The purpose of this study is to expand on an already
burgeoning body of literature that has generally sought to explain the factors behind the political use of military force by the United States during a crisis situation. Yet different from other studies, this research demonstrates it is not always accurate to make the assumption that the president can and does use military force, even in limited fashion, whenever he wants. Even the president, like every other top decision-maker in Washington, is faced with certain resource constraints which severely affect or hamper his ability to use the military during a crisis situation. Generally speaking, the president must act within certain bounds dictated by society (Fordham, 1995). While the president is certainly granted more latitude in his actions than any other member of government, his performance tends to be magnified or scrutinized because of the effect these decisions can have on the country in general, and he is thus forced to be wary of and respond to economic and other resources which may impede his capability to deploy the military during a crisis situation. This is not to suggest that the president will always face constraints placed on his ability to act when deciding whether to use military force; indeed, crisis situations perceived to severely threaten vital U.S. national and security interests will almost always be met with a use of force if other political avenues fail to resolve the crisis. Yet crisis situations deemed by the president to be of lesser significance to U.S.
security interests, while still important, might not lead to a use of force. This is due to negative ramifications that may adversely affect the U.S. and, consequently, the president himself.

This conceptualization is not found in previous studies that model the use of force as a presidential decision (Job and Ostrom, 1986; Meernik, 1994; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Ostrom and Job, 1986). Thus, the president, fulfilling his role as commander-in-chief of the United States military, is viewed as a utility maximizer, including in his decision-making calculus the economic and financial costs of a use of force relative to the potential benefits or gains when dealing with a crisis situation. While the president must be responsive to certain domestic and international conditions during a crisis, he must also be aware of the availability of financial resources found in the domestic economy as well as resources available for military purposes. Little attention has been given to the constraining role the availability of resources can play on presidential decision-making. This omission is problematic and plagues the theoretical development of the use of force research area.

A testable model is developed to advance our understanding of the use of military force. It includes both domestic and international demands for the limited use of force by the president as well as economic and other
supplies which possibly constrain his ability to use force. While past research has certainly provided an understanding of the factors that drive presidential decision-making, it fails to examine the whole picture. Incorporating the availability of resources will illustrate that the president is responsive not only to domestic or international conditions inherent in a particular crisis situation.

The president operates within the cybernetic decision-making context. Steinbruner (1974) developed the cybernetic model in an attempt to explain how individuals make decisions in environments dominated by complexity and uncertainty. This model is applied to the use of force. The president is not able to monitor and respond to all the incoming stimuli from the domestic and international environments; rather, presidential decision-making must be viewed as operating in an environment with reduced information-processing capabilities as well as limited cognitive ability. Due to the complexities of the international system, it is troublesome to assume the capacity of the president to recognize and process the vast amount of incoming information about a crisis situation is perfect or complete. Rather, it is more appropriate to view the president as a cybernetic decision-maker; that is, one who makes decisions concerning the use of force based on careful examination of a select number of environmental stimuli or variables. Ostrom and Job (1986) have used a
similar theoretical basis in past research efforts. Based on this conceptualization, this paper demonstrates that the cybernetic paradigm of decision-making, complemented with the cognitive processes model, best describes how presidential decision-making takes place.

The opportunity for the United States to use military force is the unit of analysis. According to Meernik (1994), this is a severely neglected aspect in the study of the use of force by the U.S. He notes "one of the principal limitations of previous research concerning the decision of use force has been the lack of the concept of an opportunity to use force."(122) Many scholars have predicted decisions to use force using quarterly or yearly time intervals (James and Oneal, 1991; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Stoll, 1984), thereby eliminating from consideration the particular conditions of a crisis situation which affect presidential decision-making. Using the opportunity to use force based on a case by case situation illustrates a more accurate representation of the decision-making environment facing the president.

The period under study extends from 1976-1988, during which there are 152 opportunities to use force. The dependent variable is the use of force, coded 1 when the United States engaged in a use of force during a crisis situation, 0 when the opportunity to use force was present but no use of the military was undertaken. An additive model of the use of force that incorporates the domestic,
international, and resource environments a president looks to when considering military force as a policy tool is developed. Due to the unsuitability of Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis when modeling a dichotomous dependent variable, binary probit analysis models the president’s decisions.

This sets the basic outline of the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the literature, assessing the strengths of past research and suggesting where the study of the use of force by the United States must proceed if valuable conclusions are to be gained. Chapter Three lays out in detail the cybernetic model of presidential decision-making and its applicability to the use of force. Included is a complete outline of the decision premises the president looks to when evaluating whether the use of force is a valuable policy tool based on the circumstances of a particular crisis. A series of testable hypotheses are generated from the theoretical tenets. Chapter Four presents a detailed analysis of the results of the overall model, and includes a discussion of the effect each variable has on presidential decision-making. Finally, Chapter Five provides a recapitulation of the purpose of this study and suggests fruitful avenues for future scholarly attention.
A fundamental assumption in the development of foreign policy studies, stemming from the realist paradigm, is that states pursue foreign policy outcomes largely independent of domestic politics (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz, 1979). Arguably the dominant tradition of those who study international relations, realism assumes that a state, acting as a unitary entity, makes foreign policy decisions based on conditions germane to the international environment, and subsequently implies that domestic politics play a subservient role in foreign policy outcomes. The overriding conditions that drive foreign policy can not be found by looking inward to the domestic processes of a state; rather, the stimuli that shape state action in the international arena are to be found in its external environment.

This assumption plays a significant role in the literature on the use of military force by the United States (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978; Brands, 1987; Cable, 1981; Meernik, 1994; Oneal and Lian, 1992; Zelikow, 1984). Highlighted by Blechman and Kaplan's (1978) study on limited uses of force, scholars have built upon this realist view of foreign policy by suggesting the United States has
historically placed more import on systemic and crisis characteristics when faced with an opportunity to use military force. The evidence at hand suggests the extent of involvement by the Soviet Union and China in a crisis (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978; Zelikow, 1984), the severity of a crisis (Oneal and Lian, 1992), prior uses of military force in a particular area (Meernik, 1994), and the "malign presence" and influence of anti-American leaders (Brands, 1987) are conditions influencing the president's decision to use force in a crisis situation. These results should come as no surprise, for it has long been assumed in the study of foreign policy that "politics stops at the water's edge."

The importance of these findings, though, can not be underscored enough: evidence that links domestic conditions to the use of military force by the president would seriously undermine the applicability of the realist tradition to the study of political uses of force.

Yet this is exactly what has happened. Beginning with the comprehensive study of political uses of force by Ostrom and Job (1986), which has played an influential role in guiding other researchers to link domestic conditions to the use of force, scholars have found evidence that the election cycle (James and Oneal, 1991; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Stoll, 1984), public approval and partisan support (DeRouen, 1995; James and Hristoulas, 1994; James and Oneal, 1991; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Russett, 1990), economic conditions (James
and Hristoulas, 1994; James and Oneal, 1991; Ostrom and Job, 1986) and public aversion to war (DeRouen, 1995; Lian and Oneal, 1992; Ostrom and Job, 1986) all play a significant role in the decision to use force by the United States. Taken as a whole, these results represent a serious challenge to the realist paradigm. As Ostrom and Job (1986, 559) point out, "there is support for the proposition that the use of force is a presidential decision that resides in a decidedly political context." The implications are far-reaching: it is no longer satisfactory to simply explain uses of force by the United States as responses to international circumstances while ignoring the role domestic politics plays. Rather, domestic political processes are now seen as consequential influences which guide the use of force.

The first question that naturally arises is why this debate exists? How can researchers, studying the same phenomenon, arrive at such divergent conclusions? Levy (1989, 266), in his review of the diversionary literature, argues "that few of the quantitative empirical studies of the relationship between internal and external conflict behavior of states have been guided by any theoretical framework." Rather, studies on the use of force are propelled by "method and data availability" (ibid). This is an unsettling revelation. Ostrom and Job (1986) make a bold statement against the prevailing wisdom that realism guides
the study of foreign policy and have thus encouraged other scholars to engage in a critical reassessment of the dominance of realism. While work in this area has grown substantially since Ostrom and Job's study, theoretical cummulation is severely lacking as scholars instead play a game of one-upmanship, building the use of force literature only through reformulated models which emphasize unique domestic or international variables hypothesized to play an important role in presidential decision-making. To use Ostrom and Job's phrase, researchers have only been respecifying presidential "decision premises" (1986, 545) rather than adding to these decision premises. Overall, the development of the study of the use of force by the United States has been a part-and-parcel endeavor. Responding to this problem, there is another factor at work in a president's calculation of whether to use force. Distinguishing between the international context and domestic politics is an important element in the study of use of force by the United States, and has received a thorough treatment in the literature. But it fails to consider the entire range of decision premises facing the president. Previously specified models, whether attempting to verify or refute the realist paradigm, are missing a key theoretical element, an element that clearly distinguishes
between opportunity and willingness to use force.  

Past studies are underspecified, and have consequently left out one very important consideration; that is, the role resource constraints play on the ability of the president to use force. While it might be true that both domestic and international conditions are linked to uses of force, it is not equally true that a president can use limited force for political purposes whenever he wants. Instead, there are certain conditions that restrict his ability to use force in a crisis situation. Does the level of defense spending deter a president from using force? Or can resources already committed for military purposes affect a decision to use force? This is another "decision premise" (Ostrom and Job, 1986, 545) that has failed to be systematically analyzed. One can't simply work from the assumption that the capabilities to use force are in eternal supply, and all that needs to be modeled are the domestic or international conditions that drive uses of force. The president no doubt perceives threats in the international arena which may facilitate military action. Yet this action is in part a function of the availability of resources at home. The theoretical tenets are drawn out in more detail below. A review and critique of the development of the use of force literature is undertaken first.

