GRAND STRATEGY AND FPA PERSPECTIVES: REEXAMINING THE "GOLDEN ERA" OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

by

MICHAEL DAVID FABOS

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Department of Political Science and International Studies
School of Government and Society
College of Social Sciences
University of Birmingham
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ABSTRACT

Grand strategy literature often treats the Truman administration's approach to America's post-World War II international challenges as a "golden era" for US strategy development. Other scholarship, however, emphasizing the complex and contingent quality of events at the very beginning of the Cold War, has suggested that aspects of this "wise men" portrayal require significant qualification. How are we to reconcile conventional interpretations of the Truman White House as the exemplar of strategy, with others that depict early American Cold War crisis responses as a series of impromptu reactions? This thesis pursues a synthesis of these diverging perspectives, utilizing a blend of grand strategy as a rational enterprise and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as an approach to understanding decisionmaking, to advance our understanding of US foreign policy at the start of the Cold War. To achieve this, the early years of the Truman grand strategy case are assessed, and FPA's poliheuristic theory is used for the first time to analyze US decisionmaking across three critical decision points at the onset of the Cold War (1946-1947): first in Iran, then Turkey, and finally Greece. Drawing on archival research at the Truman Presidential library and a wide range of contemporary accounts and Cold War scholarship, the resulting reappraisal of key events, contextual factors, and policymaking processes serves to qualify in important ways the "grand narrative" account of Truman era strategic thinking. It also argues that the concept of "emergent" strategy provides fresh insights into early American Cold War policy, and it explores the implications for present-day strategy formulation and foreign policy decisionmaking.

DEDICATION

To my wife Vicki, and to my parents David and Cecilia:

For your love, continued encouragement, and the countless ways

you have made this endeavor possible in the first place.

To my children Sophia, Isabella, and Ava:

For being my inspiration to complete this project. May this work serve as a reminder of (1) the ever-important role that history will play in helping you understand the world around you, and (2) what can be accomplished through continued curiosity and application, even at a later age. Gratefully all three of you are cleverer than I, so you will likely figure this all out much sooner.

Love you always.

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Timeline

1920s

July 1923	Treaty of Lausanne signed, establishing boundaries of modern Turkey
December 1925	Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality signed between Turkey and the Soviet Union

1930s

July 1936	Montreux Convention is adopted, regulating the use of the Turkish Straits
September 1939	World War II starts in Europe
October 1939	Great Britain, France, and Turkey sign the Treaty of Mutual Assistance

1940

October 1940	Greece enters World War II after Italy invades Albania

1941

April 1941	Nazi Germany invades Greece; Greece surrenders, and Germany's occupation begins
August 1941	Britain and the Soviet Union jointly invade Iran under Operation Countenance

1942

January 1942	Iran, Britain, and the Soviet Union sign the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance

1943

November 1943	Wartime conference held in Tehran; US, Britain, and the Soviet Union reaffirm their commitment to Iran's sovereignty and independence, and agree to support Turkey if it entered the war on the side of the Allies

1944

October 1944	Germany withdraws from Greece; secret “percentages” meeting is held between Churchill and Stalin

1945

February 1945	Turkey enters the war on the side of the Allies; Yalta Conference is held, where Stalin raises the issue of Turkish Straits security and the need for revising the Montreux Convention
March 1945	The Soviet Union sends official diplomatic note to Turkey, demanding a revision to the Montreux Convention and joint control of the Straits
May 1945	World War II ends in Europe
July 1945	Postwar Potsdam Conference is held and Turkey is discussed among the Big Three; Truman proposes internationalization of key waterways, including the Turkish Straits
September 1945	Azerbaijani Democratic Party declares control of Iranian Azerbaijan

1946

January 1946	Kurdish People’s Republic of Mahabad is proclaimed with Soviet backing; US and British troops withdraw from Iran; first session of the United Nations General Assembly opens; Security Council Resolution 2 concerning the crisis in Iran is adopted
February 1946	Kennan delivers “Long Telegram” to Washington; Stalin delivers “election” speech in Moscow; first session of the United Nations General Assembly closes
March 1946	Tripartite Treaty troop removal deadline passes and Soviet forces remain; Churchill delivers his famous “Iron Curtain” speech; Informal Security Council meetings are held on the Iranian question; The Greek Civil War begins as communist forces launch a guerilla campaign against the royalist government
April 1946	Moscow eventually agrees to withdraw troops in exchange for Iranian oil concessions; Initial US concerns regarding Turkey begin to escalate; American battleship USS Missouri is sent into the Mediterranean Sea; Security Council Resolution 3 is adopted and Soviet troops begin to depart Iran

May 1946	The Soviet Union completes its withdrawal from Iran
August 1946	The Soviet Union sends a forceful note to the Turkish Foreign Ministry reiterating its demands regarding the Straits, igniting a crisis; Turkey requests US support; US Secretary, War, and Navy Committee forms recommendations and meetings are held at the White House regarding the Straits crisis; US, Britain, and Turkey follow with communiques in response
September 1946	James Byrnes delivers "Speech of Hope" in Stuttgart, Germany
October 1946	Major powers exchange another round of diplomatic correspondences regarding the Straits; Soviet pressure over the Turkish waterways begins to subside
November 1946	US midterm elections are held
December 1946	After entering northern Iran, the Iranian army reclaims both autonomous regions (Azerbaijan and Kurdistan), ending the separatist movements

1947

January 1947	Kennan's "X Article" is published in *Foreign Affairs*
February 1947	Britain informs the US that it can no longer financially support the Greek government; several US meetings are held to discuss America's response to the Greek crisis
March 1947	President Truman delivers the Truman Doctrine, requesting funding for Greece and Turkey through a speech to a joint session of Congress; British funding to Greece and Turkey ceases
May 1947	Following Congressional approval of the Truman administration's request, America begins supplying the Greek government with financial and military aid
October 1947	Ratification of the Soviet-Iranian oil agreement is terminated by the Majlis

1949

October 1949	The Greek Civil War ends with the defeat of the Democratic Army of Greece

Introduction

In a 2009 publication entitled "Freedom's Challenge" by the international think tank the Atlantic Council, several scholars and former government officials penned their reflections marking the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The featured essays addressed all aspects of that landmark historical event, assessing its past, present, and future ramifications for international relations. The word "strategy" appeared time and again throughout the document; nearly every article included an argument concerning strategy in some regard, whether in delineating the US approach to Germany during and immediately after the Cold War, or in prescribing how the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) should navigate global affairs in the years to come. The last piece, "The Limits of Force: The U.S. in the 21st Century," written by former US Senator and future Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, then chairman of the Atlantic Council, contained a plea for engagement and building coalitions of common interest, saying "we need a clearly defined *strategy* that accounts for the interconnectedness and the shared interests of all nations" (Hagel, 2009, p. 150; my italics).

A closer review of the Atlantic Council, which characterizes its role as "advancing and advocating constructive U.S. leadership in the world alongside friends and allies," reveals a history rooted in mid-twentieth century US Cold War strategy and foreign policy (Since 1961, no date). It was an eventual outgrowth of the establishment of NATO in 1949, founded in 1961 through the efforts of some notable policymakers from Harry S. Truman's administration, including his trusted Secretary of State Dean Acheson. In many accounts of the Truman presidency and the early Cold War, officials like Acheson and his contemporaries are acclaimed as exceptionally far-sighted statesmen, credited with developing a sound strategic approach to counter the Soviet Union that successfully positioned the United States as a global leader. As one author argues, “the Cold War ‘wise men’…offered more thoughtful, consistent, and substantive strategic guidance to those around them. They identified clear threats, defined countries and resources of priority, and emphasized—at their best moments—a careful combination of military, diplomatic, and economic tools to pursue their ends” (Suri, 2009, p. 613). In light of this lineage, it is perhaps no surprise that we find a keen emphasis on strategy throughout the Council’s publications and activities, which the organization views as continuing in the tradition of these pivotal postwar decisionmakers.

Now more than ever, three decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War global order, the need for a “grand strategy” remains a recurring focus in assessments of American foreign policy, whether emerging from think tanks, practitioners, or academics. A quick survey of public-private fora demonstrates a topic in demand: “The Future of American Grand Strategy” conference at the Ohio State University (Mershon Center, 2020), the “Grand Strategy Summit” hosted by the Richard Nixon Foundation (Richard Nixon, 2023), and the “In Search of a 21st Century Grand Strategy” lecture delivered by Dr. Paul Miller at Dartmouth University (Miller, 2024), just to name a few. The primary emphasis of these events, along with many books, articles, and public hearings on the theme in the same period, has been finding the optimal strategy for the United States in a complex, multifaceted post-Cold War international landscape. Numerous proposals have been offered, ranging in content from sustained US primacy to new forms of strategic isolationism; nor has there been any shortage of intense debate on the relative merits of these approaches (Posen and Ross, 1996). And for every "new" strategic vision offered by those in office, there has been a plethora of critiques (Drezner, 2011; Dueck, 2015; Brands and Kahl, 2017; Schoenfeld, 2017). Yet as will become evident from survey and discussion in the chapters ahead, there is no straightforward consensus on what grand strategy *is*, even as both scholars and Washington policymakers are clear it is imperative for America to have one.

When scholars look to history for lessons in this area, as they frequently have, attention has often landed on arguably the last overarching grand-strategic concept to achieve truly sustained dominance: "containment," which was formulated during the Truman presidency (Cambanis, 2011; Gaddis, 2005). The efforts of the "wise men" of that era to construct a response to the unprecedented circumstances America confronted following World War II, along with the outcomes they achieved, have led some to refer to theirs as a "golden age" for approaching US strategy and foreign policy. The period has often been viewed as the ideal model, setting a standard by which current US policymaking should be judged. One source notes that "since the end of the Cold War pundits and policy makers have…described the Truman era as a time of unmatched grand strategic vision and innovation, and invoked it as a model for present-day foreign policy" (Brands, 2014, p. 17). There has been some dissent from the chorus, however; analysts who have suggested the strategy of the Truman period was neither so comprehensively and coherently conceived, at least at first, nor as cleanly implemented as mainstream accounts in the history and grand strategy literature typically state or imply. Even George Kennan himself, generally regarded as the principal intellectual architect of containment, observed later that

"American policy since World War II was not based on any global plan, but owed much to a great deal of improvisation" (Popescu, 2017a).

Considering Kennan's remark and associated scholarship, one is left with an overarching question which this thesis will address: how does one reconcile the archetypal view of the Truman administration as strategic to an exemplary degree, with other interpretations that find much of its early Cold War policy consisted of ad hoc, unstructured responses to crises? One way, this thesis will suggest, is to reach beyond the standard accounts of early Cold War US foreign policy in works of grand strategy and history to the domain of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). This subfield of Political Science and International Relations focuses on foreign policy decisionmaking at the level of national government, and aspires to devise models capable of reconciling elements of both rational calculation and cognitive bias that combine to influence leaders' decisions. In particular, the thesis will make use of the poliheuristic (PH) theory of decisionmaking, which incorporates both aspects in a two-stage decisionmaking process. By applying this approach to a detailed examination of how events unfolded in the early years of the Truman White House, this project will arrive at a synthesis that helps harmonize conflicting visions of the period as one of both grand strategy and improvisation.

To accomplish this, this study will focus on the earliest years of the Truman administration, from late-1945/early-1946 to the spring of 1947, and framing it as one of crisis decisionmaking. PH theory, with its blend of both rational and cognitive attributes, will be used to model the process of US decisionmaking that occurred during three early Cold War crises:

1. The 1946 crisis in Iran, in which the US decided to take a firmer stance against the USSR while resolving the issue diplomatically;
2. The American-Soviet standoff over Turkey later in 1946, in which the decision was taken to demonstrate resolve in support of Turkish rights in the Straits;
3. The decision to provide aid to Greece and Turkey to prevent communist gains and potential Soviet advances, leading to the proclamation of the March 1947 Truman Doctrine.

Using a structured, focused case comparison and a within-case method of analysis, each case study will begin by providing the historical narrative of the crisis, key events, and American actions taken. The broader US decisionmaking context will also be reviewed given its centrality in developing foreign policy outcomes.

Applying as a framework the two-stage PH model detailed in Chapter Two, each case will break down the decisionmaking process, incorporating the underlying context established at the outset. This assessment will begin by looking at the fundamental decision confronting the administration and the primary policymakers responsible for selecting a preferred foreign policy alternative. The potential policy options available to the Truman administration are then enumerated and analyzed using the first and second stages of the PH decisionmaking process. In the first phase of cognitive-based decisionmaking, this study will determine which policy alternatives were deemed as untenable by US officials across noncompensatory issues (e.g. political loss, threats to political leadership/survival) and dimensions. In the second stage, where rational choice is emphasized, this work will examine the options that remained and how American officials ultimately determined a course of action. Lastly, each case will be reviewed in terms of how crisis events, decision processes, and outcomes align with a grand strategy interpretation of the case. Based on this investigation, this thesis argues that PH theory provides a valuable construct to model decision outcomes across these early Cold War cases, and when used in conjunction with the concept of "emergent" strategy, serves to (1) offer a more robust understanding of how initial Truman administration strategy and foreign policy developed and to (2) provide an important caveat amid traditional grand strategy interpretations of the "golden era."

To begin, Chapter One surveys the topic of grand strategy via a detailed examination of the field, considering both the recent wave of critical literature and what this may imply for the Truman administration case. Chapter Two reviews the field of Foreign Policy Analysis, explains the mechanics of the poliheuristic model in particular, notes previous FPA-based engagement with the Truman era, outlines Truman's decisionmaking structure, and considers how PH Theory might be applied to this period. Chapters Three, Four, and Five then analyze the three key decision points during the early years of Truman's presidency – the Iranian Crisis of 1946; the subsequent conflict over the Turkish Straits in 1946; and the concurrent crisis in Greece which prompted the Truman Doctrine in March 1947. Each chapter will include all aspects of the case study approach discussed above, from an overview of the historical circumstances and the key elements of America's decisionmaking context, to the use of the PH model to assess potential policy responses across cognitive and rational decisionmaking factors. This analysis is then compared with the "grand narrative" version of the case, in pursuit of an integrated assessment of how each scenario contributed to an *emerging* Cold War strategy. Lastly, the Conclusion takes stock of findings across the cases, drawing out the potential implications for our understanding of the Truman era, PH Theory, and grand strategy today.

Chapter 1: Grand Strategy, the "Wise Men" Narrative, and its Discontents

"Strategy was not a lengthy action plan. It was the evolution of a central idea through continually changing circumstances…Any cookbook approach is powerless to cope with the independent will, or with the unfolding situations of the real world."[1]

~Jack Welch

Introduction

References to "strategy" are commonplace throughout the social sciences. The term has been used to characterize actions and decisions in circumstances ranging from the politics of Ancient Greece to the operations of modern corporations. Despite its pervasiveness, however, identifying and assessing strategy can be a tricky analytical endeavor. Even Carl von Clausewitz, who set the standard for strategic theory and analysis, found attempts to elucidate the word definitively a fruitless undertaking (Luttwak, 2001, p. 267). Yet as Sir Lawrence Freedman asserts in a recent comprehensive work on the subject, "everyone needs a strategy," and despite the confusion that the concept can engender, "*strategy* remains the best word we have for expressing attempts to think about actions in advance, in the light of our goals and our capacities. It captures a process for which there are no obvious alternative words" (2013, pp. ix-x).

Regarding the focus of this thesis, "strategic" is a term often invoked, perhaps more than any other era of American foreign policy, to describe US actions during the Cold War. US policy

[1] Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 504.

approaches and objectives during that period – with labels like "rollback," "flexible response," or "mutually assured destruction" – are either designated as formal strategies in themselves, or are framed as components of a larger strategic concept. There are good reasons for this; as Freedman puts it, situations and decisions dictate the need for strategy when there is a "sense of actual or imminent instability, [and] a changing context that induces a sense of conflict. Strategy therefore starts with an existing state of affairs and only gains meaning by an awareness of how, for better or worse, it could be different" (2013, p. 611). Moreover, strategy is also "frequently presented as a duel, a clash of two opposing wills" (2013, p. xi). These conditions that call for strategic thought and action were certainly present during the Cold War, when American policymakers were required to chart a course of action vis-à-vis their principal antagonist, the Soviet Union, in a bipolar postwar milieu. Faced with an international environment that was "uncertain, unstable, and thus unpredictable" (2013, p. 612), US decisionmakers *needed* a strategy and sought to act accordingly. Retrospective evaluations of America's actions in the Cold War era have, in turn, largely obliged this interpretation.

This viewpoint is most apparent – and often regarded as maximally appropriate – when seeking to understand the formative years of US Cold War foreign policy. Roughly spanning the presidency of Harry S. Truman (1945-1952), this period saw the development of America's overarching conceptual framework for the Cold War, "containment," which would provide the underlying blueprint for US actions in the decades to follow. The Truman years also featured a host of policymaking "wise men," including containment's chief architect George F. Kennan, who would leave an indelible mark on American strategy (Isaacson and Thomas, 2013). Furthermore, it was during this period that US foreign policy delivered some strikingly consequential outcomes. It is often argued, and reasonably so, that achievements like the Marshall Plan, the formation of NATO, and the revival of Japan and West Germany "largely stabilized the Western world and created 'situations of strength' that would redound to American benefit for years to come" (Brands, 2014, p. 18). Given the international environment that American decisionmakers faced following World War II, and the generally high regard in which these outcomes were subsequently held, it is little wonder that strategic studies – and the study of grand strategy specifically – has tended to look to this era as an aid to understanding the past, present, and possible future of US foreign affairs.

In more recent times, however, various works across Cold War history and US grand strategy have sought to provide a more nuanced characterization of American decisionmaking during this period. Some historians have argued that, particularly during the early years of Truman's presidency, there was less strategic coherence than is commonly attributed to US planners during this time. Meanwhile other scholars, building from general critiques of grand strategy as a concept, have constructed new perspectives on how strategy is formed and implemented, which call into question the traditional depictions of US foreign policy in the late 1940s. Indeed, on closer inspection of more recent analyses of the period through a grand strategy lens, these insights can be found in the form of caveats integrated into the narrative. Grand strategy analyst Hal Brands, for instance, concedes that "the 'golden era' tag can also be misleading, for it obscures just how messy and vexatious a process Truman-era grand strategy could be" (Brands, 2014, p. 18). Taking this evolving reappraisal seriously, however, leads to some interesting questions: How satisfactorily does grand strategy as a concept fit the events of the Truman White House? Though grand strategy may provide a partially valid interpretive reading of this era, are there other perspectives or models that can serve as a useful supplement when trying to understand US foreign policy after World War II? Did the first months and years of the "wise men" age of policymaking differ from later stages of the Truman administration's Cold War approach, and if so, what are the implications for applying a grand strategy paradigm to explain this period?

This chapter will explore the concept of grand strategy, noting both its proponents and its detractors, along with surveying how the case of the Truman presidency features within this literature. From there, it will review the treatment of the period in history and historiography, observing that many texts align with and reinforce the "grand narrative" portrayal, while noting others which push back against this popular characterization. It will also examine new developments, in the form of the "emergent strategy" concept, and suggest how this could aid in understanding the evolution of American thinking in the early Cold War. Lastly, the chapter will conclude by addressing two issues important to a focused reassessment of the Truman era: the time period covered, and the framing of the period as one of crisis decisionmaking. In doing so, it raises the possibility that analysis of this period may be usefully improved through the application of models from the study of Foreign Policy Analysis in International Relations (IR).

The Field of Grand Strategy

As Brands states, "'grand strategy' is still very much in vogue these days" (2014, p. vii). Even with the Cold War firmly in the rearview mirror, the rise of "grand strategy" as an intellectual construct in scholarly and professional analysis of US foreign policy continues apace. Academic and defense colloquia abound (Brady-Johnson Program, 2017; Citizenship and Crisis Initiative, 2016), which seek to understand and promote the role of grand strategy in US decisionmaking, past and future. Books and articles were written during the Obama presidency which strove to assess whether it had successfully forged a "doctrine" or grand strategy of its own (Dueck, 2015; Clarke and Ricketts, 2017). During the first Trump administration, there followed a veritable deluge of reviews centered around the concept of grand strategy (Dombrowski and Reich, 2017; Popescu, 2017a; Brands, 2018), especially upon the release of the administration's National Security Strategy in December 2017. While some critics question whether the central elements of what a grand strategy requires have been properly addressed in the American political sphere (Friedman and Logan, 2016, p. 14), it is certainly true that the concept has generated a cottage industry of committed scholars, and has come to occupy a prominent position among the topics regularly discussed in the US policymaking, military, and specialist media communities.

A survey of scholarship from proponents of grand strategy frameworks reveals two general areas of thematic concentration. The first primarily centers on defining the contours of grand strategy and analyzing its theoretical foundations. The project of delineating the concept and what it means for a given nation-state encompasses longstanding classics in the military strategy field, from the pioneering *On War* by Clausewitz and *Strategy: The Indirect Approach* by B.H. Liddell Hart, to more contemporary works like Edward Luttwak's *Strategy: The Logic of War Peace* and Colin Gray's (2010) writings on modern strategy and statecraft. More recently, however, grand strategy appraisals have sought to unpack the concept more thoroughly in an academic context, as in the case of Rebecca Lissner's 2018 article 'What Is Grand Strategy? Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield,' Nina Silove's 'Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of Grand

Strategy,' and the comprehensive *Comparative Grand Strategy: A Framework and Cases* edited by Thierry Balzacq, et al. Such contemporary articles have sought greater clarity on how the term is used, how it fits among prevailing schools of thought in IR, and how the field's research agenda should proceed going forward.

The second strand focuses on recounting the historical practice of grand strategy, from the great empires of the past to the international challenges of the present. Compendiums like *The Making of Strategy: Rulers, States, and War* and *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (Murray, et al., 1994; Kennedy, 1991) primarily use historical case studies to evaluate the presence and quality of strategy in past eras of great power politics, and to draw insights for modern-day statecraft. The largest subset of this thread focuses on US strategy, while seeking to prescribe an optimal approach for contemporary American foreign policy in light of history's lessons. This US-centric quality to the field is easily explained, given the preeminent role still occupied by the United States even in an increasingly multipolar world (Lissner, 2018). Scholarship in this area can range from texts spanning a wide historical sweep, like Colin Dueck's *Reluctant Crusaders: Power, Culture, and Change in American Grand Strategy*, to more pointed studies on current presidential administrations, such as Brands' *American Grand Strategy in the Age of Trump*.

These two thematic clusters in the literature – theory and application, simply put – are of course not completely separate from one another, and one can often find the same authors either engaging on both fronts or employing a cross-section of each theme within one study. Notwithstanding a particular writer's focus in a given piece of scholarship, however, the vast preponderance of these researchers and practitioners endorse the premise that grand strategy represents a *necessary* component in understanding and formulating a powerful state's interactions on the global stage.

A closer examination of the first group demonstrates a considerable degree of variation and contest over how the term "grand strategy" is used, and indeed how strategy itself is generally defined (Murray, et al., 1994, p. 1; Brands, 2014, p. vii; Silove, 2018, p. 2). It is common for those researchers that employ the concept to begin by observing that its meaning is often "unclear" (Brands, 2012, p. vii) and "notoriously difficult to define" (Murray, et al., 1994, p. 1). The co-existence of competing delineations has, as Lissner notes, often led scholars to "talk past each other, [to] use definitional quibbles to invalidate competing ideas, and [to] define alternative explanations selectively" (2018, p. 55). Many of the characterizations favored by more recent studies of grand strategy build on the expansive conception put forth by the oft-quoted Liddell Hart, who viewed it as something that extends beyond simply military affairs; a term that should incorporate the mobilization and direction of *all* instruments of national power toward political ends. Dueck provides a useful summary of some prominent definitions offered by contemporary theorists:

> Any broad-based policies that a state may adopt for the preservation and enhancement of its security.
>
> A political-military 'means-ends' chain, a state's theory about how it can best 'cause' security for itself.
>
> A state's overall plan for providing national security by keeping national resources and external commitments in balance (2006, p. 9).

Other classifications range wider, however, to encompass both – at a high conceptual level – aspects of a leader's *weltanschauung*, and – at a lower, granular level – more tactical and operational planning for implementation (Reich and Dombrowski, 2017).

Most interpretations seek to incorporate elements of these various definitions, while establishing some basis for limiting what counts as the making of grand strategy. In the spirit of compromise, Gray suggests seeking a description that is "right enough;" it "does not have to meet any and every objection, but it must highlight the core of its subject, and it must not mislead" (2010, p. 17). This thesis embraces the relatively expansive definition put forward by Brands, who portrays grand strategy as the "intellectual architecture that gives form and structure to foreign policy…a purposeful and coherent set of ideas about what a nation seeks to accomplish in the world, and how it should go about doing so" (2014, p. 3). In contrast to some of the other delineations discussed in this chapter, this definition encompasses aspects of both the high-level principles that lead to a strategy *and* its implementation in practice. The two fundamental themes referenced in his construct – "intellectual architecture" and the notion of a how a "coherent set of ideas" should be enacted – are not only essential to understanding depictions of Truman era grand strategy, but align well with this thesis' assessment of emerging strategy and the decisionmaking process of early Cold War policymakers.

In addition to addressing questions of terminology, this strand of grand strategy literature focused on conceptual underpinnings is also concerned with how the study of grand strategy fits within the field of IR, theoretically and methodologically, and what its research agenda should be. Many scholars consider it to be a subset of the more comprehensive concept of "foreign policy;" as Luttwak explains, grand strategy does "not encompass all the relationships of all participants in the totality of international politics" (2001, p. 209). From this follows the question of whether the study of grand strategy falls most naturally within a particular IR school of thought (e.g. realism), and where it sits methodologically within the discipline. Silove suggests that contributions on grand strategy have often suffered from unresolved questions over methods and evidence, observing that (at the time of her writing) "there is little explicit discussion of methodologies of concept construction in the literature on grand strategy" (2018, p. 5). Lissner suggests multiple potentially productive research agendas for the study of grand strategy (2018, p. 67), arguing that despite the inconsistencies in the literature regarding lexicon and method, "the study of grand strategy is necessary for scholars and strategists alike. As a framework for scholarship, it trains attention on highest-order questions of international relations" (2018, p. 53).

The empirically-oriented strand of grand strategy literature typically takes the form of historical case studies, using these to demonstrate the presence of grand-strategic thought in international events. Scholars have identified examples of grand strategy across epochs of Western history and culture, ranging from the Delian League and Roman/Byzantine strategies of antiquity to the modern era. British and German strategic development in the 19th century tends to feature prominently (Murray et al., 1994; Kennedy, 1991; Luttwak, 2011). Such case studies generally, though not always, center on significant geopolitical moments where a nation's choices impacted multiple countries or altered the international landscape. Where they focus on the United States, they often span the nation's foreign policy evolution from the so-called "isolationist" orientation of the early Republic, through the expansion of America's strategic horizons during and after World Wars I and II, to the "unipolar moment" of the post-Cold War environment (Murray et al., 1994; Kennedy, 1991). Work in this vein also stretches beyond the academy, encompassing large bodies of analysis produced by think tank programs focused on US grand strategy. The foreword of a 2019 publication from the Center for a New American Security, "New Voices in Grand Strategy," noted the topic's ubiquity in contemporary US foreign policy discussions, along with how the "debate [is] perhaps wider than at any time in decades" (Fontaine and Schulman, 2019, p. 2).

Contributions to this literature often have a substantial prescriptive dimension, seeking to propose the answer as to what America's role and course in the world should be. Here we find contention between calls for a US grand strategy of restraint (Posen, 2014) or "offshore balancing" (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2016), and advocacy for maintaining forward-leaning postures like "deep engagement" or "liberal hegemony" (Brooks, Ikenberry, and Wohlforth, 2013; Friedman and Logan, 2016). Though the specific strategy advocated by certain authors may vary, and they are often highly critical of the quality of actual US strategy, collectively this scholarship shares a premise that grand strategy remains an important and useful lens both for understanding and conducting American foreign policy.

Interpretations and representations of America's experience with strategy are often important in advancing these arguments. A viewpoint commonly embraced since the end of the Cold War has been that during that conflict the US *had* a clear strategy, but the country has since lacked sufficient long-term strategic vision to grapple with 21st century issues. Many articles on current international politics judge that contemporary US strategic efforts do not live up to the standard established by predecessors in the era of Truman and Kennan. A 2015 article in the *National Interest*, for example, entitled "How George Kennan Would Contend with China's Rise," asks "what is the grand strategy to succeed containment?" only to conclude that the answer actually lies not in seeking a new "Mr. X" but in revisiting and reviving Kennan's own analysis in "The Sources of Soviet Conduct" (Manning and Przystup, 2015). The long shadow of Kennan was also present in the Atlantic Council's 2021 publication of "The Longer Telegram" (a reference to Kennan's famous 1946 dispatch from Moscow) in which the anonymous author aspired "to provide a similarly durable and actionable approach to China" (*The Longer Telegram*, 2021). These are just two examples among many others illustrative of how the "wise men" of the Truman administration live on as a frequently invoked model for how US grand strategy should be formed and implemented.

<u>The Truman Era: A Case Study in Grand Strategy</u>

Indeed, as the aforementioned articles suggest, the most renowned historical case study of US grand strategy is the onset of the Cold War during the Truman administration. Stretching approximately from the closing months of World War II until the outbreak of the Korean War, this period is often depicted as a high-water mark for strategic thinking and policy planning on the part of American officials. "'The Truman team's strategy marked the golden age of U.S. foreign policy,'" former Council of Foreign Relations president Leslie Gelb wrote in 2009, "'as glorious in our history as the founding fathers' creation of the Constitution'" (Brands, 2014, p. 17). In the early 1990s, the search for a new grand strategy was dubbed the "Kennan sweepstakes," an allusion to Kennan's role in the late 1940s as head of the State Department's Policy Planning Committee and his development of containment principles (Berkowitz, 1998; Manning and Przystup, 2015). Later scholars and statesmen would look frequently for inspiration to this era's coterie of "sophisticated strategic thinkers...[and] 'wise men' of the Cold War" who, unlike more recent policymakers "defined clear national interests, identified pressing threats (foreign and domestic), and devised policies that promised to secure interests from threats at manageable cost" (Suri, 2009, p. 613; Gray, 2011). And others have pointed to Truman's leadership, suggesting that his administration's foreign policy achievements lay in his ability to get the "'big things' right" (Gray, 2011, p. 210; Spalding, 2006).

This "grand narrative" of the Truman period is not only found in IR scholarship, but is also present throughout works in Cold War history as well. Notwithstanding the literature's evolution from "orthodoxy" through revisionism, to post-revisionism (Gaddis), the preponderance of American Cold War history has been consistent, whether via explicit argument or implicit assumption, that American thought and action were notably strategic in character during this time. Retrospective accounts by members of the administration have contributed to and bolstered this interpretation directly through their own words.

A landmark text in this regard is John Lewis Gaddis' *Strategies of Containment*. Despite variations *within* the broad strategic framework of containment during the postwar era, Gaddis finds that "whatever the oscillations between symmetry and asymmetry, whatever the miscalculations, whatever the costs, the United States and its allies sustained a strategy that was far more consistent, effective, and morally justifiable than anything their adversaries were able to manage. Indeed, it is difficult to think of *any* peacetime grand strategy in which the results produced in the end corresponded more closely with the objectives specified at the beginning" (2005, p. 381). Authors like Michael Hogan stress the interconnectedness and coherence of strategic ideas in the Truman administration, arguing that its officials constructed a unifying "national security ideology" which included a "sense of destiny and mission" and a collective understanding regarding the Soviet threat and military preparedness (1998, pp. 13-15). Others point to the bonds between key Truman decisionmakers of the "old Establishment" who shared a similar service ethos, were suited to the task at hand, worked well together, and were ultimately "secure in their common outlook" (Isaacson and Thomas, 2013, p. 741). Even revisionist works, which offer a more critical appraisal of the era, suggest a clear and distinct intellectual architecture at work among key US officials. Examples of this can be found in Daniel Yergin's discussion of the emergence of the "Riga Axioms" in *Shattered Peace* (1977), and in William Appleman Williams' *Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, which contends the United States pursued an "Open Door Policy" that was "supported by a thoroughly bipartisan assortment of liberals and conservatives…[and] guided the community of American policymakers through the war and on into the cold war era" (2009, p. 209).

The precise narratives of American histories of this timeframe may differ, but the idea of a grand strategy at work is ever-present. Melvyn Leffler (1992), for example, observes that although senior policymakers in the Truman White House had their disagreements over how to respond to the Soviet Union and postwar events, officials generally came together in furtherance of shared beliefs which directed American actions. Barry Rubin discusses how key personnel like "Harriman, Bohlen, Berle, and others" converted "one by one" to establish commonly held views regarding the Soviet threat (1985, p. 43). Aaron Friedberg's *In the Shadow of the Garrison State* argues that a cohesive "strategic synthesis" emerged later, but was nonetheless molded by collective "anti-statist influences that were particularly potent during the opening stages of the Cold War, from the late 1940s to the closing years of the 1950s" (2000, p. 340). And in his reassessment of US policy and Eastern Europe in 1945, Marc Trachtenberg asserts that "there *was* a guiding philosophy…The U.S. government was trying to achieve a real understanding with the U.S.S.R. on the fundamental issue of how the postwar world was to be organized" (2008, p. 131).

In no small part, this interpretation also stems from retrospective works by former Truman administration contemporaries. Dean Acheson's reflective *Present at the Creation* is certainly one of the most well-known examples of this. In one passage, he states in panegyric fashion:

> When the Truman government found its footing in foreign affairs, its policies showed a sweep, a breadth of conception and boldness of action both new in this country's history and *obviously centrally planned and directed*. We had seen it in the early domestic policies of the New Deal and in our vast military effort in the 1941-45 war, but not before in foreign policy. The 1947 assumption of responsibility in the eastern Mediterranean, the 1948 grandeur of the Marshall Plan, the response to the blockade of Berlin, the NATO defense of Europe in 1949, and the intervention in Korea in 1950 – all those constituted expanding action in truly heroic mold. All of them were dangerous. All of them required rare capacity to

> decide and act. All of them were decided rightly, and vigorously followed through (1987, p. 731, my italics).

This post-hoc framing not only highlights a successful, guided strategy but also conveys a foreign policy era that was unprecedented in US history, worthy of the "golden age" moniker it would later acquire. Truman's (1956) own memoirs also emphasize the degree to which key actions were planned or premeditated, including the administration's response to Soviet threats in the Mediterranean, and efforts to overhaul and reorganize America's defense structure. Other key officials were more circumspect, in their later writings, about claiming to have followed an entirely overarching and consistent strategy throughout the period (Kennan, 1983; Bohlen, 1973), but most would likely concur with Robert Lovett's later comments that "it was an exciting period and a fruitful period and a period of extraordinary good will" (1971).

Notwithstanding variations in emphasis between authors, the dominant theme inherent in this "grand narrative" portrayal of the era remains clear: sagacious policymakers were at the helm, and they achieved an effective consensus around a robust vision for reckoning with the international challenges they faced in a novel postwar environment. Not every source, in IR or history, is entirely on board with this depiction of the early Cold War years, however. It is to these sources, which seek at least to qualify the "grand narrative" assessment, if not altogether dissent from it, that we turn to next.

<u>Issues with Grand Strategy and the Truman Era 'Grand Narrative'</u>

The notion of grand strategy as a driver of national action is not without its critics and sceptics, many of whom have argued that it risks projecting onto state behavior a degree of rigorous strategic thinking that is rarely truly present (Betts, 2000; Milevski, 2016; Reich and Dombrowski, 2017). Others have suggested that alternative approaches to foreign policy decisionmaking – emphasizing factors like bureaucratic and organizational politics, structural international factors, or complex global systems – have downplayed the practical usefulness of grand strategic designs as an explanatory guide to national action (Jervis, 1997, pp. 44-48). Famous leaders and principal policymakers, including former US presidents ranging from Abraham Lincoln to Bill Clinton, have also questioned the merits and utility of strategy at the level grand strategy typically engages (Betts, 2000, p. 18; Brands, 2014, pp. 14-15).

In keeping with this line of reasoning, there has been a recent wave of scholarship interrogating the rising importance placed upon grand strategy as a concept. Alexander Kirss noted in 2018 that new literature has begun to push "back against the consensus that grand strategy matters," questioning "whether academics and policy elites place too much stock in strategy, particularly grand strategy, as a cure-all for American foreign policy woes" (2018, p. 117). A major reason for this is the vast assortment of international challenges the United States currently faces, and the resulting difficulty of integrating them all into a single strategy while maintaining enough coherence to be purposeful. A glance at the list of "Most Pressing Foreign Policy Issues" put forward for then president-elect Joe Biden by the Council on Foreign Relations (no date) features everything from state-level threats posed by China and Russia, to transnational issues like

COVID-19 and cybersecurity. Due to this multi-threat environment, Kirss claims that "the complexity of the modern world precludes the conceptualization of a single, uniform grand strategy that would be responsive to the full range of threats a country faces. Even if such a strategy is conceivable, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement" (2018, p. 117).

Some skepticism of grand strategy is rooted in the conceptual issues involved with arriving at a consistent definition that all are willing to work with, as discussed earlier (Silove, 2018; Lissner, 2018, p. 55). The focus here is on the question of whether the vision of "grand strategy" in theory can be realized in practice. In a comprehensive examination in 2000, "Is Strategy an Illusion?" Richard Betts understands that strategy is widely regarded as an "essential ingredient for making war either politically effective or morally tenable," but questions how close to the ideal of strategy it is possible to obtain in reality (2000, p. 5). He enumerates several criticisms often levelled at the idea, from strategy's limited predictive ability to issues of organizational process, noting that although "strategy does sometimes work," most criticisms are "stronger than generally realized" and all are "valid in some cases" (2000, p. 46). Reich and Dombrowski, in their book *The End of Grand Strategy,* highlight the limits of employing grand strategy as a lens of analysis in a US context. Through a review of America's naval operations, they conclude that not only does the "very idea of a single, one-size-fits-all grand strategy [have] little utility in the twenty-first century" it is "often counterproductive" (2017, p. 2). Strategies, they argue, need "to be calibrated according to operational circumstances. They exist in the plural, not in a singular grand strategy" (2017, p. x).