For an expanded discussion of these two organizing principles, see Most and Starr, chapters 3 and 4.
The case study has assumed a prominent role in the use of force literature (Blechman and Kaplan, 1978; Brands, 1987; Cable, 1981; Zelikow, 1984). Blechman and Kaplan (1978, 12) suggest "a political use of the armed force occurs when physical actions are taken by one or more components of the uniformed military services as part of a deliberate attempt by the national authorities to influence, or to be prepared to influence, specific behavior of individuals in another nation without engaging in a continuing contest of violence." What has been at the center of debate, as hinted above, are the stimuli these "national authorities" respond to. For Blechman and Kaplan (1978) and Zelikow (1984), the use of force is a response to decidedly external stimuli. They point to the fact that limited military force is primarily a political tool, and has historically been sensitive to environmental conditions, namely prior uses of force, treaties and international commitments, the role of the Soviet Union, and the level of conflict and cooperation between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Zelikow (1984), extending the work of Blechman and Kaplan (1978) to cover the post-Vietnam war years (1975–1984), also finds the dominating drive behind the use of force to be the same international concerns highlighted by Blechman and Kaplan (1978).

Scholars also point to the relevance of "gunboat diplomacy" (Cable, 1981) and "Big Stick diplomacy" (Brands,
1987) as techniques "employed by governments to secure advantage or avert loss in the international arena." (Cable, 1981, 17) The ability to project military force abroad in response to a "malign presence" and influence of anti-American leaders, the inherent threat to American lives, and local and regional instability (Brands, 1987) as well as the necessity of changing or altering the behavior of another state through a naval presence (Cable, 1981) suggests that international conditions play a dominant role in a president's decision to apply military force abroad.

It is unsettling to point out that none of these studies include a discussion on particular restraints facing the use of military force. They all begin with the implicit premise that force, even in a limited fashion, can always be and many times is used in a crisis situation, and then proceed to examine the divergent forms it can take, the amount necessary to achieve an objective and the different results it can obtain. There is no analysis of constraints that preclude the use of force. Force is seen, especially in the United States, as a political tool available whenever a threatening crisis calls for it.

The empirical attention given to uses of force short of war by the United States has burgeoned over the last decade. Stemming from the theoretical propositions and definitions set forth by Blechman and Kaplan (1978), research indicates a significant link between external circumstances such as
the severity of a crisis (James and Oneal, 1991; Miller, 1995), international tension (Job and Ostrom, 1986; Meernik, 1994), involvement in an ongoing war (Lian and Oneal, 1993; Meernik, 1994; Oneal and Lian, 1992) and uses of military force. These findings suggest that the president monitors threats to American interests abroad. In response to the findings of Ostrom and Job (1986), Meernik (1994) and Oneal and Lian (1992) present important challenges to Ostrom and Job's attack on realism. The basis for disputing Ostrom and Job's (1986) results lies in significant methodological flaws. Oneal and Lian (1992) argue that many key variables are measured incorrectly and that a measure capturing the severity of a particular crisis must be included in the analysis. Similarly, Meernik (1994) suggests that a more accurate representation of the decision-making environment is the opportunity to use force rather than the number of uses of limited force aggregated for a given quarter. These reformulations generate results which stress the importance of external conditions. Oneal and Lian (1992) further test a purely "realist" model, which includes an index of the severity of a crisis,\(^3\) war deaths in Korea and Vietnam, public aversion to war, and presidential approval. The results indicate a parsimonious and powerful model that correctly predicts uses of force 72% of the time and is

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See James and Oneal (1991) for a complete discussion of the severity index.
driven by external factors.

While these studies tend to uphold the realist tradition, they fail to adequately recognize the importance of resource constraints facing a president when using force. Like the case studies before them, both Meernik (1994) and Oneal and Lian (1992) fail to systematically test a model that includes factors that preclude the president from using force. Their models analyze the conditions which lead a president to use force, yet neither mentions those factors that might handcuff the president when deciding to use force. Meernik (1994, 136) notes his "results would seem to indicate that when balancing domestic and international conditions, presidents' decisions are more often motivated by national interest than personal political gain." Yet it not enough to weigh only these domestic and international considerations; rather, some account must be taken of the influences that limit the willingness to use force.

Scholars also have paid a great deal of attention to what is known as the diversionary theory, or scapegoat hypothesis (DeRouen, 1995; James and Oneal, 1991; Job and Ostrom, 1986; Lian and Oneal, 1993; Miller, 1995; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Stoll, 1984). The theory holds that a president, faced with declining political conditions at home (i.e. decaying economic conditions, loss of public approval, dwindling partisan support), will attempt to refocus national attention outward
through the use of force. At its most base level, the
diversionary theory presents a challenge to realist
thinking, as it places primary emphasis on domestic
conditions that drive the president to engage in limited
uses of force. In fact, Russett (1990, 7) argues that "the
success or failure of international policy is in fact driven
by domestic political developments, and so, therefore, is
the choice of policy by a leader who aspires to success."

At the core of the diversionary theory is the belief
that presidents engage in uses of force in an effort to
bolster presidential popularity (Burbach, 1994; Lian and
Oneal, 1993; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Mueller, 1973; Ostrom
and Job, 1986). This line of reasoning has a long tradition
in the use of force literature. Mueller (1973) finds the
president could create a "rally 'round the flag" phenomenon
and generate a temporary surge in public support following
uses of force. The public, it is assumed, will unite behind
their president in cases where force is used to protect the
national interest. Contemporary examinations of the rally
effect suggest that certain uses of force cause dramatic
increases in support while others have little or no
measurable effect. Burbach (1994, 6) demonstrates that
"events showing higher levels of coverage and more activity
by the president are more popular" and "the public judges

See Levy (1989) for a review of the in-group/out-group
hypothesis as it applies to the study of social groups.
uses of force with a consistent set of foreign policy preferences." Recent examples in the diversionary literature confirm this finding (James and Oneal, 1991; Miller, 1995; Ostrom and Job, 1986). The results indicate a decrease in public support tends to lead to an increase in the use of force. Ostrom and Job (1986, 557) suggest "a good deal of the impetus for large swings in the propensity to use force can be traced to the presidential approval rating."

Despite all this support for a link between presidential approval ratings or the rally effect and the use of force, Lian and Oneal (1993, 294) find "no rally effect following a use of force...the mean change in the president's approval rating is 0%." Moreover, James and Oneal (1991, 327) indicate it is "only reasonable to believe that leaders will be more inclined to use force when they have the support of the nation" (emphasis added)." These results directly contradict the weight of the evidence presented by so many other scholars.

Research also suggests elections (James and Oneal, 1991; Job and Ostrom, 1986; Stoll, 1984), economic conditions (James and Oneal, 1991; Ostrom and Job, 1986), and public aversion to war (DeRouen, 1995; Ostrom and Job, 1986) are linked to uses of force. Stoll (1984) predicts that the election cycle has a negative impact on uses of force during peacetime and a positive impact on forceful
action during times when the U.S. is engaged in war. This suggestion has received luke-warm support (James and Oneal, 1991; Job and Ostrom, 1986), although it still appears difficult to make a substantial case for a link between force and election periods. Scholars also highlight the fact that a deteriorating economy is related to uses of force (Burbach, 1994; James and Oneal, 1991; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Russett, 1990). Russett (1990, 32) postulates that "economic downturn, coming after a period of prosperity, growth, and rising expectations, can easily generate high levels of frustration for elites," leading them to engage in uses of force abroad. Ostrom and Job (1986) also find evidence that lingering public opposition to uses of force significantly affect subsequent presidential decisions. In each case, the impact is negative, suggesting there is an adverse impact on presidential decisions to use force when aversion to risk following a war is high. They note "immediate postwar periods are marked by substantially reduced propensities to use force."

Once again, though, the literature is ripe with evidence showing little or no relationship between these domestic factors and uses of force. James and Hristoulas (1994), in their model of crisis activity, find no support for a link between either the election cycle, the misery index and public aversion to war, and the use of force. Meernik's (1994) results indicate presidents respond
primarily to prior demonstrations of military force and the
provision of military aid. Ostrom and Job (1986) and
DeRouen (1995) fail to find a relationship between
presidential reelections and military uses of force. Yet
James and Oneal (1991), in their replication of Ostrom and
Job’s study, find the election cycle to be a significant
predictor of force when they add the severity index into the
equation. James and Oneal (1991) also did not uncover a
link between public aversion to war and the use of force.
As for the misery index, James and Hristoulas (1994, 343)
report "crisis activity becomes more likely with an
improvement (emphasis added) in the misery index," a finding
contrary to most who find deteriorating economic conditions
related to the use of force. Incredibly, Meernik (1994)
found no relationship between the misery index and uses of
force. And all these researchers were studying the same
thing: the use of force by the United States after World
War II.

Clearly, a serious problem exists, and some sense must
be made of it. Overall, we see a body of literature that is
fragmented and contradictory at best, with certain scholars

As developed by Brecher and James (1986), the severity
index is "a measure of the seriousness of ongoing events,
rather than a gauge of the context of decision" (James and
Oneal, 1991, 318). It is an additive index constituting
five factors: the number of crisis actors, the great powers’
level of involvement, geostrategic salience of the crisis
setting, heterogeneity among the participants, and the range
of issues under dispute.
finding evidence in favor of the realist tradition and still others suggesting that internal conditions, not external circumstances, drive the use of force. Yet even among those researchers who find in favor of domestic politics as the chief impetus motivating the use of force by the president, there remains no agreement on the most salient factors. How, then, do we account for these discrepancies? If the goal of political science research is to build from middle-range theories towards a grand theory of the use of force, it seems that researchers are doing nothing more than spinning their analytical wheels. Heterogeneity of a specific phenomenon will undoubtedly not lead to a homogeneous theory. This is not to suggest that there have not been attempts to assimilate all this information and improve the use of force literature; rather, too much emphasis has been placed on establishing an analytical niche rather than expanding the use of force theory in general. Several reasons could be offered that explain this phenomenon.

Foremost, tests to establish a link between domestic conditions and the use of force tend to examine this relationship over different temporal domains. The only two studies independent of each other that cover the same time period (1949-1976) are Ostrom and Job's (1986) and James and James and Oneal's (1991) attempt to build upon the work of Ostrom and Job (1986) is a prime example of this.
Hristoulas's (1994). In no other case do studies cover the same time span. And it is interesting to note that while Ostrom and Job (1986) find substantial support for domestic conditions leading to uses of force, James and Hristoulas (1994), in their crisis activity model, suggest both internal and external factors are responsible.

This leads to a second point; that is, these studies rarely include the same variables measured the same way. Specifically, the domestic and environmental conditions hypothesized to lead to the use of force vary considerably from study to study. Ostrom and Job (1986), for example, include only three international conditions in their analysis. With the other seven variables measuring domestic circumstances, it might come as no surprise that their model supports strongly the argument that domestic politics is the key impetus driving the use of force. The way the variables are measured also differs. For example, the dependent variable use of force is an aggregated quarterly measure in Ostrom and Job's (1986) study while Meernik (1994) examines the opportunity to use force as measured by each specific incident. Also, Ostrom and Job (1986) focus only on major uses of force as defined by Blechman and Kaplan (1978), thereby eliminating any situations where lesser uses of force might be used. These facts make it extremely difficult to build from one study to the next.

Third, and most important, these tests attempt only to
establish relationships between potential demands placed on the president to use force and the use of force itself. As suggested, there is no attention paid to possible constraints on the use of force as a policy instrument. Too much emphasis is placed on the fact that the president can use force whenever he wants, thereby precluding a test of conditions where the use of force may be an attractive but unusable political tool. Systematic evidence needs to be uncovered that explains why a president might be limited in his abilities to extend the military abroad.

The Supply Of The Use Of Military Force

Recognizing that the United States can use force anywhere on the globe at a moment’s notice requires little more than a passing thought. One would encounter little resistance if the argument were forwarded that the U.S. has been the economic and political hegemon since the end of World War II. With its wealth of available resources, it should come as no surprise to find the U.S. willing and able to intervene in any crisis found to threaten the national security of the country. In fact, several scholars suggest that crises are an on-going presence in the international environment, and the president can simply pick and choose the crisis in which he wishes to involves the country (Fordham, 1995; James and Hristoulas, 1994). This is an intuitively plausible argument when taken at face value.

But a deeper look into the literature reveals something
different. Fordham (1995) points out that presidential decisions to use force are constrained by certain bounds dictated by society, bounds within which a president must act if force is to be accepted as a viable policy tool. "Decision makers," he emphasizes, "must consider the implications of a decision to use force on broader allocative arrangements in the society."(1995, 8) The supply in the form of financial, military and other resources of this policy instrument is an important aspect of decision-making and must be accounted for. Fordham (1995) notes three considerations facing the president: resources available in the economy, resources on hand for military use, and resources already being employed for military purposes. This conceptualization is consistent with past findings which have highlighted the importance of public opinion (Marra, 1985; Ostrom and Marra, 1986; Nincic and Cusack, 1979; Russett, 1972; Wildavsky, 1992) and the state of the economy (Kamlet and Mowery, 1987; Russett, 1972; Su et al, 1993) on spending for defense. A more accurate assessment of the domestic decision-making environment when deciding to use force, then, might be that a president faces substantial and persistent constraints that preclude military action in certain cases.

This brief analysis allows some powerful inferences to be drawn. Certain conditions implicitly hamper the availability of military outlays, which could effectively
deter the president from using force. Domestic political arrangements are extremely sensitive to change, with a delicate balance existing between defense and non-defense spending. The president, given all his power, must operate without upsetting this delicate balance. It wouldn't be prudent for the president to drain other sectors of the economy of valuable resources in order to make a political statement through the use of force. Thus, there is a ceiling on the ability of the president to draw on national resources when resorting to force. The president is likely to view military force as a viable policy tool in many different circumstances and under many divergent conditions, but the ability to draw upon the necessary resources varies by situation. The effect of involvement in an ongoing war by the United States has been modeled by some as a condition that deters presidents from using force elsewhere (James and Oneal, 1991; Lian and Oneal, 1992; Meernik, 1994; Ostrom and Job, 1986). This represents one example of possible constraints placed on the president. But the analysis must be taken further, as resource availability encompasses more than just involvement in a war.

It is hypothesized that resource availability plays a substantial constraining role on the president's ability to fulfill policy goals through the limited use of force. We have seen evidence that military force has various international and domestic uses, all of which provide useful
insight into the presidential decision-making process. Some key elements that undoubtedly affect presidential decision-making have been touched upon. Both Ostrom and Job (1986) and Meernik (1994) present comprehensive works that examine the issue of why the United States uses force. These important findings are not to be discounted. In fact, this analysis will draw heavily from the models they developed and the variables they used. Ostrom and Job's (1986) characterization of presidential decision-making operating in a cybernetic environment represents a strong theoretical foundation from which a comprehensive theory of the use of force can be built. We have also seen, though, a dispersed body of literature that fails to bring together much of what has been written into a comprehensive theory of the use of force. Moreover, this body of literature has ignored or neglected a very important phenomenon; that is, the effect resource availability has on the presidents ability to shape decisions about the use of force. This is an important and critical step in the development of the use of force literature. The next chapter outlines a theory that examines the use of force as a function of both the demands it fulfills and supplies to which the president responds.
CHAPTER III

THEORY BUILDING

The Cybernetic Model, Cognitive Processes
and the Use of Military Force

Why does the United States resort to limited uses of military force for political purposes? How do opportunities to use force advance the realization of political objectives by the U.S.? An answer to these questions necessarily entails identifying the processes driving presidential decision-making. Faced with the problem of understanding the logic behind uses of military force by the United States in a crisis situation, it is thus critical to examine closely how the president sees and attempts to understand crises in a complex world. The president is ultimately responsible for all decisions to use force. While recognizing the impact of other individuals or groups on this critical decision, it is the president, fulfilling his constitutional role as commander-in-chief, who is the final arbiter governing the use of force. The unique perspective of the president affords him the opportunity to examine the conditions that shape decisions to use force. Moreover, the expectations of the nation demand he take an active and visible role in protecting national security. His stature
demands he act as a foreign policy leader, especially in circumstances that require dramatic action. This assumption is consistent with Meernik (1994) and Ostrom and Job (1986).

Scholars have widely agreed upon three distinct analytical frameworks that serve as conceptual bases when examining individual decision-making. Allison (1971) has been credited with the development of the rational actor model. This model assumes the goals and objectives of a leader, acting implicitly as the head of a unified nation, are fulfilled through a process whereby an arrangement of known possible alternatives about a given situation is set up and thus ordered by preference based on outcomes. Alternatives are weighed based on the value of possible consequences, and a leader simply chooses "that alternative whose consequences rank highest in the decision-maker’s payoff function." (1971, 30) Leaders are seen as cost-benefit maximizers, possessed with complete information about a particular situation, and thus able to achieve predetermined ends through rational calculation of a situation.

On the other hand, the cybernetic approach as developed by Steinbruner (1974) posits a much simpler decision-making mechanism. The theoretical framework adopted here, consistent with Ostrom and Job (1986), stems from this cybernetic model of decision making and is complemented by the third decision-making framework, the cognitive processes
approach. The cybernetic model is most plausible when studying presidential decision-making and the use of military force. In a complex international system, it is nearly impossible for the president to take in, analyze and comprehend fully the wealth of information available. Thus, it is necessary to view the president as a leader who uses simplified decision-making techniques rather than rational calculations of a crisis situation. This being true, a decision to use force by the president is not the outcome of fully known and assimilated pieces of information that paint an accurate picture of the world; rather, the inherent uncertainty of decision-making forces certain cognitive devices to be relied upon when a complete understanding of the environment is lacking. The president simply does not have the ability to gather and comprehend all the available information about a crisis situation and subsequently formulate a suitable response with calculated outcomes, as is assumed by the rational actor framework. Rather, the cybernetic model used assumes a limited set of stimuli, or feedback variables, is monitored and thus forms the basis for consistent decisions over time. Yet while the cybernetic model presents a suitable starting point, Steinbruner (1974, 14) suggests a "need to supplement simple cybernetic theories in building a paradigm of the decision process competitive with that operating in rational decision theory...with a set of principles about the operations of
the human mind." These principles help explain how humans structure their beliefs; in essence, they provide the stable organization necessary for cybernetic processes to work. Thus, the cybernetic decision-maker assumes survival as his ultimate goal, which in the context of presidential decision-making can be viewed simply as the preservation of national security interests. As such, this result can only be achieved through a simplified decision process that is complemented by a set of presidential beliefs that maintain or control uncertainty in a highly complex setting.

Steinbruner's conceptualization of a cybernetic individual is similar to those developed by Wiener (1948) and Deutsch (1963). Deutsch (1963, 76), who draws much of his cybernetic theory of man and the community from Wiener, suggests that cybernetics is simply the "study of communication and control in organizations of all kinds." It represents a shift from instincts or impulse to systems of decisions, regulation, and control. Steinbruner (50), adding to the cybernetic paradigm, develops the cybernetic approach to decision-making around the premise that individuals are "very unlikely...to examine all the alternatives, establish a preference ordering, and choose the best one" when confronted with even the simplest decision.