Do these reservations about grand strategy theory and practice apply even to the US "golden age" during the early years of the Cold War? For one, the conceptual and methodological criticisms noted above are evident in the "grand narrative" of this case study. In some pieces, we find strategy scholars offering different definitions of strategic design at the outset of their work, while still maintaining comparable strategic interpretations of key Cold War events (Brands, 2014; Dueck, 2006). Furthermore, if we expand upon the critique leveled by Betts and others, the identification and evaluation of grand strategy typically place a premium on foreign policy *outcomes*. As Daniel Drezner points out, "strategic planning affects three aspects of foreign policy: the plans, the planning, and the planners. If the policy plans are actually implemented, their effect on foreign affairs is self-evident. Even if they are not implemented, however, the *process* still matters" (2009, p. 14, my italics). A large cross section of literature that treats the Truman White House as an exemplar of grand strategy tends to treat the achievements or outcomes of administration policy – the formation of NATO, the air lift that overcame the Berlin blockade, or the resolution of events in the Mediterranean – as evidence of impressive strategic thinking and execution. The strategy-making process from which these outcomes emerged, and related factors like the domestic political context, receive less attention (Brands, 2014, p. 18).

Other scholars of the Truman years have also taken issue with the extent to which US foreign policy can be labeled "strategic." Robert Jervis, in his investigation into the impact of the Korean War on the Cold War, states that "American policy in the years 1946-1950 was *not* highly coherent" (1980, p. 564, my italics). In their evaluation of US strategy and political warfare in the early Cold War, Lucas and Mistry (2009) agree, arguing that the dominant narrative of the period risks projecting an "illusion" of coherence onto a more complex reality.

George Kennan, they note, still serves as “a divining rod for many academics trying to lay out an American foreign policy of clarity and consistency.” But although he “occupied a key space in the formulation and implementation of U.S. foreign policy…this did not result in strategic coherence for American foreign relations.” Kennan and his era were characterized less, they contend, by “the development of a comprehensive U.S. strategy” than “the pursuit of operations in the absence of one” (2009, p. 40).

Some researchers, like Wilson D. Miscamble, have concluded that US foreign policy developed iteratively during this period, and was less the product of strategic foresight:

> This study…reveals clearly that this policy was not simply a ‘working-out’ of a clearly delineated doctrine or strategy of containment. Nor can it be presented as conforming to any other deliberately fashioned schema. Although President Truman and his advisers determined as early as 1946 that Soviet actions endangered American security and resolved to meet this danger, no explicit course of action was charted for them. Only in a piecemeal and staggered manner did the Truman administration decided upon the major elements of the American response to the Soviet Union…[establishing] that foreign policy neither was built in accord with the design of a single architect – whether Kennan or another – nor conformed to any overarching strategy (1992, p. 347).

Deborah Welch Larson comments, along similar lines, that in 1946, “Truman improvised, following no consistent policy toward the Soviet Union” (1985, p. 250). Recollections from contemporary actors lend support to this perspective. As Louis Halle – then a State Department official – recounted, diplomats in the 1940s "were faced with the awesome realization that 'the official foreign policy that had been projected for the postwar world could not be made to work.' As a result, Halle recalls, the United States was without a workable foreign policy until the spring of 1947" (Larson, 1985, p. 250). This view was also shared by some outside observers at the time; Lord Halifax, the British ambassador to the United States, lamented the transition from the "great Roosevelt impetus" to the "indeterminate direction" of Truman's early foreign policy (Messer, 1982, p. 9).

It is worth noting that the question of whether, and from how early on, the Truman administration operated from a clear grand-strategic vision is not always the central concern of works cited. Often it is a matter of passing or tangential interest to authors in pursuit of a larger thesis focused elsewhere. As such, while there are accounts in the literature that implicitly question the "grand narrative" approach to the early Truman years – suggesting that the level of cohesion among planners may have been less than sometimes portrayed, and that decisionmaking was primarily reactive to events – these works do not generally explore the case in maximum depth since they have other priorities. There is scope, however, for reevaluating how American strategy-making really unfolded in this "golden" period – acknowledging its often improvisational and evolving nature – and what this may hold for both US strategy and grand strategy as a framework for understanding a nation's approach to foreign affairs.

Emergent Strategy

Strategy, obviously, plays a significant role in other disciplines besides International Relations. The field of business management, for example, is laden with studies and reflections on how strategy should be developed and implemented in an industry context. "That strategy is, perhaps, *the* master concept of contemporary times is beyond dispute" declared a 2013 editorial in the journal *Business History*. The piece further maintains that an "organization not styled in the couture of strategy would be regarded as idiosyncratic at best – perhaps run by a self-styled maverick – or, at worst, negligently managed: what well-run organization would not have a strategy?" (Carter, 2013, p. 1047). In addition, there has long been a cross-pollination of ideas between political science and business management in the pursuit of "trans-historical" insights about strategy (Carter, 2013, p. 1047). Going one way, we find primers for investment managers on how the teachings of Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Alfred Thayer Mahan can help with their craft (Ellis, 2013, p. 6). In the opposite direction, industry management theories have, in turn, informed new approaches to thinking about international politics and foreign policy. One such idea – the concept of *emergent* strategies – advocated influentially by Henry Mintzberg, has gained some traction in the analysis and critique of grand strategy (Popescu, 2017, p. 9; Mintzberg and Waters, 1985).

Applying this concept to American foreign policy and strategy, Ionut Popescu (2017) observes that among business analysts' assessment of strategy there is a divide between "a 'design school' focused on planning and execution versus those of an 'emergence school' focused on learning and adaptation." The key insight of Mintzberg and his associated school of thought, he argues, is that "successful strategies can form without being fully formulated in advance" (2017, p. 9). "Where patterns develop in the absence of intentions, or despite them," according to Mintzberg, we have an emergent strategy (Mintzberg, 1987, p. 13). The process of emergence, and the study thereof, emphasizes *learning*: "coming to understand through the taking of actions what those intentions should be in the first place" (Mintzberg et al., 2005, p. 189). Whereas the study of grand strategy in IR has tended to emphasize deliberate and comprehensive planning in advance, an "emergent strategy" analysis suggests instead an evolving, "incremental strategy-making process" (Popescu, 2017, p. 10). As Popescu concedes, deliberate strategizing of course has its place, but the shift of emphasis suggested by the concept of "emergence" can be productive (2017, p. 11). The "relation between following a coherent long-term grand strategy and achieving success in foreign policy is much more tenuous than commonly assumed," and an approach to grand strategy that is too rigidly fixated on advance planning can contribute to failure by constraining short-term learning and adaptation (2017, p. ix). He proposes looking for evidence of the "emergent strategy" paradigm, with its emphasis on learning and adaptation, through structured case studies of US foreign policy periods.

Popescu actually includes the Truman era among his cases in *Emergent Strategy and Grand Strategy*, examining the development of containment and early American-Soviet engagements through the alternative lenses of both grand strategy and emergent strategy. He begins with an analysis of Kennan's planning documents, which established the strategic framework of containment that would inform major foreign policy actions. He then assesses three "impactful policy decisions of this formative period" for Cold War strategy: the Truman Doctrine, the adoption of the Marshall Plan, and the formation of NATO. After analysis of these events, he finds that “though Kennan’s plans…had some impact on the contours of the early containment strategy, the emergent elements nevertheless had a more significant impact than the designed ones on the strategy’s short- and long-term success.” “On balance,” he concludes, “the Emergent Strategy model explains the formation of three of the most successful elements of containment better than the grand strategy one” (2017, pp. 28, 30-31, 45).

Popescu’s study offers an insightful challenge to the traditional grand strategy framework, providing a lodestar for the agenda of this thesis. It contributes valuably to scrutinizing the “grand narrative” often employed to discuss the development of US foreign policy during the crucial early Cold War years. This thesis builds upon its analysis, while differing in a few ways. First, in keeping with some of the criticisms noted earlier, this thesis does not treat “grand strategy” and “emergent strategy” as competing alternative paradigms. Rather it seeks a synthesis by suggesting that in reality the process of grand strategy-making *is* to a significant degree a process of “emergence” (Balzacq, T., Dombrowski, P. and Reich, S., 2019b); or to put it another way, grand strategy is something that emerges from a process of reaction and learning like that described in the “emergent strategy” model. Second, Popescu’s review of the evidence of a grand strategy at work is derived almost entirely from Kennan and his policy papers, with far less attention paid to the writings and actions of other major players during this period (e.g. Byrnes, Harriman, Acheson, Marshall). This thesis knits together a wider range of sources from contemporary participants. Lastly, this thesis aims to unpack more fully the decisionmaking *process* to more clearly delineate how learning – among other cognitive aspects that influence decisions – features in strategy development.

Toward an Alternative Framework: Timeframe, Crisis, and Decisionmaking

"Plans are worthless," President Eisenhower once observed, drawing on his military experience, "but planning is everything" (Freedman, 2013, pp. 609-610). This pithy remark speaks to the quixotic-yet-necessary quality of efforts to translate the ideals of strategy into real-world practice. For the reasons discussed in this chapter, there is merit to interpreting postwar US foreign policy through a grand strategy lens, especially given the accomplishments of the period, but there is also a danger in taking the "grand narrative" portrayal too far. Though the outcomes achieved by US officials after 1945 were indeed substantial, there is cause to bring the process of decisionmaking into sharper focus, and in so doing, reevaluate the extent to which policy reflected an overarching strategic plan. The concept of "emergent strategy" provides a fresh perspective through which one can assess US policy development as American-Soviet tensions arose and proceeded, helping make sense of the fact that although US action *was* to some extent strategic, it was also formulated and implemented through an incremental process of learning and adaptation. Establishing this, and elaborating on what it means, requires a more detailed analysis of the choices policymakers faced and the decisions made by the Truman administration.

With this being the principal aim, there are two key aspects to highlight regarding how this thesis will approach this topic. The first concerns the time period under review. Most "grand narrative" depictions of the Truman years typically begin either with his abrupt assent to the presidency upon Roosevelt's death, or with his initial interactions with Soviet policymakers (e.g. the Molotov meeting at the White House in April 1945 or Potsdam three months later). Others commence even earlier, to highlight the transition from FDR's handling of Stalin, or to provide earlier snapshots of key policymakers (e.g. Kennan, Harriman); either way, the first half of 1945 often serves as the starting point. This is then usually carried to the end of Truman's tenure in office, encompassing the full scope of foreign policy outcomes during that timeframe, up to and including the Korean War. This period, as a whole, is often packaged together as constituting the "wise men" era in a way that can lead readers to surmise a sense of strategic cohesion spanning its entirety.

As noted earlier, however, there have been some historical works which question this implication of an orderly, overarching, administration-spanning plan. Yet these treatments do not explore, at the same level of granularity, the specific junctures within Truman's administration that this thesis contends were highly significant. There are profound differences between the early and later stages of Truman's presidency, ranging from Washington's conception of the Soviet threat to the administration's decisionmaking maturity. This makes it problematic to treat initial US-USSR exchanges in 1945-1946 as part of the same strategy as say, the formation of NATO in 1949, let alone the Korean War and the eventual implementation of National Security Council directive NSC-68 as policy in 1951. This is apparent in Popescu's examination of the case, which during the latter period surrounding adoption of NSC-68, he finds only "mixed evidence" for the emergent strategy and how, by this point, there is stronger evidence of more deliberate planning (2017, p. 64). And while there have been attempts to argue for greater consistency in US actions during the early years – Gaddis, for one, identifies a "patience and firmness" framework that took effect until the spring of 1947 – these largely amounted to "just a set of attitudes" rather than an actual strategy of the kind that emerged in later years (2005, p. 23).

To mitigate these issues while aligning with the extant literature, this thesis will therefore narrow the period of focus considerably from most studies of the Truman White House, primarily focusing on events from January 1946 until the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947. This was a time when US policymakers were still transitioning from the war, formulating America's role in the resulting geopolitical landscape, navigating a variety of economic and political crises at home, and reckoning with potential threats that were emanating from the Soviet Union. These contextual factors and the transitional nature of this initial period make this timeframe the least likely to correspond with broader depictions of a cohesive grand plan, permitting a more detailed exploration into the "emerging" aspects of US Cold War strategy. And while a narrower focus may sacrifice later outcomes and circumstances that would be helpful in reviewing the *full* spectrum of Truman administration foreign policy, this view into the formative years affords the opportunity to analyze individual events with greater precision, to closely scrutinize the president's decisionmaking process in short-term conflicts, and to clearly observe learning and continuity across successive cases.

A second feature of this thesis is its treatment of this narrower period as one of *crisis decisionmaking*. Although there is some contest in IR as to what constitutes a "crisis" (Houghton, 2017), Charles Hermann provides a serviceable and time-tested definition:

> A crisis is a situation that (1) threatens the high-priority goals of the decision-making unit; (2) restricts the amount of time available for response before the situation is transformed; and (3) surprises the members of the decision-making unit when it occurs (1969, p. 29).

A crisis can give strategy form and function, motivating the transition from a "set of attitudes" to a more comprehensive and consistent, objective-driven plan. As John R. Oneal (1982) observes, crises can "have a pervasive effect and prompt the formation of a new 'fundamental outlook' from which many other situations in the future [can] be viewed. 'Thus in personal and social development crisis is a catalyst, disturbing old habits, evoking new responses, and becoming a major factor in charting new developments'" (1982, p. 14). Moreover, similar to arguments presented by Jervis in *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Oneal hypothesizes that "crises will often lead to a clarification of values on the part of the beleaguered individual, organization, or society" and that research on crisis behavior can "indicate that learning has taken place" (1982, pp. 19-21; Jervis, 1976). The literature on emergent strategy does not emphasize or explore, in the way this thesis does, the role played by crisis events in strategy development and foreign policy learning.

The last issue to resolve toward a new framework for assessing this period pertains to the "decisionmaking" component of crisis decisionmaking. Harkening back to Eisenhower's quote on planning, in the emerging strategy construct there is an attempt to "view emergent learning as a cognitive process," which seeks to account for other aspects that impact decisionmaking – areas that are often overlooked or are perceived as hindrances to deliberate planning, like domestic politics and public opinion (Popescu, 2017, pp. 12-14). This is a welcome shift from relying on strategy outcomes at the expense of the decisionmaking process; however, this analysis stops short of implementing cognitive-based models and more exhaustive reviews of these influential factors in the context of the case studies under investigation. This is partly due to the usage of strategy as a "model," but it is also owed in part to the larger scope of Popescu's – and other grand strategy critics' – research. To develop a more robust approach for evaluating US foreign policy and strategy development during this period, it is necessary to broaden our search to other models that help us better understand individual decisionmaking. Given our reorientation to this early period of crisis decisionmaking, we need a model that is, for instance, better suited to describe the day-to-day decisions made by Truman and Secretary of State Byrnes during the onset of Soviet probes into Iran in 1946.

Taking into account these two factors – the narrowed time period for analysis, and the adoption of crisis decisionmaking as a frame – we have the basis for taking a productive new look at Truman era foreign policy and its relation to grand strategy. The result will be an analysis that explicates the strategic "arc" followed by US decisionmakers during Truman's administration during these early years, in a way that contrasts with an administration-spanning "grand narrative" interpretation that is at times too pat. It is also one that deploys application of a model-based approach to analyze aspects of the decisionmaking process, and to identify and demonstrate the process of strategy's "emergence." Before we can proceed to this, however, it is necessary to identify an appropriate model for decisionmaking analysis to employ in this case. This requires taking stock of the field from which such a model could be selected.

Chapter 2: The Poliheuristic Theory of Foreign Policy Analysis, and its Application to Truman Era Decisions

"80 percent of the job of foreign policy was 'management of your domestic ability to have a policy.'"[2]

~ Dean Acheson

Introduction

Grand strategy is, of course, just one conceptual approach within the far broader field of International Relations (IR). The latter encompasses a wide range of paradigms and methodologies that seek to understand the full scale of interactions between people, nations, and ideologies across the globe. Most approaches seek to understand, in one way or another, states' foreign policy actions by constructing models for their interpretation across different levels of analysis. These are tested and then reevaluated in light of new developments on the global stage in a social-scientific manner. At various times in the discipline's evolution, these international events have given rise to conflicts over the degree to which state conduct is "rational" in the manner implicit to most grand strategy constructs. In the pursuit of this line of inquiry, watershed moments are often the important points of emphasis; one such noteworthy episode is the beginning of the Cold War, which is the focus of this thesis.

[2] Charles A. Kupchan and Peter L. Trubowitz, "Grand Strategy for a Divided America," *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 4 (2007): 82 https://www.jstor.org/stable/20032416.

The study and interpretation of such pivotal moments gives rise to a variety of "conceptual lenses" for understanding foreign policy actions, in the parlance of Allison and Zelikow (1999, p. 2), which can then be compared for explanatory value. As these authors illustrate in their breakthrough *Essence of Decision*:

> Particularly in explaining and predicting actions of governments, when one family of simplifications becomes convenient and compelling, it is even more essential to have at hand *one or more simple but competitive conceptual frameworks* to help remind the questioner and the answerer what is omitted…Alternative conceptual frameworks are important not only for further insights into neglected dimensions of the underlying phenomenon. They are essential as a reminder of the distortions and limitations of whatever conceptual framework one employs (1999, p. 8, my italics).

Allison and Zelikow are not alone in noting the value of comparing theoretical frameworks in the analysis of the same case or question; as another source states, this application can "be presented as tests of the relative explanatory power of different theories" or as an opportunity to identify how "different variables become apparent when looking at the same policy or event" (Garrison et al., 2003, p. 159). One can also find the same idea expressed at the level of more general methodological discussion; George and Bennett underscore "how scholars can most effectively draw on the respective strengths" of various models to find satisfactory explanations (2005, p. 16).

Returning to the subject at hand, it has been demonstrated that the concept of grand strategy has acquired a strong position as a "lens" for assessing early US Cold War policymaking; American decisions and actions during this period are largely framed in those terms throughout the literature. However, by applying these two disciplinary insights – neoteric international relations models, and the advantages of comparing multiple perspectives – it becomes evident that this largely one-sided paradigm in the available Cold War scholarship opens the door to a productive reevaluation of early Truman era foreign policy from other perspectives. This, in turns, provides an opportunity to shed new light on this case from a different "lens" and to advance theoretical understanding.

The previous chapter outlined the rationale behind some of the skepticism regarding the "grand narrative" portrayal of US strategy at the onset of the Cold War. As discussed there, one major criticism of literature that projects the idea of grand strategy too strongly onto the Truman years is that it is too purely focused on the *outcomes* of policy, retrospectively inferring strategy from these. This, the last chapter suggested, provides only a partial view of the true picture: to understand the actions of Truman administration policymakers accurately we need to attend not only to strategic outcomes but also to the *decisionmaking process* from which they emerged. As one decisionmaking theorist has stated, "the links between [decision] processes and outcomes cannot be assumed. They must be demonstrated" (March, 1994, p. 223). Additionally, as noted in Chapter One, the "emergent strategy" paradigm may offer the promise of avoiding some of the pitfalls inherent in overstating what "grand strategy" is, providing more nuance by integrating the reality that decisions evolve through a process of adaptation and learning. Finally, that chapter argued, this should be complemented by an understanding that, especially in the context of *crisis* decisionmaking, it is important to take account of the degree to which strategy and policy formation are not purely "rational" in the sense that much discussion of grand strategy implies, at least not without significant qualification of what that means.

Although strategy and decision analysis are often found inextricably linked in many social science assessments, decisionmaking theory constitutes a field of study in its own right. Like strategy, a search for models to understand the decisionmaking process leads one down an interdisciplinary path, ranging from psychology to behavioral economics. Decisionmaking frameworks tend to be a function of the broader subject in which it is being applied; therefore, this thesis will concentrate on a sub-discipline of IR that seeks to delineate how decisions are made in the realm of foreign policy and national security: Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). Contrary to the emphasis in many international relations theories upon a relatively high degree of "rationality" at the level of the state unit, FPA approaches commonly seek to qualify this through a closer focus on the decisionmaking process, and in so doing, to better understand the impact of cognitive-based decision factors.

This chapter will begin, in the next section, by reviewing some foundations of international relations theory, the role of rationality therein, and the development of FPA and contemporary models of foreign policy decisionmaking. Next, it will outline the tenets of one model in particular – poliheuristic (PH) theory – which this thesis will contend provides an approach that productively integrates both the rational-strategic and cognitive elements of a leader's decisionmaking process. It will proceed to note some previous efforts to study the Truman case along FPA lines, observing the perspectives on Truman's decision apparatus that have resulted from applying this "lens." Lastly, the chapter explains how this thesis will go about applying PH Theory, and the cases of crisis decisionmaking upon which the analysis in subsequent chapters will focus.

Realism, Rationality, and its Limits

The field of FPA largely arose as a subdiscipline within IR to provide a counterpoint to prior approaches that leaned more heavily on the assumption of rationality either at the level of the state unit or the international system as a whole. Realist perspectives, tracing their lineage back to Thucydides and Thomas Hobbes, typically put the state at the center of analysis, holding that states tend to gravitate toward a rational pursuit of self-preservation in an anarchic international environment and the power required to secure it. In his assessment of realist thinking from Max Weber to Henry Kissinger, Michael Joseph Smith finds that "as opposed to utopians, idealists, optimists, and reformers of every stripe, realists say they accept and understand the world as it is" and "this understanding provides the foundation for all their ideas" (1986, p. 1). Over the last half century, realism has developed multiple strains, including "classical," "structural," and neoclassical variants (Quinn, 2018, p. 2), but the basic principles just articulated serve as an appropriate point of departure to delineate the field.

Throughout this period, the notion of "rationality" has remained "one of the most central concepts in the field" (Rathbun, 2019, p. 1). Theories of "rational choice" have roots that can be traced at least back to Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, and other Enlightenment thinkers (Rubin, 2005). This conceptual grounding is often defined as an assumption that individuals will select rational choices that align with their own self-interest, or more simply, as "having a goal and working towards it" (Rathbun, 2019, p. 1). This idea forms the basis for what is often termed the "rational actor model," which underpins many mainstream theories in microeconomics, business management, and a host of other fields. In its most basic form, this model holds that individuals take actions intended to maximize gains and minimize losses.

For individual leaders in a foreign policy context, rational action involves a "consistent, value-maximizing choice within specified constraints…[where] decision makers choose among alternatives on the basis of their expected consequences" (Schultz, 1997, p. 6). At the level of the state, a realist-rational actor model suggests that national actions will converge on ensuring its own security. According to Laura Neack, in the classical realist framework, "states are only distinguishable by the relative power they hold, not by their internal characteristics. Government type, history, economics, and the qualities of the individuals holding political leadership positions hold no importance in and of themselves to the analyst" (2014, p. 30). This proposition, she explains, "is possible because of a key assumption that realists make about leaders: any and all leaders act in ways consistent with the *long-term and persistent national interests of the country*. Since the interests do not change, changes in leadership have little consequence" (2014, p. 31, my italics). Diverging strands of contemporary realism may debate rationality's precise meaning in practice and the degree to which rational action can be expected of any individual state at a given time (Quinn, 2018), but in evaluating state behavior "there is no more common bedrock assumption in the field than that of rational leaders" (Rathbun, 2019, p. 2).

The conception of grand strategy outlined in Chapter One is a natural corollary to the precepts of realism and rationality. It implicitly supposes that great powers naturally aspire to pursue long-term national interests in an orderly and logical way. Ideal strategy development involves a rational evaluation of the international environment and the threats and opportunities it presents, along with an objective assessment of what is required to secure prioritized ends amid structural constraints. Moreover, it requires leaders to select the optimal course of action among available alternatives, linking means and ends amid resource constraints in a way that presupposes rationality. Within a grand strategy approach to state behavior "actions are considered 'planful' – that is, the result of strategic problem solving – and are embedded in an action-reaction interaction" (Neack, 2014, p. 33). Even in the language used in defining grand strategy we see similar points of emphasis. According to Brands' formulation cited in the previous chapter, for instance, grand strategy "requires a clear understanding of the nature of the international environment, a country's *highest goals and interests* within that environment, the primary threats to those goals and interests, and the ways that finite resources can be used to *deal with competing challenges and opportunities*…It is the theory, or *logic*, that guides leaders seeking security in a complex and insecure world (2014, p. 3, my italics).

The parsimony, universality, and air of common sense which characterize rational choice and its expression in realist form make it a formidable approach. As Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen put it: the rational actor model "is often referred to as the ideal type – many consider it the most desirable form of decisionmaking…[and the] model has much to recommend it. It is open to new information and casts a wide net in search of information. Decisions can be made by a person or small group searching for the optimal outcome" (2010, p. 7). Nevertheless, researchers have also sought to reckon with its limitations. In his classic text, *Administrative Behavior*, Herbert Simon demonstrated how individual decisionmakers are limited in both "actual knowledge and computational powers in the face of the real world" (1997, p. 122). Policymakers' rational actions are therefore "bounded," leading to decision outcomes that are satisfactory but not necessarily optimal as classic rationality would predict (1997, p. 118). Others, such as John Steinbruner, point to historical "episodes where nations acted against what would appear to have been compelling analytic logic," which are often "rationalized post hoc," creating "doubts about the dominant paradigm" (2002, p. 43). Even within realism, skeptics debate how far rationality can serve as an explanation for state behavior (Quinn, 2018, pp. 7-9). In an analysis dedicated to the theme, *Reasoning of State*, Rathbun argues that realists and rational thinkers are in fact a "very rare breed in international relations," and the use of traditional rational choice theory to explain foreign policy actions requires significant qualification to account for "individual-level variation in rational thought" (2019, pp. 2, 4).

Another line of challenge to the rational actor assumption at the state level has been to highlight that foreign policy actions can be approached from other levels of analysis, where organizational and psychological factors may undermine what might be considered rational for the nation as a unitary actor. Valerie Hudson and Christopher Vore claim that this line of thinking, in addition to "what the social sciences…are learning about human decision making," ushered in "what has become known as the 'cognitive revolution'" (1995, p. 211). Steven Smith, in a historical overview of FPA theories, notes that the rise of new behavioral methods in the 1950s and '60s was in large part a reaction against deficiencies in the classical realist approach propounded by Hans Morgenthau in *Politics Among Nations*, which paid too little attention to the impact of internal, domestic factors on foreign policy (1986, pp. 15-16). Other research has attributed decreasing satisfaction with classic realist approaches to the increasing complexity of the modern world, suggesting that "our inherited tools and ways of describing the international arena seem not to work as well as they once did" (Hudson and Vore, 1995, pp. 209-210). This sentiment is echoed in the observation levelled later by Hudson and Vore that the realist concept of "national interest" was simply insufficient to explain why nations chose the courses they did. Rather, that notion should be "more productively viewed as the interests of various players – not all of which may coincide, and not all of which are coherently related to anything resembling an objective national interest." For all these reasons, there was a pressing need to break apart "the monolithic view of nation-states as unitary actors" (1995, p. 210). It is the raison d'être of Foreign Policy Analysis, as a subdivision of IR focused on state-based decisionmaking, to do just that.

Foreign Policy Analysis

First and foremost, the guiding purpose of FPA as an intellectual enterprise is to understand the conduct of foreign policy by focusing on the state's decisionmaking process. This distinguishes it from structurally oriented rational-actor approaches, especially realist ones, which view states as so-called "black boxes" for the purposes of modeling their behavior patterns. A foundational supposition of FPA is that a state's internal politics and government are key to understanding how it operates internationally. It shifts the emphasis on the "state" as the sole relevant actor to an "agent-oriented theory," in which "human decisionmakers acting singly and in groups are the ground of all that happens in international relations," and it takes the view that "such decisionmakers are not best approximated as unitary rational actors equivalent to the state"

(Hudson, 2005, p. 2). Building on this reorientation toward the human element of policymaking, FPA also investigates and theorizes about how decisions are formed – by individuals or groups – in light of nonrational factors. It not only questions the degree of rationality behind national action, but also endeavors to produce models that account for these cognitive elements. Additionally, FPA theories are often "multifactorial" and "multilevel," incorporating variables from more than one level of analysis while drawing on insights across the social sciences (Hudson, 2005, pp. 2-3).

As a subfield, FPA's lineage is often traced to post-World War II political science scholarship, starting with the groundbreaking *Decision Making as an Approach to the Study of International Politics* by Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin in 1954. As Smith has noted, "it is quite clear that this one framework [by Snyder, et al.], more than anything before, brought the FPA approach into existence" (1986, p. 14). In this text, the authors staked out an agenda based on looking within the black box of state-level analysis, concentrating on policymakers and the internal factors shaping their actions. This gave FPA "its characteristic emphasis on foreign policy *decision-making* as versus foreign policy *outcomes*" (Hudson, 2005, p. 6). This work also took an interdisciplinary approach, stressing the importance of understanding the process by which decisions are made, and the associated impact of domestic political structures and institutions (Snyder et al., 1954). Later notable FPA models like "groupthink" and associated small group dynamics (conceived by Irving Janis), along with organizational process and bureaucratic politics models (most famously advanced by Graham Allison) evolved out of the research pathway set by *Decision Making* (Hudson, 2005, pp. 7-8).

Hudson and Vore also note two other "founding" pieces of scholarship in the development of FPA from around the same period: James Rosenau's *Pre-theories and Theories in Foreign Policy*, and the *Man–Milieu Relationship Hypotheses in the Context of International Politics* by Harold and Margaret Sprout (Hudson and Vore, 1995, p. 212). Rosenau's work (1966) sought to understand the underlying drivers of foreign policy by considering multiple levels of analysis. His focus on empirical testing, and a desire to build a general theory across nations' foreign policy was "seminal" in the development of subsequent work in areas like Comparative Foreign Policy (Smith, 1986, p. 18). Sprout and Sprout (1956), meanwhile, argued that to understand foreign policy, one needed to understand the "psycho-milieu" or psychological, social, political context surrounding decisions. They contended it was necessary when interpreting individual decisionmaking to adopt a multicausal approach that accounted for cognitive factors and actors' perceptions of their context. In this vein, FPA would embark on research to explore a leader's individual characteristics, perceptions, and national/societal characteristics (Hudson and Vore, 1995, pp. 217-219).

Today, FPA remains an "eclectic field of study," exploring new research avenues stemming from these core pathways (Breuning, 2004, p. 618). In assessing the field's current state, one author from a 2003 symposium entitled "Foreign Policy Analysis in 20/20" finds that "current research in FPA is vibrant and multidimensional; it bridges gaps with adjacent disciplines, the policymaking community, and the larger field of international relations" (Garrison et al., 2003, p. 156). A review of recent works in the discipline reveals multiple threads of inquiry in productive co-existence, including comparative studies of foreign policy (James and Özdamar, 2009; Bezerra, et al., 2015), ideationally focused studies on topics like the psychology of nation-branding (Browning, 2015), and efforts following in the footsteps of Sprout and Sprout that evaluate how presidential personality (Gallagher and Allen, 2014) or factionalism (Lantis and Homan, 2019) impact US policy and the use of force. Many current approaches also engage in "middle-range theorizing," building on prior research into domestic politics and organizational behavior (Garrison et al., 2003, p. 155). This has led scholars to investigate how foreign policy decisionmaking is impacted by other factors including electoral cycles, public opinion, and economic interests (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010).

FPA has not been without its critics, of course. Some scholars have questioned whether its lack of any unified "grand theory" diminishes its standing among rival approaches within IR (Garrison et al., 2003; Smith 1986). This lack of singular cohesion has led to a frequent recasting of what constitutes the "grounding" of FPA, and the proliferation of what seems to some an unwieldy array of topics, theories, and methodologies within the literature (Hudson, 2005; Hill, 2010). Others have complained that FPA theories have, at times, been guilty of reductionism, neglecting systemic or state-level factors even in instances where their role is key. It has also been criticized for an unduly heavy focus on the United States (Garrison et al., 2003; Mintz and DeRouen, 2010). Notwithstanding these critiques, however, most would agree that FPA's focus on the importance of internal state factors and decisionmaking processes has provided at the very least a valuable complement to IR theories concerned with the state and system level. For the purpose of this thesis' focus of interest – how American foreign policy was developed and implemented at the very beginning of the Cold War – the value of FPA is articulated well by Smith:

> Foreign policy does form patterns; it is to be explained by structures and processes that are common, if to variable extents, among different states; and the explanations it provides are more economical than other theories of state behavior. The all too obvious failures of the grandest schemes have blinded us to our successes. After all, there is no 'truth' out there waiting for discovery by one all embracing theory. We are, therefore, in the business of dealing with competing theories and explanations, and in this light FPA had aided, and can continue to aid, the study of international relations (1986, p. 25).

FPA and the Truman Era

Before turning to an FPA-informed assessment of decisionmaking in the early Truman years, this thesis should pause to inquire whether this case has been examined through this lens before. As indicated previously, works on grand strategy and Cold War history typically cleave to a "grand narrative" of Truman administration policy, which either explicitly or implicitly espouses realist, rational-actor assumptions. A review of FPA literature, meanwhile, reveals that while there have been references to Truman era policymaking, these analyses tend to come in one of two forms. First, many works offer short discussions of multiple cases to further a broader argument regarding an FPA principle or theme, rather than employing one framework to engage in extended and detailed analysis of postwar US foreign policy alone. One example of this can be found in Jervis' book (1976), referenced in Chapter One, where he describes how decisionmakers develop inferences to predict behavior and to address the external environment they encounter. In support of this larger aim, he provides a brief assessment of American Cold War beliefs regarding the Soviet threat and the increase in US armaments during the Korean War

(1976, pp. 33-34). In another survey of FPA approaches, Mintz and DeRouen cite the Truman Doctrine as an example of how “symbols” can be used to elicit “emotion and patriotic pride.” Ultimately, they argue, “Truman’s decision to send military aid to Greece and Turkey after World War II was driven by fear of communism among the public,” showing how “symbolic framing” helped increase public approval (2010, p. 153). In these instances, the priority is often brief engagement with the case to support overarching theoretical claims instead of using an FPA model toward a thorough elucidation of decisionmaking in the Truman era.

The second cluster of FPA scholarship does provide a more detailed look at decisionmaking within the Truman administration, but it examines aspects and issues that are peripheral to the topic of this thesis. In one piece, “Centralizing Advisory Systems,” the researcher discusses Truman’s decisions in the context of early Cold War events like the use of the atom bomb and America’s approach to China, but these instances are mainly analyzed to understand presidential influence in central advisory systems (Mitchell, 2005). Also, there are works that address broader aspects of America’s Cold War foreign policy, such as Tim Kane’s (2012) article on US troop deployments and international economic development, along with Sjostedt’s (2007) assessment on the discursive origins of foreign policy doctrine from Truman to George W. Bush. None of these, however, directly address the issue that is central to this investigation, i.e. how an FPA analysis of three key early decision points stacks up against the portrayal of the administration as an exemplar of grand-strategic policymaking.

Two works that edge closer toward the focus of this study, and which have been major influences on it, are Larson’s *Origins of Containment: A Psychological Explanation*, and Gaddis’

The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947. Both sources provide a more extended analysis of the "golden age" utilizing FPA-type factors. In her interdisciplinary study, Larson seeks to understand the origins of US foreign policy during the early years of Truman's presidency, and "*why* American policymakers adopted a 'tough' policy of refusing to make any more concessions to obtain Soviet cooperation" during this time (1985, p. 15). She argues that Cold War history to that point had not paid enough attention to the interaction of international systemic, social, and individual factors during this stage, and had neglected the individual psychological level in understanding the origins of containment. Her study filled this gap by applying social psychological theories of attitude change to understand the actions and cognitive processes of four key policymakers from 1944-1947: Averell Harriman, Harry Truman, James Byrnes, and Dean Acheson.

Larson's assessment of these leaders' decisionmaking style, inconsistencies, and self-perception are important findings that will feed into the analysis of this thesis (1985, pp. 126-149). Yet her work predominantly employs social psychological concepts and theories (e.g., cognitive dissonance, schema theory) in a way that this thesis does not, and in the process marginalizes the rational dimension of policymaking. By contrast this analysis seeks to synthesize both the rational *and* nonrational aspects of decisionmaking into a single account. Also, Larson's account is larger in scope, providing an historical assessment of the entire early Cold War period as opposed to specific moments of crisis decisionmaking, and is conducted largely through the lens of individual factors. Although its application of social psychological models to the origins of US Cold War policymaking advances our understanding, the analysis provided by this thesis –

which looks at the period through both rational-strategic aspects and an FPA methodology – seeks to expand upon and supplement it in important ways with distinct insights.

Gaddis, meanwhile, takes a broader sweep, seeking to understand the "evolution of United States policy toward the Soviet Union from the formation of the Grand Alliance in 1941 to the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947" (2000, p. xiii). This work constituted a significant step forward in understanding the emergence of the early Cold War narrative, giving fresh attention to internal constraints faced by US policymakers during this period. Indeed, in the preface to its later edition, he observes that the book's assessment "focuses, more than I'd remembered, on the relationship of domestic politics to foreign policy, and in this sense it's still unusual" (2000, p. x). He continues by noting that:

> Somehow, in our preoccupation with archives, theory, quantification, methodology, and historiography, we've lost sight of something Presidents Roosevelt and Truman and their subordinates never for a moment forgot: that they operated within a highly contentious domestic political environment from which they could only rarely insulate the conduct of foreign policy (2000, p. x).

This constraint was certainly present in the minds of Truman and his inner circle as they formulated policy toward the Soviet Union at the outset of the Cold War, and it would continue to limit alternatives available to each presidential administration thereafter. As Gaddis remarks, "the Constitution did, after all, give the public and their representatives on Capitol Hill at least a negative influence in this field, while these influences may not have determined the specific direction of diplomatic initiatives, they did impose definite limitations on how far policymakers could go" (2000, pp. 357-358).

This component of Gaddis' research aligns well with the spirit of FPA analysis in seeking, as Smith characterized it, to better understand how domestic politics intersects with foreign policy decisionmaking (1986, p. 15). This thesis seeks to elaborate upon, and supplement, this aspect of Gaddis' analysis. It will seek to illustrate, with more detailed focus on specific decisions, how Truman and other key policymakers were acutely aware of their own political standing and public opinion, and how the necessity of ensuring their own political survival domestically provided important context for the emergence of their strategy.