Such a characterization is undoubtedly true of a decision-maker faced with an exceedingly more complex and
difficult decision like the use of military force. In a world of "structural uncertainty," (ibid, 18) simple decision mechanisms act as guides that help reduce or simplify the decision-making environment, effectively screening out information that is not programmed to be recognized. In an attempt to decrease the amount of variety inherent in decision-making, a stable but limited set of critical variables, each sensitive to a pre-established range of critical values, is established that forms the basis for selective feedback or response.

Steinbruner's (1974) analogy of the simple thermostat clearly illustrates this phenomenon. Steinbruner notes that the thermostat is nothing more than a servomechanism, or, rather, a simple mechanical device. In essence, the thermostat is responsive to general environmental conditions, and when the upper or lower limits of a clearly specified range are reached, the thermostat is activated. For example, when the temperature in a room gets hotter than the desired limit, the cooling mechanism of the thermostat is engaged. Similarly, when temperatures below the desired range are detected, the heating system is activated. The result is that normal environments are kept within the desired range. The capacity of the thermostat to respond to a set of programmed feedbacks helps control any variety inherent in the environment; indeed, it reacts in a predetermined manner to a few variables. There is little
variety in the actions of the thermostat: it warms the environment when it senses temperatures below the critical limit and cools the environment when temperatures rise above the critical limit.

Such a characterization can also be applied to a decision-maker under structured or simple conditions, although the human mind is more intricate and less mechanical than Steinbruner’s (1974) description of the servomechanism. In an effort to ameliorate the difficulties of decision-making and thus control the amount of variety and uncertainty inherent in a simple decision under controlled environmental conditions, the decision-maker monitors a small yet stable set of programmed or critical variables, effectively eliminating substantial amounts of incoming information from a decision outcome. Furthermore, a specified range of values is established that determines whether some course of action is taken in response to the critical variables in focus. A decision-maker will react, like the thermostat, when limited environmental stimuli are perceived that fall outside the critical values. One would not expect to observe a marked change in behavior unless one or more relevant environmental factors are perceived to be outside of some tolerable range set by the decision-maker (Marra, 1985). Once a decision-maker is alerted to a regularly monitored variable that exceeds the acceptable range of values for that variable and thus possibly upsets
the stability of the decision-makers environment, the probability of action is increased. Moreover, this response tends to be an outcome that is satisfactory, although not most beneficial, rather than one based on maximum value calculation (Steinbruner, 1974). The decision-maker will not examine every possible response to a problem in an effort to determine which is most appropriate or convenient; rather, the first response found to be satisfactory by the decision-maker will generally be the one selected and implemented.

Yet, this brief description of the cybernetic approach to decision-making accounts only for decisions made in a relatively simple environment. What happens in a complex environment where structured conditions are eliminated? How are successful decisions implemented in a complex setting? To deal with complex situations like the opportunity to use military force, the cybernetic approach to decision-making must be complemented by the cognitive processes model (Steinbruner, 1974). We have seen that a simple decision in a highly structured environment can be made by monitoring the critical values or ranges of a select few variables. But how does a decision-maker respond in a situation where greater complexity necessarily entails greater variety and where, consequently, the decision-maker must be sensitive to more than one or two environmental stimuli?

The cognitive processes model (Steinbruner, 1974)
focuses on how decision-makers make decisions in highly complex environments. Cognitive theorists have developed a framework that explains decision-making in situations governed by structural complexity and high levels of uncertainty; or, rather, situations which are not adequately explained by the cybernetic approach alone. Steinbruner (1974,95) notes "there are regularities in cognitive operations" that stem from a structured set of beliefs. In essence, an understanding of this set of beliefs explains how "problem structures are set up within which cybernetic mechanisms can operate."(ibid, 139) A decision-maker, for example, is aided by cognitive heuristic devices such as beliefs, memory, and internal simplicity and stability when making a decision under complex environmental conditions. These cognitive tools are in fact devices that aid in the reduction of complexity during decision-making in complex environments.

Anderson (1987, 286) suggests that "the overwhelming cognitive demands of decision making guarantee that individuals must adopt strategies that fall short of the optimal, comprehensive ideal." Rather than being able to process completely all available information, the decision-maker develops cognitive structures that greatly simplify or limit the task of judging and understanding complex situations. The dominant factor behind these simplifying strategies stems from the decision-makers perceptions or

Evidence indicates a decision-maker is influenced by psychological factors such as beliefs, values and cognition when formulating a decision (Axelrod, 1976; Holsti, 1976; Jervis, 1976). In essence, a decision-maker forms a cognitive map that aids the decision-making process. A cognitive map is a psychological representation of the beliefs and concepts of a policy maker. Using this representation, the policy maker will search this map, or set of beliefs, in an effort to simplify or reduce the complexity inherent in a situation. As Holsti (1976, 122) notes, "our beliefs provide us with a more or less coherent code by which we organize and make sense out of what would otherwise be a confusing array of signals picked up from the environment by our senses." Especially in a crisis situation, the cognitive map acts as a perceptual filter, guiding the decision-maker by simplifying the complex environment. Decision-makers integrate information with their pre-existing beliefs; these perceptions are slow to change (Jervis, 1976, 191). This function allows the policy maker to channel incoming information, thus choosing the action that seems best under a particular set of complex circumstances.

This internal consistency of beliefs, then, establishes the reason why only certain key variables are continuously
monitored while others are ignored or go unrecognized. The decision-maker will maintain cognitive regularities that hinder the processing of new information. The ability of the decision-maker to use these aids that reduce complexity will generate decisions that are consistent with prior experience and guided by the fundamental belief of ensuring stability while keeping the decision mechanism as simple as possible. The result is the reduction of an otherwise complex environment to a limited number of stimuli that are consistently monitored over time.

This sets the boundaries within which a decision-making theory of the opportunity to use military force must be formulated. In the following pages, a comprehensive theory of the use of force by the United States is outlined, drawing from both the cybernetic and cognitive processes models. In addition, the decision premises that a president uses to coordinate his behavior when looking to use military force as a policy tool are developed. These decision premises are in essence several sets of limited feedback variables to which the president is responsive and can be conceptualized as a series of linear and additive relationships. Theoretically, the final decision by the president to use force is the sum of all the factors included in the president's decision premises. A president must account for both the domestic and international environments as well as the resource constraints placed on
him when deciding whether to use military force. He is hypothesized to weigh the status of the opportunity to use force in accordance with the basic decision premises being evaluated (Meernik, 1994). If the outcome of these decision premises exceeds some critical limit established by the president, military force will seen as a viable policy tool. The president will thus add up the limited stimuli he is responding to and ultimately make one decision regarding the use of military force.

The Cybernetic Approach to the Use of Force

A crisis situation where the opportunity to use force is a potentially viable and useful policy tool can not be reduced to a simple, easily understood set of recurring circumstances. The use of military force is conditioned or affected by a number of uncertainties which pervade each particular crisis situation. Even though the United States possesses extraordinary technological capacities to gather and assimilate information worldwide, the president is still faced with a situation that poses considerable difficulties. A myriad of underlying factors responsible for a crisis situation, the involvement of the Soviet Union, the varying goals of other states committed to the crisis, even the number of actors involved, for example, presents an extraordinary amount of unexpected and divergent information to the president. He must recognize and process this information, and doing so introduces a challenge to the
president and his ability to respond appropriately. In addition, there are continual domestic pressures placed on the president.

Yet such an unpredictable situation, where the capacity to comprehend fully all the intricate exigencies is often inadequate and where the president is ultimately responsible for guiding foreign policy, makes recognizing, understanding and assimilating all this material a virtual impossibility. Thus, the president is forced to rely less on a set of established policy alternatives with known consequences and more on a limited set of critical factors, or feedback variables, that simplify the decision-making process when considering the opportunity to use force. Even with a set of foreign policy advisors and experts who monitor the international scene on a continual basis, the inherent uncertainty in a complex system is dauntingly large. Therefore, as Ostrom and Job (1986, 543) point out, "the mechanics of choice are simple: the president monitors a limited set of essential or critical factors, and considers a restricted set of decision options."

This is the basic cybernetic framework of presidential decision-making when considering a use of force. A crisis situation, permeated by a lack of complete understanding and information available to the president, is reduced to a set of recognizable and easily understood environmental variables that represent the most salient features of the
decision-making milieu. The most important variables monitored are a direct result of presidential beliefs and are a function of past reinforcement. These variables can be found in both the international and the domestic contexts as well as in the president’s capacity to act as an evaluator of resources available for military purposes.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine and predict presidential decisions to use military force given the opportunity. Blechman and Kaplan (1978, 12) suggest "a political use of the armed forces occurs when physical actions are taken by one or more components of the uniformed military services as part of a deliberate attempt by the national authorities to influence, or to be prepared to influence, specific behavior of individuals in another nation without engaging in a continuing contest of violence." Two concepts will become important: the opportunity to use force and the use of force itself. Without delineating the different levels of intensity uses of force can take, generally speaking, a use of force can be seen as a situation where the president made a positive decision to exercise military force during a crisis (Job and Ostrom, 1986). It is important to point out that this conceptualization doesn’t include circumstances where

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Blechman and Kaplan (1978) divide the levels of force into five categories, ranging from minor to standard to major. For an expanded discussion of these levels, see Blechman and Kaplan (1978, 50).
extended military combat was undertaken by the United States or instances of cooperative or friendly uses of force; rather, the use of force here implies short-term yet no less apparent actual military endeavors endorsed by the president in an attempt to influence the outcome of a particular crisis.

Opportunities to use force all share the common property of events likely to attract the president's attention (Meernik, 1994), although force may not necessarily be used even if considered. The opportunity to use force as a unit of analysis has been severely neglected in use of force studies. The guidelines set forth by Meernik will be followed here. Like Meernik, I argue that in order to identify the factors either leading to the use of force or constraining the use of military force as a policy tool, the particular conditions present during each crisis situation influencing the president's decision to use force must be identified. The criteria used for identifying international events likely to be perceived as sufficiently threatening to the United States to cause the president to consider a use of force are borrowed from Meernik (1994) and Job and Ostrom (1986). Such events are termed opportunities to use force and are consequently situations where the president considered military force when evidence of one of the following characteristics was present:

1. the situation involved a perceived current threat to
the territorial security of the U.S., its current allies, major clients, or proxy states;
2. the situation posed a perceived danger to U.S. government, military, or diplomatic personnel, to significant numbers of U.S. citizens, or to U.S. assets;
3. events were perceived as having led, or likely to lead to advances by ideologically committed opponents of the U.S. (i.e., communists or "extreme leftists" broadly defined) be they states, regimes, or regime contenders;
4. events were perceived as likely to lead to losses of U.S. influence in regions perceived as within the U.S. sphere of influence, especially viewed as Central and South America;
5. events involved inter-state military conflict of potential consequence; in human and strategic terms; or events, because of civil disorder, threatened destruction of a substantial number of persons.

It is imperative to note that data on actual presidential perceptions or beliefs were not gathered; rather, this conceptualization of opportunities constitutes a "syndrome of characteristics commonly found in use of force situations." (Job and Ostrom, 1986, 9)

When making a decision concerning the opportunity to use military force, the president will consider both domestic and international conditions as well as the availability of resources for military purposes. Following Ostrom and Job, these three sets of environmental factors are termed "decision premises." (1986, 545) The international factors he monitors are a resultant of his perception of U.S. national security and conditions which may threaten the country's stability internationally, while the domestic factors scrutinized are a consequence of the presidents belief that he must lead the country and ensure
domestic stability and prosperity. Resource availability sets possible constraints on presidential decision-making when determining if the use of force is a feasible policy tool. These features allow the president to develop a relatively unambiguous, albeit reduced, picture of the crisis situation he is reacting to. A president should not act in a manner inconsistent with these internally maintained structures; rather, given the amount of potential error inherent in decision-making, the president should always satisfy his own principles by referring to a stable set of reference points which reinforce the decision-making process.

The president responds to these three capacities in accordance with his role as commander-in-chief and is ultimately responsible for maintaining an equally active and balanced role in all three settings. Presidents have undoubtedly been keen on the idea of leaving behind a legacy after serving in office, and one of the available avenues to reaching this status is decisive action on the foreign policy front. To fulfill this goal, though, he must constantly be wary of these three settings. Political uses of military force can have grave consequences on the lasting image of a president, and a lack of attention given to one particular category can lead to devastating and unwanted results. The president, therefore, will constantly monitor these general settings in an effort to ensure a relative
consistency among them.

Decision Premises

From these three domains, an outline of the decision premises to which a president is responsive can be developed. As a leader responsible for maintaining American security interests globally, the president must continually be aware of and responsive to American security worldwide. This includes but is certainly not limited to the preservation of the security of U.S. citizens living in other countries, the maintenance of stable and lasting relationships with close allies, and the containment of anti-American ideologies, especially communism. As a domestic leader, the president is forced to react to conditions that pertain generally to the internal structure of society. If the president expects to remain in power, he must be responsive to his image among the public, the state of the economy, public attitudes toward the use of force, and the importance of the election cycle. Finally, as a decision-maker cognizant of the resources necessary for the use of force, the president must always be aware of the availability of these financial resources, for the immediate costs of military action must be financed without straining the domestic economy. In an attempt to ensure the domestic economy is not overextended, he must monitor, for example, resources on-hand for military purposes and resources already employed for military purposes (Fordham, 1995).
The president, then, operates within a tripartite decision-making context: the domestic, international and resources availability settings. Yet, consistent with the cybernetic model of decision-making, the president monitors only a select few stimuli within each environment. The following outline provides the decision premises a president looks at when deciding whether to use force:

I. International Environment
   a. prior use of force
   b. international tension
   c. crisis severity

II. Domestic Environment
   a. aggregate public popularity
   b. election cycle
   c. partisan public popularity

III. Resource Availability
   a. military spending
   b. overall level of armed forces

While this conceptualization might indicate the president is actually faced with more information than a cybernetic decision-maker can be expected to monitor, the president delegates authority to individuals who actively attend to specific policy areas and thus provide him with data that greatly simplifies further his role in the decision-making process. The president is indeed the final arbiter of the use of force, but this fact doesn’t necessarily entail that he continually monitor each aspect of each environment; rather, he surrounds himself with high level policy experts that gather, assimilate and present information from which he can make executive decisions. The
president can not always scrutinize closely all the intricate details inherent in these decision premises, yet the particular details presented to him allow the president to understand and digest these conditions, thus enabling one outcome concerning the use of force.

This outlines briefly the limited environment to which the president looks when deciding to use military force. It is consistent with past studies that have highlighted the importance of either domestic or international influences on the use of force (James and Oneal, 1991; Meernik, 1994; Ostrom and Job, 1986). Yet, it advances the study of the use of force by the United States by explicitly focusing attention on the fact that the president is constrained by the availability of certain resources. An extended examination of each context and its relation to the use of force by the United States follows.

The International President

The president must be able to demonstrate convincingly to other nations the fundamental national interests of the United States (Meernik, 1994). To achieve this goal, a credible posture of U.S. strength must continually be maintained, for the perception and projection of strength allows these national interests to be met and preserved. Uses of force may be the most important policy tool the president can employ in his efforts to realize this international goal. As the leader of the world’s greatest
power, the president must guide and implement policies that advance these interests (Ostrom and Job, 1986), for the use of force can act as a stabilizing agent, fostering the perception that the U.S. can and will defend the interests of its citizens and allies. In particular, these are important goals that must be met if the U.S. was to maintain their superpower status vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, 1976-1988. Any sign of weakness in the international environment may be perceived by the Soviet Union as a strategic opening, inviting confrontation that may lead to nuclear war (Meernik, 1994). Thus, any deployment of the U.S. military abroad can be expected to have significant international ramifications (Ostrom and Job, 1986) that affect not only the crisis situation at hand but also the international system as a whole. Therefore, it is imperative that an examination of systemic factors be undertaken if a profound understanding of the conditions driving the use of force is expected.

Prior use of force

The United States maintains a tangible presence in the international environment, with the use of military force acting as the key catalyst necessary for fulfilling this requirement. Yet using force for political reasons in a region of perceived interest and consequently failing to do so on subsequent occasions in that same region may be identified as a sign of possible indecision or indifference.
This could potentially lead other states to view this lack of commitment as a useful strategic opportunity, one that could threaten U.S. interests in the region. Undoubtedly, a prior use of force shows the United States has a decided interest in the area. For this reason, the president may feel compelled to use force in an area where force was used before to prove its lasting commitments in that area and consequently project an image that deters other states from taking action (Job and Ostrom, 1986). The president must concern himself with U.S. adversaries' perceptions of American willingness to take forceful action in the future (Meernik, 1994). Likewise, the president must also be aware of the negative perceptions that could arise from allies when force could be but is not used. Thus, crisis situations arising in areas where the United States has used force during the previous year will increase the chance of military response.

This variable is defined to include all those opportunities taking place in the state or specific geographic location where the U.S. had used a major level of military force on a previous occasion in the year before the opportunity. Information on prior uses of force was taken from Blechman and Kaplan (1986) and Zelikow (1986). In almost every case, a prior use of force was considered to be one occurring in the same country or in the waters around that nation as a current opportunity. In a few rare cases,
however, opportunities did take place on the open seas, such as in the Black Sea. If uses of force took place in the same body of water on a previous occasion, they too were coded as prior uses of force.

International Tension

A crisis situation necessarily entails a diverse number of actions and reactions taken by states around the world, and the president is ultimately held accountable for gauging the level and intent of responses from these actors. However, the U.S. and the Soviet Union remain the most active contributors to the overall level of tension in the international system (Ostrom and Job, 1986). For this reason, the general state of the international arena can be judged primarily by the overall relationship the U.S. and the Soviet Union maintained throughout the Cold War. U.S. foreign policy has been dominated by this connection, and the president has remained cognizant of the level of cooperation or conflict between the two superpowers. A high level of tension between the two adversaries may condition the use of force by the president (James and Oneal, 1991). Indeed, if there are any ramifications emanating from the use of force, it is likely they will involve the Soviet Union (Meernik, 1994; Ostrom and Job, 1986). A president must always be forceful enough to maintain his international reputation and, while exhibiting a certain measure of control so as not to involve the country in a direct
confrontation with the Soviet Union, protect U.S. interests directly. Thus, higher levels of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union during an opportunity should increase the probability of force being used. See Ostrom and Job (1986) for the variable operationalization.