Together Larson and Gaddis provide a springboard for an alternative narrative, derived from the FPA tradition, of the grand strategy depiction of the early Truman years. This thesis builds upon their respective approaches, weaving together insights from FPA, with the concept of "emergent" strategy, to enhance our understanding of how Truman and key officials handled the crises they faced. Since FPA contains numerous models, however, this raises the question of what approach this thesis will adopt. It is to this that we now turn.

The Poliheuristic Model of Decisionmaking

The PH theory of decisionmaking is a contemporary research program with origins rooted in both classic rational actor models and FPA approaches explicated above. It draws on insights from both the "rational" and "cognitive" schools of thought concerning foreign policy decisionmaking (Stern, 2004, p. 108). Rather than choosing between these two domains, the PH model seeks to craft a synthesis that bridges the divide between them (Mintz, 2004b; DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004).

According to Alex Mintz, a noted "founding figure" in this area of research, poliheuristic theory "postulates that when making decisions, policy makers employ a two-stage decision process consisting of (a) rejecting alternatives that are unacceptable to the policy maker on a critical dimension or dimensions and (b) selecting an alternative from the subset of remaining alternatives while maximizing benefits and minimizing risks" (2004b, pp. 6-7). This process is based on five general principles originally put forward by Nehemia Geva and Mintz (1997), which are later recounted in Dacey and Carlson's 2004 work on traditional decision analysis and PH. First, PH theory posits that the decision process involves a "nonholistic/nonexhaustive" search, wherein "comparisons of policy options are made within a (very) restrictive alternative set and attribute set." Second, PH theory is a "dimension-based" process, meaning that when a decision must be made, options will be narrowed to those that clear a certain threshold with regard to certain attributes on the part of the policy alternatives designated as important. Third, the PH decision process involves a "noncompensatory" heuristic: decision options are eliminated via cognitive shortcuts rather than giving full consideration equally across every conceivable path forward. Fourth, following Herbert Simon, the decisionmaking process is also satisficing, i.e. "concerned with finding 'acceptable' rather than maximizing alternatives because it allows the possibility that not all dimensions will be considered before a decision is made." Fifth and lastly, order sensitivity follows from the dimension-based nature of the process, meaning that "the choice of a particular alternative may depend on the order in which particular dimensions (diplomatic, political, military, economic) are invoked" (1997, pp. 84, 86-87; Mintz, 2004b).

Together, these points provide the basis for the first "stage" of PH's two-step decision process. Choices in this stage are viewed in noncompensatory terms, where leaders satisfice among a limited set of policy options. In this model, domestic politics is typically regarded as the "essence of decision" (Mintz, 2004b, p. 7). Though it is possible in certain situations for other decision attributes – including military or strategic considerations – to be noncompensatory, the model "typically assumes that avoiding political loss is a driving goal for state leaders. As such, the decision process is colored by this goal" (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004, p. 57). Most case study applications of the PH model seek to demonstrate the political calculations driving the first stage of a leader or group's decision process (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004). Since this step involves deciding based on heuristics, this is the component of the PH process that incorporates insights from cognitive psychology. Policymakers use these mental shortcuts to immediately discard potential alternatives that come into conflict with their overriding goal, i.e. political survival.

In the second stage of the PH model, leaders invoke a process more akin to the classical rational-actor model of decisionmaking, weighing only those alternatives that have survived the first phase. This step is based upon an "expected utility" approach, where costs are minimized and benefits are maximized. It is because of these two prongs that scholars view the PH model as a blend of "rational" and "cognitive" FPA approaches. In short, "Step 1 captures process and the origins of preferences. Step 2 captures outcomes based on gain maximization and risk minimization. PH, therefore, combines both elements of rational choice decision making and cognitive heuristics in explaining political decision making" (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004, p. 57). Thanks to this clever blending of elements, the approach has attracted some considerable interest and support in the literature, with nuance and scholarly contribution arising in the author's choice of emphasis within this two-stage decision process. As we turn to instances of model application, we also find additional conclusions, or corollaries to this theory, that give added "shape" to this body of research.

Most studies applying PH theory use either experimental analyses or a case study approach. An example of the former can be found in Christensen and Redd's (2004) analysis comparing PH with the Bureaucratic Politics model. Through an assessment of decisionmaker responses to a fictional military dispute, this study seeks to determine which model could better explain how "the nature of political advice as well as differences in the presentation of information would influence foreign policy choices" (2004, p. 82). This method – assessing decisionmaker survey responses based on manufactured conflict scenarios – is typical of experimental uses of PH. Case study approaches are also quite common, including Mintz's (2004b) application of PH to Turkey's decision over whether to allow the deployment of US troops for the Iraq War in 2003, Goertz's (2004) review of the US decision to return the Panama Canal to Panama, and K.P. Vijayalakshmi's (2017) work on using PH modeling to understand Indian foreign policy. There have also been efforts to test PH theory via large-N quantitative studies (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004).

This research has generated some interesting conclusions. First, a PH model can be applied productively across a variety of decision types and decisionmaking units: "single decisions, group decisions, sequential decisions, and decisions in strategic settings" (Mintz, 2004b, p. 4). Furthermore, by virtue of its integrating both cognitive and rational elements, and thus being interested in both process and outcome, PH theory generates scope for flexible and adaptable synthesis when it comes to drawing links with grand or emergent strategy (Dacey and Carlson, 2004). PH theory is also suitable for analysis of decisionmaking in a crisis, having the ability to incorporate elements such as time constraints, incomplete information, the dynamic quality of crisis situations, the role of domestic politics in defining goals, and the availability of *in*action as a response (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004, p. 66). Studies using PH theory have suggested that aversion to domestic political loss in "stage one" can act as a constraint on initially resorting to violence in scenarios of confrontation (DeRouen and Sprecher, 2004, p. 66). They have also found that leaders are prone to employ PH dimension-based processing in new or "unfamiliar" circumstances (Mintz, 2004a).

On the other hand, as with any method, PH theory has also attracted its share of criticism. In discussing the "satisficing" performed during the first stage of the PH decision process, some have suggested the need for greater specification in circumstances where decisionmakers will consider the relevant "thresholds" to have been passed. This could have ramifications in cases where officials would be able to defer decisions over a longer time horizon or could expand their range of options (Dacey and Carlson, 2004, p. 53). Eric Stern's 2004 article "Contextualizing and Critiquing the Poliheuristic Theory" summarizes critics' contentions, including the belief that the model overstates the weight of domestic politics and the absolute quality of the constraints it imposes (2004, p. 110). There are, of course, historical examples where key officials embarked on foreign policy projects even in the face of existential levels of political opposition, e.g. President Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations (2004, p. 110). Also, the prevailing literature seems to exclusively rely on political motivation as the "essence of decision" in the first stage. Despite suggestions that military or other strategic considerations can be noncompensatory in step one (Mintz, 2004b), evidence of this application in the literature is scant.

Comparisons with other FPA models also reveal areas where decisionmaking factors may not be sufficiently addressed within a PH model. In his review of PH against other contemporary approaches (e.g. Cognitive Institutionalism, Problem Representation, Decision Units), Stern finds that PH theory "tells us relatively little about how problems are detected, how decision makers are activated, and how decision units are formed in real-world settings" (2004, p. 110) Similarly, others have commented that PH does not adequately account for the full range of institutional mechanisms and psychological factors that play a role through all stages of the decision process (Vijayalakshmi, 2017). Lastly, PH case analyses may be accused of devoting so much attention to phase one, with its emphasis on "cognitive" attributes, that they neglect the transition to phase two, and the evaluation of alternatives that follows to produce policy outcomes.

Notwithstanding these various complaints, PH theory remains well-suited for mounting a reassessment of early Truman administration policy. Its strengths, including its incorporation of both rational and cognitive decision factors, applicability to various decisionmaking arrangements, suitability to crisis-oriented events, amenability to case study methods, and emphasis on domestic political calculations are all central to the examination that follows. Other FPA approaches were considered during the planning of this research, ranging from Leadership analysis to Two-Level Games (Mintz and DeRouen, 2010). Bureaucratic/organizational and political process models, in particular, were initial candidates given their focus on internal government bargaining and how actors (and their goals) influence foreign policy, which could prove helpful in understanding the rational components of Truman era policymaking and strategy development. While each approach has its merits, however, ultimately it was judged that neither was as well-fitted to deliver the desired *synthesis* between cognitive-based impacts and rational strategizing sought by this thesis, nor to provide an interpretation of the emergence of strategy through a series of crisis decisions. PH theory, through its combined incorporation of both decisionmaking elements in a two-step process, provides the optimal configuration to assess the early conflicts and choices faced by Truman and his staff.

Having identified an appropriate model for a reevaluation, it can now be used to address the US decisionmaking process that took place across early Cold War incidents of interest. But given the importance of a president's decisionmaking *structure* to the process by which decisions are ultimately rendered, it is first necessary to review Truman's decisionmaking apparatus – particularly during the early years of his administration – which will help inform the case studies ahead.

Truman Administration Decisionmaking

Every president puts their own stamp on the policymaking process, whether through formal structural reorganization of agencies and White House staff, or less formally through their personality traits and decisionmaking preferences. Truman was notable in both regards. He directed and oversaw significant changes to how decisions were made, both in terms of institutional arrangements and personal style. To understand, therefore, how Truman and his key policymakers responded to early Cold War crises, we need to consider closely his management and advisory system, along with aspects of his personality and decisionmaking style. By connecting these with an appreciation for the context in which key decisions were made – including the global landscape, threats, and shifting domestic attitudes – we can use the poliheuristic model to arrive at a better evaluation of the Truman period and the emergence of US strategy during this time.

Richard Tanner Johnson, in his examination into the role of the chief executive *Managing the White House*, identifies three different managerial models presidents have employed in the modern era: formalistic, competitive, and collegial (1974, p. 2). Within this rubric, the Truman administration has commonly been treated as an example of the "formalistic" model, which is "characterized by an orderly policymaking structure, one that provides well-defined procedures, hierarchical lines of communication, and a structured staff system" (George, 1980, p. 148). This interpretation of the Truman years is often contrasted with the "competitive" system cultivated by Roosevelt, who fostered and thrived on political and bureaucratic conflict to obtain information and make decisions (Johnson, 1974, p. 5; George, 1980, pp. 149-150; Neustadt, 1991, pp. 131-132). In reality, however, Truman's approach was not a diametrical opposite to

FDR's approach; despite government expansion following the war and a surge in executive branch personnel and processes, there was "only a slight increase in the degree of organizational hierarchy" – a feature that would become more conspicuous during the Eisenhower administration (Burke, 2000, p. 28). Perhaps it is therefore more accurate to view Truman's management model as a sort of halfway point "between the designed chaos of his predecessor and the structural purity of his successor" (Hess, 1976, p. 45).

According to Alexander George, over time Truman adopted his own variant of a formalistic model with the following characteristics:

> (1) specialized information and advice flows to the president from each of his cabinet heads and advisers; (2) the president tends to define the role of each cabinet head as a functional expert on some aspect of national security or foreign policy; each official briefs the president authoritatively on that aspect of a policy problem for which he has jurisdiction; (3) each adviser receives information and advice from his subordinate units; (4) the president does not encourage his advisers to communicate with each other or to engage in joint efforts at policy analysis and problem solving; (5) the president sticks to channels and seldom reaches down to bypass a cabinet head to get independent information/advice from one of his subordinates; and (6) the president takes responsibility for intellectual synthesis of specialized inputs on a policy problem received from his advisers (1980, pp. 151-152).

Under Truman, lines of communication became more formalized, with each cabinet head providing information that was disseminated and filtered upward (Walcott and Hult, 1995). The president relied on key trusted advisors for their subject matter expertise and their ability to resolve difficult foreign policy questions. His role and responsibility was that of ultimate decider – collating the information provided by his advisory body while reserving the right to make final rulings on the path forward.

Evaluations of this system find that it "worked best when the advice was consistent…[and kept] the machinery working and more or less in balance" (Johnson, 1974, p. 57). Instances where it proved advantageous include the decision to aid Greece and Turkey, and the policymaking that led to the Marshall Plan, where Truman was able to utilize his decisionmaking apparatus effectively to assess possible courses of action, serve as the ultimate arbiter, and then use the presidency's persuasive power to implement policy. Other cases suggest limitations of the approach, however, particularly when Truman delegated too broadly and/or became too reliant on key advisors, and when he was reluctant to tap into information flows below the role of key cabinet members or advisors. Decisions related to US objectives during the Korean War and the firing of General MacArthur have been cited as examples of these managerial shortcomings (Johnson, 1980; George, 1980; Neustadt, 1991).

It is telling, however, that many of the examples used to illustrate how the "formalistic" model prevailed under Truman come after late 1947. This makes intuitive sense; first, this timeline correlates with the passage of the National Security Act in the second half of that year, and the subsequent creation of the National Security Council and restructuring of military and intelligence organizations. Moreover, Truman's administration had evolved into a relatively well-oiled machine by the latter stages of his time in office. As with any administration, it took a while for this state of affairs to develop and mature. The focus of this thesis is, by contrast, to examine US foreign policy crises that arose between 1946 and the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in early 1947. Many of the events under review here occurred less than a year after Truman had occupied the Oval Office, by which time many of the organizational structures and staffing arrangements described in this formal approach had not yet been instituted. This naturally limits the degree to which decisionmaking in the period can be explained simply or primarily by reference to the "formalistic" model. Elements of that model may be discernable during this early stage, but it was nonetheless a period of transition.

William Newmann proposes a framework that seeks to inject a bit more fluidity and nuance into the analysis of Truman's process. He maintains that "three concurrent structures develop within any presidential administration," with "informal" and "confidence" models operating alongside the "formal" interagency system. The informal approach is "narrower in participation than the interagency process" and "contains more informality and more ad hoc processes." The "confidence" model, meanwhile, is "narrower still, even more informal and ad hoc, and almost defiantly outside the formal interagency system." Early on, he finds, Truman made decisions largely through an informal structure by "consulting with specific selected advisers as needed." Then later, he employed a confidence model with Acheson, circumventing aspects of the formal structure – like the NSC – until the Korean War (2003, pp. 192-193, 195). Other presidential scholars have arrived at a similar view of these early Truman years, suggesting that initially "Truman believed that the Cabinet should be analogous to 'a board of directors,'" and that he, "like FDR, originally relied on *simple structures* revolving around prominent [policymakers]" (Hess, 1976, p. 46; Walcott and Hult, 1995, p. 160, my italics).

Consequently, for the time period under review in this thesis, there is evidence that a blend of co-formal and informal/confidence-based processes existed, particularly during initial dealings with Secretary of State Byrnes and in Truman's budding relationship with Under Secretary of State – and future Secretary of State – Dean Acheson. While largely closed off from Roosevelt's wartime planning and engagements with allies as Vice President, Truman nonetheless sought to continue Roosevelt's foreign policy objectives upon assuming office, and found in his choice for State's top job someone who would help carry on these measures (Larson, 1985, p. 192). The president held formal meetings on foreign policy crises and followed White House processes, but he relied on Byrnes to understand the Yalta accords and America's relationships with its allies (Leffler, 1992, p. 27), and would come to develop an informal/confidence connection with Acheson too in this regard. This was also, after all, a period when the State Department was seeking to reassert its role in foreign policy, moving away from the FDR-era paradigm where the president acted in many ways as his own Secretary of State (Rubin, 1985; Leffler, 1992, p. 27). As time passed, however, Truman would become more assertive in foreign policy as his relationship with Byrnes soured, continuing to serve as the final decisionmaker while inching closer toward a more structured decisionmaking hierarchy.

Knowledge of the various factors contributing to this underlying advisory system is critical to understanding decision outcomes, and to analyzing key patterns across the foreign policy crises reviewed in this thesis. Moreover, to understand Truman's decisions, due consideration should be given to his closest personnel, who provided substantial input in responding to early Cold War events. Still, since Truman *was* the chief arbiter, it is imperative to account for his personality traits and cognitive attributes, which impacted his decisionmaking and are particularly relevant to the first "stage" of applying a PH model. George argues that three core dimensions – "cognitive style, sense of efficacy, and orientation toward conflict" – along with prior executive experience, overall competence level, and interest in foreign affairs "combine to determine how a new president will structure the policymaking system around him and how he will define his own role and that of others in it" (1980, p. 148). Because of the wealth of first-hand accounts – in Truman's own words, as well as those of close contemporaries and numerous in-depth historical studies – there has been plenty of material on which to construct analyses of his worldview and information processing style. This information, aggregated across these three decisionmaking dimensions, will help lead to a better understanding of how Truman's personality traits shaped his advisory system and the overall policymaking process during his time in office.

By cognitive style, George is referring to how "individuals differ in their approaches to processing and evaluating information" (1980, p. 147). Therefore, to start, it is worth asking – what kind of man was the president? A *Time* magazine article issued prior to Roosevelt's 1944 reelection described the future Vice President as "homespun and plain as an old shoe…modest, honest, healthy, simple, kindly, straightforward, with a pleasant sense of humor, the average level of Congressional intelligence—which is higher than U.S. voters often think" (TIME, 1944). Tracing his life to understand the forces that shaped his presidential style, Johnson finds that he also possessed a "deep sense of doing the right thing;" he was humble and lacked confidence in certain respects but was determined to face adversity head on (1974, p. 53). This analysis largely accords with James Barber's assessment of presidential leadership traits in *The Presidential Character.* In terms of leadership style, Barber identifies Truman as "active-positive" within his comparative framework: "active" (versus passive) presidents show energy and "an orientation toward productiveness as a value," while "positive" (versus negative) leaders derive enjoyment from the position and exude "high self-esteem and relative success in relating to the environment" (2009, pp. 8-9). Additionally, Truman's "style [involved] aggressive rhetoric" and "swift decision[s]," but that he also "talked a good deal worse than he acted" (2009, pp. 312 & 321).

In Larson's analysis, Truman was the "consummate politician" and possessed "acute political instincts" (1985, p. 129). He was diligent in carrying out commitments and straightforward in his dealings, which served as a contrast – particularly upon his transition into the Oval Office – with Roosevelt's tendency to vacillate, trade in ambiguity, and play advisors off against one another (Larson, 1985, Johnson, 1974). Through his experience as a Missouri politician under the sway of the Tom Pendergast machine, he became a firm believer in the "code of the politician" to keep agreements. This would feature prominently in Truman's initial dealings with Stalin and his foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov. The president placed a high value on loyalty, and he was willing to "count on subordinates and support them in return for their loyalty" (Johnson, 1974, p. 53). In terms of worldview, the man from Independence was "unpretentious" and "blended a parochial nationalism with a pragmatic internationalism" (Leffler, 1992, p. 26). As noted previously, Truman ascended the presidency without deep knowledge of ongoing White House wartime planning and strategy, in which he was not involved, and limitations – both perceived and actual – in his understanding of global affairs.

Nevertheless, as Larson states, “Truman brought with him to the presidency certain resources that helped him carry out a vigorous, assertive foreign policy: a knowledge of history, political skills, and a characteristic style of leadership” (1985, p. 126).

The second dimension in George’s list mentioned above was a “sense of efficacy and competence,” meaning “the types of skills that [the president] possesses and the types of tasks that he feels particularly adept at doing and those that he feels poorly equipped to do” (1980, p. 148). Truman preferred to make decisions using information he had acquired through personal experience, and although largely self-taught, the president did possess a fairly comprehensive knowledge of history and politics. In keeping with the management models discussed earlier, however, Truman appeared to rely on his senior advisors for the bulk of the analysis and critical thinking behind major foreign policy decisions, which some have suggested was perhaps a way of compensating for his own educational shortcomings (Johnson, 1974, p. 55; Larson, 1985, p. 144; Barber, 2009).

Truman was also keenly aware of his political skills and trusted his own judgment when it came to the final decision. He relished being the ultimate decider; so much so that observers, particularly during his first year on the job, relayed that the president often appeared too eager to be seen as decisive, potentially coming at the expensive of more thorough deliberation and planning. He could be impetuous at times, with a tendency to shoot from the hip, and sometimes “parceled out assignments ‘on the basis of who was available’” (Hess, 1976, p. 47). Truman for his part would later defend this approach retrospectively, in the autobiographical *Mr. Citizen*:

> If a President is so equipped and so endowed, he can make decisions almost instinctively. Sometimes these decisions are instantaneous, and they may be interpreted by some persons as snap judgments. But actually they are rooted in a man's capacity to see clearly what lies ahead and the ability to act quickly…All the time I was President, one event followed another with such rapidity that I was never able to afford the time for prolonged contemplation. I had to make sure of the facts. I had to consult people. But to have hesitated when it was necessary to act might well have meant disaster in many instances. Many of the important decisions I had to make in the White House were what I described to myself as 'spot decisions.' By 'spot decisions,' I meant decisions which were almost instinctive with me – when I had to confront an emergency or serious situation. I never revealed to anyone what my 'spot decision' was in advance of calling for all the facts available and consulting the experts or the departments of government involved. Once the facts were examined and the experts heard, I then made the final decision. Looking back, I find that my final decisions usually corresponded to my first 'spot decisions' (1960, p. 195).

A post hoc reflection such as this might of course be viewed simply as an attempt to rationalize and justify his process while in office. Nonetheless, it provides helpful insights into how Truman viewed his own style as a decisionmaker, along with his comfort – implicitly – with relying on what we might now call cognitive "shortcuts" and heuristics (i.e. initial spot decisions) during the initial phase of making a presidential decision.

George's third and last highlighted presidential characteristic of interest is "orientation toward political conflict and, related to this, toward interpersonal conflict over policy among his advisers" (1980, p. 148). As Johnson points out, "a distaste for conflict was an important part of Truman's style" and he also "preferred agreement to controversy" (1974, p. 49). In contrast to Roosevelt's machinations in foreign policymaking, Truman sought to suppress internal political spats and interagency rivalries. When asked to "explain his curious stress on unanimity…[Truman replied] 'Reasonable men don't differ much when they have the facts'" (Johnson, 1974, p. 49). Just because he sought to minimize discord, however, did not mean he would always shy away from it. Illustrations of this can be found in his famous dressing-down of Molotov over broken Soviet promises during their first White House meeting in 1945, and in his later political confrontations with Byrnes and Henry Morgenthau.

But for the most part, Truman conceived of his role as one that hinged on the power of persuasion. He would, he explained, "sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them…That's all the powers of the President amount to" (Neustadt, 1991, p. 10). This approach to the role seemingly had the effect of inspiring sufficient loyalty among key officials and staff, especially those Truman had himself selected, to minimize open conflict. Unlike his predecessor, Truman may not have had advisors compete for his attention, but his "informal openness…did help him approximate Roosevelt's rich fare of information and advice" (Burke, et al., 1989, p. 8).

Combining the above assessment of Truman's decisionmaking process and advisory system with his own characteristics, we have a basis for better understanding his administration's decisions at the key moments of interest to this thesis, in terms of PH Theory. The investigation that follows will be guided first by the principle that Truman was the principal decisionmaker, yet he was significantly influenced during these crises – both through informal and formal processes – by close aides. Several works that adopt the "grand narrative" portrayal of the administration's strategizing assign primacy to the State Department and the works of Kennan during this era, and there is, of course, much to be said about the role played by Foggy Bottom at this time. The thrust of the analysis that follows, however, suggests this should not be overstated at the expense of Truman's own role as the key decisionmaker, even as he arrived at his decisions based on guidance from multiple sources. PH theory is applicable across varying decisionmaking structures but emphasizes the importance to decisionmaking of the political consequences anticipated from possible choices, and in this regard, the president had the most to lose. Most biographical accounts of Truman note that he kept a sign on his Oval Office desk inscribed "The Buck Stops Here" – and it did.

Reexamining Early Truman Era Foreign Policy: Three Case Studies in Decisionmaking

Chapter One outlined two important aspects of this thesis' approach to analyzing the emergence of strategy during the Truman administration. First, it is focused on the *earliest* years of the Truman presidency, from late-1945/early-1946 to the first months of 1947, when "containment" and the administration's Cold War strategy were far less formed than they would be in later years. Second, it frames this period as one of crisis decisionmaking, seeking a better understanding of the process by which decisions were crafted during this time. Now, following a survey of the rationale for FPA approaches to the study of decisionmaking, an overview of poliheuristic theory and its model application, along with Truman's decisionmaking structure and method, this thesis can revisit this "golden age" for US strategy in a way that will emphasize the process of decisionmaking through a PH model, with its blend of both rational and cognitive elements.

Taking a similar approach to Oneal's study on decisionmaking in times of crisis, this study selects "all of the cases from a narrow time period…and related geographical regions (Europe and the Middle East) in which the same policymakers (the Truman administration) were involved with the same adversary (the Soviet Union under the leadership of Stalin)." This, he believed, meant "comparability among the cases was enhanced" (1982, p. 6). From the end of World War II to the spring of 1947, the administration faced a number of growing conflicts arising from early American-Soviet antagonisms. Initial Soviet probes into the Middle East and Mediterranean, however, provide some of the clearest instances of early crisis decisionmaking, and hold the strongest potential for analysis through the PH framework. And given their occurrence in succession, they are ideal for understanding how this decisionmaking process relates to an emerging Cold War strategy and the factors – like foreign policy learning – that contributed to it. Therefore, in the chapters that follow, the PH model will be employed to understand the decisionmaking process that occurred during the following three cases:

1. The 1946 crisis in Iran, in which the US decided to take a firmer stance against the USSR while resolving the issue diplomatically;
2. The American-Soviet standoff over Turkey later in 1946, in which the decision was taken to demonstrate resolve in support of Turkish rights in the Straits;

3. The decision to provide aid to Greece and Turkey to prevent communist gains and potential Soviet advances, leading to the proclamation of the March 1947 Truman Doctrine.

In terms of methodology, this study uses a structured, focused case comparison as set forth in George and Bennett (2005) across these three crises. As these authors explain, "the method is 'structured' in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is 'focused' in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined" (2005, p. 67). Each case is analyzed using the within-case method of causal narrative as defined in Matthew Lange's work *Comparative-Historical Methods*. This narrative-based approach explores the causes of a particular "social phenomenon," focusing on the causal impact of specific factors within a given case over time to understand outcomes. It is also "well equipped to analyze historical processes" (2012, p. 84).

Each of the three cases will start by addressing the following structured questions to establish context:

- What was the background of the crisis and how did events proceed, particularly from America's standpoint?
- What was the underlying decisionmaking context impacting U.S foreign policy at the time of the crisis?

This step reviews the historical narrative of the conflict, key events, and American actions taken. The assessment of the US decisionmaking context surrounding the case establishes the basis on which potential American actions were conceived. As specified in Chapter Three, a detailed review of Cold War scholarship reveals four key threads impacting the US decisionmaking context during this period, which are investigated in each case: (1) a marked shift in tone on the part of Truman and his administration, reflecting an increased understanding of the Soviet threat; (2) a fundamental reorientation in how the US viewed its role and interests on the world stage, especially vis-à-vis the USSR; (3) domestic constraints on the foreign policy alternatives acceptable to the Truman administration; (4) Truman's decisionmaking and cognitive factors that contributed to the crisis decision process.

Next, the PH model is then employed, using the Applied Decision Analysis PH procedure as delineated by Mintz (2005). Each case reviews the following structured questions:

- What was the key decision facing the Truman administration?
- Who were the key decisionmakers involved?
- What was noncompensatory for these key decisionmakers, and what were the potential policy alternatives available to Truman and his advisors?
- Based on these alternatives, how did Truman era decisionmakers reach their decision through both stages of the PH process?
- How does this decision compare with the actual crisis decision outcome?

Applying the two-stage PH model described earlier in this chapter, each case features an examination into the decisionmaking process, incorporating the decisionmaking context established at the start. This is a multilevel assessment, incorporating factors at the level of the individual US policymaker, the state level of domestic politics, and the international backdrop of the crisis, and utilizes both empirical and secondary source material to provide an understanding how Truman and his team perceived the options that were afforded to them. This process begins by looking at the fundamental decision confronting the administration, and the key policymakers responsible for selecting the optimal foreign policy alternative. As per the assessment above, President Truman was the primary decision authority throughout his tenure, but especially in these early stages of his presidency he relied to a significant degree on informal, confidence-based collaboration with close advisors, which will be evaluated in each case.

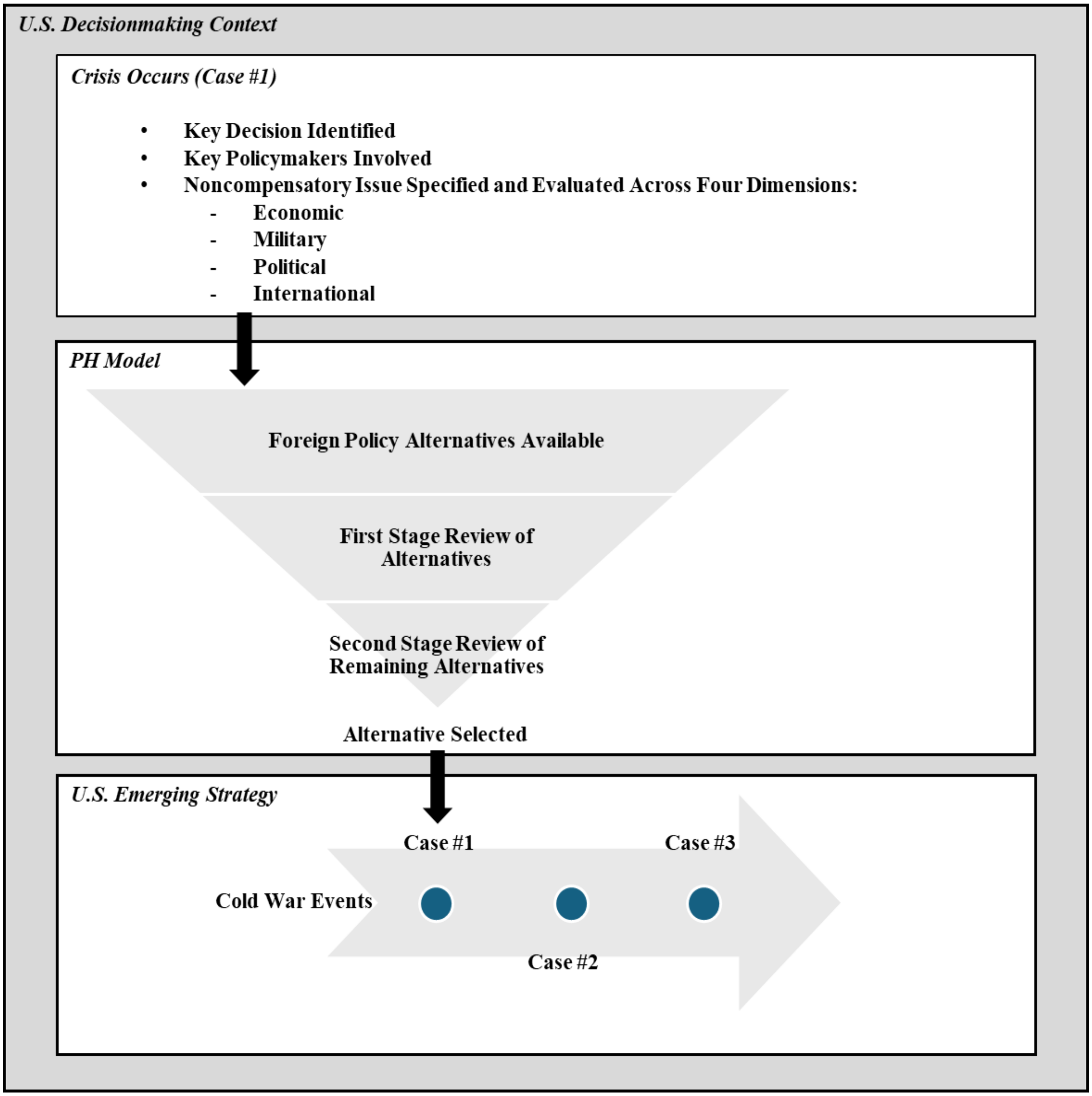
The next step is to break down the key American decision using the structure provided by the PH model using the Applied Decision Analysis PH procedure, which starts by identifying "a set of alternatives the leader has, the policy dimensions (or criteria) for selecting among these alternatives, and an assessment of the implications of each dimension for each alternative" (Mintz, 2005). This involves reviewing the "menu of alternatives" (Brulé, 2008) potentially available to the Truman White House, which are constructed from the empirical sources of US decisionmaking during the crisis. These prospective options are unique to each conflict as they are in other applications of PH-based case studies, and thus may vary case-to-case depending on the specific circumstances of the decision. These potential policy alternatives are then assessed using the first and second stages of the PH decisionmaking process. In the first stage, through the lens of cognitive-based decisionmaking, this thesis determines which alternatives would have been perceived by American planners as noncompensatory, or a "deal-breaker," across four key decision dimensions: economic, military, political, and international. In the second stage, where rational-analytic decisionmaking comes to the fore, this study examines the options that remained – having survived the winnowing process of the first stage – and how American decisionmakers perceived these remaining alternatives. The analysis then takes stock of the decision that emerged and was implemented, and reflects on how well this model of analysis serves to explain it.

Lastly, each case study will conclude by assessing American strategy at the time of the crisis, accounting for the following questions:

- Are elements of grand strategy present in the given case?
- To what extent can "emerging" strategy explain case events and/or characterize the development of US Cold War foreign policy?

Utilizing the definition of grand strategy adopted in Chapter One, each case is reviewed in terms of how the crisis events, decision process, and outcome align with a grand strategy interpretation of the case. From this, the concept of "emergent" strategy is invoked to determine the extent to which this construct can describe the development and evolution of US Cold War strategy and foreign policy.

The contours of this overall approach, which will be employed in the chapters to follow, are depicted in the visual aid below:



Chapter 3: The Iranian Crisis of 1946

"Now we'll give it to them with both barrels."[3]

~James F. Byrnes

Introduction

"In early 1946," wrote a reflective President Harry S. Truman, "Russian activities in Iran threatened the peace of the world" (1956, p. 93). Amid burgeoning tensions with the Soviet Union and the ominous situation that was developing in postwar Iran, many contemporary Washington officials would have endorsed Truman's retrospective. Having been occupied by Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States to establish Allied supply lines during the early stages of World War II, Iran emerged as a unique geostrategic arena and testing ground for Allied cooperation (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 304). For American decisionmakers, concern was mounting over the USSR's failure to remove their troops from Iranian territory, which was in direct violation of treaty obligations stipulating the evacuation of Allied troops six months after the war. Moreover, the Soviet Union's support for separatist movements in northern Iran and Stalin's intractable diplomacy in the closing months of 1945 presented a challenge to this Allied territory, endangering prospects for a peaceful resolution.

In light of these actions, and the stalwart responses later promulgated by Washington and London, Louise Fawcett describes Iran as a "battlefield of conflicting interests in which national

[3] James Clark, "Oil, the Cold War, and the Crisis in Azerbaijan of March 1946," *Oriente Moderno* 23 (84), no. 3 (2004): 564 https://www.jstor.org/stable/25817964

pride, security considerations, the struggle for control of oil resources, and the hearts and minds of the Iranian people all played a part" (1992, p. 1). This region became a postwar flashpoint for America and the Soviet Union, as events in 1946 "led to a U.S. challenge to Soviet pretensions for a sphere of influence in northern Iran" (2014, p. 379). Thus, it is not surprising that among the many international incidents that contributed to escalating hostilities between the two superpowers, the Iranian (or Azerbaijani) dispute "is widely acknowledged as being one of the first Cold War crises" (2014, p. 379). According to one scholar, even if "no historian could reasonably suggest that the Cold War *began* over Iran," the conflict offers "a textbook case of [its] origins" (Lytle, 1987, p. xiv, my italics).

As one of the first major Cold War arenas, the Iranian crisis certainly had a significant impact on American foreign policy. Many researchers have persuasively argued how America's "success" during this critical moment solidified the shift from a passive to an active posture that defined the Soviet Union as the enemy and called for a more direct line regarding the threat from Moscow (Fawcett, 1992, p. 122; Leffler, 1992, p. 100). As Bruce Kuniholm suggests, "the crisis in Iran crystallized the Truman administration's understanding of Soviet tactics" and reinforced the validity of America's transition to a stronger Cold War strategy. He demonstrates how this crisis framed Washington policymaking and led to foreign policy learning, "condition[ing] the administration's reaction" toward subsequent confrontations with the USSR (1980, p. 378). Various historians have also demonstrated how the superpowers' actions in Iran precipitated important transitions in US planning, and how it viewed its role in global affairs (Lytle, 1987; Lenczowski, 1990). So even before White House responses to the Kremlin's later advances on the straits of Turkey, before American involvement in Greece against communist insurgency and the Truman Doctrine, there was Iran and the implications it held for these future Mediterranean events.

As with the evolution in Cold War historiography noted in Chapter One, so too has the treatment of the Iranian crisis undergone its recent share of reappraisals. The most significant impetus for this stems from access to Russian and Eastern European archival material that only became available after Cold War tensions had faded. This has led to new research into the 1946 conflict that provides greater transparency concerning Soviet actions in Azerbaijan and deeper insights into Stalin's motivations (Yegorova, 1996; Raine, 2001; Hasanli, 2006). Other recent works on the Iranian affair have followed post-revisionist Cold War themes, including the "search for local agency" and analyses of the periphery, with pieces eschewing focus on the superpowers in favor of the Iranian experience and how the country managed external pressures (Fawcett, 2014, p. 380; Halliday, 1997; Harper, 2018). New overarching Cold War surveys which emphasize the wider international context have also incorporated similar dynamics (Westad, 2007).

In a comprehensive survey of then-new scholarship in this area, however, Fawcett notes that this work, despite newly available records, does not necessarily "displace" earlier accounts; the lack of access available to prior researchers of the crisis "did not prevent some very sound scholarship and excellent accounts that have survived the test of time" (2014, p. 380). Amid these shifts in orientation, and despite the incorporation of new archival information, many recent accounts largely depict the US role in the Iran case either within familiar constructs or as a secondary focus in the context of their own priorities. It is important, therefore, to consider the full compendium of Cold War literature on the conflict to appreciate the scope of earlier research performed on America's involvement in Iran.

Those works that do detail US actions offer valuable insights into how this crisis contributed to broader aspects of America's early Cold War foreign policy. Returning to the fundamental question of this study – how to square conventional grand strategy interpretations of the Truman administration with early US Cold War responses – many of these assessments of US policy appear to implicitly adopt a rational choice framework, aligning White House and State Department maneuvering in Iran with the "grand narrative" depiction of the era. Foreign policy *outcomes* are a central feature in most examinations of the standoff, along with how they factored into US national security development. Less thoroughly discussed in the literature – especially that on grand strategy – is how this early case of American-Soviet confrontation can be evaluated with regard to the *process* of US decisionmaking. Whether the focus is on Cold War origins, American-Iranian relations, or the role of the newly formed United Nations (UN), most existing scholarship provides only a brief treatment of the issues of interest to this thesis: the decision context and process from which US choices emerged, and the role of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) factors like Truman's cognition and decisionmaking style, that shaped the administration's policy in early 1946. Taking account of these factors, as this thesis argues, will provide a more robust understanding of how administration decisions were arrived at during the crisis, and how a larger American strategy emerged.

Thus, to better understand the decisionmaking process from the US standpoint, this chapter will first review the course of events surrounding the conflict over Iran and the role that America played in this postwar confrontation. From there, it will evaluate the state of American foreign policy and decisionmaking at this point in time, along with the broader context in which these decisions were taking place. At this point, the poliheuristic (PH) model will be applied to understand both the cognitive and rational factors that led to the alternative selected by Truman and his key advisors. This section will then conclude by considering how this decision outcome represented the inception of an emergent strategy, and how actions during this crisis would impact decisionmaking and strategy during later Cold War events.

America, the Soviet Union, and Cold War Origins in Iran

As one study on American-Iranian relations puts it, "it can easily be argued that before 1941 Iran and the United States had almost no relations whatsoever" (Lytle, 1987, p. xiii). Historically, direct American involvement in Iran before World War II had been very limited, notwithstanding the occasional missionary activity or ad-hoc economic advisory mission (Fawcett, 1992, p. 108). Moreover, any early American activity was largely overshadowed by the "great game" of European power politics that had presided over the region since the 19th century, where Britain sought to make the Emirate of Afghanistan a protectorate and to use surrounding areas – including the Persian Empire – as a buffer to Russian inroads. In fact, some sources have argued that Iran's entire modern history and foreign relations up to the second World War had been "influenced principally by Russia and Great Britain, which had been engaged in a continuous struggle for political and economic ascendancy" given the territory's geopolitical importance (Alexander and Nanes, 1980, p. 147; Andreeva, 2007, p. 6).

Yet after British and Soviet forces invaded Iran in August 1941 to establish war-time supply lines to the Soviet Union, US involvement in Iran increased dramatically. Within the following year as many as thirty thousand American missions, civilian advisors, and non-combat troops had arrived to supply US lend-lease supplies to the Soviet Union (Lenczowski, 1990, pp. 7-8). Additionally, Americans assisted the Iranian government in maintaining the Trans-Iranian supply line to the USSR and played an instrumental role in the Tripartite Treaty of 1942. Although it was not signed by the US, then-Secretary of State Cordell Hull was influential in setting the terms of the treaty under American auspices, making sure that its statements were compatible with the principles of the Atlantic Charter (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 143; Hasanli, 2006). Under the terms of occupation, Great Britain retained control of Iran's southern zone that extended southward from Tehran to the Persian Gulf, and the Soviet Union managed the northern zone around the Caspian Sea. However, even as the United States emerged on the scene at the war's onset, American diplomacy still proceeded with caution in asserting its interests under the purview of London's and Moscow's spheres of influence. While some have argued that the US was slow to involve itself, this was also a function of both the palpable political realities of the region and the need to ensure smooth collaboration among the great powers in support of the war effort (Lundestad, 2005).

As the second World War approached its denouement and the Truman administration assumed its responsibilities, relations between the US and Iran underwent a "radical change" (Lenczowski, 1990, p. 8). For America, the contingencies of war and the need for allied unity had been supplanted by a "new challenge, the nature of the relationship between the two emerging superpowers in the postwar world" (Lenczowski, 1990, p. 8). This emerging bipolar confrontation between Washington and Moscow had begun to materialize in several postwar hotspots, predominantly in Germany and Eastern Europe. But as the months wore on and diplomatic exchanges became more strained, US concerns expanded to the Mediterranean, particularly over Soviet interference in Iranian affairs. As one scholar notes, instances of this intrusion had already been occurring since the Soviet occupation in 1941, including "harassing the population, manipulating to her own advantage the food supplies, expelling inconvenient Iranian officials, influencing elections to Iran's [parliament, the] Majlis, and applying oppressive measures toward the 'bourgeois' classes in her northern zone" (Lenczowski, 1990, p. 9; Ramazani, 1975, pp. 109-116).

By 1946, continued encroachment into Iranian sovereignty would take on new meaning among Western nations amid this budding Cold War milieu. The diplomatic wrangling that would ensue rested on what Washington perceived as two brash, antagonistic actions by the Kremlin. The first issue that caused concern for American officials regarded what appeared to be Moscow's complicity in the creation of two separatist pro-Soviet regimes in its northern zone during the closing months of 1945: the "Autonomous Republic of Azerbaijan" centered in Tabriz, and later the "Kurdish People's Republic" in Mahabad. Despite the USSR's denial of involvement in UN exchanges, subsequent archival research has ultimately confirmed Stalin's guiding hand in advancing Soviet interests through these machinations (Yegorova, 1996; Raine, 2001). Nonetheless, as Fawcett points out, "despite the alarm [this] caused, [it] was not for the United States so decisive an event as was the [second major concern, the] failure of the USSR to withdraw its troops from Iran." This provocation was so serious, in fact, that both the Americans and the British had engaged in talks debating the possibility of war with the Soviet Union over

Iran (1992, pp. 122-123). As cited above, Iran, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union had signed the Tripartite Treaty which had called for the withdrawal of armed forces by March 2, 1946. The United States had evacuated most of their troops before New Year's Day 1946, while Great Britain would remove its forces later but prior to the cutoff date. A significant contingent of Soviet troops, however, remained in Iran after the March deadline. This aggressive posturing would lead to a firestorm of US protest, sparking an international crisis that would further widen the growing postwar divide.

Tensions began in earnest on January 19, 1946, when Sayid Hassan Taqizadeh, leader of the Iranian delegation to the United Nations in London, submitted a formal complaint that called for the UN Security Council to investigate Soviet interference in Iranian affairs (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 304; Hurewitz, 1973, p. 27). This led to a brusque response from the head of the Soviet delegation, Andrei Vyshinsky, who claimed that the "allegation made" by Iran "through its officials and through its armed forces…is not in accordance with the facts and is devoid of any foundation" (FRUS VII, Vyshinsky, January 1946). He cited the Soviet-Iranian Treaty of 1921 and the Tripartite Treaty of 1942 to justify the Soviet Union's continued presence in Iran, then denied Soviet involvement in Azerbaijan and recommended that these issues be adjudicated through Russo-Iranian negotiations (FRUS VII, Vyshinsky, January 1946). This debate would continue through Security Council proceedings later that month, ending in a resolution encouraging Moscow and Tehran to continue bilateral negotiations regarding Soviet troops on Iranian soil. During this first round of UN engagement, though the United States would not yet provide definitive support to Iran, both the American and British UN delegations – led by Edward Stettinius and Ernest Bevin respectively – insisted "that until a settlement was reached, this matter would remain a continuing concern of the council" (Kuniholm, 1980, pp. 307-308). With a resolution in hand and assurances from Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, Stettinius was initially "satisfied," and "believed that Iran and the Soviet Union would reach a settlement which conformed with the principles and purposes of the [UN] charter" (Kuniholm, 1980, pp. 307-308).

Meanwhile, the crisis in Iran continued to intensify. Following the formation of the Azerbaijan People's Government under Soviet auspices, Kurdish leader Qazi Muhammad, in a Soviet military uniform, announced the formation of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad on January 22, 1946. In Tehran, the Kremlin's continued pressure over oil concessions in northern Iran and its support for Ja'far Pishevari and the Azerbaijani independence movement led to the collapse of Iranian prime minister Ebrahmi Hakimi's government. In late February, the newly elected prime minister Ahmad Qavam was greeted by Molotov in Moscow to begin the UN sanctioned bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union. These discussions, however, would only lead to sterner demands by Stalin and Molotov, and eventual protests by the Iranian government in response (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 315). As the March 2nd date for troop withdrawal came and went, various Western news media outlets also began to report on the situation, with speculation that war might be in the offing (Fawcett, 1992, p. 126; Leffler, 1992, p. 110).

At this time, US planners' apprehensions continued to rise as Soviet troops remained on Iranian soil. Much of the anxiety felt by American policymakers stemmed from communiqués provided by Robert Rossow, the American vice consul in Tabriz, who sent urgent telegrams during the first weeks of March describing the Soviet Union's military mobilization in Azerbaijan (FRUS

VII, Rossow, March 1946; Fawcett, 1992, p. 126; Kuniholm, 1980, pp. 317-320). These reports, along with demonstrations in Tehran and propaganda from the Soviet press (Hasanli, 2006), played an important role in prompting the United States to more fully counter perceived Soviet aspirations in Iran. Evidence of this shift can be found in Washington's diplomatic responses during the apex of the crisis in March. In particular, the correspondence by Secretary Byrnes (delivered by George Kennan) addressed to Molotov on March 5, 1946 stands out as a prominent example of this firmer tactic. In this cable, Byrnes emphasized the importance of abiding by the Tripartite Treaty and the need for maintaining UN principles, claiming that the Soviet Union had "created a situation with regard to which the Government of the United States…cannot *remain indifferent*" (FRUS VII, Byrnes, March 1946, my italics).

As the focus shifted back to the United Nations in late March, Iranian Ambassador Hossein Ala brought the dispute between the Soviet Union and Iran back to the floor of the UN and asked that Iran's appeal for a solution be placed on the agenda for the 25th. He stated that the bilateral negotiations had failed; Soviet troops remained in Iran and continued to interfere in Tehran's internal affairs (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 326). Vociferous debate would once again continue through Security Council proceedings, with the Soviet delegation staging a walk out during the March 28th meeting. Nevertheless, amid the continued pressure and ongoing negotiations with Qavam, Stalin finally conceded to a settlement put forth on April 4th, which ended the immediate crisis. Moscow agreed to withdraw its troops within six weeks from March 24th while recognizing that the struggle over Azerbaijani independence was an internal affair for the Iranians. In return, Qavam agreed to an oil concession for the Soviet Union, but this was later terminated by the Majlis the following year, in a vote of 102 to 2. And in mid-December 1946, the Iranian army entered Northern Iran and forcefully reclaimed the two autonomous regions, ending their year-long stretch of de facto independence. With these results, many US policymakers inferred that Washington's stalwart approach had been a telling success; historian Gary Hess would later write that it was America's "first diplomatic victory in the Cold War" (1974, p. 117).

The Iranian Crisis and US Decisionmaking in Context

In *Pattern in Organization Analysis*, Sherman Krupp delineates the importance of understanding the environment, or context, through which decisionmaking occurs:

> From a broader framework – in an environmental point of departure – non-instrumental aspects can be stressed and the decisionmaker can be seen as part of his environment. Decisionmaking, after all, may merely reflect its larger setting (1964, p. 95).

In light of this, an important first step toward establishing the process by which US decisions occurred involves assessing the state of American foreign policy on the eve of the crisis. As we have seen in works by Miscamble, Larson, and others that have questioned grand strategy interpretations of the Truman administration, the period in this case – late-1945 to early-1946 – can be viewed as a moment of *in*decision in American policymaking. Those authors have noted several issues that contributed to this, ranging from Truman's brief time in office, to overall inconsistencies in US policy toward the USSR. There were also bureaucratic issues hindering consistent foreign policy decisionmaking and "squabbles between occupation authorities, the War Department, and the State Department [that] were a microcosm of larger difficulties besetting Washington's policymaking community in the aftermath of the war" (Leffler, 1992, p. 41).

Furthermore, "containment," often considered *the* organizing principle that unified aspects of American foreign policy during the Cold War, had not yet been established across Washington policymaking circles at this stage. The initial foundation of what would become containment was first articulated by Kennan in his famous 8,000-word telegram sent from Moscow in February 1946. But in many ways Kennan's message was primarily "an elucidation of the Soviet threat" rather than an argument for specific strategic initiatives in response (Gaddis, 2005, p. 21). More importantly, as Gaddis contends, the actual *implementation* of containment did not really become apparent until 1947 (2005, p. 54). From this perspective, since the pivotal moments of the Iranian showdown occurred during the early months of 1946, the crisis would have pre-dated containment's full manifestation as a strategic framework.

So what *was* the shape of American thinking at the time? In her comprehensive work on the Iranian affair, Fawcett claims that this conflict "helped to draw together the different threads of an emergent Cold War policy" for the United States (1992, p. 108). In the analysis of this thesis, based on a survey of scholarship on early US Cold War foreign policy, there were four underlying "threads," or structural factors, that influenced the American decisionmaking environment at the onset of the Iran crisis, and contributed to US actions and outcomes. Two have received the lion's share of attention in interpretations of how policy was enacted at this time (and in the case studies to follow): (1) a marked shift in tone on the part of Truman and his administration, reflecting an increased understanding of the Soviet threat, and (2) a fundamental reorientation in how the US viewed its role and interests on the world stage, especially vis-à-vis the USSR. Two other factors, though occasionally mentioned in Cold War and FPA literature, have not received such extensive treatment in assessing these events: (3) domestic constraints on the foreign policy alternatives acceptable to the Truman administration, alongside (4) Truman's decisionmaking and cognitive factors that contributed to the crisis decision process. These four factors are reviewed below:

Shift in Tone and the Soviet Threat

Immediately upon assuming the presidency, most historians would agree that Truman "did not significantly alter U.S. policy," opting instead to continue toward his predecessor's international objectives (Avey, 2012, p. 170). Although he was kept at arm's length from Roosevelt's wartime planning and foreign policy aims, Truman initially sought smooth relations with the Soviet Union where possible, following FDR's goal "of persuading the Soviets to cooperate with Britain and the United States in maintaining world order" (Larson, 1985, p. 250). There were moments, like his first meeting with Molotov in the Oval Office, where Truman adopted a more aggressive tone advocated by hawkish advisors, but by and large Truman – and Byrnes – maintained an accommodationist, negotiating posture through their engagements with the Kremlin during this immediate postwar period.

From late 1945 into the early months of 1946, however, Truman's cabinet and the broader US foreign policy establishment began the initial stages of a transformation in how they perceived the Soviet Union in emerging areas of conflict. One of the main triggers for this change centered on perceived threats from recent Kremlin activities abroad. In light of "Soviet actions in Eastern

Europe in 1945, together with the change in tactics by the international communist movement," many US planners had become more convinced that "Moscow had embarked on a program of unlimited expansion which threatened the very survival of the United States and its Western allies" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 284). Stalin's and Molotov's obstinate diplomacy was another area of concern, and issues over the fate of Poland following the breakdown of the Yalta agreements had left officials like Averell Harriman "with a bitter taste in his mouth for Soviet-American collaboration" (Larson, 1985, p. 118).

Amid the ensuing crisis over Iran, Stalin's February 9, 1946 "election" speech in Moscow also prompted alarm among American officials. In his speech, Stalin proclaimed that World War II was "the inevitable result of the development of the world economic and political forces on the basis of monopoly capitalism" (Judge and Langdon, 1999, p. 13). Even though "it was intended largely to rally the Soviet peoples for continued sacrifices in rebuilding their war-torn country, this speech was viewed by many in the West as a declaration of Cold War against the capitalist world" (Judge and Langdon, 1999, p. 13). Justice William O. Douglas summed up American fears when he told Secretary of Navy James Forrestal that Stalin's speech was the "Declaration of World War III" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 310). Later that month, on the US side, Kennan's telegram also played a significant role in policymakers' perceptions of the Soviet Union, providing a cogent and structured interpretation of the Soviet threat. Although it would be months until this viewpoint truly crystallized across the US foreign policy community, it nonetheless articulated a mindset that many diplomats and defense officials were beginning to adopt.

Lastly, this burgeoning tonal shift was also influenced by organizational issues within American policymaking that were impeding a consistent approach in dealing with the Soviet Union. Nowhere is this more evident than in the White House's growing disenchantment with Byrnes on the eve of the crisis. Although Truman's "dissatisfaction with Byrnes's conduct of foreign policy had been growing for several months," it was the Moscow Conference in December 1945 where this underlying discord came to a head (Gaddis, 2000, pp. 285, 287). The president, expecting to "see at least a reference to Soviet withdrawal from Iran in the final communiqué" of the conference, had not been consulted prior to Byrnes' decision to release it (Raine, 2001, p. 27). After the Secretary returned to Washington, an angry Truman is reputed to have dictated to his Secretary of State a longer letter attacking current policy regarding the Soviet Union (Raine, 2001, p. 27). In the case of Iran, he felt that "unless the United States protested 'with all the vigor of which we are capable' and backed that strong public language with 'an iron fist,' [he] foresaw war with the Soviet Union. The only way, he said, to deal effectively with the Russians and avoid war was to get tough and refuse to compromise any longer" (Messer, 1982, pp. 162-163). Aside from Truman's personal issues with Byrnes, the letter served to demonstrate both the president's intent to take a firmer hand in guiding US policy, and his evolving transition toward a more defiant American stance in the face of Soviet maneuvering.

Expanded Role and Interests

In addition to this incipient Cold War posture, US officials also began to revise their conception of America's role in the world. Following World War II, the United States occupied a preeminent position on the global stage. In his analysis of history's great powers, Paul Kennedy finds that "American power in 1945 was, for want of another term, *artificially* high" and "the actual dimensions of its might were unprecedented in absolute terms" (1989, p. 357). From this new position of power there were multiple foreign policy approaches on the table that the US could in principle adopt, ranging from neo-isolationism on one end of the spectrum to "rollback" of communism on the other (Dueck, 2006; Avey, 2012). The attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent wartime experience had largely discredited calls for isolationism or very limited engagement, however, and a "window of opportunity [had] opened up for more expansive conceptions of America's role in the world" where "many Americans began to think aggressively about the need to sustain a permanent equilibrium in Europe and Asia" (Dueck, 2006, p. 84). As part of this more expansive vision, US planners began to reconsider their perception of American geopolitical and economic interests. In *Preponderance of Power*, Leffler asserts that "policies in different regions of the globe…[and] plans for developing overseas bases and for sharing atomic energy…[reflected] how U.S. officials sought to perpetuate their nation's preponderant position in the international system." And although "they did not seek a rift with the Kremlin," they were uncertain of "Soviet motives and apprehensive about the formation of closed blocs" and thus "sought to establish a postwar order that comported with America's values, fostered its interests, and safeguarded its security" (1992, p. 55).

Policymakers' thinking about Iran reflected these broader notions of America's interests and the country's global role. First, there was a desire to maintain Iranian sovereignty, which dovetailed with efforts to foster early development of the UN – the primary forum through which the 1946 crisis would largely be adjudicated. Additionally, as Mark Lytle describes in a more critical assessment of America's role in the Iranian conflict, "the Americans, like the British before them, came to see an independent and stable Iran as a vital barrier to Soviet conquest of American geopolitical resources in the Middle East" (1987, p. 139). He notes that the US ambassador to Iran, Wallace Murray, who served during the standoff, "did not advocate American opposition to Soviet initiatives in Iran merely in order to contain Russian or communist expansion. Murray believed that Great Britain and the United States had vital interests to protect…[including] commerce with Iran and airline routes." Soviet control over Iran would "preclude an American oil concession there, while endangering rich American fields in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. Thus, Murray defined a system of 'defense in depth' that extended the American security perimeter into the Middle East…[which] would afford the United States access to commercial and natural resources upon which its future security might come to depend" (1987, p. 144).

Domestic Constraints

Less frequently discussed – though some researchers do to varying degrees (Gaddis, 2000; Avey, 2012) – is that the US decisionmaking context on the eve of the Iran crisis was also heavily influenced by issues on the domestic front, particularly across three sources: the views of Congressional and party leadership; economic pressures and anxieties related to the unwinding of the war effort; and public opinion regarding the Soviet Union.

As the "New Deal" Congress came to end in 1945 (Maney, 1998), along with FDR's centralization of foreign policy through the Oval Office, Congress began to reassert itself in defense and security issues in the years to follow (Gaddis, 2000, p. 254). Notwithstanding the more "internationalist" vision for America espoused by many officials in Roosevelt's and then

Truman's White House, Congressional leaders at this time held a wide range of foreign policy views. Some, like Senator Arthur Vandenberg, were starting to come around to the administration's way of thinking regarding the Soviet Union and the potential need for a more active foreign policy (Haas, 2016). Others, meanwhile, like Senators Robert A. Taft and William E. Jenner, were calling for a more limited US role in global affairs and a different approach to the Soviet "problem." These competing strains of foreign policy perspectives would only become more entrenched in the run-up to the 1946 midterm election. Yet even at this juncture, Gaddis observes that "the net effect of the reassertion of congressional authority which took place in the fall of 1945 was to drive the Truman Administration toward a firmer Russian policy." Byrnes may have exemplified this during the crisis in Iran, in which his "decision to push the Iranian issue through the Security Council even after the Russians had indicated their willingness to withdraw troops from Iran…[can be viewed] chiefly [in terms of] *domestic* considerations: the Secretary of State wanted to make clear to his critics at home that the United States had abandoned the politics of appeasement once and for all" (2000, pp. 261, 312, my italics).

Leading up to the Iranian standoff, Truman and his team had also been dealing with a slew of domestic issues. Worries over labor disputes, postwar reconversion, and the rapid pace of demobilization were front-and-center across the nation and therefore at the top of Washington's agenda. Postwar economic issues specifically loomed large in the mind of the president. As one researcher points out, "as the war ended there was widespread anxiety among economists and politicians of all stripes that the United States would repeat the experience of the 1920s…Indeed, cautioned President Truman in 1946, because the pressures at work were 'many times stronger than those which caused the inflation after World War I,' there was a real danger that they could bring a 'much more serious' crash" (Friedberg, 2000, p. 95). Truman was also very concerned with avoiding deficits and maintaining balanced budgets during his tenure. The "fear that deficit-fed inflation would be unpopular and that it could contribute to economic and, perhaps, also to social and political instability influenced President Truman's behavior throughout his time in office" (Friedberg, 2000, p. 95). These apprehensions hovered over White House decisionmakers as they assessed what options the United States had available to counter the USSR in peripheral regions like Iran.

Third, public opinion has also been cited as influencing the trajectory of US foreign policy during this period, in particular, a changing national mood toward the Soviet Union. While the country was widely supportive of "Uncle Joe" and the Soviet Union as their ally during the war, "opinion polls showed that at the time of Japan's surrender, 54 percent of a national sample had been willing to trust the Russians to cooperate with the United States in the postwar world. Two months later, following the failure of the London Conference, this figure had dropped to 44 percent. By the end of February, 1946, it would stand at 35 percent" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 289). The Iranian affair itself served as a case in point when it came to US public sentiment: a March 1946 Washington Post article reported that during the crisis "77 percent [of the country] decried Soviet policies in Iran" (McFarland, 1980, p. 347). While some scholars, like Thomas Paterson, have argued that public opinion on foreign affairs during this era was largely characterized by "ignorance or indifference" (1979, p. 5), the high-level polling trends are still indicative of the country's evolving postwar attitudes toward Moscow in general, which would hold implications for Washington's policymaking abroad.

Truman's Approach to Decisionmaking

As reviewed in Chapter Two, there were several aspects of Truman's decisionmaking apparatus and personal style that impacted how White House decisions were made. His approach constituted a noteworthy departure from FDR's "competitive collegiality" in several ways, with a greater tendency toward "shoot from the hip" decisionmaking and close collaboration with a limited set of US officials early in his tenure. As Kuniholm notes, "events in Greece, Turkey, and Iran, and Soviet actions along the Northern Tier…served as a learning experience for the new president, Harry S. Truman, whose management of foreign policy *differed considerably* from that of his predecessor" (1980, p. xvii, my italics).

In terms of his advisory system, the "informal confidence" model that largely characterized Truman's decisionmaking during the early years of his administration was taking shape leading up to and during the Iranian confrontation. This was most evident in his exchanges with Byrnes, who served as his closest foreign policy aide at this time and as the key official responsible for relations with the Soviet Union. Earlier, in his "frank" communication with the Secretary in January 1946, we see his vision for how he expected his delegates to operate, and how he functioned as the final decisionmaker:

> As you know I would like to pursue a policy of delegating authority to the members of the cabinet in their various fields and then back them up in the results. But in doing that and in carrying out the policy I do not intend to turn over the complete authority of the President nor to forgo the President prerogative to make the final

> decision. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that the President should be kept fully informed on what is taking place (Truman and Ferrell, 1997, p. 79).

Not only does this passage speak to Truman's straightforward manner, it also illustrates his desire to ensure his core message – in this case, demonstrating a stronger position vis-à-vis the Kremlin in Iran and in other regions – was understood by his delegate and was ready for implementation through future exchanges. His priority was the "big picture," letting Byrnes and his advisors wrestle with the intricacies behind how these foreign policy measures should be enacted.

As noted above, however, Truman's burgeoning rift with his Secretary of State also demonstrated tensions over internal decisionmaking processes and uncertainty within the cabinet. Despite the strong language used in communicating his thoughts to Byrnes, there was still, nonetheless, a fair amount of ambiguity regarding the trajectory of foreign policy at this time, and how this would impact Washington's decisions on Iran and beyond. Even among the president's closest officials, there were advocates for different approaches with Moscow. In the waning months of 1945, for instance, Harriman and "Leahy, for his part, saw Byrnes and others at the State Department as too ready to accommodate the Russians" (McCullough, 1993, p. 486).

In terms of Truman's personal decisionmaking preferences, meanwhile, we see these traits emerge as the president's time in office progressed across the three dimensions discussed in the last chapter: cognitive style, sense of efficacy, and orientation toward conflict. His pithy demeanor and pragmatic internationalism can be seen from his initial engagement with Molotov in April 1945, to his blunt press engagements at the height of the Iranian situation (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 324). Where Roosevelt typically bounced ideas off key officials while undertaking a lengthy deliberation regarding the decision at hand, Truman relied on heuristics to make quick decisions, and this would have ramifications for the policy alternatives considered. This would become more pronounced across the period covered by this thesis: despite the shift in tone regarding the USSR, Truman's "spot" decisionmaking process was perhaps less evident in the Iran case because there remained still a fair amount of uncertainty and ambivalence as to how Washington should ultimately manage its affairs with Moscow.

Taken together, these factors shaping US foreign policymaking at the time of the Iranian crisis – a shift in tone and threat interpretation, an expanded conception of America's global role, domestic constraints, and White House decisionmaking – are critical to understanding the process by which alternatives were considered during the crises of interest here. Next, the PH model will be used to assess how this played out in the case of countering Soviet actions in Iran.

A PH Analysis of US Decisionmaking during the Iranian Crisis

Introduction

As presented earlier, PH theory provides an FPA model of the decisionmaking process that combines both cognitive and rational elements. This model employs a two-phase procedure in which decisionmakers start by engaging in "a cognitively based screening of alternatives, serving to simplify and reduce the 'decision matrix.' The second [step] is a more rationalistic treatment of the remaining alternatives and dimensions and tends to be based on analytic, expected utility or lexicographic rules of choice" (Stern, 2004, p. 108). The PH decision process has been ascribed a number of core tenets – nonholistic/nonexhaustive, dimension-based, order sensitive – but chief among these, as K.P. Vijayalakshmi contends, are "(1) the non-compensatory principle of avoidance of major domestic political loss in the first stage…and (2) the satisficing principle concerned with finding "acceptable" rather than maximizing alternatives in order to allow for the possibility that not all dimensions will be equally considered before making a decision" (2017, p. 202). To understand US decisionmaking during the Iran crisis through this model, therefore, this thesis must first identify the key decision and relevant policy responses available to the Truman administration. Then, it will assess how the first and second stages of the PH process transpired, along how the noncompensatory and satisficing criteria were employed across relevant dimensions.

As Truman and close US officials perceived the situation in Iran, the overarching decision could be stated as follows: *How should the US respond to Soviet actions in Iran*? There were, of course, multiple issues and decision points that policymakers would have to address and resolve throughout the duration of this affair, e.g. should the US support Tehran, what role should the UN Security Council have in resolving the crisis, how should the US react to Soviet military movements in Azerbaijan, etc. But by and large these were derivative of the fundamental decision regarding how America should react to Stalin's provocations in Iran.

To implement the PH model, we also need to specify the key decisionmakers responsible for selecting available alternatives. As per Chapter Two, it is the position of this thesis that

President Truman was the ultimate decisionmaker throughout his time in office. In the early stages of his presidency, he relied heavily on ad hoc collaboration with close principals, which, in the case of Iran, would be Secretary of State Byrnes. Other influential officials will be referenced including, but not limited to, Ambassador Murray, US Ambassador to the UN Stettinius and State Department Director of Near Eastern and African Affairs Loy Henderson, who played significant roles throughout the crisis. Truman and Byrnes, however, are the primary officials to consider for purposes of the analysis that follows.

Policy Alternatives

Using the Applied Decision Analysis PH procedure (Mintz, 2005) as described in Chapter Two, along with the empirical case material, this thesis identifies the following decision options available to Truman and Byrnes as the situation in Iran unfolded: (1) Maintain current diplomatic posture; (2) Intensify diplomatic measures; (3) Issue an ultimatum; (4) Demonstrate a show of force; (5) War. Each alternative will be assessed in light of the prevailing decisionmaking context described above and the primary source documentation available. Often, decision options are not explicitly stated in policymakers' deliberations, but can be inferred from correspondence, circumstances, and actions taken.

Although Mintz and PH researchers have identified potential alternatives that may apply in other foreign policy scenarios, the options just delineated constitute a realistic spectrum of response measures relevant to the Truman White House as it grappled with the Iranian conflict. As scholars have pointed out, there is danger of contemporary policymakers (and thus analysts in hindsight) "missing" potential alternatives in a thoughtful decisionmaking circumstance (Herek et al., 1987, p. 204). However, PH model expectations are deliberately nonholistic/nonexhaustive, and the decision categories enumerated above are sufficiently broad to encapsulate the policy options reasonably expected – and available – to a major power in 1946. Other instruments of national power that were not yet a standard part of the modern US foreign policy toolkit to impact an adversary's behavior (e.g. covert action, economic sanctions) were therefore not assessed given the time period under review. And given that PH processing is sensitive to the order in which policy options are assessed across decision dimensions (e.g. diplomacy, military) (Geva and Mintz, 1997, p. 87), it is helpful to view these possible alternatives through the escalation path set forth below, even if they could be implemented out of order or in combination.

Option #1 – Maintain Current Diplomatic Posture

In this alternative, the Truman administration chooses to maintain its current diplomatic efforts amid the growing crisis in Iran, ranging from accommodation to negotiation positions already established in dealing with the Soviet Union to date. US decisionmakers continue to engage the principal nations involved – the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and Iran – to achieve a peaceful resolution that satisfies US interests and Iranian sovereignty concerns over the continued presence of Soviet troops and their activities in Azerbaijan. While sympathetic to Iranian concerns, the US focuses on efforts to resolve this issue through the United Nations, preferring a joint multilateral approach in conjunction with Britain to resolve the issue. Although there is general concern regarding the Kremlin's actions in this scenario, American officials do not feel the situation compels them to change course or alter their status quo approach to the USSR in light of recent events.

Option #2 – Intensify Diplomatic Measures

In implementing this option, Truman and his advisors decide to escalate their position by taking a more assertive diplomatic approach in dealing with the Soviet Union, largely forgoing any concessions, accommodative positions, or quid-pro-quo bargaining. Policymakers in Washington adopt a hard line posture across the board toward actions perceived as threats to US/Western interests, and toward nation-state behavior in opposition to international norms established through the UN. Under this alternative, US officials assign the threat to their interests – and the possibility of a larger conflagration – posed by the Soviet Union in Iran more weight. For this reason, America decides to lend diplomatic support to the Iranian position in the face of Soviet encroachment, seeks further backing from Britain and other Western nations, and becomes more vocally critical of Soviet actions. Intelligence gathering regarding the situation is also increased, and deliberations over aid to Iran are considered. But decisionmakers still opt for diplomatic channels as the primary means of resolving the crisis, especially through the UN, even if they are willing to denounce Soviet behavior bilaterally and in international forums.

Option #3 – Issue an Ultimatum

Under this course of action, the Truman administration perceives the continued presence of Soviet troops in Iran and the events in Azerbaijan as a grave, immediate threat to Iran and US/Western interests, which could open the door to wide-scale conflict. For this reason, American policymakers engage in coercive diplomacy, issuing demands aimed at compelling

Soviet troop removal that include threats up to and including the use of force to accomplish that end. The US also condemns Soviet behavior internationally. While they maintain consultations with Britain and other Western powers, they are prepared to pursue this course unilaterally. Increased intelligence gathering continues, tensions are heightened in the UN, and while tenuous diplomatic channels remain open, US officials signal that they may decide to cut any remaining diplomatic ties with Moscow unless the American/Iranian position is adopted and Soviet encroachments cease.

Option #4 – Demonstrate a Show of Force

As with the previous alternative, the Truman administration perceives the continued presence of Soviet troops in Iran and the events in Azerbaijan as a severe, perhaps existential, threat to Iran, the West, and the world order. US officials decide that diplomatic efforts alone, even an ultimatum, will be insufficient to achieve a desirable outcome. Therefore, they opt for a show of force to demonstrate US military reach, strength, and capabilities, and to signal resolve regarding the American-Iranian position in the region. There are a range of possibilities for such a show of force, from establishing a naval presence in the Mediterranean, to providing military aid and stationing troops in nearby locations. Continued intelligence gathering becomes a top priority, and the US military takes on a more proactive role in decisionmaking and in developing potential war plans.

Option #5 – War

In this option, US policymakers decide that Soviet activities in the region constitute an existential threat as outlined above, and deem that all other instruments of national power are insufficient to remove USSR troops or to prevent further incursions across Azerbaijan and beyond. Diplomatic efforts are essentially terminated, and war plans are implemented. In light of these perilous circumstances, America's military is called back to the region to engage in a proxy battle to force the removal of Soviet troops from the territory. This escalation increases the potential for a full-scale military conflict that could envelop other powers and regional nations.

PH - First Stage

PH theory posits that during the first stage of decisionmaking leaders deploy cognitive processes that reject alternatives deemed unacceptable to key policymakers on a critical dimension or dimensions. These unacceptable alternatives are eliminated because they conflict with what is "noncompensatory" – a deal-breaker – in the mind of the decisionmaker. To employ the first stage of this model in the case of Iran, we must begin by identifying what was noncompensatory for Truman and Byrnes amid the prevailing decisionmaking context. From there, we use the Applied Decision Matrix to review the four key dimensions weighed in PH decision analysis – economic, military, political, international/diplomatic – which represent the "criteria" that are "relevant in evaluating the alternatives" (Mintz, 2005, p. 96).

Noncompensatory Issues/Dimension Analysis

As one FPA scholar has stated, expanding upon the Chapter Two PH overview, "poliheuristic theory sees domestic politics as 'the essence of decision'…Consequently, policymakers are likely to reject outright any alternative that poses potentially very high political costs, even if that same alternative also yields potentially high benefits on other dimensions" (Mintz, 2004b, p. 7). A key aspect of the PH model, therefore, rests on how US decisionmakers perceive their decision alternatives through the contextual lens of their own political survival. A leader's avoidance of major political loss or damage to their domestic standing encompasses a range of noncompensatory issues, including: threats to their leadership position, threats to the leader's survival, prospects of electoral defeat, low public support for a given policy, declining leader popularity, threat to the regime, and threats to the dignity, honor, or legitimacy of a leader. (Mintz, 2004b).

In the case of the Truman White House's process for deciding how to respond to Soviet activities in Iran, there were – as indicated above – some key contextual factors shaping US decisionmaking at this time. The two externally focused aspects – the shift in perception of the threat posed by the Soviet Union, and an expanded conception of US interests – are important, often-discussed dynamics impacting decisionmaking in this episode. But the other two factors – domestic constraints and the nature of Truman's decisionmaking – also played a major role.

In light of these decisionmaking factors, what was noncompensatory for Truman and his team? Referring to Mintz's list above, it would be difficult to argue that there was a direct, imminent threat to Truman's leadership, regime, legitimacy, or his political survival at this time. The prospect of democratic electoral defeats during the midterm elections may have been looming, but the next presidential election was not until 1948. The polling data, particularly Truman's plummeting numbers heading into early 1946 (Gallup, 1972), suggest that declining popularity may have been a possible motivation. Truman was also acutely aware of the importance of the concomitant shift in public opinion during this period, and how it might give Republicans ammunition in the 1946 midterm elections. Moreover, amid domestic strife and internal indecision, one author describes how "his popularity was tumbling. From the record high of 87 percent approval in the months after Roosevelt's death, it had fallen by February to 63 percent, according to the Gallup Poll" (McCullough, 1993, p. 485). Truman, Byrnes, and other administration officials thus worried about public support for their foreign policy and how this, in turn, could impact both their domestic agenda and their ability to achieve support through Congress (Gaddis, 2000). It has also been argued that Byrnes, in particular, was responding to the president and domestic pressure in his turn toward more aggressive diplomatic language in late February to early March 1946. For these reasons, the potential for *low public support* and *declining popularity* were highly pertinent noncompensatory considerations in this case.

Across the applicable dimensions (i.e. economic, military, political, international), our analysis of the domestic considerations demonstrates how difficult it would have been for Truman and Byrnes to enact any of the available alternatives in Iran across either economic or military dimensions. Despite the evolving shift toward a "get tough" mindset with the USSR among the Washington foreign policy establishment, any measure that called for increases in American economic sacrifices or military reengagement to aid Iran just after World War II would have been a non-starter within the scope of Truman decisionmaking. The president was particularly focused on remedying the postwar economy and ensuring that demobilization and reconversion continued apace. Furthermore, despite any misgivings that Americans may have had toward their former ally, foreign policy-related apprehensions paled in comparison to concerns over domestic issues. The nation was still largely focused on price controls, labor strikes, and other domestic matters. And lastly, the indecision and uncertainty that still plagued Truman's White House processes would likely not have led to the clear decisionmaking required to marshal economic and defense resources in response to the crisis. Therefore, any alternative requiring significant costs financially or militarily would not only have been challenging to implement, but would have likely had a negative impact on the public's support for the administration and the president's overall popularity.