Crisis Severity

The perception by U.S. presidents of the severity of a crisis should affect decision-making. In fact, the number of actors which overtly involve themselves in a crisis, through the use of force, will play significant role in conditioning the response to a crisis situation by the president (Meernik, 1996). A crisis provides a conduit through which many diverse actors could involve themselves for a variety of different purposes, some of which are inherently anti-American. As the number of states increases, it becomes exceedingly difficult to ascertain exactly what the motives of those involved actors is. Further, the number of states involved in a crisis provides the president with a strong indication of the perceived severity of the crisis by states around the globe. The likelihood of the president using force during a crisis increases as the number of states involved in a crisis increases. Data on the number of states involved in a crisis were gathered from the Blechman and Kaplan data set (1978), Zelikow (1984), the Center for Naval Analysis: "The Use of Naval Forces in the Post-War Era: U.S. Navy and U.S.
The Domestic Leader

The president is routinely faced with the daunting problem of maintaining a credible reputation among his domestic audience. There tends to be strong sentiment among the public that the president should be active (Russett, 1990), and uses of force may be the policy tool necessary to ensure his reputation as a powerful domestic leader. If there is a general consensus on the part of the public that the risks associated with the use of force are acceptable, the credibility and future effectiveness of the president may be enhanced with a successful use of force (Ostrom and Job, 1986). This undoubtedly lends strength to the president in his bid to ensure domestic political survival, as any major use of force draws great attention to the president as an individual (Ostrom and Job, 1986). In his efforts to fulfill the expectations placed on him by those who elected him and the public in general, a successful use of military force may very well reward the president with greater approval ratings (Meernik, 1994). Several conditions monitored by the president affect his decision-making calculus.

Presidential Popularity

Partisan and overall public support for the president are two of the most important considerations driving the use
of force, for they provide a significant indicator of how the president is succeeding in his job as national leader (James and Oneal, 1991; Meernik, 1994; Ostrom and Job, 1986). Yet there remains some discrepancy in the use of force literature about the effect of presidential support on the use of military force. Some suggest relatively high approval ratings will lead to uses of force (James and Oneal, 1991; Ostrom and Job, 1986), while others show that a decrease in public support conditions the use of force by the president (James and Hristoulas, 1994; Meernik, 1994; Miller, 1995). The second argument seems more plausible. The opportunity to use force will always involve political dangers for the president, and it would seem foolish for him to risk losing public support when his standing is already high due to a perceived failure on his part to lead the United States in a successful military mission. Rather, a significant decrease in the president's base of support in the electorate would seem to cause military action abroad, for force as a political tool would be better used in an effort to restrengthen lost support rather than risk the chance that an opportunity to use force might not succeed, thus precipitating a drop in an already strong approval rating. Decisive military action during an international crisis, then, could bolster the president's approval rating and enhance his reputation as a capable domestic leader. Thus, a drop in the president's overall approval rating will
lead to the use of military force, given the opportunity. Also, a drop in the president’s partisan approval rating will lead to the use of force. Refer to Meernik and Waterman (1996) for a discussion of how the variables are operationalized.

Elections

An upcoming election can have a substantial impact on presidential decisions to use force, for the president may find himself and/or his party in a politically weak or vulnerable position. Limited military action may be seen as a "strategic" behavior undertaken by the president and, as such, the president is likely to use force in an effort to look more presidential as an election nears (Ostrom and Job, 1986). A clear-cut military victory in a crisis situation might foster an increase in the amount of favorable attention paid to the president and/or his political party, and hence may significantly improve the chance of his re-election and the election opportunities of members of his party. Thus, the president is more likely to use military force during an opportunity in the three months prior to congressional and/or presidential elections. The reader is referred to Meernik and Waterman (1996) for a discussion of how the election variable is operationalized.

Resource Evaluator

Because resource constraints often do not play an obvious role in the decision-making process, their
importance is easy to overlook (Fordham, 1995). Yet the president must always be cognizant of the fact that decisions to use force must fit within the bounds of what society can be expected to accept (Fordham, 1995). A crisis situation may necessitate a response by the United States, but the ability of the president to do so may not always be financially or politically feasible. The trade-off between military and other spending priorities is relevant to decisions about the use of force (Fordham, 1995). For example, an extended military encounter is always a possibility, and the president must be cautious of disrupting the economy through unplanned military action. Thus, when exploring the opportunity to use force, it is imperative that the conditions precluding the use of force given each particular opportunity be drawn out.

Military Spending

The amount of money spent on defense is immense, and its most important function may actually be symbolic (Wildavsky, 1992). Both domestically and internationally, levels of defense spending can affect public opinion and foreign adversaries. Nevertheless, the size of the defense budget should play a role in determining presidential uses of force. While the president is not appropriated a finite pool of resources to spend for defense purposes, financial constraints and pressures limit presidential action. While some of this money is set aside specifically for situations
involving the use of force, a larger proportion is used on personnel, training and other basic features of defense. When the amount of resources on hand for military purposes increases, though, the propensity to use force may also increase. The commitment of a large quantity of resources to military uses lowers the opportunity cost of using force by reducing the risk of retaining an insufficient amount in reserve for more important uses (Fordham, 1995). Thus, relatively larger budgets set aside for defense should allow more frequent uses of force.

Troop Levels

The extent to which the United States can mobilize troops and subsequently send them to regions of instability conditions the use of force. The absolute number of enlisted troops as well as military personnel stationed throughout the world in large part determines whether military force is a viable policy tool, for low levels of troops in absolute terms or troops engaged in other military activities may limit the ability of the president to use force in a quick and decisive fashion. Even when a large reserve of military personnel are available for military purposes, the ability to mobilize them in particular regions may be difficult and costly. While the United States is undeniably the most powerful nation on earth, it faces substantial risks and difficulties when moving troops to

See Wildavsky, pg. 386.
certain regions, and thus forces the president to examine closely the feasibility and possible costs of mobilizing troops for limited uses of military force. Thus, I suggest that more troops available for military action will increase the use of force by the president given the opportunity. Data are taken from World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers.

This presents a substantive outline of the factors conditioning presidential decision-making and the use of force as well as several testable and falsifiable hypothesis. A president must appear forceful for a number of different domestic and international reasons, yet must also be aware of and responsive to resource availability that constrain presidential action given the opportunity to use force. A president will not be able to use military force for political purposes whenever he wants; rather, the lack of attractiveness of military force as a policy tool based on resource considerations precludes action in certain crisis situations. This would not be evident during crises that severely threaten United States national security interests. Rather, these constraints would play a major role in restricting the use of force during less severe situations. In the following pages, an outline of the model used to predict the use of force by the president during the period 1976-1988 will be highlighted. Also, the findings will be presented and comment will be given concerning the
effect of each of the indicators on the propensity of the president to engage in military force abroad when given the opportunity.
CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

The empirical results from the cybernetic model of presidential decision-making between the years 1976-1988 can now be assessed. Table 1 presents the estimates and several other summary statistics from the binary probit analysis which includes domestic, international, and resource evaluation variables the president looks to when considering a use of force during a crisis. The use of the probit technique is appropriate when the dependent variable is dichotomous (Aldrich and Nelson, 1984; McKelvey and Zavoina, 1975), and is consistent with past studies of the presidential use of military force (Ostrom and Job, 1986). Three aspects of the probit analysis are addressed. First, the overall results of the cybernetic model are assessed. Particular attention is paid to the variables which are significant factors accounting for presidential decision-making. Second, the cases that the model fails to correctly predict are examined. This discussion is intertwined with an explanation of why several of the variables fail to account for presidential decisions to use military force. Finally, the strength of the model in relation to past inquiries is determined. Special attention is given to research which highlights the importance of either domestic
Overall, the results of the probit analysis indicate the model performs relatively well (see Table 1). Three of the eight variables achieve statistical significance, while all but one of the eight indicators are in the direction hypothesized. Only the measure of aggregate presidential popularity is in the direction opposite that predicted. Examining the predicted versus actual outcome matrix in Table 2 indicates that the model correctly predicts the uses and non-uses of force nearly 75% of the time. This is important for two reasons. Ostrom and Job (1986) suggest that because their model is correct three out of four times, there is substantial empirical support for their decision-making model. The same assertion can be made for the model developed in this research endeavor, which examines the use of force and presidential decision-making based on the opportunity to use force as a unit of analysis. This supports Meernik’s (1994) hypothesis that the opportunity to use force during a crisis situation based on environmental circumstances correctly and accurately represents the decision-making environment in which the president finds himself. Furthermore, with a 55-45 split between the use of force and the non-use of force during the period under examination, the model represents a substantial increase in predictive success over the naive alternative model that
always predicts the modal category (Ostrom and Job, 1986, 554). Between 1976 and 1988, there were 69 cases where the opportunity to use force existed, yet the president chose not to engage the military. Conversely, there were 83 cases where the president used military force given the opportunity.

While no measure of goodness of fit exists similar to that of the r-squared used in OLS regression analysis, the chi-squared indicator is a robust 42.094, which is significant at the .001 level. The value of the measure indicates a large deviation from the null hypothesis, thus showing there is no support for the hypothesis that the use of force is not influenced by the domestic, international, or resource variables outlined in this paper. The conclusion can generally be reached that the model provides support for the cybernetic theory of decision-making outlined above. A more in-depth look at the impact of the particular variables is undertaken below. The effects of each group of variables on presidential decision-making is examined. Also, comment on the findings in relation to past studies is given.

The estimated model reveals that one international variable, the number of states involved in a crisis

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This same model was run using Ordinary Least Squares regression, with the r-squared in that analysis being .24. The signs and significance of each of the independent variables was likewise similar.
situation, significantly influences presidential decision-making. It is significant at the .005 level, using a one-tailed test. As the number of actors actively committed to a crisis situation increases, the president is more likely to engage in the limited use of military force for political purposes. Two explanations can account for this finding. First, United States presidents may well believe that an increase in the number of actors involved in a crisis significantly threatens vital U.S. national security interests around the globe. Disparate and strong anti-American sentiments continually pervade international politics, and the president may find it in the best interest of the country to reduce or eliminate the possibility that security concerns might be undermined by the inclusion of new actors in an ongoing crisis. When the opportunity arises, the president may feel it necessary to make a strong international stand against potential adversaries who choose to enter a crisis situation. Second, the president may feel it necessary to support key allies that are either already involved in the crisis situation or become involved at a later stage. The U.S. has traditionally played a fundamental role in protecting allies during both war and peacetime, and the president may find it necessary to come to aid of an ally during a potentially volatile crisis.