There was, however, more flexibility to seriously consider and implement options in the political and international domains, though these would still need to be evaluated in light of domestic constraints. Despite some limited calls within the United States for retrenchment from international commitments, there was sufficient desire within the White House, Capitol Hill, and the press to ensure that the administration was reevaluating its relationship with the Soviet Union. As one analysis puts it: "not only did much of the internationally oriented press of the eastern seaboard immediately support Churchill [after his Iron Curtain speech], mostly without serious reservation, but most moderate and isolationist opinion agreed with him immediately on the Soviet threat. Thus Senator Burnet R. Maybank (D-North Carolina), a representative southern conservative, rejected a British alliance but agreed that Stalin sought 'indefinite expansion'" (Harbutt, 1981, p. 633). And given the onslaught of domestic issues that had been impacting the administration's standing, it could be argued that Truman was undoubtedly looking for a "win" in the foreign policy space and an opportunity to have the White House appear decisive. On the international front, decision options would need to address early Cold War concerns especially given America's expanding role globally, including the creation of a postwar environment conducive to Washington's interests and the need to ensure that another power was unable to muster sufficient resources to militarily challenge the US and its allies. Other issues involved establishing the proper groundwork for the UN as a viable forum to support postcolonial nations like Iran. Moves in this international domain could still influence the administration's public standing and its ability to enact policy in this case, but there was more latitude and less immediate consequence to Truman's and Byrnes' noncompensatory priorities inherent in these areas when compared to the economic and military arenas.

First Stage Review of Option #1 – Maintain Current Diplomatic Posture

In the lead-up to the situation in Iran, diplomacy still remained the primary means of international engagement, and the chief instrument of US foreign policy. During and immediately following the end of war, the allied nations had held three wartime conferences that were instrumental in shaping the postwar world. Even after the last sessions at Potsdam in August 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union continued diplomatic activities through bilateral and multilateral engagements. And despite early bipolar hostilities, several diplomatic solutions and agreements had been brokered since the prior conference in Yalta, along with subsequent Foreign Minister Conferences in London and Moscow. Diplomacy was still the modus operandi even through the waning months of 1945, and correspondence between the allied nations and Iran served as a case in point.

In light of this, one could ask, did the US *have* to act in response to the Soviet Union's aggressive maneuvering in Iran? Was there a need to do anything different from, or in addition to, the status quo pattern of negotiating that had been taking place since wartime? Doing nothing in response to developments can be a legitimate course of action in any decisionmaking scenario.

In broader public policy terminology this is often referred to as “inaction;” in grand strategy parlance, “strategic patience” or perhaps a posture akin to what Barry Posen has characterized as “restraint” (McConnell and Hart, 2019; Kelly, 2017; Posen, 2014). As Robert Kelly has argued, however, this approach should be viewed as distinct from strategic “passivity,” as nations can continue *defensive* measures in the interim (e.g. military build-up, alliance formation) (Kelly, 2017). Though at times neglected, preserving the current state of affairs by taking a “wait and see” approach “can be considered good policy in particular circumstances,” especially when other alternatives appear unviable (McConnell and Hart, 2019, p. 646; Kelly, 2017).

Historical events preceding the Iran crisis, along with broader US strategic considerations following the war, give some initial credence to the idea that this alternative might have been considered. While wartime allies, American officials often accommodated Soviet policies within their sphere of influence in order to maintain their cooperation to defeat Germany. As a result, the US would often deliberately refrain from responding to, or would otherwise ignore, Soviet actions that ran counter to American principles. This was also the case in Iran initially; “the importance of preserving a good relationship with the USSR in Iran led the United States to at first adopt a cautious or even conciliatory policy towards its communist ally” and “certainly, between 1941 and 1944 the U.S. administration probably paid rather scant attention to Soviet activities in northern Iran” (Fawcett, 1992, p. 115). Likewise, there were officials across both the executive branch and Capitol Hill that were either calling for more restraint in the face of Soviet demands, or an outright return to isolationism after the war. Had elements of this platform been adopted, the US would have sought to “avoid strategic commitments overseas, especially in Europe and Asia" which would likely either limit America's response during the crisis, or have the US disengage from Iran entirely (Dueck, 2006, p. 84).

Early on in Iran, "business as usual" did indeed appear to be the order of the day at the onset of the crisis, particularly during the first phase of UN deliberations. Although some Iranian delegates were anxiously seeking American support, a secret communique from Byrnes to Ambassador Murray on January 2, 1946 demonstrated an unwillingness to provide Iran "assurance[s] in advance that the United States and Great Britain would support the Iranian position" (FRUS VII, Byrnes, January 1946). Although America would carry out its commitments, "the United States has friendly relations with both the Soviet Union and with Iran, and for us to [give] advance commitments to either side would not be in harmony either with those friendly relations or with the spirit of the United Nations" (FRUS VII, Byrnes, January 1946). Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson echoed this in a conversation with British Ambassador Lord Halifax the next day, stating that though the US "could not possibly urge Iran not [to] bring the matter up if they wished to do so…we should not make the representation to Iran, and that to do so would be to take on a responsibility which we should not assume" (FRUS VII, Acheson, January 1946). Even Loy Henderson, who had been suspicious of Soviet motives since the Roosevelt administration, agreed that at this time "Iran should decide for itself what it should do" (FRUS VII, Henderson, January 1946).

In the final analysis, however, this alternative would struggle to pass muster given the prevailing geopolitical factors and the US decisionmaking context outlined earlier. As one of the countries during World War II that retained troops from all three allied nations, Iran was a location that visibly demanded a response on the postwar international stage, especially given that it would serve as an early "test case" for the UN. And despite efforts to maintain functional diplomacy with Moscow, relations were being reconsidered amid Washington's nascent shift in tone in early 1946 and its rising suspicions of Soviet motives. Furthermore, in terms of US interests, a number of considerations compelled action after the Soviet Union missed the deadline for troop removal: the potential for Soviet expansion into the Mediterranean and beyond; maintaining Iranian sovereignty; and preserving access to Iranian oil (or alternatively denying the USSR a monopoly over Iranian oil that could be used toward a military buildup). As Kennan would later observe, in his evaluation of regions necessary to maintain a balance of power conducive to American interests, "the countries of the Mediterranean and the Middle East as far east as…Iran" are "those areas of the world which…we cannot permit…to fall into hands hostile to us" (Gaddis, 2005, p. 29). In all, these concerns weighed on American officials, creating a need to at minimum consider new measures, or perhaps a new approach altogether.

First Stage Review of Option #2 – Intensify Diplomatic Measures

It would have been difficult for US policymakers, even during the crisis, to envision a time when diplomatic action would not have been possible in any form, nor even the primary means of conducting foreign policy with the Soviet Union. Therefore, the decision that Truman and his staff faced in 1946 was not whether America would continue to engage in diplomacy, but rather what manner this would take, and what path would be sufficient to secure a satisfactory end to the discord over Iran. The broader literature on diplomacy highlights that this policy option can take many forms and can feature varying methods of dispute resolution (Collins and Packer, 2006; Lauren, 1979; Mandel, 1986), but until the Iran standoff, the US approach to the Soviet

Union across several international issues had largely vacillated between accommodation, conciliation, and firmer negotiation (Langer, 1979).

As postwar events and the US decisionmaking context reveal, the Iran crisis arose on the heels of American-Soviet tensions that been slowly building since the war. Until the end of 1945, Truman still believed in the prospect of positive relations with the USSR, but these escalations led to an evolving reevaluation of America's wartime ally both in and out of US policymaking circles. And despite a few limited calls to extricate America from foreign entanglements, domestic pressure from both Congress and the public was trending toward less compromise. "The general principle of 'getting tough with the Russians' evoked overwhelming public approval: a generation seared by the memory of Munich would not tolerate appeasement, however unpleasant the alternatives might be" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 356). Going forward, these voices would call for Washington to no longer accept Soviet demands or engage in a quid pro quo with Moscow.

Both the president's direction to Byrnes in January 1946 and the secretary's March correspondence to Molotov were not only strong indicators of the shift in perspective cited earlier, but telling in terms of what more adamant diplomatic measures would entail. Truman's messaging to Byrnes signaled his intent to no longer abide Soviet actions in places like Iran. Even during the height of the conflict, Truman became more vocal in the press, "reiterat[ing] America's resolve to insist on immediate consideration of the Iranian case" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 326). As the clash wore on, this sentiment was also expressed by the Secretary of State. Stettinius' diary points to how Byrnes' frustrations over the Iranian crisis "clearly catalyzed his attitude toward the Soviet Union." Despite the initial reticence to fully support Iran, "by 25 March, Soviet methods had sufficiently infuriated Byrnes so that he told Stettinius he had 'nursed' the Russians for the last time. George Allen – who succeeded Wallace Murray as ambassador to Iran – and Henderson corroborate Byrnes' "determination to support Iran even if it meant an irreparable break with the Soviet Union" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 329). His March 5th language of no longer being able to "remain indifferent" indicated a departure from where US decisionmaking had stood in January: a greater sense of urgency, adopting a position in support of Iran, and a desire to meet the Soviets head-on.

Other instances of this sharpened version of diplomacy were evident in Byrnes' "firmness and patience" speech to the Overseas Press Club on 28 February. As one researcher has argued, his address "began to rally public support for a policy of resistance to aggression. A central but overlooked feature of this speech…was Byrnes's assault on a vital Soviet interest: the Security Council veto. The principles of the U.N. Charter, he insisted, were more important than 'the mere legal veto,' and 'we will stand united with other great states in defense of the Charter.' Here was the implicit threat, which Winston Churchill would make explicit [in his "Iron Curtain" speech] five days later" (Harbutt, 1981, p. 630). Another example of this came later, just prior to the crisis resolution on April 4th. Truman instructed the new US ambassador to the Soviet Union General Walter Bedell Smith, who would be meeting with Stalin "to tell [him] that he had always considered the generalissimo a man of his word, but that Russian troops in Iran had upset that conviction." Smith was blunt in his exchange, looking to understand "how far" the USSR was willing to go and whether "the Soviets really intended to support the U.N." (Kuniholm, 1980, pp. 332-333). Similar to the above language used by Byrnes, and in keeping with

Truman's decisionmaking style, this was a more straightforward approach than had been the case in previous diplomatic engagements. In assessing this meeting, Kuniholm even suggests that it was "perhaps this conversation [that] led Moscow that night to approve the [crisis-ending] communique agreed to by Qavam and Sadchikov [on April 4^{th}]" (1980, p. 334).

Together these memoranda, correspondences, and statements give an indication of what this alternative would involve: there would be less emphasis on cordiality and working partnerships; no more compromises as with prior deals over Poland and Eastern Europe; no more complacency while the Soviet Union interfered with another nation's sovereignty; and full support to the UN and peripheral nations like Iran who were subject to Soviet demands. This course would constitute unchartered waters, and it was unclear if it would be tenable given the contextual factors impacting decisionmaking at this time. But it was possible; whether Truman and Byrnes would embrace this option was still to be decided.

First Stage Review of Option #3 – Issue an Ultimatum

If there was the potential to shift to a more aggressive stance in countering Soviet maneuvers, did Soviet actions in Iran warrant an ultimatum threatening more coercive measures? As a means by which a nation will seek to resolve an international conflict, Paul Gordon Lauren observes that "coercive diplomacy attempts not to destroy an opponent, but rather to persuade him to terminate those policies that are viewed as undesirable." A coercive approach "seeks to erode an opponent's motivation by exploiting the capacity to inflict damage, and thus creating the expectation of unacceptable costs in the event of noncompliance with demands." The strongest expression of this comes in the form of an ultimatum, or "a communication issued by one state or group of states to another which threatens to employ coercive measures unless compliance with formulated demands is forthcoming within a certain time limit” (1972, pp. 135, 137).

The closest to coercive diplomacy that the Truman team would come in advance of the Iran crisis was the use of so-called “atomic” diplomacy shortly after America developed the atom bomb. US ownership of this new weapon “drastically altered the postwar balance of power, making it at least technically feasible for the United States to impose its will upon the rest of the world. No responsible official in the Truman administration wanted to go that far, but the President and his advisers did expect that the American nuclear monopoly would improve the West’s bargaining position with the Soviet Union” (Gaddis, 2000, pp. 245-246). This was most evident in attempts to put the bomb under international control in exchange for concessions. However, Stalin and the Soviets called the Americans’ bluff; “Washington officials had no intention of actually using the bomb to compel Moscow’s cooperation” and they knew it (Gaddis, 2000, p. 246). For this reason, atomic diplomacy ultimately failed as a diplomatic approach. In the case of Iran, “however understated or subtly applied, such intimations that the bomb would be used…to force Soviet evacuation of northern Iran was credible to neither side” (Messer, 1982, p. 89).

During the crisis, the US responses in March cited above in Option #2 were indicative of an evolution toward a more unyielding diplomatic approach, but no official meeting or available correspondence appears to suggest escalating to an ultimatum, perhaps because of the level of uncertainty among American decisionmakers. Indeed, this uncertainty cut both ways: the USSR and Iran were also unsure how the US would react to Soviet provocations. As one report from Henderson’s secretary in March makes clear, although “the U.S.S.R. seemed to be determined to face Iran and the rest of the world with a *fait accompli*" in Azerbaijan there was still confusion regarding "how strongly could the U.S. react" (FRUS VII, Gallman, March 1946). A similar hesitation was expressed by Ambassador Murray in a cable detailing his conversation with Qavam; when the "Prime Minister…wished to ask what America and Britain could or would do to assist Iran in case Soviet Government ignored our present protests and proceeded to do as it wished here. I replied it was impossible to give [a] precise answer to such a question at this moment" (FRUS VII, Murray, March 1946). These passages speak to a reluctance in terms of how far US policymakers were willing to go. Despite the shift in tone and interests at this stage, along with the domestic constraints that concerned key statesmen, American leadership would have been unable to articulate where, to borrow a contemporary phrase, the "red line" was for America that would merit an ultimatum to enforce US demands.

Interestingly, Truman later reflected on a "blunt response" to Stalin just prior to the Soviet announcement of an agreement to the Security Council and would – in later interviews – suggest he had in fact issued an ultimatum to the Soviet leader (Kuniholm, 1980, pp. 320-321). This has been the subject of some controversy, however, as scant evidence exists to support this claim either through contemporary policymakers or other available internal/diplomatic correspondences (FRUS VII, Kuniholm, 1980, p. 321; Fawcett, 1992, p. 127; Thorpe, 1978). Kuross Samii (1987) has argued, leaning heavily on the rhetoric used in the conversation between Ambassador Smith and Stalin, that within the context of the crisis Truman's alleged responses constituted an ultimatum. Although this may have aligned with cognitive aspects of Truman's decisionmaking approach at the time, this interpretation is mostly at odds with the available historical record.

First Stage Review of Option #4 – Demonstrate a Show of Force

The possibility – or eventuality, as some officials saw it – of military conflict with the Soviet Union had been on the minds of Washington policymakers since the end of World War II. US postwar military planning reflected this, seeking to establish "an integrated, global network of US-controlled air and naval bases, as well as the negotiation of widespread military air transit rights" (McMahon, 2003, p. 7). Even before the emergence of Cold War hostilities, American strategists believed "the nation's military power must never again be allowed to atrophy" and that the US military "must form a core element of the new world order," which involved several goals: "maintaining naval and air forces second to none; a strong military presence in the Pacific; dominance of the Western hemisphere; a central role in the occupations of defeated adversaries Italy, Germany, Austria, and Japan; and a continued monopoly on the atomic bomb" (McMahon, 2003, pp. 7-8).

Hence the idea that the United States might respond to Soviet actions with a show of force, or a military "peacekeeping" deployment, was within both its capabilities and the realm of possibility. Robert Mandel, in his work on the effectiveness of "gunboat diplomacy," enumerates the various forms shows of force may take and the theory behind them. Invoking the definition established by Blechman and Kaplan, "a show-of-force occurs 'when physical actions are undertaken 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.'" Shows of force encompass a wide range of military activity, from "publicized movement of air units [to] military exercises in sensitive areas." They can serve a variety of purposes, including "demonstrating one's own power and resolve to enemies, displaying alliance strength, communicating direct or indirect threats, changing or maintaining other states' behavior, avoiding war, achieving a resolution of tensions, raising internal morale, or gaining feedback about other states' reactions. The general presumption here is that shows-of-force occur in order to emphasize and bolster these purposes in a more decisive manner than non-force-related strategies" (1986, pp. 61-62).

Although the United States had not yet taken up this policy option at any point leading up to the crisis in Iran, the Soviet military movements reported by Rossow brought American decisionmakers closer – in their language at least – to contemplating a show of force than was previously the case. On March 5th and 6th, the American vice consul relayed that "all observations and reports indicate inescapably that [the] Soviets are preparing for major military operations. Exceptionally heavy Soviet troop movements have been going on since yesterday…it is further reported from Mahabad that [the] Kurds are preparing to assert [their] claim to Turkish Kurdistan and plan to commence military operations to that end soon" (FRUS VII, Rossow, March 1946). More information from Rossow in the following days led to a March 7th meeting between Henderson and Byrnes to review intelligence reports and State Department maps of Iran. Byrnes became "convinced [that] the Soviet Union was adding military invasion to subversion in Iran," and ended the meeting with the infamous quote cited in this chapter's header: "'now we'll give it to them with both barrels'" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 321). The next day, Acheson held a committee meeting which "concluded unanimously that the Soviets were using military invasion to effect a *fait accompli*" (Kuniholm, 1980, pp. 321-322).

Yet, despite these findings by officials and Byrnes' aggressive language, there were no concrete moves, such as preliminary military maneuvers on the US side, to suggest a show of force was being taken to the serious planning stage. While it would have been a feasible alternative – with some precedent in prior American military engagements – logistically, in this case, it would not have been an easy feat. For one thing, US troops had already departed Iran, and rapid postwar demobilization was underway. Moreover, given the location of the Azerbaijani region, it would have been difficult to construct effective show-of-force options aside from perhaps joint military exercises with Tehran or deployment of a peacekeeping detachment. And although defense officials had contingency planning in place for this region, the emphasis at the time was on the European theater. Overall, executing a show of force to compel Soviet troop removal and preserve American interests in Iran would require a significant escalation in terms of economic and military resources committed.

First Stage Review of Option #5 – War

According to American media reports, the Iran crisis had set off the drumbeats of war. Even during the initial phases of the standoff "newspaper headlines conjured up images of war and columnists wrote of the possibility of grave confrontations" (Leffler, 1992, p. 110). This was not an idle consideration for policymakers either. "When Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace dined with Acheson and [State Department Russian specialist] Charles Bohlen in the middle of the crisis, he gathered the impression that they were willing to run the risk of war, betting that the Russians would back down" (Leffler, 1992, pp. 110-111). The US and British also engaged in talks over the possibility of war: in trying to convince Averell Harriman to become ambassador to Great Britain, "the president told Harriman that a dangerous situation was developing in Iran, a situation that might lead to war" (Kuniholm, 1980, pp. 324-325). All this raised the possibility that war could come not only by deliberate choice, but also as a result of miscalculation (Leffler, 1992, p. 111).

The height of the crisis in March prompted exchanges within the US government that suggested awareness that war was a potential risk. When Soviet mobilization in northern Iran appeared to intensify in mid-March, this prompted American officials to not only revisit the Iranian case at the UN, but to consider additional preparatory defense measures. On March 16th, Byrnes delivered remarks "in which he refuted Soviet denials of troop movements, urged extension of the Selective Service Act, and pledged that U.S. strength would be used to support the principles of the UN Charter should the occasion arise" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 325). Others like Bohlen discussed – but ultimately objected to – measures tantamount to war. Not only had the "United States never legalized its position in Iran…the United States was in no position to confront the Soviet Union in Iran. The American Army was largely demobilized. If it were to be effective, the army would do better confronting the Soviet Union in Europe. In Iran, Bohlen argued, the Soviet Union would consider any strong action a bluff, and the United States might wind up in a worse position than before" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 322).

Despite these pronouncements and internal exchanges, there does not appear to be any evidence of truly serious deliberation on the part of Truman or Byrnes over whether to knowingly initiate war with the USSR, as opposed to engaging simply in more assertive posturing. The Soviets may not have wanted war, but neither did a war-weary American populace. Even if war plans may have existed in early 1946 as a contingency, this was far from the forefront of policymaking alternatives. A limited military engagement, of the kind that would become a more standard policy option in later years, would not have been a viable alternative for the United States at this juncture, and contemplation of one does not appear in officials' correspondences. The Soviets posed a formidable threat due to their military capacity in Europe, which in turn could have led to a protracted conflagration. As Fred Lawson has argued in "The Iranian Crisis of 1945-1946 and the Spiral Model of International Conflict": "the extension of American forces into this area posed a serious—albeit indirect—threat to the security of the U.S.S.R…[and] the result of this interaction was a spiral dynamic…Fortunately, the means that the Truman Administration adopted to handle the crisis and the inherent weakness of the Soviet position in the region worked to defuse the confrontation at a relatively early stage and war was averted" (1989, pp. 323-324).

First Stage Conclusions

So what was the upshot of this first stage of decisionmaking as to how the US should respond to Soviet actions in Iran? Immediately before and during the conflict the administration was contending with the two central noncompensatory issues discussed earlier – low public support for costly overseas commitments and declining popularity. Alternatives that would adversely impact these concerns, particularly those with highly burdensome economic and military dimensions, would be ruled out as unviable. Therefore, any options that called for deploying major American military resources in Iran, or for Americans to "foot the bill" on behalf of another major military campaign abroad immediately following World War II, would have been deemed untenable and would have lacked domestic support. Although a shift in approach on the part of Truman and Byrnes is discernable as the crisis progressed, with "tough talk" featuring in the memoranda and meeting summaries noted above, even that language stopped short of embracing the need for action beyond a more assertive diplomatic posture. On this basis, two of the alternatives theoretically available to the administration – a show of force and war – would have been discounted early in the minds of Truman and Byrnes as they weighed how to respond to Soviet actions. The potential costs to the president's public standing, especially across the high-priority economic and military dimensions, would have been too high.

At the other end of the scale, however, "more of the same" would also have been problematic for Truman and key US decisionmakers in light of what they found noncompensatory. Maintaining an accommodative, negotiation-only stance during the crisis would have, to a certain degree, been easy to implement. But although continuity with the status quo would not have incurred any material cost in terms of economic or military resources, the domestic political and international dimension costs associated with this option would likely have been too high for Truman and Byrnes. Although we cannot be sure what the outcome would have been if the first alternative were selected, the administration would likely have suffered severe consequences for a perceived failure to push back at all against Soviet actions. This would have been true at home, given the developing mood in Washington and across the country, which was beginning to favor a tougher line toward Soviet aggression. It would also have been true internationally, with implications for how America was viewed on the global stage. These would have ranged from potential damage to the standing and viability of the UN during its nascent stages, to losing American credibility with Iran – and other countries more generally – seeking assistance with maintaining their territorial integrity. Furthermore, US policymakers were still unsure how far

Moscow was truly willing to go: leaving Soviet advances entirely unanswered could invite challenge against US/Western interests in other areas or, at the very least, raise the chances of later conflict through miscalculation when the Soviet Union pushed against a more vital American interest.

From a cognitive standpoint, status quo diplomacy also ran counter to Truman's desire for decisive decisionmaking in spite of any organizational issues he may have faced. Evidence for this lies in his "dressing down" of Byrnes in January, which may also have been a product of the president's psychological disposition to embrace and prioritize new information from advisors and adapt his beliefs accordingly. Considering this facet of Truman's decisionmaking during the Iran case, it makes sense that *recent* events and actions impacted his feelings most, and that given the circumstances, he would formulate the following cognitive shortcut: Moscow's latest maneuvering in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean demonstrated that the US required a new direction. Based on this heuristic, Truman's desire to be seen as "taking action," along with the shift in prevailing domestic American attitudes away from isolationism, maintaining an accommodationist approach toward the Soviet Union would have been shelved as a policy alternative during the Iranian affair in this first stage.

PH - Second Stage

The second stage of the PH model involves a more traditionally rational, systematic approach to decisionmaking, where policymakers analyze the surviving alternatives. This step is associated with classical rational choice theory or expected utility, whereby decisionmakers seek to minimize costs and maximize benefits. For individual leaders in a foreign policy context, rational action, as described in Chapter Two, involves "selecting the alternative whose consequences rank highest in the decisionmaker's payoff function" (Allison and Zelikow, 1999, p. 18).

In this case, options at either extreme of the spectrum of possibilities were ruled out, for various reasons, during the first phase of the PH decision process – accommodationist status quo diplomacy, a show of force, and initiating war. In this second stage, Truman and Byrnes would perform a cost-benefit analysis among the remaining alternatives, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each and determine the best way forward. Although a specific rational choice exercise of this nature is not, of course, explicitly detailed in the historical record, analysis of memoranda, meetings, and other evidence provides a glimpse of how this process may have unfolded in the minds of these leaders as they weighed their remaining options.

The first remaining possibility was to reorient American diplomacy with the Soviet Union toward a more uncompromising position, aiming for a resolution that saw the Soviets withdrawing troops and its presence in Azerbaijan. In terms of the wider decisionmaking context, this would fit with the emerging US narrative regarding Moscow's behavior, and would align with the country's expanded conception of its role and interests abroad. Domestically, it would also serve to answer critics calling for a tougher stand against the USSR without incurring severe costs in economic or military terms. It would afford the ability to "talk tough" in public arenas, likely bolstering America's international standing through the UN, and facilitate collaboration both with Britian and with nations like Iran that were concerned with maintaining their sovereignty. In all, this course of action could help side-step, or even mitigate, concerns around low public support and declining popularity. The potential risk, however, lay in an escalatory response from Stalin over Iran, or another geopolitical hotspot as a countermeasure, since this would leave the United States facing a very difficult choice as to how to follow their tough words with action. But this risk might be worth taking given the potential benefits of preserving US interests and averting the Soviet Union's possible attempt at expansion.

An ultimatum was still on the table as well. Once again, this alternative would have aligned with the prevailing attitudes regarding the Soviet Union, along with advancing perceived US interests internationally. Moreover, as with the shift to a more aggressive posture, the immediate economic or military costs of coercive diplomacy would be minimal *so long as* it did not produce an escalatory response from the Kremlin. Yet given that latter risk, and that this was one of the first areas of direct postwar confrontation between Washington and Moscow, this step might also be taking the new "assertive" American approach a step further than the US was realistically willing to back up at this time. It was not altogether clear where American policymakers drew a line in Iran, as the US had multiple interests at play in the crisis, e.g. preventing Soviet expansion, access to oil, maintaining Iranian sovereignty. It is evident from the historical record that compelling Stalin to withdraw Soviet troops was the key outcome desired, but whether any remaining Soviet military presence whatsoever would have been a sufficient cause for an ultimatum is uncertain, perhaps in the minds of American leaders themselves. In addition, any US ultimatum would have been a largely unilateral action as there was no guarantee of support from Britain or other Western nations. And if this option were enacted, the potential costs in the event of an unfavorable Soviet response could have been far higher, particularly if forced to follow through with a military confrontation.

When it came to deciding between these options, the timing of the crisis was perhaps the most important factor. Interestingly, on March 6th, "Byrnes told the secretaries of war and navy that 'if the Soviets decline to come before the Security Council on this issue,' he predicted, '*the United Nations Organization may well be gone and a different world be in the making*.' 'If this occurs,' Byrnes emphasized, 'it means the end of cooperation'" (Larson, 1985, p. 267). If the crisis had been prolonged, or had the USSR increased its military build-up and impacted other areas in northern Iran, an ultimatum might have emerged as the preferred alternative. In the end, weighing the costs and benefits of these two remaining alternatives as events unfolded, Truman and Byrnes preferred to opt for uncompromising diplomacy *without* escalating to an ultimatum. As per the account above, this took into consideration the noncompensatory priorities of the decisionmakers at the time, across decision dimensions, while aligning with the decisionmaking context. With this becoming US officials' preferred alternative, diplomatic responses did indeed take on a more strident tone when engaging with the Soviet Union over their activities in Iran.

Strategy Implications and Conclusions

Literature in the "grand narrative" tradition generally "insist[s] that…[early Cold War] American leaders were more heavily influenced by 'strategic' considerations than by economic interests" (Lawson, 1989, p. 307). How does this case, in which the US decided to adopt a more assertive diplomacy toward the Soviet Union over Iran, fit with this analysis? Some Cold War experts have made attempts to show the strategic foundations of containment were already present in the minds of US policymakers by the closing months of World War II. Leffler cites a May 1945 memorandum to President Truman from William J. Donovan, director of the Office of Strategic Services, which not only identified the Soviet threat, but also "captured the geopolitical concerns of U.S. officials and illuminated the global scale of American interests." Even if this memo "did *not* constitute a blueprint for American action," it suggests that to a certain degree "containment was the policy of the United States before George Kennan's famous long telegram" (1992, p. 61). And, as cited at the end of Chapter One, in his prologue "Containment before Kennan" Gaddis agrees, contending that US planners had developed a discernable postwar framework by the start of 1946 (2005, pp. 21-22). These authors and others, however, only hint at how these proto-containment sentiments contributed to US actions in Iran.

In considering where the events of this case fit within the strategic story, it is worth considering to what degree there was a US grand strategy at play when responding to the Iran crisis. Returning to the definition adopted from Hal Brands in the first chapter, for the purposes of this thesis strategy is the "intellectual architecture that gives form and structure to foreign policy…a purposeful and coherent set of ideas about what a nation seeks to accomplish in the world, and how it should go about doing so" (2014, p. 3). The poliheuristic analysis of the US decisionmaking context, alternatives, and process surrounding the conflict in Iran should give us pause in applying the "grand strategy" label too hastily. First, despite some indications that the central ideas and structural decisionmaking factors that would later become containment were *starting* to coalesce, there was still a great degree of uncertainty across American foreign policymaking at this time both in terms of varying perceptions of the Soviet threat and in how the White House policymaking process should operate. This hindered Truman, Byrnes, and other US officials from formulating a consistent line of thinking, let alone a full-blown strategy, toward Iran or other threats emanating from the Kremlin. Leading up to the Iranian conflict, Truman biographer David McCullough adeptly captures the president's disposition (and that of Washington's):

> In fact, Truman was not of one mind regarding the Soviets, any more than official Washington was, or the country. He did truly wish to get along with the Russians quite as much as did [Henry] Wallace and, like Leahy, he was steadfastly against appeasement. Nor did he see why he should consider such attitudes contradictory. He had no clear policy or long-range objectives. He was facing events only as they came, trying to be patient, trying to be prudent and maintain balance. But at bottom he had no intention of being either belligerent or weak (1993, p. 486).

Aside from this question of "intellectual architecture," which was still in its infancy in early 1946, the link between means and appropriate ends was also undeveloped in the thinking of US planners. In Iran, the path ultimately taken by Truman and his foreign policy team – to harden America's diplomatic line while stopping short of an ultimatum – was a logical outcome from the decisionmaking process outlined above. But as Truman, Byrnes, and other US policymakers were assessing the optimal response to Soviet actions in Iran through these stages, their ultimate objectives vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the means by which they would seek to achieve them, and where the resources would come from for such an effort in light of other domestic/economic plans, all remained unclear. While the Long Telegram and other policy documents from this period are suggestive of emerging broader themes, the lack of a fully cohesive set of ideas, along with early issues with reconciling means and ends, suggest that some "grand narrative" summaries may overstate the presence of a fully realized strategy at this point in time.

If there was indeed less "strategy" involved in American deliberations over the Iran crisis, what can this tell us about how to think about that concept in regard to American actions during this period? Some relevant works contend that the situation in Iran should be viewed as a "confirming" process – suggestive that taking a hard line approach could work, at a time when an evolution in US policy was underway. Kuniholm and other researchers point to the *learning* that Iran initiated in the minds of Washington policymakers as a "test case" for future Soviet engagement. This notion of a test case fits well with the concept of *emergent* strategy discussed in Chapter One. In his work on emergent strategy, Popescu only dedicates a couple paragraphs to the Iranian case, but concludes that the "key for [understanding] the long-term design vs. emergent learning theoretical distinction…[comes from] then undersecretary of state Dean Acheson [who] used Iran as a "model" for how to deal with the upcoming Greek and Turkish crises; other policymakers also used analogies, such as calling Grecian Macedonia another 'Azerbaijan area.' This process of reasoning by the use of analogies, and using lessons learned from one crisis to develop a response to the next crises, supports the emergent view of strategy-making" (2017, p. 32).

On this basis, one could sensibly conclude that the Iran crisis and the course of action decided upon by the United States in response to it, was not *itself* the product of a grand strategy; there was not yet anything resembling a preconceived plan for how the US should grapple with this foreign policy conflict. Rather, it was a key episode in the *emergence* of a strategy that would continue to develop through a series of subsequent conflicts. It was the first instalment in an iterative process through which American officials would react to crises in real-time, in a sequence of events that would allow for an emerging strategy to follow. This, in turn, would provide lessons for future cases, and raise important strategic questions around how to reconcile foreign policy goals with available resources. In successive encounters with Moscow, Washington would use lessons learned from Iran to inform how they would respond, each in turn then yielding further makings of an emergent strategy. This connection between the PH process analysis, learning, and emerging strategy will become even more evident as this thesis considers two subsequent cases of early Cold War decisionmaking.

While the situation was intensifying in Iran, other areas of the Mediterranean were also facing Soviet demands. This included one of Iran's western neighbors and a country of immense geopolitical importance: Turkey. In the next case study, we will see how the PH model can be used to understand decisionmaking in that case, and how this contributed to the continuing evolution of America's emerging strategy.

Chapter 4: The 1946 Crisis over the Turkish Straits

"If there was a threat to Turkey, [America] would go all the way."[4]

~ H. Freeman Matthews

Introduction

In describing the various geopolitical flashpoints that would emerge in the postwar world, Dean Acheson found that for American officials "the year 1946 was for the most part a year of learning that minds in the Kremlin worked very much as George F. Kennan had predicted they would" (1987, p. 196). With the Iranian crisis, which crescendoed during the early spring of that year, the Truman administration had already begun to receive important "lessons" regarding Soviet foreign policy. In the months to follow, US leaders would continue to reckon with a variety of nascent Cold War entanglements: the eruption of a civil war between communist revolutionaries and government forces in Greece; ongoing postwar diplomatic disputes surrounding Germany, including the stoppage of reparations deliveries from the American zone in May; and a major dispute with Yugoslavia over two US aircraft forced down in early August. The magnitude of each confrontation may have differed in scope, but all would test the mettle of US decisionmakers.

Continuing this exploration into the execution and evolution of American foreign policy during this period, this thesis now turns to the next salient Mediterranean imbroglio that would flare up

[4] Süleyman Seydi, *The Turkish Straits and the Great Powers: From the Montreux Convention to the Early Cold War, 1936-1947* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2003), 232.

during this pivotal year – the Turkish Straits. Consisting of the Dardanelles and the Bosporus on both sides of the Sea of Marmara, these waterways have held strategic importance since antiquity. Similar to Iran, the conflict over the Straits also had its roots in the enduring great power rivalry between Russia and Great Britain, which would take on new life as the second World War approached its denouement. Following the war, Turkish-Soviet relations deteriorated into acrimony as the Soviets initiated a "war of nerves" through its demands over the Turkish Straits (Hasanli, 2011). These demands would, in turn, prompt the West to take action and force American policymakers, in formulating a response, to reevaluate their foreign policy. The US would eventually hold firm in the face of Soviet pressure, and "with [its] decision to support Turkey, the Truman administration reversed more than 150 years of benign neglect toward the Ottoman Empire and its Anatolian successor, the Republic of Turkey" (Knight, 1975, p. 452).

Yet despite similarities across time, geography, and political circumstance the historical record on American foreign policy and the 1946 Straits crisis is less robust, especially when compared to "the better understood confrontation over Iran" (Mark, 1997, p. 387). A few important early works were completed in the mid-to-late 1970s and early 1980s by Jonathan Knight and Anthony R. De Luca, which provide historical context and in-depth analyses of the conflict's political dynamics and America's role. Knight's works, specifically *American Statecraft and the 1946 Black Sea Straits Controversy* (1975) and *America's International Guarantees for the Straits: Prelude to the Truman Doctrine* (1977), represent some of the earliest sources to assess US strategy and decisionmaking specific to this early Cold War flashpoint. But the 21st century has seen a reemergence of research focused on these events, particularly among international scholars. Like much contemporary Cold War history, and in themes found in modern assessments of the Iranian crisis, these studies reexamine Turkey and the "Straits question" with greater emphasis on that nation's agency as it navigated great power dynamics. The comprehensive book by Jamil Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War, 1945-1953* (2011) stands out as an exemplar in this regard, along with recent contributions by Behlül Özkan (2020), Süleyman Seydi (2006), and Onur Isci (2023), which review the politics of the İnönü government and Turkey's search for security against the Soviets. In a similar vein, regional analyses and the Montreux Convention of 1936 have also received renewed attention in recent years, whether in service of understanding the context of international maritime disputes (Conley, 2016) or in evaluating how the legacy of these historical developments factored into the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine (Ozerdem, 2022; Nevitt, 2022; Aliano, 2022).

Contemporary accounts of this conflict and its key moments – including the well-documented August 15th White House meeting between Truman, Acheson, and other key defense officials at the height of the crisis – have certainly received mention in the literature on US grand strategy and on the American side of Cold War history. The Turkish Straits affair is typically mentioned only briefly, however, in support of a broader narrative; more detailed treatments are in shorter supply. Scholars have posited a few reasons contributing to this. One researcher finds that the crisis over the Straits "did not have the clear focus or the dramatic denouements of later confrontations. There were few public announcements, and cautious efforts to mobilize public opinion had scarcely begun before the acute phase of the crisis suddenly ended" (Mark, 1997, p. 386). It has also been asserted that the "situation in Turkey at this time was [simply] much less complicated" than the engagements in Iran or Greece, which receive more attention in Cold War narratives (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 355). Lastly, some revisionist perspectives, like that of Arnold Offner (2002), have come to view the clash with a degree of skepticism, contending that the situation surrounding the Straits and US actions in response do not fully warrant the label of "crisis," and should be interpreted as more "symptomatic of Washington's tendency to overreact to Soviet initiatives" (Mark, 1997, p. 385; Leffler, 1985).

There are, however, some notable exceptions which – as with Knight and De Luca – provide more detail regarding the Straits crisis from the point of view of American policymakers, and in doing so, recognize its significance on US foreign policy. Bruce Kuniholm's comprehensive book (referenced in the last chapter) on the origins of the Cold War in the Northern Tier, and Eduard Mark's *The War Scare of 1946 and Its Consequences* are valuable sources both on the Truman administration's response to this Mediterranean challenge and on the broader ramifications for US statecraft. Kuniholm's analysis concludes that American perceptions during the confrontation were conditioned by the experience in Iran just months earlier. Furthermore, he argues, Washington's response "set in motion the reformulation of American policies toward" the region stemming from "the administration's recognition of the United Nations' limitations, from its experience regarding the hazards of sanctioning bilateral diplomacy between the Soviet Union and its neighbors, and from its growing appreciation of firmness in dealing with the Soviet Union" (1980, p. 378). Mark's essay starts from a similar outlook – using then-recently declassified intelligence and military planning documents to understand how American decisionmakers perceived the developing hostilities – but goes a step further. He suggests that not only were US planners' suspicions regarding Soviet intentions vis-à-vis Turkey "sincere and justified," but that it was "fears for Turkey" – not Iran – that "sustained the preparations for conflict and pushed them to lengths heretofore unsuspected" (1997, pp. 385-386, my italics). As will be discussed later, this may overstate the case somewhat, but Mark's work nonetheless provides constructive insights into Washington's mindset at this time.

Notwithstanding the granularity offered by Knight, De Luca, Kuniholm, Mark, and others, many sources depict the Turkish Straits crisis in the context of the rationalistic "grand narrative" tradition, placing emphasis on foreign policy outcomes at the expense of attention to the decisionmaking process. Kuniholm and Knight, for instance, though they successfully characterize how America's crisis response fit within the early development of a Cold War strategy, pay less attention to some of the contextual factors highlighted in this thesis that impacted US foreign policy at this time, including domestic political considerations and decisionmakers' cognitive attributes. Mark's work, meanwhile, adds rich detail through the inclusion of new source material, however, the contemporary foreign policy milieu, along with the range of decision alternatives under evaluation necessitate further exploration. Given the aim of this study, which is to contextualize these broader strategic portrayals by examining the US decisionmaking process during these early Cold War events, the following analysis will incorporate these underlying factors and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) decision attributes to offer a clearer picture of how America formulated their response to the controversy over the Straits, and to determine what this meant for US strategy going forward.

This chapter will start by outlining the historical circumstances surrounding the Turkish waterways, and how the crisis unfolded. Next, it will frame US actions by laying out the decisionmaking context surrounding American foreign policy during this period, and the alternatives available. Then poliheuristic (PH) theory will again be applied to analyze how both rational and cognitive factors impacted the Truman administration's decisionmaking process toward the Straits issue. Finally, there will a reflection on how these events contributed to America's emerging strategy.

The Turkish Straits and Stalin's Challenge

Any summary of the crisis, and the "Straits question" at its heart, would be remiss without first noting the importance of the waterways in the context of 19th and 20th century great power politics. While the Black Sea, Bosporus, and Dardanelles have been regarded as important since time immemorial, analysis of their geopolitical significance in the modern era stems from the "continuously contentious and bellicose Russo-Turkish relations under the old imperial regimes," along with Britain's determination "to keep the Russians bottled up in the Black Sea to protect the Mediterranean route to India" (Myers, 2022; Larson, 1985, p. 203). The location has long constituted an area of special strategic significance for Russia. As Joseph E. Davies, Special Advisor to the President, wrote to Secretary Byrnes ahead of the Potsdam conference: "Ever since Peter the Great visited Germany, Holland, and England in 1697, Russian leaders have recognized the need for ice-free ports" (FRUS I, Davies, no date). By the late nineteenth century, amid tense relations with the Ottoman Empire, Russian planning in the region began to take on a more expansionist vision, developing into "a growing desire – first among intellectuals and ultimately among Tsarist officials and diplomats – to annex the Dardanelles and Bosporus and rename Constantinople 'Tsargrad'" (Myers, 2022). The region would later become a focal point during World War I, with Entente powers vying to take control of the Straits through the unsuccessful Dardanelles and Gallipoli Campaigns, and again during the Russian Civil War, in which Western nations used the waterways "to take key strategic points along the Black Sea, [enabling] them to supply Denikin's White Russian armies" (Larson, 1985, p. 203). Postwar negotiations eventually led to the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923, which recognized the new Republic of Turkey and, in keeping with British proposals, allowed unrestricted civilian passage through the Straits.

Further diplomatic wrangling over the outcomes of the Lausanne convention during the interwar years, however, led to a situation that "satisfied neither Turkish nor Russian demands" regarding the Straits (Akgün, 1994, p. 62). Turkey, invoking the international law principle of *rebus sic stantibus* and citing issues regarding Lausanne, formally "requested that the contracting powers meet to renegotiate these provisions" (Conley, 2016, p. 27). This culminated in the hastily arranged, but critically important, Montreux Convention, adopted on the 20th of July 1936, which still remains in effect today. Signed by Bulgaria, France, Britain, Greece, Japan, Romania, Turkey, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia, this agreement reestablished Turkey's ownership of the Straits, giving them the right to fortify the waterways while restricting access by navies of non-Black Sea states. These decisions, along with other stipulations resulting from the convention, would become the key points of contention in the Cold War crisis that would envelop Turkey and the Big Three powers a decade later.

One Western power that was not a signatory on the Montreux list noted above was the United States. As in the case of Iran and other Middle Eastern nations during the early 20th century, formal US relations with Turkey were quite limited. Official US diplomacy with its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, was established in 1831, and continued until America entered World War I in 1917, but the most notable American engagement in these early years was US missionary work in the region (Criss et al., 2011). Overall, as Knight explains, “America had no impact on great-power collisions over the European territories of the ‘sick man of Europe,’ and was content with protecting missionary, philanthropic, cultural, and modest economic interests in the empire, and after 1923, in the Turkish Republic” (1975, p. 452). Diplomatic relations were established between the US and Turkey in 1927, and the two nations would become more intertwined following Turkey's entrance into World War II on the side of the Allies in 1945. Unlike the situation in Iran, however, Turkey was not occupied by the Allies during the war and the US did not have troops and materiel in-country. Moreover, the amount of direct bilateral engagement between the US and Turkey was still modest. Nonetheless, the significance of the Straits was not wholly lost on American policymakers. For example, W. L. Rodgers, senior member of the Navy General Board, in a 1922 memorandum to the Secretary of the Navy entitled “American policy as to freedom of navigation of the Dardanelles” advanced arguments advocating “freedom of the seas” – the second of former President Wilson’s fourteen points – and foreshadowed Truman’s later proposals in postwar negotiations (Van Alstyne, 1947, p. 66). Relatively speaking, however, the US was not heavily invested in the fate of these waterways during the early years of American-Turkish relations.

World War II marked a significant turning point, both in Turkish-Russo relations and in the dispute over the Straits, and its immediate aftermath ushered in greater US interest in the future of the region. Starting in the spring of 1939, as the “threat to European stability mounted…Turkey proceeded carefully to improve its ties with France and Great Britain” (De

Luca, 1977, p. 503). This eventually led to the Tripartite Pact of October 17th, which included mutual wartime pledges with Britain and France. Meanwhile, the Kremlin sought "to persuade the Turks to accept a unilateral revision of the Montreux Convention which would, in effect, have placed control of the Straits in Soviet hands" (Hale, 2021, p. 834). This proved to be unacceptable to Turkish leaders, forcing Ankara to cease further negotiations with Moscow. As the war progressed, Kuniholm argues, "Turkey was subject to intense pressures" and its continued pivot toward friendlier relations with the West to balance traditional suspicions of Russia "was a response to repeated attempts by the Soviet Union to seek advantages at Turkey's expense." Evidence of Soviet designs and "ill will toward Turkey" spanned the duration of the war, starting with the Kremlin's specific demands in 1939, to their rebuff of Turkish attempts to renew existing treaties or to renegotiate a new agreement in 1944 (1980, pp. 68-69). The "Straits question" would also become a key agenda item during the wartime conferences held at Tehran and later at Yalta, where Stalin repeatedly raised the issue of revising the Montreux Convention in light of Turkey's wartime management of these passageways.

By several accounts, March 19, 1945 can be viewed as the start of Stalin's "war of nerves," in which Moscow unilaterally announced its intention not to renew the 1925 Turco-Soviet Treaty of Neutrality and Non-Aggression. Three months later, the Soviets "confronted the Turkish ambassador in Moscow with demands for bases in the Straits, for a Soviet-Turkish revision of the [Montreux] convention, and for the return of Kars and Ardahan to the Soviet Union" (De Luca, 1977, p. 512; Gökay, 2021). While the Turkish government would go on to reject these demands, the Soviet Union would continue to press the issue at the Potsdam conference, where "Stalin amplified the Soviet position by pointing to the 'impossible situation' created by

Montreux" (De Luca, 1977, p. 512). It was also at Potsdam where President Truman first introduced his proposal for the unrestricted commercial navigation and internationalization of Europe's major inland waterways, including the Turkish Straits. This measure, "coupled with British and American opposition to any bilateral solution of the Straits question by the Soviet Union and Turkey, left the issue undecided" and subject to further negotiation (De Luca, 1977, p. 512). The US would go on to submit its proposals for Turkish consideration in November, and although Truman's proposal would never fully materialize, "the news of United States' interest came at a crucial moment for Turkey, and it is easy to appreciate to what extent the Turkish government regarded Truman's proposals as an important counterweight to Soviet demands" (De Luca, 1977, p. 513).

This was the context in which the 1946 Straits crisis took shape. According to Mark (1997), the confrontation over Turkey flared up twice, with the first phase occurring in the spring of 1946. Amid reports detailing the size of Soviet forces being maintained at the Bulgarian-Turkish border, along with disquieting communiques coming from US Ambassador Edwin Wilson in Ankara, "Washington was growing increasingly apprehensive about possible Soviet designs on Turkey and the effect these designs might have on the entire Middle Eastern situation" (De Luca, 1977, p. 515; FRUS VII, Wilson, March 1946). Wilson raised alarm bells by noting that within "the vast security belt of the Soviet Union," Turkey remained the "sole gap" as a nation with its own "independent foreign policy;" this, along with the country's desire for Western support was something that the Soviet Union was "unwilling to tolerate" (FRUS VII, Wilson, March 1946).

The April 1946 visit of the American battleship USS Missouri further flamed the controversy over the Straits. According to one source, the White House "dispatched America's most modern and best-equipped battleship, the USS *Missouri*, to the eastern Mediterranean. [While] its mission was to carry home to Istanbul the body of the late Turkish Ambassador to the U.S….any vessel would have sufficed for such a routine diplomatic task. The President chose to send the American flagship as a signal to Moscow" (Sebestyen, 2014, p. 192). This would also serve as America's initial reorientation of naval policy in the region, while "very definitely intend[ing] to symbolize American support for Greece and Turkey" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 335). During the summer months, American policymakers would be on the receiving end of more disconcerting intelligence reports detailing the situation, and while "July saw no increase in the Soviet ground forces in the Balkans…the USSR still maintained a menacing front. The Soviet ambassador to Ankara, withdrawn in June for "consultations," remained in Moscow. Soviet naval maneuvers continued off the Turkish coast, as did the noisy press campaign" (Mark, 1997, p. 399).

The apex of the crisis occurred during the second phase when, on August 7th, the Soviet Union provided the US with a copy of its message to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. Upon receipt of the communication, "policymaking circles in Washington, on edge from months of ceaseless reports and rumors about Soviet intentions, fell into a mood of crisis" (Mark, 1997, p. 399). The transmission stated that the way Turkey was handling the Straits no longer met the "security interests of the Black Sea Powers" and went on to propose "a new regime at the Straits based on five principles" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 359). The note reiterated prior charges regarding Turkey's acquiescence to the passage of Italian and German warships through the Straits during the war. The first three principles recommended aligned with the US communication to Turkey the prior

November; “principles four and five, however, departed radically from any previous understanding and were in many respects similar to Molotov’s demands of November 1940. The fourth principle called for the establishment of a regime on the Straits under the competence of Turkey and other Black Sea Powers. The fifth principle called for a joint Turco-Soviet system of defense for the Straits – a system which implicitly contained the idea of Soviet bases” (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 360). A few days later, Ambassador Wilson would continue to “stress that the Straits question was a pretext for Soviet domination of Turkey;” meanwhile, “Turkey was holding her breath over the U.S. reply to the Soviets, since it would be a determining factor for further Soviet action” (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 360; Seydi, 2006, p. 140).

The US departments of State, War, and Navy immediately met to assess the situation, and on the 15th of August they presented a memorandum to the president regarding the crisis and how the US should proceed. Later that afternoon, President Truman met with Acting Secretary of State Acheson, Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal, and other key policymakers in the White House. Acheson presented the report and discussed the context of the Soviet note to Turkey. He recalled that

> our report expressed the seriousness of the Russian moves against Turkey and Greece, which aimed at the domination of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. They should be resisted at all costs. Our note to the Russians should by its studied restraint impress the Russians that we meant every word of it. Where they had valid criticisms of the Treaty of Montreux, we should say so, but be adamant against any interference with exclusive Turkish defense of the Straits.

> We recommended making very plain to the Russians, Turks, British and French that we were in deadly earnest (1987, p. 195; Forrestal, 1951, p. 192).

Truman approved the memo, "asserting that he would follow its recommendations 'to the end'" and Acheson was "asked to urge that the Turkish reply to Moscow be 'reasonable but firm'" (Mark, 1997, p. 383; Acheson, 1987, p. 196). On August 19th, after consulting with British and Turkish officials, Acheson delivered the US note to the Soviet Charge d'Affaires and sent copies to Ankara, Paris, and London urging their agreement (Acheson, 1987, p. 196). The British would follow with a communique two days later expressing similar sentiments, along with the Turkish note on the 22nd, which "answered the Soviet charges in detail, refuting allegations that Turkey had not enforced the [Montreux] convention" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 362).

The issue would linger into late September when the Soviet Union submitted yet another note regarding the question of the Straits. However, "the exchange of views on the Straits which now took place was more subdued than that of August" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 371). Evidence only made available after the Cold War's end has since revealed that during this time the British diplomat and Soviet spy Donald Maclean, who had been given the task of establishing "how far the West would go to defend this part of the world…informed Moscow that Truman…was firmly opposed to Stalin's policies of hegemony and that he would never abandon Turkey" (Mark, 1997, p. 408; Sebestyen, 2014). This may have also influenced Stalin's decision to back down (Mark, 1997, p. 408; Sebestyen, 2014). There was a final round of diplomatic exchanges in October during which all parties continued to restate the original positions they had adopted in August, but Moscow's latest communique "proposed no preparatory steps, thereby effectively shelving Soviet claims and ending the crisis" (Mark, 1997, p. 409). A recently declassified Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) analysis of Turkey, composed two years after the crisis, maintained that although Soviet determination to "participate in the control and defense of the area" would continue, this would remain a non-starter for the Turks, who had "stated unofficially that they will take no initiative in bringing the question up for discussion" (PSF Box 160, CIA, December 1948, p. 38).

The Straits Crisis and US Decisionmaking in Context

In describing "Washington's anxiety" regarding Moscow's actions vis-à-vis Ankara, Mark contends that these concerns were warranted within the "context of the *strategic premises* that informed American foreign policy" (1997, p. 386; my italics). His subsequent analysis puts heavy emphasis on the defense aspect of these, but to fully understand US decisionmaking regarding Turkey it is necessary to examine all aspects of the context surrounding America's response to the Straits crisis. As another source points out, "it is worth noting that the Truman administration had been unwilling to support Turkey in the face of identical demands by the Soviet Union in July 1945" (Knight, 1975, p. 451), even though the US was sympathetic to Turkey's position. What changed in 1946?

Given the similarities in time, region, and geopolitical conditions, we will refer here to the same four key dimensions that drove American policy during the Iran crisis: a marked shift in tone on the part of Truman and his administration amid a greater understanding of the Soviet threat; a fundamental reorientation in how the US viewed its role and interests on the world stage;

domestic constraints influencing alternatives available to American officials; and Truman's approach to decisionmaking and the cognitive factors that contributed to the crisis decision process.

Shift in Tone and the Soviet Threat

In keeping with the last case study, the critical events in the Straits came at a time when Truman and his aides were transitioning toward a more assertive posture in dealing with the USSR. As early as October 1945, in a response to Byrnes regarding a proposed telegram to Turkey, Truman emphasized that "we ought to keep pushing the program so as to prevent Russia from taking the Straits over" (PSF Box 160, Truman, October 1945). In the president's January 1946 reprimand to Byrnes quoted in Chapter Three, he also specifically referenced the conflict over the Turkish waterways, stating that "there isn't a doubt in my mind that Russia intends an invasion of Turkey and the seizure of the Black Sea Straits to the Mediterranean. Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language another war is in the making. Only one language do they understand – 'How many divisions have you?'" (Truman and Ferrell, 1997, p. 80). American perceptions of Soviet actions in Iran, just months prior to the Straits crisis, only gave further credence to Truman's interpretation. With this firmer mindset taking hold, he demonstrated a "new belief that the Russians could be influenced only by conventional military power" (Larson, 1985, p. 226). Whereas Iran served as more of an initial opportunity to test out this new tone, Truman may have viewed subsequent encounters – like the Straits – as circumstances that called for even stronger applications of this posture.

By the time the crisis over the Dardanelles and the Bosporus was reaching its peak, this shift in attitude had moved closer to becoming the standard vision across America's defense community. Since Kennan's delineation of the Soviet threat in his February 1946 telegram, Gaddis writes, the administration's "handling of the Iranian crisis [had] showed its acceptance of Kennan's analysis: throughout the rest of 1946 the United States made no concessions of significance to the Soviet Union" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 316). The discourse among policymakers, including what transpired at the pivotal August 15th meeting mentioned above, certainly reflected this perceptual framing. There was also evidence it had started to coalesce across leaders of multiple US foreign policy-related departments; as one State official put it during the height of the Turkish crisis: "All I can say for the present is that this is a BIG (sic) thing. It would appear that the hour of decision has struck and in the circumstances it is reassuring to find a remarkable degree of unanimity and awareness prevailing among those in high places" (Knight, 1975, p. 464).

The clearest expression of this emerging consensus in Washington came in the form of what would later be known as the Clifford-Elsey report, which was, incidentally, compiled during the ongoing situation over the Straits. This report, developed by White House aides Clark Clifford and George Elsey at the behest of Truman in July 1946, "was the first comprehensive interdepartmental effort to assess Soviet intentions and capabilities, analyze the Kremlin's motivations, evaluate Russian behavior, and prescribe American measures" (Leffler, 1992, p. 131). It depicted the Soviet threat in grave terms, recommending that America "revitalize its military capabilities, upgrade its atomic arsenal, prepare its overseas bases, and mobilize its economic and financial resources" (Leffler, 1992, p. 132). Some historians have taken issue with the report's characterization of Soviet intentions (Gaddis, 2000; Leffler, 1992), and Truman instructed that the final report should be kept under lock-and-key, but the document nevertheless "reveals that the perspective expressed by Kennan's Long Telegram was taking hold through the administration" (Ideology – The Cold War*,* no date).

Expanded Role and Interests

As Washington policymakers gained more insight into Soviet behavior and continued to shift their outlook, their conception of America's role in the world, and its interests abroad, also continued to expand. As discussed in Chapter Three, after World War II the US found itself in a unique power position on the global stage and had begun assuming its role as a leader in world affairs. Concomitant to this changed circumstance was a more expansive view of American interests; interests which, in many cases, would have been inconceivable just a few years prior. Turkey served as a case in point – by the time the situation came to head "in the fall of 1946, the Truman administration tied itself to interests which [even] if lost could not harm the nation's physical or economic well-being" (Knight, 1975, p. 452).

In terms of military strategy and planning, a central US interest for decisionmakers lay with preventing the Soviet Union from garnering "full mastery of this territory, which is strategically important from the point of view of resources, including oil, and from the point of view of communication…[putting them] in a much stronger position to obtain its objectives in India and China" (Knight, 1975, p. 464). Earlier British concerns in the area, which had been focused on access to India and China, gave way to broader American economic interests concerning sea routes and commercial trade in the region. Furthermore, as the Joint Chiefs of Staff developed their defense plans, Turkey soon rose in priority as "the most important military factor in the

Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 363). In the months leading up to the crisis, and the months after it, extensive war planning would continue to highlight the importance of Turkey, the Straits, and the surrounding region (Mark, 1997).

This was particularly evident from a naval standpoint as well. As Knight points out, "to an unprecedented degree the administration was extending its conception of 'vital interests' to the Middle East by linking naval activity to diplomacy. The United States was committing itself to the Middle East postwar territorial status quo to an extent unimaginable in the years between World Wars I and II" (1975, p. 468). Truman's proposals regarding the waterways after taking office reflected this vision. On three separate occasions in 1945, the President essentially pitched the notion of America, the Soviet Union, and Britain pledging to establish unrestricted commercial navigation across major European waterways, from the Rhine to the Straits and the Black Sea. Although the idea never went beyond Truman's general interest in it, had his "proposal been accepted by Stalin at Potsdam, America would have abandoned its traditional allegiance to isolation which had characterized its relations with Europe and the Middle East since 1800" (Knight, 1977, p. 242).

Lastly, as in the case of Iran, respect for territorial sovereignty and the fulfillment of United Nations (UN) principles remained key US interests. Stalin's demands, when received, were assessed by American officials to "be at complete variance with American ideas concerning the desirability of revising the Montreux Convention under the aegis of the United Nations" (De Luca, 1977, p. 517). A December 1945 State Department memorandum prepared for the US delegation to the UN stated that America

> has a basic interest in the preservation of commercial freedom in the Turkish Straits, which the Montreux Convention, to which the United States was not a party, guaranteed…a general interest in seeing that any new regime of the Straits fits within the framework of the United Nations…an interest in the continuance of a genuinely independent Turkey, friendly to the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union (FRUS VII, Howard, December 1945).

As with the recent experience over Iran, maintaining the fledgling UN during these early years was of paramount importance, and would remain so going forward. The Head of State's Near Eastern and African Affairs Loy Henderson "had written that while oil, trade, and sea routes played their part in defining America's interest in the Middle East, far more important was the American concern in 'preventing developments from taking place in that area which might make a mockery of the principles on which the United Nations Organization rests, which might lead to the impairment if not the wrecking, of that organization" (Knight, 1975, p. 461). Even if the situation in Turkey would not ultimately be addressed through the UN in the way that Iran had, American policymakers still wanted to ensure UN principles would be upheld.

Domestic Constraints

Many of the same domestic factors present during the Iranian conflict continued to be consequential months later, but with additional developments. These were: the revival of Congressional influence in foreign policy, the administration's concern for its domestic agenda, and shifting public opinion on global affairs. With regard to the first, it has already been demonstrated that a more vocal postwar Congress began playing a role in the White House's tougher stance toward Moscow. As 1946 proceeded, however, the administration found itself making decisions amid rising pressure on the home front, some even from within its own party. By late summer of that year, Gaddis illustrates how two overarching alternative approaches to the Soviet Union had emerged as potential challenges to the "harder line" track evolving as the favored approach of the Truman administration and the foreign policy establishment. The first came from a sizeable segment of US politicians and the American public who "favored firmness with Moscow, [but] threatened to deprive the Administration of the means to carry out such a policy by calling for a return to the military and economic practices of pre-World War II isolationism" (2000, pp. 337-338). This was reflected in Congressional calls from Taft and others, ranging from a more limited posture in European affairs to outright isolationism, that would only become more vociferous as the 1946 midterm elections neared. These positions were tied politically and economically to demands for demobilization and more conservative budgeting.

The second came from what the historian describes as "a dwindling band of popular front liberals, convinced that Roosevelt's policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union still offered the best hope for world peace, [which] vigorously condemned Truman's uncompromising stand" (2000, p. 337). A high-profile manifestation of this challenge was the Henry Wallace affair. In September 1946, as part of his campaign duties, Henry Wallace – Secretary of Commerce in Truman's administration and Vice President before Truman under FDR – addressed a crowd at Madison Square Garden on foreign policy. Though the president had hastily agreed to the general thrust of his speech, Wallace's remarks were critical of actual administration policy. He denounced the “get tough” policy toward the Soviet Union and asserted that America should disavow its interests in the political affairs of Eastern Europe. Amid the fallout, Truman added to the confusion with subsequent explanations that failed to clarify his interactions with Wallace, leading important Congressional figures like Senator Vandenburg to grumble “that Republicans could only cooperate ‘with one Secretary of State at a time’” (2000, p. 340). This incident was important for two reasons. First, it tested the nature of the president’s policy. Wallace was fired, and in doing so Truman “cut the last of his tenuous ties to the liberals less than two months before the Congressional elections,” while simultaneously “vindicat[ing] Byrnes’ policy of toughness” (2000, pp. 340-341; Messer, 1982, p. 213). Additionally, it demonstrated how the White House perceived public sentiment, along with the administration’s desire to satisfy “campaign promises. In seeming to choose Byrnes over Wallace, Truman continued in his attempt to fulfill the expectations created during the war among the vast majority of Americans, himself included, about the nature of the postwar world” (Messer, 1982, p. 212).

The relative lack of mainstream publicity around the Turkish crisis made this case somewhat different compared to the Iranian conflict from a public opinion standpoint. The standoff over Iran had been covered widely in US and international media outlets, punctuated by the fact that American and Soviet grandstanding were front and center as the high-profile case was deliberated through the United Nations. American newspaper articles openly assessed the prospects of war with the Soviet Union, stirring up Congress and the public consciousness at large. Yet while the circumstances regarding the Turkish Straits were known among watchful observers, and there was some exposure through wartime conference communiques and coverage in Soviet, Turkish, and other international media, it was not as well known in the US generally.

Wider attention toward Turkey would only come shortly after the very height of the crisis. In fact, it was not until the August 15th meeting that "Truman agreed with the suggestion that the time had come to prepare public opinion for the new policy on Turkey and the dangers that attended it." Five days later, "Acheson met with about fifteen leading journalists to explain the urgency of the situation" (Mark, 1997, p. 400).

Even though US decisionmakers were largely operating outside of the public eye, however, they were nevertheless conscious of the domestic constraints in addressing the Straits issue. As Larson states regarding Truman's waterways proposal, he was aware "as a practical politician…[of] his inability to undertake a commitment to defend Turkey without public support…[and as a result] he [later] agreed to give up the idea of internationalizing the Dardanelles" (Larson, 1985, p. 225). Acheson also had this clearly in mind when, in the August days preceding US policymakers' response to Turkey's request for consultation, he "reminded [British ambassador to the US Lord] Inverchapel that constitutionally and politically 'no one man can commit the United States to entering military operations and that in the long run the state of public opinion and the state of congressional opinion were the *dominant factors*'" (Knight, 1975, pp. 470-471, my italics). White House planners also had the upcoming midterm election in their sights, which led to officials' curation of the messaging surrounding the Straits issue (Acheson, 1987). Public attitudes were continuing to shift, as they had since early 1946 and during the Iran crisis, toward supporting firmness in dealing with Moscow. While this may not have played a primary role in formulating the administration's decisions around the fate of the Dardanelles and Bosporus straits, Truman and other decisionmakers certainly recognized this public shift, and sought – after the fact – to appeal to public opinion by framing these events under the auspices of the White House's new "get tough" approach.

Truman's Approach to Decisionmaking

Lastly, the decisionmaking context at this time was also impacted by Truman's organizational and management style, which was evident during the Straits affair, both in terms of his advisory system and his approach to making decisions. The informal/confidence model of decisionmaking that characterized the early years of Truman's presidency continued in place as the conflict over Turkey came to the fore. With Byrnes away on official travel during the height of the crisis in August, Under Secretary of State Dean Acheson would assume the mantle as Truman's trusted confidante in this case. It was Acheson who was responsible for coordinating the interagency recommendations to Truman, for briefing the president, and for meeting with the press following Truman's decision. And despite the involvement of a wider group in the lead up to the critical moments in August, we also see this model of decisionmaking apparent in the meeting on the 15th, which only included the president's close collaborators and served as the basis for his on-the-spot decision regarding the Straits. This again is emblematic of the contrast with his predecessor, who might have been inclined to delay a final decision in responding to the situation.

Truman's decisionmaking preferences – his cognitive style, sense of efficacy, and his orientation toward conflict – were not only visible during this decision process but became even more salient due to his historical interest in this region. This was apparent in his freedom of navigation proposal regarding the Straits and other European waterways, his brusque response to

Byrnes in January, and his conduct at the decisive August meeting. Acheson recounts a moment from the meeting where, in response to Eisenhower's question regarding the possibility of war,

> the President took from a drawer of his desk a large map of the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean and asked us to gather around behind him. He then gave us a brief lecture on the strategic importance of the area and the extent to which we must be prepared to go to keep it free from Soviet domination. When he finished, none of us doubted he understood fully all the implications of our recommendations (1987, p. 196).

This episode is indicative of the confidence Truman placed in his self-taught view of world history; as Larson argues, the president's "interest in Turkey and the Dardanelles was derived from the script he had formed from his reading of history: wars were often fought to gain control over strategic inland waterways" (1985, p. 226). It is this inclination to view unfolding events through his own historical lens which likely contributed to the heuristics he was developing regarding Soviet behavior and encouraged his disposition to "shoot from the hip" following the interagency report and subsequent meeting.

This was also an interesting time for the progression of Dean Acheson, who would later – after the period under review in this study – rise to the position of Secretary of State. At this time, he was undergoing his own transition from FDR acolyte to Cold Warrior (Beisner, 1996). In Larson's analysis, Acheson too was guilty of the "actor-observer" fallacy identified by attribution theorists: he attributed the actions of the Soviet Union to the "'internal' expansionist ambitions of its leaders, while inferring that comparable policies of the United States were a response to 'external' geopolitical factors…But Acheson and other U.S. officials succumbed to the actor-observer fallacy because they could not adopt the perspective of the opponent" (1985, p. 284). These cognitive factors played a role in Acheson's mindset, and in determining how decisions were devised regarding Turkey.

With a better understanding of how these four strands shaped the decisionmaking context leading up to the crisis over the Straits, the next section of this chapter will use the PH model to conceptualize the process by which American officials decided to act in this case. First, this analysis will identify the alternatives available in principle, then deconstruct the decision made by applying the first and second stages of the PH process.

A PH Analysis of US Decisionmaking during the Turkish Straits Crisis

Introduction

Years after the Straits crisis, in a conversation with Turkish Foreign Minister Necmeddin Sadak regarding how the Middle East figured into the emerging North Atlantic Pact, Acheson "underlined America's vital interest in Turkey by citing his government's decision of August 1946 in support of Turkey – a decision which had been taken with full knowledge of the possible consequences. 'The President,' he told Sadak, 'considered this *the most important decision* he had made subsequent to the bombing of Hiroshima'" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 424; my italics). Much of the relevant literature certainly conveys the impression that the Truman White House perceived the confrontation in retrospect as extremely important. But just what was decided, and what alternatives were available to US officials in the moment? To apply the PH model to understand America's response to this Mediterranean conflict, we must first identify the alternatives available to policymakers, then explore how, through the first and second stages of PH theory, noncompensatory and satisficing criteria were evaluated to narrow those options to eventually make what Truman called a "decision…[that] could represent a turning point in history" (Knight, 1975, p. 464).

Although the Turkish Straits standoff arguably featured several different flashpoints, it is instructive to focus especially on the culmination of events during the "second wave" of crisis in August 1946. While American leaders responded to Soviet moves with regard to Turkey in various ways during the preceding months, of particular interest are the demands levelled by Stalin and Molotov in late summer, and the pressing need for a Turkish response that prompted Washington to take action at that time. For the US, the overarching decision could therefore be framed as *how should Washington respond to Moscow's demands regarding Turkey*? Multiple smaller decisions and actions flowed from this affair, but they were offshoots from the fundamental question of how America should react to Stalin's "war of nerves."

While there was certainly some consistency with Iran months earlier, the core policymakers responsible for the Turkish crisis were slightly different. President Truman remained the primary decisionmaker, of course. But using the ad hoc collaborative model of Truman's early years described in Chapter Two, his closest working relationship during the Turkish crisis had shifted to Undersecretary Acheson. While Byrnes was privy to the situation, he was largely indisposed with other State business during this timeframe. Acheson represented the State Department at critical junctures and influenced key outcomes, becoming Truman's "go-to" associate in this case. Once again, it should be noted that many officials – some of whom have already been introduced – had a substantive impact on this case, such as US Ambassador Wilson, Secretary Forrestal, and other policymakers present at the August 15th meeting. In the end, however, Truman and Acheson were the principal executors in deciding Washington's next move vis-à-vis Moscow and Ankara.

Policy Alternatives

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the parallels to the diplomatic crisis in Iran, the options that were available to US decisionmakers in Turkey were not altogether dissimilar to those in the prior case. Since the default US posture toward the Soviet Union had evolved toward a tougher stance since the confrontation over Iran – with total accommodation no longer seriously contemplated – the only modification required is that the diplomacy-related choices in this case can be collapsed into one, incorporating elements of both negotiation and firmness. Therefore, the Straits crisis presented America with the following plausible alternatives: (1) Maintain current diplomatic posture; (2) Issue an ultimatum; (3) Demonstrate a show of force; (4) War.

Option #1 – Maintain Current Diplomatic Posture

In this alternative, the Truman administration maintains its diplomatic posture toward Soviet overtures, which by this point had evolved to a "no concessions" stance. In this case, the administration, though concerned about the risks posed in the region, believes that recent

American moves have already been sufficient to make the Kremlin back down from its demands over the Straits. In conjunction with Britain and other Western powers, Washington lends full support to Turkey, calling on the Soviet Union to stand down from its "war of nerves" while recommending a multilateral path forward regarding the maintenance of the Montreux Convention. This could also involve the UN as the situation warrants; either way, the US continues its more assertive diplomacy, through private and public pushback against Stalin's maneuvering. American officials do not feel obliged, however, to doing anything further to alter the facts on the ground.

Option #2 – Issue an Ultimatum

In this option, Truman and his staff believe that the emerging crisis over the Straits, particularly in light of nearby troop movements at the border, poses a substantial threat to American interests and the region. Based on this belief, US policymakers seek to engage in coercive diplomacy by issuing an ultimatum to Stalin to cease his demands regarding the Turkish Straits, including a threat of American military deployments to maintain security of the waterways. In addition to pledging full support to Turkey and their response to the USSR, Washington issues a communique of its own outlining stipulations for the Kremlin to cease its demands. Diplomatic avenues with Moscow remain open, but American policymakers begin to vehemently denounce Stalin's behavior publicly, limiting the potential for a future diplomatic breakthrough. While the US continues to consult with Britain and Turkey on the situation, the ultimatum itself is unilateral. Internal debates among officials also include the possibility of aid to Turkey, and intelligence operations are also ramped up to monitor the situation.

Option #3 – Demonstrate a Show of Force

Under this scenario, similar to the prior situation in Iran, the Truman administration interprets the Kremlin's actions and nearby troop movements as an existential threat to Turkish sovereignty and the region. Diplomatic efforts are essentially halted, and coercive demands in conjunction with aid-based measures are deemed insufficient to prevent the potential for – and increasing likelihood of – Soviet incursions. Thus, although consultations continue with other Western powers, US officials decide to proceed with a show of military force unilaterally. This would likely start by leveraging the existing US naval presence in the Mediterranean but could extend to military advisors or deployments into neighboring regions. Meanwhile, American defense officials review existing war plans for various contingencies and take on a more substantial role in determining future courses of action.

Option #4 – War

Given the troop movements and impending danger of a Soviet invasion into Turkey, US policymakers decide to initiate military confrontation. Naval officers in the Mediterranean begin maneuvers, making their way into the Dardanelles and toward the Black Sea as the situation necessitates. Meanwhile, the army is called back to the region to be prepared to meet any Soviet troops at the Turkish border. This raises the potential for a proxy battle or full-scale military conflict that could envelop other powers and nations in the region.

PH - First Stage

As in all cases, analysis via the PH model starts with the first stage, in which key decisionmakers use cognitive processes and heuristics to reject alternatives deemed unacceptable to the policymaker on a critical dimension or dimensions. This is based on an assessment of what values were considered noncompensatory by Truman and his administration. This thins out the option set, after which – in phase two – a choice is made between remaining alternatives based on a rational cost-benefit assessment.

Noncompensatory Issues/Dimension Analysis

As discussed earlier, a fundamental principle of the PH model is that leaders will commonly perceive their decision options through the lens of their own political survival; see Mintz's list of issues deemed "non-starters" in the eyes of Washington officials, e.g. threats to the leader's survival, prospects of electoral defeat, etc. (Mintz, 2004b). Hence, in this case we can start by considering which alternatives would have imposed very high political costs on the administration.

Domestic politics remained a significant US policymaking factor in mid-1946, though there was no clear threat posed by the Turkish crisis to Truman's leadership or political survival. By the height of the confrontation, the pending midterm election was imminent, and the president continued to reckon with calls from both Congress and the public for demobilization, more rapid efforts to bring military members home, and prioritization of domestic economic improvements. Additionally, given the partisan divisions that were hardening over American foreign policy, it was important to reconcile various factions within the Democratic party to have a chance at maintaining power. But although Truman's overall popularity remained stagnant, primarily in response to the domestic issues of the day, the public opinion challenges related to the international front – which had emerged at the time of the confrontation in Iran – had stabilized by the height of the Straits crisis (Gallup, 1972). Public opinion toward the USSR was continuing to tilt toward the administration's way of thinking. And, unlike the preceding crisis in Iran, there was substantially less public awareness regarding US involvement in a serious standoff over Turkey. For these reasons, the administration would have felt somewhat less pressured by low public support and declining popularity than in earlier months of the same year.