The variables measuring a prior use of force by the U.S. in a region and the level of international tension
present during the crisis situation fail to achieve statistical significance. These results are not necessarily surprising. The indicator measuring international tension is one which centers on Soviet-American relations on a global context, which in itself is a very important consideration for the president when determining whether a use of force is a useful policy tool. Yet the period under examination can realistically be considered post-Cold War. While Soviet policies, actions, and intentions almost certainly drove U.S. policy between 1945-1975, their global influence waned somewhat after this period, thus allowing the United States to focus their attention on other political foes. Therefore, Soviet actions may not have conditioned American action as much during the 1976-1998 period.

Further, while a use of force may indicate some level of commitment by the United States to other nations around the world, it certainly doesn’t ensure the president will choose to use force again in that region to achieve political purposes. Each crisis situation is dominated by circumstances or characteristics unique to the particular crisis, and while past research (Meernik, 1994) has shown prior uses of force to be a significant factor in presidential decision-making, the president may be more concerned with present realities than past successes and failures.
Among the domestic contextual variables, the estimated cybernetic model indicates that one variable, the president's popularity among his party in the electorate, achieves statistical significance. As hypothesized, the propensity to use military force increases as the president's popularity within his political party decreases. This finding should come as no surprise, for it has long been hypothesized that presidential popularity is directly tied to his propensity to use military force during a crisis situation (James and Oneal, 1991; Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Ostrom and Job, 1986; Russett, 1990). A successful use of force given the opportunity by the president could be one way of reversing a downward spiral in his popularity rating among party supporters, thus bolstering his image among both the public as well as his political colleagues and adversaries.

Both the presidential election variable and aggregate popularity in the electorate fail to achieve statistical significance. This may indicate the president is not in the "habit of manufacturing opportunities to use force." (Meernik, 1994) Domestic factors play a significant role in ensuring presidential success or failure, and the president must guard his delicate and finite resources if reelection is to be sought. For this reason, he must be cautious not to waste these resources, in effect severely hurting his chance of reelection. Thus, a president may not be
conditioned by the population as a whole due to fears that potential swing voters may perceive his actions as unnecessary and not vote for him. Similarly, the political repercussions of an unsuccessful use of force during an election period may seal his fate as a one-term leader.

Finally, an examination of the resource variables a president must be aware of when determining whether to use force during a crisis situation reveals that the amount of money spent yearly for defense purposes achieves statistical significance and thus acts as a restraint on presidential decision-making. It is significant at the .005 level and is in the direction hypothesized. The estimated model suggests that defense spending plays a role in constraining presidential uses of force, allowing the president more freedom or latitude to use force when the defense budget is high and conversely restraining the use of force in crisis situations when money set aside for defense spending is relatively low. Thus, it appears spending on defense during a given year is an indirect cause of the use of force. The president must be aware of and responsive to the availability of defense funds before engaging in a use of force during a crisis situation, ensuring military spending remains balanced.

The resource variable measuring troop levels does not achieve statistical significance. While the amount of troops ready for military deployment is indeed important to
success, the ability of the United States to quickly and easily mobilize the necessary troop force to deal effectively with a crisis situation is impressive. Therefore, it may be that the president does not concern himself greatly with the amount of troops near a crisis situation, knowing the military can deploy rapidly the requisite force able to protect American interests.

This provides a brief analysis of the three environments hypothesized to affect presidential decision-making when considering a use of military force. Equally important inferences or conclusions might be drawn from an in-depth analysis of the opportunities which the model fails to predict correctly. As mentioned above, the model predicts correctly 114 of the 152 cases during the 1976-1988 time period, leaving 38 cases where the model incorrectly predicted either a false positive or false negative.

False Negatives and False Positives

Of the 38 cases where the model failed to correctly predict a use or non-use of force, 22 were false positives; that is, the model predicted a use of force when no use of military force actually occurred (see Table 3). Several trends can be advanced that suggest why the model incorrectly predicted these cases. In general, the events represented by these errors took place in three significant regions of the world: the Middle East (11), Africa (5), and Asia (4). All three regions share a very important trait:
each was a hotly contested area between the Soviet and American superpowers in an effort to remain the dominant global power, and while the U.S. may have found the opportunity present in many of these cases, the president may have decided against a use of force based on his calculations of possible retaliatory action by the Soviet Union. In short, the president potentially shied away from the use of military force during these particular opportunities due to possible feelings that the threat to United States national security was not strong enough to warrant the use of military force and that the U.S. might be interfering in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. For example, crisis situations predicted incorrectly by the model include Iraq's use of gas against the Kurds, the burning of the U.S. embassy in Libya, and fighting between Jordan and Syria. It is quite possible that U.S. presidents were risk-averse during these situations, given that these areas represent Soviet satellites, and were thus not always willing to use force as an avenue that might help achieve political objectives. While many prior uses of force have been undertaken in these regions by the United States, the fact that the variable measuring a prior use of force in a particular region didn't achieve statistical significance could suggest that the president does not base present decisions on past demonstrations or considerations of military force; rather, the president focuses more on
present considerations in calculating whether a use of force is a viable policy tool. Indeed, the president operates within an environment that is constantly changing, and he is thus not always able to rely on avenues that were successful in the past. One possible remedy for these incorrect predictions might be to include a variable measuring level of Soviet involvement in a particular crisis situation.

A second trend seems to suggest that many of the false positives predicted by the model occur during periods that led up to a presidential election. For example, 10 cases predicted incorrectly took place between January 1979 and December 1980, while another three each took place between the periods of April 1983 and December 1984 and June 1988 and December 1988. Stoll (1984) has found that election periods are significantly correlated with presidential uses of military force. According to these results, the variable measuring an upcoming election fails to achieve statistical significance. As highlighted earlier, this would seem to indicate that while the opportunity to use force during a crisis situation existed in the presidential decision-making calculus, he felt that the use of force for apparent political purposes might damage his chances of re-election. The president, it seems, believed that an election period was not the proper time to engage in risky and potentially threatening military encounters overseas. This again could readily account for the principal reason why the
presidential election period variable failed to achieve statistical significance in the original model.

Several other noteworthy trends bear mention. Of the 4 opportunities to use military force that involve the nation of Angola, the model incorrectly predicts 3. This might be explained by the importance the Soviet Union placed on this nation, and much like the above discussion, the president may be weary of involving the United States in an encounter which might then attract a response by the Soviet Union. Also, it seems the model misses on many of the cases where U.S. embassies were bombed, especially in Middle Eastern nations. These are certainly cases where the potential exists for a use of force by the United States, yet the continually unstable nature of the region may have dissuaded presidential action.

Finally, of the 22 cases where the model predicted a use of force when none actually occurred, most were initiated by other actors in the international system. For example, Soviet border problems with China, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, the Iran/Iraq border dispute, the military coup in Turkey, and the South African invasions of Angola all constitute opportunities where the United States reacted to other states rather than initiating military action against another state. Consequently, there may be another underlying process driving presidential decision-making when the U.S. is not one of the initial actors in the
crisis situation. It might thus be wise to include in future models some measure of the United States' role when the crisis situation first erupted.

The cybernetic model also misses on 16 false negatives; that is, the model fails to predict a use of military force when one was actually undertaken by the United States (see Table 4). Several trends are likewise revealed when a closer examination of these cases is undertaken. The most revealing might be the fact that many of these cases involve situations where the United States was initially committed to the resolution of the crisis through the use of force, rather than becoming involved as a third party later in the conflict. It is possible the model fails to predict these cases for the same reason as above; that is, there is potentially a separate process driving the use of force based on the initial involvement of the U.S. in a crisis situation. It is not unrealistic to assume the president wished to use force based on the domestic or international contextual factors outlined above, yet other pressures were ultimately responsible for the president's actions. This would seem feasible due to the high visibility within the public of some of the cases. For example, the model fails to predict correctly the North Korean killing of a United States military officer, the emplacement of Soviet MiGs in Cuba, the Iran hostage crisis, the Falklands War, and the attempted rescue of United States hostages held in Iran.
These are all critical opportunities that threatened U.S. national security as well as involving the U.S. in the crisis from the beginning, thus attracting public attention. It could therefore be argued that the immediate pressures (i.e. need to protect national security) not included in a president’s calculus of the crisis environment were the driving motivation behind a use of force.