Therefore, in this case, it would seem that the decisionmaking calculus surrounding the Turkish Straits would have also led to a shift in what Truman, Acheson, and his staff considered noncompensatory. Based on the available evidence, it was more settled within the administration over how America should approach Soviet actions, and the die had essentially been cast in dealing with the Soviet Union in a more assertive way. This had led, by the late summer of 1946, to more scrutiny from Congress and from internal party figures than had been the case prior, but this did not rise to a level that directly threatened the administration's political survival. In light of all of this, Truman and Acheson likely elevated potential damage to *dignity, honor, or legitimacy* (of America, the administration, and its approach) to noncompensatory importance in the absence of an existential political threat.

In view of the relevant alternative dimensions – economic, military, political, and international – we see a slight shift following the Iranian crisis and other burgeoning Cold War conflicts, but implementing any option that would require the US to undertake major new expenditures would still have probably been considered infeasible. Although US policymakers were coalescing around a more confrontational approach toward the Soviet Union, the President was still committed to strengthening the postwar economy. And while the American public may have been warming to the idea of viewing Moscow in adversarial terms, economic concerns took precedence. In fact, worries on that front would persist unabated into the later months of 1946. The US economy shrank by 11% throughout 1946 and continued to contract "in the face of a sharp scaling back of military spending, prompting concerns about the possibility of sustained recession and rising unemployment" (Back to the Future, no date). Consumer prices were also surging, with "inflation averag[ing] around 6.5% annually from 1946-1951" (Back to the Future, no date). As a result, any option that entailed major economic sacrifices on the part of the American people, be it over the situation in Turkey or any other immediate postwar conflict, would have likely been quickly eliminated in the minds of Truman, Acheson, and other key decisionmakers.

Across the other dimensions, however, there was perhaps a greater degree of nuance as to what policymakers considered noncompensatory. On the military front, calls for demobilization still continued among a war-weary public that had not yet reached the one-year anniversary of V-J day. Any decision requiring military engagement would still be viewed very skeptically. An airtight case would have to be mounted, politically and publicly, to justify any major use of force. That being said, emerging Cold War hotspots in Europe and elsewhere had put the *possibility* of war with the Soviet Union – whether deliberately or through miscalculation – into the public arena. So, while a hypothetical decision to deploy (and justify) militarily force in support of Turkey following a Soviet incursion would have had a high bar to clear, it was perhaps not as improbable as it would have been at the start of 1946.

In the political and international dimensions, the main constraint that appeared to face the administration was that US planners were, to some degree, starting to become locked into the path and precedent it had set with the Iran case and subsequent US actions/pronouncements. The idea that the Soviet Union needed to be confronted had largely solidified among the Washington foreign policy establishment, and the White House had accepted the heat from dissenting voices that were opposed to this course. The highest political costs at this point, therefore, would likely be paid if the Truman administration now deviated to a weaker line than that taken in their approach to the crisis in Iran. The perception of this constraint initiated the process by which the administration would become hamstrung to a particular course of action, foreshadowing the rigidity that some would later attribute to the Truman Doctrine and more formalized aspects of containment thinking. The greatest amount of flexibility, however, would still reside with alternatives across the international domain. While there may now have been a rising notion of expected support to a peripheral power like Turkey in the face of Soviet demands, there was still little that was noncompensatory for options across this dimension.

First Stage Review of Option #1 – Maintain Current Diplomatic Posture

Despite what shifts in tone there had been to this point, something like standard diplomacy still remained the default instrument for US foreign policy at this time. Until this crisis, America had remained quite uninvolved regarding the Turkish waterways. As noted earlier in this chapter, prior to World War II the United States and Turkey simply did not have that much interaction.

Even as stronger relations were being forged with Middle Eastern nations during wartime, Turkey was still a second-tier concern on the American foreign policy agenda, and US officials typically opted to stay on the periphery of long-standing issues in the region. As one source recounts, "the Truman administration had been unwilling to support Turkey in the face of [sic] demands by the Soviet Union in July 1945. Joseph Grew told the Turkish ambassador to the United States that Russian-Turkish conversations 'had been a friendly exchange of views and…no concrete threats had been made.' While Grew was personally sympathetic to Turkey, he emphasized that the American government would not even offer to mediate the Russian-Turkish dispute" (Knight, 1975, pp. 451-452). Unsurprisingly, therefore, initial US communiques and consultations with Turkey following Yalta and Potsdam were negotiation-oriented in posture. This was similar to America's position toward Iran up until January 1946, where US policymakers were reluctant to provide outright support to a third power subject to overbearing Soviet demands. In the Straits case, this would continue well into 1946, particularly in the correspondences between Wilson, Soviet Ambassador Vinogradov, and Turkey's Foreign Minister Sümer (FRUS VII).

Stalin and his inner circle had made plain their desires regarding the Dardanelles and Bosporus straits in the years preceding the crisis; if the US had not engaged more meaningfully before now, it is worth asking, what made this circumstance different? The decisionmaking context outlined above – especially the expanding scope of America's perceived interests and the shifting attitude toward the Soviet Union – helps explain how the calculus regarding Turkey would have changed in the minds of White House officials. Concerns over the gradual deterioration in US-USSR relations, recent Soviet actions in the region (especially Iran), territorial power vacuums, and Turkish sovereignty were all seen as potential threats to US interests in this postwar milieu. Above all, by the fall of 1946, American policymakers viewed the Soviet Union's potential for amassing military and strategic resources to threaten the US as the key concern, and "Turkey was a passageway to [this] fearful future" (Knight, 1975, p. 466). This contributed to making Turkey a greater focal point in American foreign policy.

Also, on the eve of the crisis, there were other factors that may have compelled the US to change gears. While Stalin's ambitions regarding the Turkish Straits had been known and deliberated for years, his "war of nerves" entering 1946 had taken on a more strident tone. At the same time, similar to the Soviet military presence in Azerbaijan during the Iranian imbroglio, intelligence reports had been indicating Soviet troop movements in bordering Bulgaria, which made an American decision on how to respond seem more urgent. Also, given the logistics of the circumstance, Turkey specifically requested US consultation regarding their response to the Soviet's August 1946 demands, which forced America's hand to formulate its thinking and its position more clearly. Amid these circumstances, a scenario in which American officials would fall back to a conciliatory position was hard to imagine.

While diplomatic exchanges between the Soviet Union and the West over Turkey continued through late 1945, it is reasonable to assume Soviet intransigence and regional threats were already leading American planners to consider a sterner diplomatic approach at that point. As the war was ending, this line of reasoning was evident in the United States' response to the August 1945 Turkey memo, which featured a more comprehensive proposal regarding the strategic waterways than had been the case in earlier communications. The text of the note, delivered to Turkey's Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey in November, proposed a new structure for the Turkish Straits to which the Soviets never responded (Larson, 1985, p. 274). Truman's internationalization plan for the Straits, although not realized, along with the administration's calls for revising the Montreux convention, likewise demonstrated an interest in being more proactive regarding the situation. Later bilateral engagements between Washington and Moscow also prompted US officials to consider their position, including the meeting cited in the Iranian case between Ambassador Smith and Stalin in April 1946. Smith asked Stalin "'How far is Russia going to go?' Looking directly at him, Stalin replied: 'We're not going to go much further.' 'You say 'not much farther,'' Smith observed, 'but does that 'much' have any reference to Turkey?' Stalin's answer was carefully worded. He admitted that he had assured President Truman the Soviet Union and no intention of attacking Turkey. But Turkey was weak – not strong enough to protect the Straits. The Turkish government was 'unfriendly' [in Soviet eyes]" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 334; Mark, 1997, p. 394).

As with the Iran case, the Turkey decision was formulated within the context of a wider diplomatic shift toward a "harder line" that would become ever more apparent as the events of 1946 unfolded. Gaddis, in demonstrating Byrnes' "patience and firmness" modus operandi, catalogues other instances where a more pointed diplomacy was underway, from "East Asia, where Washington continued to resist any substantive role for the Russians in the occupation of Japan…[to] Germany, where the United States cut off reparations shipments from its zone and began moving toward consolidating it with those of the British and the French…[and at] the Council of Foreign Ministers, where Byrnes firmly resisted Soviet bids to take over former Italian territories along the southern Mediterranean coastline, while at the same time patiently pursuing negotiations on peace treaties for former German satellites" (2005, p. 22). In light of these actions, a more assertive, uncompromising diplomatic alternative toward the USSR over the situation in Turkey would seem to be in keeping with prevailing expectations. Other evidence of this turn comes from Ambassador Wilson, who began to interpret Soviet actions over the Dardanelles as part of the Kremlin's bid for control of the region. By the spring of 1946, he believed that "the real Soviet objective towards Turkey is not a revision of the régime of the Straits, but actual domination of Turkey" and that the US, if the situation escalated, would "presumably, [sic] intend to give Turkey all possible support in and through the UNO" (FRUS VII, Wilson, March 1946). This came to fruition in the critical August 1946 deliberations among Truman, Acheson, and other US policymakers, which crystalized the desire to take a firm hand toward the Kremlin. On the basis of all of this it becomes clear that the necessity of a strong diplomacy – at a minimum – was front and center in the minds of administration officials. The remaining open question was what form this would take, and what degree of American assertiveness would be appropriate.

First Stage Review of Option #2 – Issue an Ultimatum

In view of these heightened tensions over the Turkish Straits, was an ultimatum in the offing to counter Soviet demands? Stalin's dictates in the August 1946 note began to approach that territory, though they stopped short of issuing threats over non-compliance. As just outlined, US leaders were clear that American interests were under threat and had already embraced a tonal shift toward more confrontational measures. Moreover, in view of Wilson's correspondences, Byrnes' invocation of potential UN involvement, and Truman's remarks in the August 1946 meeting (Acheson, 1987; Forrestal, 1951), White House officials implicitly understood the severity of the situation and where escalation could potentially lead.

The viability and seriousness of this option diminishes, however, upon closer examination of the available records and the practicalities of the situation as perceived by US policymakers, especially when using Lauren's (1972) criteria for what constitutes a true ultimatum – issuing specific demands, establishing a time limit for compliance, and threatening punishment for failing to comply. While US naval maneuvering in March and other subsequent international engagements confirm an evolution toward more unyielding measures, there does not appear to be any specific mention or language supporting an escalation in the official meetings and memoranda available. And unlike the purported "ultimatum" in dispute over the Iranian crisis, there is no suggested evidence that Truman issued (or planned to issue) an ultimatum over the Straits.

Also, despite the sense of urgency among Acheson and his counterparts in their official August rebuttal to the Kremlin, they did not identify a specific timetable for Soviet leaders to reply, nor was there a clear threat issued should the Soviets not heed elements of the US response. And, as the case in Iran demonstrated, fleeting notions of leveraging "atomic" diplomacy failed to deliver tangible results in dealing with the USSR. The closest that American officials would get to an ultimatum perhaps resides in the use of so-called "gunboat" diplomacy; yet this approach edges closer to the "coercive diplomacy" described in Chapter Three, which is reviewed in the next alternative.

Finally, but importantly when considering the process by which the situation unfolded, Washington was not technically responsible for replying to the Soviet Union itself, but was rather consulted (along with Great Britain) by Turkey on how to respond. While Truman's decision to support the Turkish government quickly became news, it was ultimately Turkey's leaders that were required to respond to Stalin's demands. And while some in Ankara believed Turkey needed to prepare for the possibility of armed conflict (FRUS, VII), many Turkish diplomats wanted to exhibit caution. They wanted US support, but it is doubtful Turkish leaders would have been comfortable with directly responding to Moscow in this manner; any actual ultimatum option would have come from the US directly, and like Iran, it was still unclear what constituted a red line for American decisionmakers. If the Soviets had continued to press their demands more forcefully, or escalated the situation in some fashion, perhaps this alternative would have risen in probability. But this was not tested.

First Stage Review of Option #3 – Demonstrate a Show of Force

Turning to options on the "force" end of the alternative spectrum, the possibility of a military conflict with the Soviet Union, as noted earlier, was increasingly top of mind for Washington defense planners. But was a show of force – where physical actions short of war are undertaken to influence another nation's behavior (Mandel, 1986) – considered a realistic option for US policymakers in this case? The desire to act and the possibility of a Soviet incursion through a neighboring country made it a pressing question, which would only intensify as the crisis reached its zenith in August 1946.

Truman's approval of Forrestal's plan to send forces to the Mediterranean shows a glimmer of this possibility. This was implicitly a signal that US officials could potentially "turn back an apparent Soviet bid for the Dardanelles" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 317). While atomic diplomacy might have faltered in forcing Moscow to concede to America's international demands, by this action Forrestal sought "to connect the Russian threat to strategies that would provide the navy with a significant postwar role while denying that Russia posed a serious naval challenge to the United States. The connection was 'gunboat diplomacy,' a phrase never used by Forrestal but which characterizes the indirect strategy he shaped for the navy in the Mediterranean" (Knight, 1975, pp. 456-457).

This remains as close as the US came to a show of force, however, and is the only substantive evidence of American decisionmakers considering one. Further variations or escalations of this tactic do not appear in any other available discussion or correspondence during the crisis. While some, like Acheson and Wilson, may have discussed in general terms the possibilities for armed conflict, after the establishment of an American naval presence in Mediterranean waters there does not appear to have been any serious consideration of further force allocation. And it is significant that these "gunboat diplomacy" actions occurred relatively early in the timeline, during the "first wave" of the dispute over the Straits. They did not constitute a specific response to Soviet maneuvering during the height of the crisis in August. While forces stationed in the Mediterranean would have made a show of force *possible*, it did not qualify as a new show during the crucial period. Similar to the alternative of an ultimatum, we can surmise that such a move might have been contemplated, or even preferred, if Soviet actions had escalated, perhaps with demands being addressed to the US specifically or if the Soviet military had begun to mobilize further, but this was not the case.

First Stage Review of Option #4 – War

Author Victor Sebestyen provides an interesting anecdote in his work on the year 1946: "Towards the end of his life, the slavishly loyal Molotov admitted that his boss made one big mistake. Stalin had got almost everything right in decades of power, he said, except with regard to Turkey in 1946. There he had miscalculated badly, and the Soviets and Americans nearly stumbled into a war neither of them wanted" (2014, p. 323). This suggests that war by miscalculation was a real possibility at this time. But was it considered by the United States as a deliberate course?

Soviet military movements, in particular a heavy concentration of troops in Dobruja and northeast Bulgaria in March, planted the possibility of war in the minds of American officials. In his report on these deployments, Ambassador Wilson provided a sober assessment, positing that the "present Soviet military dispositions raise question[s] whether they have decided to use force to achieve this objective [of dominating Turkey]" (FRUS VII, Wilson, March 1946). Although "this would be [a] very grave decision fraught with heavy risks" to break its "policy of cooperation with Western democracies," US decisionmakers should "not rule out [the] possibility, however illogical it may seem, of [the] use of force by Russia against Turkey any time after April 15, [the] approximate date when roads will be dry enough for large movements (FRUS VII, Wilson, March 1946). Even during the height of the crisis, the possibility of war was a real part of ongoing discussions; at the White House meeting on the 15th, Acheson "told

Truman that it was essential to resist firmly this Russian 'trial balloon'…with the full realization that if Russia did not back down and we maintained our attitude it might lead to armed conflict." A few days later, Lord Inverchapel asked Acheson point blank, "was the United States 'prepared to resort to war if necessary to maintain its position?'" (Knight, 1975, pp. 451, 470).

Scholars have since noted this, with Gaddis concluding that "the episode was significant, though, for it showed that the Truman Administration was now willing to risk war if necessary in order to block further Soviet expansion" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 337). A key element of Mark's analysis of the Straits crisis is how it contributed to an increased intensity in American war planning. As he states, following the identification of troop maneuvering,

> it [was] now apparent that officials had ample grounds for believing that an attack on Turkey was possible, perhaps even imminent. These included the large forces the Soviets maintained on the Turkish border, the decision of the clandestine Prague Conference that Turkey should be relieved of much of its territory, reports that the Soviet officers both discussed and planned for an attack on Turkey, extensive logistical preparations that seemed designed to support an attack, the sudden halt to Soviet demobilization, and the erroneous order-of-battle estimate by the British JIS at the very height of the tension produced by the Soviet note of 7 August (1997, p. 412).

Although others like Leffler "attribute the beginning of the war planning to the Iran crisis," according to Mark "it was actually Iran *and* Turkey, and the planning became most intense *after* the military threat to Iran had subsided with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from the country in May. The JCS, moreover, early on took the position (which the president ratified on 15 August 1946) that Turkey was worth a war" (1997, p. 387).

While the timeline for increased war planning aligns with this narrative, there is an important distinction between heightened *planning* as a result of worsening American-Soviet relations and clearer identification of US regional interests, versus contemplation of the US deliberately initiating war over Turkey in 1946. While noteworthy, war planning for different contingencies is a commonplace directive of defense officials regardless of whether actual engagement is expected. It was perhaps more telling as to where defense establishment *thinking* about the future stood. But executing any such option vis-à-vis the Straits in 1946 would have represented a significant leap in response. While this was indeed a critical moment in the eyes of American officials, Mark's reliance on military planning documentation risks overstating the seriousness with which political leadership contemplated choosing war at this stage. The argument for war – and for more forceful options in general – had perhaps become slightly stronger by the time of this crisis than had been the case in Iran. But it would have taken either direct Soviet military action or a major miscalculation to make war seem a reasonable American response in the minds of its own decisionmakers.

First Stage Conclusions

Returning to the overarching decision regarding how the White House should approach the Soviet Union over the Straits, any alternatives that would have interfered with what was deemed noncompensatory – delegitimatizing the Truman administration's plan to counter Stalin's ambitions – would not have been considered, especially any that called for marshalling economic resources on a struggling public focused on domestic affairs. And while the administration's shift in tone and recognition of interests played significant roles in evaluating these alternatives, other contextual attributes like decisionmaking style and cognitive factors were also a part of this first stage process. Truman's proposal regarding international waterways, for example, can "be [partly] explained by temperament: the President's desire to make a strong impression at Potsdam as a leader with firm convictions and broad vision, a worthy successor to Roosevelt" (Knight, 1977, p. 242). Additionally, the president (and Acheson) could still, as in the Iran case, be viewed as "taking action" in maintaining a strong diplomatic position as this was still largely considered a fresh idea in Washington. Foreign policy learning became a critical element at this point too: having perceived the de-escalation in Iran and in other arenas as a successful outcome from a more uncompromising tone, US policymakers would have felt emboldened – at a minimum – to maintain their current posture of diplomatic firmness. For all these reasons, we can conclude that any return to prior accommodationist-oriented options would have been discounted; the more assertive approach had become the new baseline for dealing with Soviet aspirations over the Straits.

Likewise, factoring in domestic constraints, there is little evidence of "softer" alternatives in Washington communications during the crisis. If any thought was given to this, it was to be found in the domestic coalition of thinkers that opposed administration policy and favored more conciliatory relations with Moscow. Yet, while this may have had some minority constituency on Capitol Hill or among certain members of the public, it was not well represented among administration officials or primary decisionmakers responsible for managing the Turkey crisis.

Moreover, among US policymakers, inaction was not in keeping with dialogue even in the early stages of the Straits question. In Ambassador Wilson's March 1946 note discussing the Soviet Union's intentions, he questioned not *whether* America would react in the face of a Soviet attack, but asked "What do we do then? If we have an answer ready it is of course Top Secret and therefore not to be mentioned in this document; but without such an answer any statement of our Turkish policy is incomplete" (FRUS VII, Wilson, March 1946). Even in the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee memorandum and subsequent August meeting between Truman, Acheson and other key advisors, the discussion focused on how aggressive the United States should be in responding to Soviet demands over Turkey, not whether to push back at all.

Given the administration's starting position then, would decisionmakers have realistically considered an ultimatum, show of force, or war in light of the dimensions that were noncompensatory for them? The language in the interagency memo presented by Acheson would seem to suggest that this had become a stronger possibility; as one excerpt states, "the time has come when we must decide that we shall resist by *all means* at our disposal any Soviet aggression and, in particular, because the case of Turkey would be so clear, any Soviet aggression against Turkey" (FRUS VII, Acheson, August 1946, my italics). Furthermore, as noted above, prior to the height of the crisis in August, the US naval fleet had already been ordered to the Mediterranean. Kuniholm and others have argued that, in light of this, "force as policy" was becoming a potential instrument of "American postwar policy, but in a context which placed persuasion before provocation" (1980, p. 364). And while there was no actual show of force in response to Soviet demands during the peak of the crisis in August, it could be debated that the prior insertion of an American military vessel essentially amounted to one.

The tenure of official discussions and memoranda also tended in this direction, so realistically, an ultimatum or more direct show of force were still in consideration. And while these options may have stretched the legitimacy of the president's foreign policy across PH dimensions, they also largely accorded with burgeoning anti-Soviet sentiments in Congress and among the public, and with the cognitive heuristics informing Truman's and Acheson's decisionmaking vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. Deliberate embrace of all-out war, however, with all its associated economic and military implications would have been far too drastic in view of administration policy and priorities, delegitimatizing White House foreign policy in the process.

Based on a first stage analysis of the alternatives in this crisis, therefore, we can conclude that the White House contemplated choices that were contained to the diplomatic arena, with a posture of firmness already locked in place. Meanwhile, US decisionmakers reserved the option to endorse measures on the more assertive end of the spectrum – an ultimatum or a show of force – that were now projected to be more realistic alternatives.

PH - Second Stage

Moving to the second stage of the PH model, consideration can now be given to how Truman, Acheson, and others would have proceeded to seek a rational choice among the options left after the initial winnowing. If any of the perceived extremes – accommodative-based diplomacy or outright war – would either not have been considered or eliminated due to the issues identified above, this would have left decisionmakers to evaluate the costs and benefits of what remained.

In this case, three possibilities would have been weighed in this way: the new standard of firm diplomacy and "sticking to your guns;" an ultimatum; and a show of force. While US policymakers may not have spelled out the choice in precisely these terms, we can infer from the historical evidence that this was the implicit nature of the decision in which Truman, Acheson, and team were engaged in.

The first alternative was for the US to continue adopting a harder line in its diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union – in effect "tough talk." This would, once again, not have required major new economic or military commitments at the moment. Internationally, it would allow Washington to be seen as a supporter of a third power facing down Moscow, and to reaffirm its commitments to global order and the new United Nations. The only major potential cost to contemplate at the outset, barring a drastic counterresponse from Stalin, was largely political: a tougher approach to the Soviets over Turkey could backfire if they refused to back down, giving further ammunition to those in the United States calling for a different approach. Nevertheless, considering the context and noncompensatory priorities outlined earlier, this option *did* become the official position, which the administration hoped would both bolster its foreign policy legitimacy and maintain sufficient domestic support. Recent events, including Iran, would likely have loomed large as a prior test of the approach in the minds of Truman and his team. The fact that Stalin and Molotov had backpedaled over the situation in Azerbaijan likely validated a tough stand in the eyes of US policymakers, giving them extra confidence it could be successfully and safely deployed and justified in this case.

What level of appeal did more forceful options – an ultimatum or show of force – hold? As indicated above, both Truman and Acheson would have been well aware of the potential consequences of such a step. As America was called to consult on Turkey's response, an ultimatum would have required responding to the Kremlin with a direct, specific threat if they did not cease their demands regarding the Straits. The concern over Soviet behavior was certainly present, but in parsing through Truman and Acheson's language, particularly at the fateful August meeting, one comes away with the sense that an ultimatum might have been considered as the *next* step if Stalin had continued to push, either through issuing more specific threats or by imposing a timetable for action. While this scenario had perhaps inched closer than the case in Iran, however, American thinking does not appear to have quite reached this point yet based on available evidence. This is likely due in part to what one could surmise as the costs and benefits of this approach. Thinking through the rational calculations of this alternative, there may have been benefits incurred by standing up to the USSR across international and political dimensions, but this would have been outweighed by *future* costs – either economically or militarily – and the need to defend them politically, that could have ensued if Stalin called their bluff.

In terms of show of force, as observed in the first stage, one could argue that to some extent one had already been made, via naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean earlier in 1946. The contingency of augmenting America's military presence in the region further was covered in military planning, in response to the accrual of Soviet troops in neighboring countries. However, there is no evidence from the JCS or other deliberations/documents that putting such plans into action proactively was seriously contemplated. A show of force during the height of the crisis would have been a new action and likely viewed – at this point – as tantamount to war. While this might have limited benefit in legitimizing the administration's approach by demonstrating strength in opposing Soviet advances while defending allies, it too would have raised the risk of incurring major economic and military costs, without any assurance of exceeding the tangible benefits achievable through simply a robust diplomatic stance.

Given the administration's fear then, for reasons discussed earlier, of sustaining major new economic and military costs at this juncture, it makes sense that a continuation of assertive diplomacy, this time in support of Turkey, but without materially escalating the risk of military confrontation, would have appeared the best balance of risk and benefit. It satisfied the noncompensatory requirement of maintaining policy legitimacy, while still fitting within the constraints posed through the decisionmaking dimensions and general context of mid-1946. As the situation over the Turkish Straits unfolded, this was indeed how Truman and Acheson decided to handle it. How things might have unfolded if the Soviets had responded differently is unknowable: they did not accept the resulting proposals, but also did not escalate the situation. As a result, Stalin has been viewed by some as more opportunistic than confrontation-seeking at this time (De Luca, 1977, pp. 522-523; Gaddis, 1998, p. 31). Nevertheless, as one book puts it, the outcome of the Straits crisis "made clear the extent of Washington's commitment to an uncompromising policy" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 336).

Strategy Implications and Conclusions

The "grand narrative" account of the Straits crisis in the literature tends to treat it as one piece amid the inexorable march toward an orchestrated American grand strategy that would characterize the Cold War. Even in works with a narrower focus on the earliest Cold War years, the situation in Turkey aligns with how researchers have formulated the foundations of containment, viewing the US response as an expression of an emerging strategy that was already present in the minds of policymakers by the closing months of World War II (Leffler, 1992; Gaddis, 2000). Other perspectives question this, however, suggesting that the conflict over the Turkish waterways should be interpreted on its own merits, at a point in time when wider American plans had not yet cohered. As one source puts it, "[While] many interpretations of American foreign policy in 1945 and 1946 see a consistent effort by the Truman administration to coerce Russia, either to force the Russians to comply with American postwar designs or to halt Russian 'aggression'…the Straits controversy stands as one piece of evidence against such a *monolithic* view of American statecraft in the early postwar years" (Knight, 1975, p. 453, my italics). This raises the question – *was* there a strategy at work here, and if so, how do we situate this event amid the unfolding strategic timeline?

In the Iran case, it was determined that two core elements of grand strategy as defined here – an extensive "intellectual architecture" and a plan for enacting it – were largely lacking. But by the later months of 1946, a more "purposeful and coherent set of ideas" had become more firmly established in the administration's thinking and threat perception. There was a clearer understanding of the United States' role and expanded international interests. And despite some domestic challenges to the president's approach, the Clifford-Eisley report cited earlier provides a useful window into ideas about the Soviet Union that had crystallized across Washington's foreign policy establishment. The preceding analysis illustrates the importance of foreign policy learning and adaptation as key factors here and suggests that prior diplomatic successes – like the Iranian crisis – encouraged Truman, Acheson, and others to persist with their trajectory toward a "tougher" stance. While Truman would still have to overcome both internal and external policy challenges "before the Administration could begin to devise long-range plans to counteract what it saw as the Soviet 'menace[,]'" this initial *continuity* in actions and outcomes across events in 1946 suggests a strategy not yet formed but in development (Gaddis, 2000, p. 338).

If the intellectual architecture was beginning to take fuller shape, however, *how* the US would execute it remained very much to be decided. In reflecting on official decisionmaking around the Straits standoff, an editorial section of Secretary Forrestal's diaries notes some interesting themes:

> The President was firm; as it turned out, there was no showdown then and diplomacy was able to deal with the Dardanelles question. Yet the episode remains as a vivid example of just those weaknesses in policy formation and direction which Forrestal, with his larger unification plan, was striving so hard to eliminate. Here was the sudden, surprise development (that might have been foreseen); the hasty, ad hoc convening of a committee deal with it (none of the top policymakers except Forrestal was present); the referral to the President, who had to be "briefed" on the simplest background elements of the situation; then the quick decision which –

> correct and forceful though it was – was still taken with no real consideration of the means available to back it up and no preparation of public opinion for the grave implications that it might have carried. It is a clear illustration of what Forrestal had in mind when he argued, as he ceaselessly did, for a closer integration of the political and military arms, for policy formulation and decision that could foresee such crises, could relate them to long-term, basic policies and could provide the means for surmounting them with full public knowledge and understanding. (1951, pp. 192-193).

Although the White House was able to achieve a successful resolution at no serious cost in this case, the decisionmaking process to obtain this can still be viewed through a day-to-day cognitive/heuristic lens. In short, US actions regarding the Straits had not been the product of rational application of a fully formed strategy. Organizational and policymaking issues persisted in hampering the development of a comprehensive strategic plan, and there had still not been a full and serious weighing of how to reconcile means and ends either internally or publicly. And, as was observed during the application of the PH model, there continued to be a great deal of uncertainty as to whether the American public was ready for the sacrifices across the economic and military dimensions that would transpire if some of the other potential alternatives were enacted, or if there was a need to follow through on the "tough talk" approach.

For these reasons, the Straits crisis provides more support for *emergent* strategy as a useful frame to analyze US thinking at this time. Popescu notes that the US response over the Dardanelles exemplifies the model "with its focus on incremental improvisations" and "also explains the road from the decisions on Greece and Turkey to the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947" (2017, p. 32). Considering how this case followed from the experience in Iran, the PH model made clear how relevant foreign policy learning – a key component to emergent strategy – was to the decisionmaking process regarding Turkey. And while there was still a strong element of improvisation detailed in the process above, there was also a discernable element of continuity forming that reflected US officials' assimilation of what had transpired through a host of international events during the months leading up to August 1946.

By the conclusion of the Turkish Straits crisis, the emergence of a strategy had taken another leap forward. But more would still need to be done to fully realize a committed strategy of containment, including making the case for it politically and publicly, and in securing support for its implementation if it should require resources beyond simply opting for more assertive diplomacy. This points toward the third and final case this thesis will consider: the next significant Mediterranean crisis in Greece, and how US decisionmaking and strategy would once again pivot in this early Cold War setting.

Chapter 5: Crisis in Greece and the Truman Doctrine of 1947

"Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East. We must take immediate and resolute action."[5]

~ Harry S. Truman

Introduction

After the immediate crisis over the Turkish Straits waned, capping a frenetic succession of Cold War flashpoints from Germany to East Asia throughout the summer and fall of 1946, that year's end was, by comparison, relatively subdued. Many nations had shifted their attention inward, focusing on increasingly problematic issues at home. In fact, the momentary relaxation in superpower relations may in part be attributed to a devasting famine that continued to ravage the Soviet countryside. Triggered by a severe drought and exacerbated by Soviet economic reforms, this massive food crisis would last well into the new year, prompting a January 1947 US Central Intelligence Group report to conclude that the recent "moderation in Soviet behavior" had been "made necessary by [their] domestic economic problems" (Oneal, 1982, p. 140). Europe too was in the throes of economic and political crises from London to Athens, further aggravated by one of the harshest winters on record. The postwar devastation and increasingly dire conditions led a despondent Churchill to ask "'What is the plight to which Europe has been reduced? Over wide areas a vast quivering mass of tormented, hungry, careworn and bewildered human beings gape

[5] Joseph C. Satterthwaite "The Truman Doctrine: Turkey." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 401 (1972): 78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1039114.

at the ruins of their cities and homes and scan the dark horizons for the approach of some new peril, tyranny or terror'" (Sebestyen, 2014, p. 367).

The United States was also reckoning with its own internal economic challenges and political changes. According to one author, "1946 was a year" for the Truman administration "of continual domestic crises – strikes, inflation, food shortages" (Bernstein, 1964, p. 235). And although the "depression" that many feared would come to pass in 1946 did not materialize, the economy still remained a central concern; "real gross national product" for instance, fell "by 19 percent, the largest single decrease in annual output in the century of recorded annual GNP data" (Vedder and Gallaway, 1991, p. 3). These issues would contribute to a disastrous outcome for Democrats during the midterm elections in November as Republicans gained control of both the House and the Senate for the first time since 1930, which would have important ramifications for White House policies going forward. January 1947 would also bring a personnel change to the executive branch, with the resignation of Jimmy Byrnes as Secretary of State. President Truman made one of his "most important" decisions in nominating George C. Marshall as Byrnes' successor on January 8, a move that would serve to "invigorate" White House and State Department foreign policy (McCullough, 1993, p. 532; Gaddis, 2000, pp. 347-348). The impact of these various changes on US foreign policy would soon become realized, as the temporary geopolitical "pause" gave way to a new year of heightened Cold War tensions across more than one region, and the solidification of an adversarial, bipolar world.

One area that quickly rose to the forefront for US policymakers in 1947 was Greece, a country afflicted by a raging civil war and an economy on the brink. The war, which grew out of World

War II and deep-seated domestic divisions, later evolved into a conflict between a British-backed Greek state and insurgent communist forces, which put pressure on Britain's resources and opened the door to a possible regional power vacuum. The worsening economic situation in Greece, which had grown more severe through the end of 1946, had "deteriorated rapidly during January and February 1947" (Acheson, 1987, p. 217). Although Greece – like its Mediterranean neighbors – had hitherto been of only marginal concern to American foreign policy, it would suddenly become a top priority in late February 1947, when the British government informed the US State Department that internal economic struggles would force Britain to suspend aid to both Greece and Turkey in six weeks (Acheson, 1987, p. 217). Amid the ongoing civil war and obvious potential for rapid Soviet and communist advances, the stage was set for a new type of US response, and the eventual promulgation of what would become known to history as the Truman Doctrine. The doctrine, which sought "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures," was historically "unprecedented on several levels of U.S. grand strategy and foreign policy" (Spalding, 2017, p. 562). The underlying crisis and subsequent decision process that led to this landmark declaration are the focus of this chapter.

Whereas detailed examinations of the earlier cases discussed in this thesis are found in a relatively limited number of sources, one can find discussion of the Truman Doctrine in just about anything written on the Cold War. As a watershed moment in the history of US foreign policy, Truman's pivotal speech in which the new American position was articulated has received extensive treatment, not just in passing references but also in thorough assessments. The relevant scholarship is too voluminous for a complete recounting of all its aspects and themes here. But if we concentrate on works that emphasize understanding the doctrine in the context of America's broader foreign policy strategy, we find some useful points of departure. Gaddis, in his influential article "Was the Truman Doctrine a Real Turning Point?," highlights the ongoing debate among Cold War historians as to whether the doctrine served as either the "moment when Americans abandoned isolationism once and for all" or the "beginning of the long process by which the United States became a world policeman" (1974, p. 386). Some have portrayed the proclamation of the doctrine as a moment of real transition in US foreign policy (Larson, 1985; Kuniholm, 1980) while for Gaddis the Korean War marked the true point of transformation. Notwithstanding this point of interpretive contest, the doctrine's proclamation uniformly features as a landmark in "grand narrative" portrayals of US strategic thinking in this period (Brands, 2014; Dueck, 2006; Gaddis, 2005). Other angles of approach, in more recent years, have included examining the doctrine through the lens of America's seeking to contain "modernity" (Merrill, 2006), and have also compared Truman's thinking with more recent presidents' strategies (Spalding, 2017). Recollections of those involved at the time certainly bolster a reading of the Truman Doctrine as an event of historical weight: it features as a highly consequential moment in the retrospectives of key administration figures like Dean Acheson (1987), Joseph Jones (1955), and others. And in contrast with the 1946 crises in Iran and Turkey, there is a comparatively larger reservoir of primary analysis and reflection to draw upon.

Yet for all of the focus on Truman's actual declaration to Congress in March 1947, that statement was essentially the public launch of a decision that had been made during prior weeks, driven by the ongoing crisis in Greece and Britain's intentions regarding the region. Many works are so eager to discuss the general principles articulated in the Truman Doctrine, it can tend to treat the initial decision to provide economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey as a relatively foregone conclusion. This emphasis in the literature on the ultimate outcome of the speech and its meaning has, at times, taken attention away from the process that led to the decision that inspired it. This neglect has certainly not been total: Kuniholm provides a detailed account of America's role in Greece, for example, and Oneal's *Foreign Policy Making in Times of Crisis* assesses Greece and other early Cold War crises through the lens of US governance, process, and policymaking. There remains more to be said, however, if we apply the same approach to this episode as to the previous two crises to compare strategic perspectives with responses in real-time: reviewing the events that transpired, bringing together the US foreign policymaking context of late 1946 and early 1947, the Truman administration's cognitive factors and learning over the previous two crises, and the two-stage poliheuristic (PH) model as a framework for analyzing the decision. By linking the decision in this case to how things played out in the Iran and Turkey cases, we can also get a sense of how all three in sequence contributed to the emergence of the Cold War strategy of containment.

In the chapter that follows, we will chart a course similar to the previous two. First, there is a review of the relevant historical circumstances in Greece, and the US decisionmaking context surrounding these events. This will then lead to an enumeration of the alternatives available to the President and his administration, followed by an explanation of how they might have been evaluated through the PH model. Finally, some concluding reflections on how this sits with "grand narrative" portrayals of America's strategy at this time.

<u>Cold War Crisis in Greece and the Truman Doctrine</u>

In its modern era as a state, Greece – like most of its regional neighbors – was constantly subject to the power struggles of the 19^{th} century great powers. Despite achieving its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1830, Greece quickly became an important chess piece on the board of Britain's and Russia's "Great Game." It was often the case that "Greece [was] the site of a competitive diplomatic struggle. As the British minister in Athens wrote in 1841: 'A Greece truly independent is an absurdity. Greece is Russian or she is English; and since she must not be Russia, it is necessary that she be English'" (Oneal, 1982, p. 145). In addition, post-independence Greek foreign policy was shaped by the "Megali Idea" or "Great Idea" paradigm, which desired to revive the Byzantine Empire by bringing all ethnic Greeks under a single state. By the turn of the 20^{th} century, the impacts of these two geopolitical influences would lead to Greece's involvement in the Balkan Wars, which in turn resulted in the nation's present territorial size, its political alignment, and its eventual decision to join the Allied side of World War I in 1917.