Similar to the false positive cases examined above, many of the false negatives incorrectly estimated by the model (11 out of 16) occur in the regions of the Middle East (5), Africa (2), and Asia (4). While discussed above, it bears repeating that these regions were undoubtedly important to the projection and maintenance of both United States and Soviet military strength worldwide, and were thus key in swaying the balance of power one way or the other. In many of these cases, especially those which initially involved the United States, low levels of force were used. In fact, few of the cases predicted incorrectly by the cybernetic model involved more than moderate shows of military force given the opportunity. This was again probably due in part to U.S. fears that major uses of force might draw the Soviet Union closer to a major superpower confrontation with the United States. Thus, while the model still predicts each case incorrectly, including a measure that broke down the opportunities to use force into minor, moderate, and major levels might help alleviate some of
A Comparison with Past Research

The results reported here contrast significantly with past research. The estimated model suggests a relatively equal effect of domestic, international, and resource variables on presidential decision-making when determining whether the use of force is a viable policy tool. Ostrom and Job (1986) and James and Oneal (1991) have argued that domestic factors are the prime motivating factor behind the use of force, while Meernik (1994) has contested this assertion by noting that international stimuli, and not domestic conditions, actually account for presidential decision-making during a crisis situation. Ostrom and Job (1986, 557) report that "a president's approval rating is the most important variable in the model from a statistical point of view," and continue later by concluding that domestic factors as a whole are more important than international circumstances (ibid, 559). Conversely, Meernik (1994) finds prior uses of force in the region, involvement by the Soviet Union, and an American military presence to be among the most significant determinants of the use of military force. The results reported in this paper do not discount the importance of either domestic or international conditions or the results of these and other important works; rather, the results of the estimated model show that neither domestic or international factors are more
significant in the presidents decision calculus when the availability of resources are factored into the model. The president will generally examine and weigh equally both the domestic and international contexts before using military force. The model also indicates that resource availability in the form of military spending on defense must be taken into account when modelling presidential decision-making and the use of military force. This may be the most important finding of all. Past research has neglected from consideration this important contextual aspect of presidential decision-making, and the results generated here suggest that the president is actually constrained in his ability to use military force for political purposes whenever he wants. Taken as a whole, then, the presidential decision-making environment is more complex than previously reported by past research.

Thus, a more accurate representation of the decision-making process might be that the president examines equally both the international and domestic domains as well as the potential resource constraints placed on him before making a decision to use military force. This would seem to be an intuitively plausible conclusion to reach. If the president places more importance on the domestic environment, thus ignoring to a certain extent the possible ramifications a use of force can have on his standing in the international environment, he is setting himself up for a potential fall.
It would not be expected that any president would be so shortsighted as to ignore the impact a use of force can have on U.S. standing in the international system. For example, by focusing his attention on the effects a use of force can have on his popularity, the president very likely fails to examine possible signals sent by the Soviet Union during a crisis situation. As important as the president's popularity is to his electoral success, no less important is his strong stance toward the Soviet Union. In this scenario, it would seem justified to conclude that the president is tuned in to both his domestic and international responsibilities. Military action by the United States is not an act that goes unnoticed either domestically or throughout the world; rather, military involvement by the U.S. in a crisis situation generates worldwide attention. Thus, the tripartite context of environmental factors the president examines when considering a use of force should be explored and consequently understood as a whole.
The research question addressed here constitutes a novel way of looking at presidential decision-making and the use of military force by the United States. It sheds important new light on the study of the political use of military force by the president. Previous scholars have modelled incompletely the president's decision-making environment when confronted with a crisis situation. Indeed, both the domestic and international environments play significant roles in conditioning the president's proclivity to engage in a use of military force. The importance of these environments has been spelled out at length in past research, and have thus spawned important testable hypotheses that have greatly expanded our knowledge of both presidential decision-making and the use of force by the United States during the cold war period. They represent valid means of attempting to understand crucial presidential actions.

Yet recent theoretical progression has been slow in coming. Undoubtedly, quantitative analysis by Blechman and Kaplan (1978), Ostrom and Job (1986), James and O'Neal (1992), and Meernik (1994) have rightly generated much scholarly attention and debate and have thus added
significantly to our knowledge of the use of force as a presidential policy tool. But many of the current works are lacking cumulative vision, as they simply rework old models or add a new indicator to one of the established environments a president looks to when considering a use of force. This development will not foster a grand theory about presidential decision-making and the use military force.

Using the cybernetic paradigm of decision-making, a theoretical construct first employed by Ostrom and Job (1986) in this area, a testable model is developed that examines three distinct presidential decision-making environments. Modeling three environments is in itself not unique to the study of the use of force. Yet one of these environments, the presidential evaluation of resources that potentially constrain his ability to use force whenever he wants, has been unduly neglected in past research. Quantitative models have implicitly assumed the president never faces any limitations or hindrances when calculating whether force is a viable or useful policy tool. This conceptualization fails to accurately capture the entire presidential decision-making milieu. Instead, the key aspect of this research endeavor is not that one particular environment takes precedence over the others, as has been the train of thought of so many past studies, but rather that resource evaluation does make a difference in
presidential decision-making.

Key Findings

And the results lend a margin of credence to my argument. The model shows all three contextual environments affect presidential decision-making. This should come as no surprise, especially when one considers logically the onus of decision-making. The estimated results show that, along with the number of states involved in a crisis situation and presidential popularity among members of the party, the amount of money spent on defense correlates with presidential decisions to use force given the opportunity. It is hypothesized that the level of defense spending in a given year will affect the attractiveness of a use of force. For example, a president might be inclined to engage in a crisis situation if defense funding is high, yet his reaction to the same crisis situation might be more low key (i.e., use diplomatic channels longer, impose sanctions) if spending for defense purposes is tight.

These results should not be taken lightly, for there is an important link between presidential uses of force and dollars set aside for defense purposes. The "supply" of a critical resource affects decision-making when the use of military force is seen as a viable policy option. Presidents have typically used force when resource levels are high. Yet modeling resources as a part of the decision-making calculus of the president reveals an additional
element scholars have yet to consider. And not to be overlooked, this research validates the importance of using the opportunity to use force as the unit of analysis. A quarterly measure of the use of force fails to draw out accurately the immediate effects a crisis situation has on the president.

Research in this area has followed two strains of thought. Blechman and Kaplan (1978), James and Oneal (1992), and Meernik (1994) have followed the realist argument by showing that international conditions are primarily responsible for a president's decision to use military force. On the other hand, Ostrom and Job (1986), among others, suggest domestic factors are the principal impetus behind the presidential use of military force.

The research reported above lends support to both of these arguments. More importantly, it uncovers a new link undergirding presidential decision-making and the use of force, thus highlighting an important area of decision-making that needs to be studied more in-depth. Blechman and Kaplan (1978), Ostrom and Job (1986), and Meernik (1994) have all presented important new pieces of research that aid the development of the area of study. The goal here has been to do the same, albeit on a less grand scale. Theory-building requires little steps before larger hypotheses can be realized and tested. This research should provide one stepping stone that will allow research to expand beyond
Opportunities to Build

There are significant opportunities to build upon this research and expand even further our understanding of the political use of military force given the opportunity. The tripartite context that includes potential resource limitations placed on the president introduces several new avenues which need to be explored. While this research has the opportunity to use force as the unit of analysis, further studies should pay particular attention to specific subsets of these opportunities. For example, are the limitations or constraints placed on the president similar during minor, moderate, and major crisis situations? One would expect the president to base his decision-making during a major crisis solely on the good of the country or national security, yet this assumption might not bear out. It may be that minor or moderate crisis situations place the largest limitations on presidential decision-making, for the president may have little gain from engaging the military during a minor or moderate crisis. An examination of minor crises might reveal situations where the president chose not to use force because the payoff isn't great enough, while major crises represent a circumstance where constraints may simply not matter. While purely speculation here, these are important research questions that need to be addressed in the future. Reformulating old models will not do it.
A second area that requires future attention centers on the types of constraints a president faces when determining whether military force is a visible policy tool. This research tests a model that includes a limited set of resource constraint variables, yet other indicators deserve attention. Much of the difficulty lies in disaggregating these variables to correspond with the particular opportunity. For example, what effect does the federal deficit have on presidential decisions to use force? Does a large deficit negate the use of force? Further, does the health of the stock market condition the president's propensity to extend the military during a crisis? These again are critical questions which need answers, yet this will only happen if scholars make concerted efforts to develop the theories already in place. As Meernik (1994, 137) cogently and succinctly notes, "there is much work to be done." Indeed, there is.
Table 1

Predicting All Uses of Force 1976-1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>z-score</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>-2.103</td>
<td>-2.452</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Use of Force</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.304</td>
<td>.761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Tension</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>1.188</td>
<td>.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Severity</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>4.869</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party Popularity</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>-2.152</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate Popularity</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>1.313</td>
<td>.189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elections</td>
<td>.338</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>.441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense Spending</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>3.409</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop Levels</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>.490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 152
Percent Predicted Correctly: 73.6%
Log Likelihood Function: -83.67, p.<.01

Table 2

Predicted vs. Actual Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Positives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. China and Vietnam Border</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. China Invades Vietnam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Insurgency in Nicaragua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Columbia Rebels Seize Embassy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Iran/Iraq Border Dispute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cuban MIGs Sink Bahaman Boat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Military Coup in Turkey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Jordan/Syria Fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. South Africa Invades Angola</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. U.S. Embassy Bombed in Beirut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Marines Killed in Beirut Bombing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Saudi’s Down Iranian Planes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. USSR Border Problems with China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. U.S. Embassy in Libya Bombed</td>
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<td>15. Fighting in Cambodia</td>
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<td>16. South Africa Invades Angola</td>
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<td>17. Afghan War Spills into Pakistan</td>
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<td>18. Major Libyan Offensive in Chad</td>
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<td>19. Cuban Military Buildup in Angola</td>
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<td>20. Iraq Uses Gas Against Kurds</td>
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<td>21. Lockerbie Bombing</td>
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<td>22. Iran Boards U.S. Merchant Ship</td>
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Table 4
False Negatives

1. North Korea Kills U.S. Officers
2. Amin Threatens U.S. Citizens
3. Rights of Passage in Okhotsk
4. MIGs in Cuba
5. Iran Hostage Taking
6. U.S. Hostage Rescue Mission
7. U.S./Libya Clash in Sidra Gulf
8. Falklands War
9. Military Exercises Off Oman
10. Violence in Dominican Republic
11. Tension between Uganda and Kenya
12. Yemen Civil War
13. U.S. Rights of Passage in Black Sea
14. U.S. Troops in Bolivian Drug War
15. Elections/Instability in Haiti
16. U.S. Rights of Passage in Black Sea
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