The onset of the Second World War, however, would lead to major international shifts for Greece. After Greece successfully repelled an attack from Mussolini's Italy in the fall of 1940, Nazi Germany initiated a massive invasion in April 1941, overrunning the Greek army within a month and jointly occupying the nation with Italy. Greece's armed resistance, which included groups like the National Liberation Front (EAM) and its military wing, the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS), persisted throughout the war, and as the tide of the conflict shifted in favor of the Allies, Greek fighters – alongside British and American forces – successfully launched several operations to liberate Greece. They eventually forced Germany to withdraw in October 1944. The end of the war did not bring peace, however, and "the chronic lack of stability in Greek politics [that] grew out of Greek history – a history plagued by divided loyalties, by Great Power rivalries, by the Greek political parties' consequent orientation along Great Power lines, by divisive political and increasingly social schisms… surfaced with a vengeance" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 125). Continued economic distress resulting from the occupation, and political tensions among Greek resistance groups – especially between EAM/ELAS, supported by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), and the British-backed Greek government – eventually led to the outbreak of a full-blown civil war in 1946. Fighting would continue until 1949, drawing the attention of the Big Three powers as well as other surrounding nations.

Throughout the war and during post-war reconstruction, Britain continued to have a substantial impact on Greek affairs. Tens of thousands of British troops had been part of the nation's wartime resistance effort, and following Greece's liberation, British forces played a significant role in occupying key areas of the country. From a broader strategic perspective, however, Prime Minister "Churchill recognized the British Empire's [increasingly] weak position" and thus initiated the secret October 1944 "percentages" meeting with Stalin, "hoping to salvage Britain's position in the Eastern Mediterranean" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 73). In these negotiations, "Churchill…[sought] a spheres-of-influence deal in the hope of securing a free hand to keep Communists out of power at least in Greece, whose strategic position in the Eastern Mediterranean was of great importance" (Carlton, 2000, p. 114). The "naughty document" that Churchill provided Stalin listed Balkan countries and the "percentage" of interest in each to be assigned to the Big Three; for Greece: "Great Britain (in accord with USA)…90% and Russia…10%." After "some subsequent and indecisive haggling between Molotov and Eden…a clear if informal deal had been done on the point that mattered most to Churchill: he had Stalin's consent to handle Greece as he saw fit" (Carlton, 2000, p. 116). This effectively established London's great-power primacy in Greece going forward. The task of re-equipping and training the Greek army, however, in addition to other economic aid, would make this an expensive proposition over time. By early 1947, Britain, which had spent £85 million in Greece since 1944, would be forced to make difficult decisions regarding its continued support as it grappled with its own domestic challenges, debt burden, and other international military commitments.

America's historical involvement in this part of Europe – similar to what we have seen in Iran and Turkey – had been fairly minor prior to the mid-20th century. After first establishing diplomatic relations with Greece in 1868, most US interactions were limited to cultural exchanges spurred on by American Philhellenism. World War II ushered in deeper American involvement, through its direct support of the war effort, but Greece and its environs would generally remain a relatively lower priority for the US as the war reached its culmination. As Kuniholm argues, while the US remained leery of spheres-of-influence arrangements and traditional power politics, "Roosevelt was [largely] willing to acquiesce to the British lead" and generally "preferred to let Churchill and Stalin work out a solution to their common, historical problems in the Balkans" (1980, p. 100). This hands-off approach from Washington would continue to characterize policy toward Greece until Roosevelt's death. Other US officials on the spot, however, such as the American ambassador to the Greek government-in-exile Lincoln MacVeagh, had been reporting for years on the need for greater US involvement. In one memo to Roosevelt, MacVeagh starkly conveyed Britain's decline in the region, demonstrating a prescient recognition of how events there were shaping up:

> No one, I feel, can keep his eyes and ears open here and fail to believe that the future maintenance of the Empire depends on how far England consents to frame her foreign policy in agreement with Washington, how far we in our turn realize where that Empire, so important to our own security, is most immediately menaced (Louis, 1998, p. 87).

Following Soviet actions in Poland and other postwar developments, along with the change in administration, Washington began to reevaluate its position on Greece. Loy Henderson and other State Department officials "called for an injection of American influence into the Eastern Mediterranean," which would include participation in the supervision of Greek elections in June 1945, and later in the year, economic aid and technical assistance, along with a $25 million Export-Import Bank loan (Leffler, 1992, p. 74). Even Truman, who had initially "opposed any United States involvement in the Balkans" had now "changed his mind by the end of 1945" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 254).

As the Greek civil war commenced in 1946 and the country's economic conditions continued to deteriorate, US policymakers monitored the situation and region with greater interest. Earlier clashes with the Soviet Union, like the crisis over the Dardanelles in the middle of that year, had made American "military planners [sic] especially eager to lend assistance to Greece as well as to Turkey" (Leffler, 1992, p. 125). A September 6 memorandum from Colonel James

McCormack laid out the risk that "'If the fall of the Greek government should result in the emergence of a communist Greece, Soviet encirclement of Turkey will have been enhanced, and Soviet prospects for entering the eastern Mediterranean will have greatly increased'" (Leffler, 1992, pp. 125-126). Diplomatically, the US continued to encourage Greek leaders to rectify their internal problems and stated that any subsequent assistance would be conditional based on Greece's ability to better manage its economic and political upheaval. But by late 1946, Byrnes had warmed to the idea of assisting Greece and Turkey directly, and "when the Export-Import Bank failed to provide additional credits, State Department officials [had already] started to work on an aid package they could submit to Congress" (Leffler, 1992, p. 127).

By early 1947, the situation in Greece had become critical; as Acheson stated: "All three of our scouts in Greece – Ambassador MacVeagh, Paul Porter, chief of economic mission, and Mark Ethridge, who had been reporting to Mr. Byrnes on conditions in the Balkans – sent back increasingly alarming reports of imminent collapse due to mounting guerrilla activity, supplied and directed from the outside, economic chaos, and Greek governmental inability to meet the crisis" (1987, p. 217). This sense of crisis escalated further for the US when, on Friday, February 21, 1947, the British Embassy officially informed State Department personnel that Great Britain would cease to provide financial aid to the governments of Greece and Turkey on March 31st. When Britain announced its intention to withdraw its support, American decisionmakers immediately surmised that this would require a sea change in its foreign policy and in its role in the region; as Secretary Marshall commented, this was "'tantamount to British abdication from the Middle East with obvious implications as to their successor'" (Berger, 2007, p. 80). Immediately following receipt of the British notes, Acheson and Henderson held discussions over the following weekend, and the first "Meeting of the Special Committee To Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey" was chaired by Henderson on February 24th to review the situation and determine a course of action (FRUS V, Jernegan, February 1947). The military was also consulted, through White House Counsel Clark Clifford, the next day. The result of the committee proceedings and internal discussions among key officials left little doubt that the US had no choice but "to assume the responsibility" and fill the vacuum that would be created by Britian's withdrawal (FRUS V, Jernegan, February 1947). A general program of assistance was compiled by the Special Committee and presented to the president; shortly thereafter, Truman approved "in principle the measures for immediate aid to Greece and Turkey" (FRUS V, Acheson, February 1947).

Following the president's decision, the administration began the process of socializing the recommended aid package across Washington. Given the call for substantial economic and military support, the White House knew they would need to convince both Congress and the American public of their plan. This led to a famous February 27th meeting where Truman hosted Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Arthur Vandenberg and six other Congressional leaders to discuss the crisis and the proposed US response. After winning over key supporters in Congress, Acheson and other State Department officials went to work drafting a public address about the proposal. The president ultimately delivered this address on March 12, 1947 to a joint session of Congress. Approval of Truman's remarks was widespread and swift both at home and abroad; in one estimation, Ambassador Caffery in Paris found that "the initial reaction of the officials and political leaders whom I have seen today (Communists excepted) is one of tremendous enthusiasm. They believe that it is a real "body blow" to the

Communists and will greatly strengthen all democratic elements and will cut the ground out from under the insidious Communist propaganda line that the United States intends to pull out of Europe and let it stew in its own juices" (PSF Box 152, Caffery, March 1947). The declared policy was eventually implemented as Public Law 75 in May, and "with the enunciation of the Truman Doctrine…the United States joined the power struggle which had been taking place in the Near East throughout World War II and the early postwar years, and indeed for centuries" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 213).

The Greek Crisis and US Decisionmaking in Context

By the time the Truman administration was formulating its plan for Greece – and by extension, Turkey – it had been a year since its clash with the Soviet Union over their actions in Iran. Since then, America's foreign policy decisionmaking landscape had undoubtedly evolved in light of a number of domestic and international developments. Hence, as in the previous two cases, this section will seek to understand the wider decisionmaking context influencing the lead-up to the Truman Doctrine in early 1947. Once again, this requires thinking about how this context evolved across four fronts: (1) the marked shift in tone by the Truman administration since 1945 and greater understanding of the Soviet threat; (2) the fundamental shift in how the US viewed its role and interests on the world stage; (3) domestic constraints influencing alternatives available to American officials; and (4) Truman's approach to decisionmaking and the cognitive factors that contributed to the crisis decision process.

Shift in Tone and the Soviet Threat

As 1946 progressed, what had once been a new idea – getting tough with the Soviets – had now become the consensus among Washington foreign policymakers. This commitment to a firm, no-concessions approach, adopted by the Truman White House, was in many ways a natural progression from lessons learned over a trying two years. Byrnes' September 1946 "Restatement of Policy on Germany" in Stuttgart (the "Speech of Hope"), encapsulated this thinking. In it, the Secretary of State confirmed America's long-term commitment to German reconstruction, seeking to alleviate international concerns over a potential return to US isolationism that would abandon Europe to Soviet domination. Months later, another expression – and elaboration – of this philosophy came in the form of Kennan's famous January 1947 'X Article' in *Foreign Affairs*, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." This piece, which introduced the concept of "containment" to a wider audience and advocated for its adoption as US strategy against the USSR, also provided "a useful codification of the image of the Soviet Union widely held at this time by American officials" (Oneal, 1982, p. 139).

Washington had by this time also become more adept at understanding Moscow's intentions. Aided by Kennan's analysis and recent experiences in dealing with Stalin and Molotov over the Mediterranean and Europe, American policymakers began to understand that "the United States could never take the pronouncements or international agreements of the Soviet government at face value. If the United States were resolute in its resistance to further Soviet expansion, it would find the Soviets very sensitive to opposing force since retreat could always be justified as a temporary, tactical maneuver for long-term strategic advantage" (Oneal, 1982, p. 139). Most recently, this had played out in Turkey, where the Soviet Union had backed away from conflict with the United States, but not from its underlying designs on the region. As Byrnes stated, "It seems clear to us that [the] Russians will not be content with any kind of arrangement with regard to [the] Straits which will not enable them unilaterally to assume control of [the] Straits whenever it seems advantageous to [the] Soviet Union for them so to do" (FRUS V, Byrnes, January 1947). Militarily, while many believed that the Soviet Union sought global conquest, US decisionmakers also understood the USSR would not proactively initiate a major, protracted conflict while it was still reeling from the devastation of World War II and was dealing with its present economic crises. Nonetheless, Soviet military capabilities presented a significant concern, outnumbering American and European forces three to two on the European continent. While there continued to be some spectrum of thought in the United States regarding broader Soviet intentions and capabilities, and some discussion of alternatives to current US policy, "by the autumn of 1946, there was general agreement in the United States that the Kremlin was an ideological enemy with no legitimate fears or grievances" (Leffler, 1992, p. 140).

As the Greek situation came to a head, American statesmen were also becoming increasingly concerned with the threat posed by communism more generally. Europe continued to grapple with a myriad of economic difficulties, and Communist parties in France and Italy had begun to make significant political gains. Official Washington feared that this could open the door to alliances with the USSR, which would augment Moscow's ability to amass power and political advantages westward. In Greece specifically, the "fear was that the [sic] KKE would gain power and align Greece with the Soviet Union. The success of the Communists in Greece might [then] have a bandwagon effect throughout Europe" (Leffler, 1992, p. 143). Many in the US government believed that the Soviet Union was actively supporting the Greek Communist war effort, and worried that if the Communists prevailed in the Greek civil war, the Kremlin would ultimately control Greek policy. This perception was not entirely accurate: later evidence would demonstrate that Stalin had deliberately refrained from providing support to the Greek Communists and had forced Yugoslav Prime Minister Josip Tito to follow suit, much to the detriment of Soviet-Yugoslav relations. Nevertheless, as Leffer asserts:

> Even if the Kremlin were innocent, it was of no real significance. The acquisition of power by the Greek Communists was unacceptable whether it came about as a result of Balkan rivalries, indigenous unrest, or internal political maneuverings. It was assumed that, once in power, Greek Communists would provide the Kremlin with a strategic toehold in the Mediterranean. Such a development simply could not be allowed (1992, p. 126).

This new threat calculus mandated not just maintaining America's tonal shift toward firmness underway since 1945, but also leaning into more proactive policies. According to Acheson "all signs pointed to an impending move by the Communists to take over the country…[and] only a national coalition government and substantial aid could save Greece" (1987, p. 217).

Expanded Role and Interests

As discussed with regard to Iran and Turkey, the United States' conception of its interests had evolved to include preventing the expansion of Soviet geopolitical power that might threaten postwar stability, while creating an environment conducive to American economic and military advantages. Throughout the remainder of 1946, this expanded range of interests was on show in efforts to block potential Soviet maneuvering in East Asia, along with resisting Moscow's gambits over Italian territories through the Council of Foreign Ministers (Gaddis, 2005, p. 22). This could also be seen in the expansive character of American military planning, particularly in the continued establishment of overseas bases and military transit rights (Leffler, 1992). Moreover, as determined in the Turkish Straits crisis, there was greater appreciation now for how historical British interests in the region – preserving access to India and China, oil, communication channels – were closely linked to American economic and military needs in the area. Aspects of these larger US interests would come to the fore in the early months of 1947 as the nature of the threat in Greece became clear.

Considering the ominous reports on economic conditions in Europe and the potential for communist inroads, the scope of US concerns also began to extend to the internal political and economic health of Western allies. Given the need to prevent consolidation of Eurasian power centers, there was now a key interest in politically supporting governments to prevent the spread of communism, and with it, Soviet exploitation. This was evident in Greece, where US diplomats spoke of how best to politically "support" the government, with Acheson commenting that Greece could become the rotten apple that would infect the whole barrel (1987, p. 219), a foreshadowing of the "domino theory" that would later shape American analysis in the Asian theater. As a result, the Truman administration became highly invested in Greek sovereignty, as a strong Greek state could serve as a bulwark against Soviet encroachment. "As the State Department's Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs noted late in 1946, '[i]t is vastly to the interest of the U.S. that the recognized government [in Greece] be assisted in becoming strong enough *before the fact* to handle its internal problems without requiring a sudden increase in assistance *during* a state of actual or near civil war'" (Gaddis, 1987, p. 56).

Economically, the US was already contributing to Europe's postwar recovery. According to a 1948 Federal Reserve Bulletin, "United States exports of goods and services amounted to 15 billion dollars in 1946 and reached 20 billion in 1947. Relief and reconstruction in large areas of Europe and the Far East have absorbed immense quantities of these exports" (Board of Governors, 1948). Additionally, after Lend-Lease ended in September 1945, several multilateral efforts were instituted, including the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) and the nascent Bretton Woods organizations, along with direct bilateral loans from the United States. An example of this was an American loan agreement with the United Kingdom in 1946, which amounted to $3.75 billion. Greece was also a beneficiary of these early aid efforts; in January 1946, the Export-Import Bank signed an agreement with Greece for a $25 million loan. Later, as Great Britain relinquished its role in the region, American policymakers came to understand – particularly in the context of Turkey's fight to maintain control over the Straits – the importance of responsibilities historically assumed by Britain in this area, and how they overlapped with what were now considered US interests. In the end, as Colin Gray argues, "Truman's America perceived a vital U.S. interest in the reconstruction of a devastated Europe" (2011, p. 236). With the benefit of hindsight, Greece and Turkey would only be the start of this vision; its full realization would not commence until the initiation of the Marshall Plan in the summer of 1947.

Domestic Constraints

As 1946 progressed, internal US politics and public opinion continued to play a key role in shaping administration foreign policy. As noted in the chapter introduction, the domestic front was not kind to the Truman White House as the year wore on. The president had increasingly become a punchline across the nation; as David McCullough writes, “not in eighty years, not since Andrew Johnson, Lincoln’s successor, had a President been the target of such abuse.” Truman’s popularity had diminished precipitously, with his approval rating registering as low as 32% just prior to the midterm elections. Much of this resulted from public discontent over general postwar economic hardships, including shortages of key goods, as well as labor issues like Truman’s handling of the United Auto Workers strike. A meat shortage had been particularly damaging: after Truman reluctantly lifted price controls on meat in a radio address three weeks before the election, the price of meat skyrocketed, leading to a public outcry and further dissatisfaction. Alongside these frustrations, early signs of what would become the “red scare” were also starting to manifest, as attacks mounted on the president and administration for “fostering communism at home” (1993, pp. 520-521).

These were all factors in the midterm elections held on November 5th, the first election following World War II, in which the Democratic party suffered large losses amid a Republican wave across the country. “Taking advantage of a combination of circumstances – accumulated grievances after thirteen years of Democratic rule, the trauma of reconversion to a peacetime economy, lack of firm leadership from the White House, recurrent labor troubles, the meat shortage, the Wallace affair – Republicans gained control of both the Senate and the House of

Representatives" (Gaddis, 2000, pp. 343-344). Having been in the minority in both chambers of Congress since 1932, the House was now 246 Republicans to 188 Democrats and in the Senate, 51 to 45. Panic was pervasive among Democrats; Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, for example, proposed the day after the election that Truman should resign to make way for a Republican presidency under Vandenberg (McCullough, 1993, p. 523). Public opinion polls after the election "revealed that only 35 percent of those surveyed supported Truman's handling of the presidency" (Hamby, no date).

For officials seeking to formulate what would become US Cold War strategy, these developments "further discouraged those who had hoped for a more cooperative attitude toward foreign policy questions on Capitol Hill" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 343). And at the start of 1947, with the Greek crisis looming on the horizon, the role of Congress would be vital, since the decision the White House and State Department were mulling would require substantial economic and military aid. In the first televised State of the Union, the president, sensitive to the new domestic political landscape, told the Republican-dominated Congress that they would have to work with him for the common good. And when it came to foreign policy, it would need some convincing: "Even after approving $33 billion in spending and voting a $2.6 billion payment on the national debt it was apparent that the Republican opposition shared neither the alarm of the secretary of the navy [Forrestal] nor the commitment to international leadership of Kennan at least not if that were to be an expensive role to fulfill" (Oneal, 1982, p. 142). And when it came to Greece and Turkey, Truman understood this: "the vital decision that I was about to make [regarding the region] was complicated by the fact that Congress was no longer controlled by the Democratic party…I realized the situation was more precarious than it would have been with a preponderantly Democratic Congress" (Truman, 1956, p. 103).

The American public at large continued to have mixed views on foreign policy. While the tide had certainly shifted toward viewing the Soviet Union in adversarial terms, it was uncertain what action the citizenry thought should follow from that. In part this was simply because the public was still preoccupied with urgent economic and domestic concerns. But it was also the case that, "despite instances of firm, decisive action, by the early months of 1947, no systematic presentation of the new policy of the United States had yet been made to the American people; nor had a situation arisen requiring the application of the new policy which was sufficiently dramatic to mobilize public opinion or to serve as a readily identifiable demarche for consideration in foreign capitals. Only with the dramatic events in Greece in the spring of 1947 was such a situation created" (Oneal, 1982, pp. 137-138). Hence, when it came to both Congress and the public, the administration was aware that it had a job on its hands to *sell* domestic audiences on the kind of action they were contemplating in response to the escalating Mediterranean crisis.

Truman's Approach to Decisionmaking

Organizationally, the President continued to employ a confidante-oriented model through his advisory system at this time, with an inner circle of trusted advisors that, following Byrnes' resignation, now included General Marshall as well as Undersecretary Acheson. By 1947, however, this ad hoc advisory system was becoming more formalized, as many "within the government…[understood] the need for greater coordination in the conduct of foreign affairs in order to cope with what was perceived to be a deliberate bid by the Soviet Union for world domination" (Oneal, 1982, p. 144). This broad consensus led to the drafting of legislation to unify the armed services, and to impose greater structure and clarity upon the process for developing and enacting US foreign policy. This work culminated in the National Security Act of 1947 signed in July, which created the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council, the purpose of which was to allow the Truman administration to manage policy in a more cohesive manner.

This nascent formalization seemed to influence Truman's decisionmaking approach as the White House responded to events from late 1946 into 1947. Truman, as delineated earlier, "was naturally disposed to be more forthright than Roosevelt. Because of his previous military experience, and his inexperience in international affairs, he was also more inclined to believe in clear lines of authority, to rely on bureaucratic channels, and to place more responsibility on the State Department" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 232). Following the midterm elections there seemed to be a slight shift away from the "shoot-from-the-hip" decisionmaking style that had characterized his earlier months in office toward a greater reliance on established channels. Even with the urgency presented by the situation in Greece, Truman's ultimate decision and the doctrine that accompanied it involved a significant lead-up from Acheson and his trusted advisors. Reflecting on this, he – as in past cases – took pride in his standing as the ultimate decider. But he also noted greater prudence before this key decision was rendered:

> There are a great many men who labor diligently behind the scenes before a policy statement can be announced. The President, of course, can neither speak nor listen

> to each and every one of them. But their work ends where the President's work begins, for then he has to make the decision…Yet decisions like these cannot be made in a hurry, and I never did make momentous decisions without hard preparatory work, study, and much thought. I always made it a point to listen to as many people as I could (Truman, 1956, pp. 102-103).

Other characteristics of Truman's approach remained quite consistent, however, including his straightforward demeanor and worldview. This was evident in the drafting of the doctrine speech, in which the President edited phrases to "to be clear and free of hesitation or double talk," and aimed to make statement that would serve as "America's answer to the surge of expansion of Communist tyranny" (Truman, 1956, p. 105). And while the Manichean terms used in his declaration were motivated in part by the need to "shock" Congress and the public into supporting action, one suspects this simplified narrative also fit comfortably with his own reliance on heuristics, his international perspective, and his view of history.

Acheson, as one scholar contends, had "an extraordinarily rich, consistent, and coherent belief system about Soviet policy and the requirements of world order," which contrasted somewhat with Truman's style, in which "the situational context largely determined which of [the president's] many convictions became apparent to him at that particular moment" (Larson, 1985, p. 337). As circumstances and their relationship evolved, however, it became clear that the two were complementary to one another when it came to the emerging Cold War. The 1946 crisis over Turkey, which was one of the first key moments where Acheson essentially served as Truman's primary foreign policy aide, had an important impact on the undersecretary's worldview and his appreciation for Truman's process. Ultimately, "Acheson could not see how Soviet ambitions in the Dardanelles could have any defensive logic" and came to believe "that the Soviets would not be satiated with a limited sphere of influence in Eastern Europe, but had an unlimited appetite for territory and influence" (Larson, 1985, p. 339). Following the Turkish episode, not only did Acheson feel "he had learned how to deal with the Soviets," but he had also "discovered how to please the man who shared his taste for action. In addition, when others took to belittling Truman – not an infrequent occurrence at Georgetown dinner parties – the proper Grotonian would stoutly defend him" (Isaacson and Thomas, 2013, p. 372). This attitude would be on display as he contributed to Truman's response to Soviet actions in the Greek case, which Acheson identified as *his* "crisis" which he had "nurtured" since Britain's notification of their intention to pull out of the region (Acheson, 1987, p. 219).

A PH Analysis of Decisionmaking during the Greek Crisis

Introduction

As noted at the outset of this chapter, Gaddis had once argued that the Truman Doctrine did not mark a true transformation in US foreign policy. Larson, however, disagrees, pointing out that while Gaddis believes contemporaries' "'sense of exhilaration [on initiating the doctrine] stemmed from the [efficient] *way* in which policy was formulated'…this was not the view held by U.S. officials at the time. On March 11, Acheson cabled the embassy in Greece that the initiation of a long-term program of substantial aid to maintain Greek independence '*of course represents [a] major decision* in U.S. policy'" (1985, p. 316, my italics). Thus, as the argument goes, to Truman, Acheson, and others responsible at the time it was the magnitude of the decision that stood out, not just its speedy or automatic quality. Hence, as in previous cases, it is worth spending time reflecting not just on the outcome, but the process by which the decision was made, which we shall do here again using the PH model.

As discussed in this chapter's introduction, despite the outsized focus on the Truman Doctrine speech itself, this was the formal public expression of a decision already made well before March 12, 1947. This unfolded via a sequence of steps, from initial recognition of the economic issues impacting Greece, to the administration's initial diplomatic engagements with the Greek and Turkish governments, to the decision to meet with key Congressional members ahead of announcing its position. But to get to the heart of its substance as a crisis decision, the pivotal moment arose from the urgency created by Britain's resolution to withdraw support from the region. While empirical material from State Department memoranda and other official documentation prior to this critical moment demonstrates a known, emerging issue in Greece along with some possible paths forward, the British decision represented a turning point demanding a more far-reaching US response. Therefore, for American policymakers, the key decision at hand could be characterized as: *how should the US respond to the Greek crisis and Britain's decision regarding the region.*

In terms of the decisionmaking structure in this case, Truman maintained his position as primary decisionmaker. But as discussed above, by this point in time the president was supported by his advisory system to a greater degree, which constituted a departure from the less formal, more ad hoc processes that transpired over Iran and Turkey. Dean Acheson was once again the key supporting official in this case given his central involvement in both developing the policy proposal, and in executing it through and after its approval. However, given the greater extent of formal deliberation, more actors had meaningful input into the decision and policy, including Secretary Marshall and Loy Henderson at Foggy Bottom, along with diplomats like MacVeagh and economic mission leaders. Moreover, the indispensability of Congressional buy-in on this occasion extended decisionmaking authority beyond the Oval Office. Although efforts to persuade Capitol Hill came after the executive branch had already decided the course it thought necessary, anticipating that Congressional support would be needed was certainly an element that factored into the overall decisionmaking process.

Policy Alternatives

When confronting this decision, what alternatives did the Truman administration have? First, it should be noted how this decision differed from those considered in prior cases. In Iran, the decision turned on how the US should respond to Soviet actions in Azerbaijan and its continued military presence. In Turkey, action was required to determine whether to support Ankara over direct Soviet overtures regarding the Straits. In both crises, these decisions were based upon, and resulted in, measures that were primarily aimed at the Soviet Union. The situation in Greece, however, was more indirect vis-à-vis the USSR. Whether US policymakers either believed that Stalin was actively engaged in supporting the KKE or, at a minimum, were concerned with the potential for Soviet encroachment in Greece is rather immaterial (per Leffler's earlier argument), as the decision was not wholly in response to specific Kremlin activities. While options may have been relatively consistent for Iran and the Turkish Straits given the need for direct action, the alternatives available to Truman's team during the Greek crisis require adjustments to account for the factors underlying the key decision at hand. And while the main focus centered around the situation in Greece, additional policy consideration was also given to Turkey as it was part of Britain's prior support in the region and continued to be a neighboring strategic location subject to Soviet pressure.

Furthermore, there is more robust documentation, compared to the previous crises, regarding what policymakers actually considered their alternatives to be. For example, a memorandum by the "Special Committee to Study Assistance to Greece and Turkey" stated that "the Department considers that this Government has only this choice: (a) either to accept the general responsibility implied in the British memoranda or (b) to face the consequences of a widespread collapse of resistance to Soviet pressure throughout the Near and Middle East and large parts of western Europe not yet under Soviet domination or the adverse consequences, from the standpoint of United States interests, of a possible new British deal with the Russians" (FRUS V, Henderson, no date). Such passages are instructive in illustrating US official thinking, but to understand how the choice came to be framed in these terms, it is useful to consider how American decisionmakers would have narrowed their options before making a final choice. To this end, if we again apply the Applied Decision Analysis PH procedure in Mintz (2005) to this case, we can discern the following options conceivably available to American policymakers: (1) Maintain current posture/no additional support to the region; (2) Provide limited additional support conditionally/multilaterally; (3) Provide full additional support independently with an emphasis on economic aid; (4) Provide full additional support independently including direct military assistance.

Option #1 – Maintain Current Posture/No Additional Support to the Region

In this alternative, the Truman administration decides to maintain its current diplomatic posture and chooses not to provide support in the region beyond what it has already committed. American officials continue to encourage the Greek government to manage its own economic and military affairs, to maintain limited support through Export-Import funding and economic advisory missions, and to work with allies regarding the situation. US intelligence also continues to monitor involvement from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and other surrounding countries. Skeptical of the overall threat and potential regional consequences, the United States decides to abstain from direct involvement and rejects fully assuming the mantle from London. It allows British aid to "run dry," preferring to take its chances on the outcome of the Greek Civil War and the possibility of economic collapse, communist party gains, or future Soviet involvement in the region.

Option #2 – Provide Limited Additional Support Conditionally/Multilaterally

In this option, the White House chooses to provide some additional support to Greece, but does so on a limited, conditional basis. American diplomacy becomes more prescriptive toward Greece; the US seeks to increase economic aid somewhat above current measures, but makes this contingent on Greece's ability to develop credible plans for rectifying its internal problems. This partial support is focused on Greece specifically given the urgency and is possibly extended to surrounding countries like Turkey. This scenario could also entail reengaging and negotiating with Britain bilaterally on a collective path forward regarding Greece, or alternatively (or in addition) involving the United Nations (UN). If the latter were involved, the deteriorating situation in Greece could be framed as a world problem in need of a multilateral solution, not necessarily precluding Soviet involvement. This would involve the United States accepting greater responsibility for the region but would stop short of extending full bilateral support.

Option #3 – Provide Full Additional Support Independently with an Emphasis on Economic Aid

In this scenario, the US decides to take on former British responsibilities in the region and become the chief Western benefactor for the Greek government. This entails providing substantial economic aid to ensure the continued survival of the Greek government with some limited military aid provided in parallel. Diplomatically, this means maintaining a firm posture and a harder line in supporting the sovereignty of the Greek government, including publicly decrying the threat of Greek Communists, and by implication, the Soviet Union. Economic aid is also considered for Turkey given its importance in the region. In this scenario, Washington perceives the threat to the United States as sufficient to justify filling the power vacuum created by Britain's withdrawal. It thus accepts responsibility for keeping the region within the Western orbit by shaping its political future, while sending a message to Stalin and surrounding communist countries regarding the seriousness of America's commitment to the area.

Option #4 – Provide Full Additional Support Independently including Direct Military Assistance

Under this alternative, US policymakers and military planners are fully convinced that a communist victory in the Greek Civil War is imminent without American intervention, and that this would be a catastrophic outcome for the region and thus the United States. On this basis, America decides to "put it on the line" by offering full support to Greece and Turkey in the form of substantial economic *and* military aid, and places greater emphasis on military support. US diplomacy takes on a maximally assertive stance, directly condemning the Soviet Union and other Communist parties for the situation on the international stage. American military assistance could range from an increased show of force through its naval presence in the Mediterranean, embedding advisors to direct military action against the KKE, or deploying troops to the Dardanelles. With America fully assuming the role formerly occupied by British forces in the region and potentially increasing its military presence on the ground, possibilities abound for a wider conflict drawing in surrounding nations, perhaps even the USSR.

PH - First Stage

In applying the PH model in this case, as in the previous two, our first stage begins with an analysis of the initial phase of decisionmaking, in which certain options are ruled unacceptable without the need for a closer cost-benefit evaluation. To that end, this assessment will start by discussing what was noncompensatory for Truman, Acheson, and other US decisionmakers across the relevant dimensions, which will set the parameters for the administration's decision in context.

Noncompensatory Issues/Dimension Analysis

Returning to the key decision at hand, the president and his closest aides were deliberating on whether the US should provide additional support to Greece and assume responsibility for Britain's prior function in the region. For Truman and Acheson, this assessment will first review the issue(s) that would have been irreconcilable in mulling over the available foreign policy options. Therefore, once again using Mintz's list of potential noncompensatory concerns from political survival to popularity and legitimacy, what was ultimately a “no-go” for the administration?

The decisionmaking context of late 1946 and early 1947, domestic and international, made the president’s medium-term political survival a pressing concern. Truman himself would not be up for election until 1948, but the resounding Republican victory and Democratic losses in the November midterms had delivered a stark message regarding popular sentiment toward the administration. By the spring of 1947, the 1948 elections were becoming a topic of national focus, and Truman was well aware that he would face major domestic political headwinds and an uphill campaign. In steering the country, he was working with much-diminished popularity and public approval, which, as noted above, continued to ebb even after the midterm elections.

On the other hand, one could reasonably contend that by late 1946 – amid a morass of economic problems and other issues directly impacting the day-to-day lives of Americans – foreign policy was one area where the White House’s initiatives were actually “working.” Such empirical evidence as exists from this point in time suggests that the administration’s posture of firmness toward the Soviet Union had not only attracted widespread support across the Washington establishment, but also tracked with the increasing skepticism toward the USSR on the part of the public. One 1946 Gallup poll “asked the public how they felt about the policy Russia was following in world affairs and how the U.S. should respond. A solid majority of Americans, 71%, disapproved of Russia's foreign policy…[and when asked how to respond to the USSR] the largest percentage of Americans, 44%, believed the U.S. should ‘be firm’ with the Soviet Union, ‘make her stick to agreements’ and not appease it” (Reinhart, 2021). While there were some voices criticizing Truman's foreign policy for being either too bold or too soft, the primary causes of the president's low popularity ratings stemmed from domestic issues. In the context of a very tough domestic political climate, foreign policy was delivering a small, but not insignificant "win" for Truman as long as he did not stray too far afield from current policy. If anything might harm the president on this front at this point, it would be alternatives that *deviated* directionally from the administration's policy trajectory. As Leffler contends: "So long as the Truman administration practiced containment and deterrence, so long as it rejected a policy of reassurance and accommodation, it could do pretty much as it liked" (1992, p. 140). Similar to the situation in Turkey half a year earlier, where the incentive for the administration was to continue proving the viability of their "patience and firmness" approach, in the case of Greece, it was options that conflicted with the thrust of the incipient push to contain the Soviet Union that would have been ruled out as unacceptable.

Considering the president's need to maintain domestic legitimacy for his foreign policy across the applicable decision dimensions – economic, military, political, and international – there were recognizable changes from where the situation stood during the Iran and the Turkish Straits crises. As noted in the domestic constraints above, the economy was still front and center for most Americans. Even if the worst forecasts for 1946 had not been realized, "the cost of living had also leaped 6 ½ points [sic] since the end of 1945 and there were still acute shortages of the things people most wanted – housing, automobiles, refrigerators, nylon stockings, sugar, coffee" (McCullough, 1993, p. 520), and the midterm elections had made the administration acutely aware of the public's economic mood. Yet despite these problems, employment remained high, many businesses were thriving, and by 1947 some of the concerns that had clouded the election year, such as price controls, had started to subside. The situation in Europe presented some serious *potential* threats in economic terms, if communist advances and Soviet power should upend global markets, but this did not have a tangible impact on ordinary Americans at the moment. In view of this mixed picture, any administration move that placed major new economic demands upon the American public to bolster Greece and possibly Turkey following Britain's pullback was a risk. Postwar US foreign policy had yet to call for major economic trade-offs nationwide.

In terms of the military dimension, the demobilization that had been much demanded by the public immediately after the war had proceeded apace, and the number of personnel in the US military had been reduced by almost 90 percent between mid-1945 and mid-1947, from more than 12 million to approximately 1.5 million. Indeed, this severe reduction worried the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other military planners, who were increasingly concerned about American preparedness should an international conflict arise. Notwithstanding Congressional and public sentiment supporting standing "tough" against the Soviet Union, calls for direct military involvement or preventative war with the USSR constituted a very small minority, and this was partly informed by the context of a significantly shrunken American military. The notion of a "preventative war" strategy or initiating direct military conflict with the Soviets still held very limited appeal among the public well into the mid-1950s (Trachtenberg, 1988, p. 5). Given these limitations, both in terms of preparedness and attitude toward what the United States could do militarily at this time, there were tight noncompensatory restrictions on what could be contemplated in this domain in early 1947.

This was gradually becoming the situation in both the political and international domains as well. Politically, the administration had become more "locked in" to its trajectory of taking a tough stance toward Soviet power. Republicans had "capitalized on inflation, strikes, and shortages" during the midterms and would later be "motivated primarily by domestic considerations;" and while there were still concerns over White House foreign policy leadership leading up to the election, the continued employment of a firm diplomatic policy was "rarely criticized" by Congress (Leffler, 1992, p. 140; Oneal, 1982, p. 141). Meanwhile, following the Wallace affair cited in the last chapter, Truman had been relatively successful at closing ranks within his own party on the merits of his administration's general approach to the Soviet Union and international affairs. Across the international dimension, where there had previously been a greater degree of flexibility in dealing with the Iran and Turkey crises, prevailing issues had made this progressively more rigid. In these earlier cases, there may have been potential diplomatic concerns with America's ability to stand with peripheral nations and champion national sovereignty; however, the inclusion of Greece now put this domain in line with events occurring across Europe. The broader economic issues and potential political gains for communist parties in Western nations made the international arena a more fraught dimension. Therefore, in the end, PH would predict that any policy option significantly deviating from or delegitimizing the Truman administration's plans would not only be discarded as a noncompensatory concern, but would also be increasingly bounded across all key dimensions as US policymakers sought a way forward in Greece and Turkey.

First Stage Review of Option #1 – Maintain Current Posture/No Additional Support to the Region

Could policymakers decide not to supply aid to Greece (and potentially Turkey) beyond what it was already providing? As indicated in the State Department discussions that followed London's decision, this was certainly a consideration among US officials, particularly as they weighed the potential negative outcomes of a British departure from the region. This would have been consistent with America's diplomatic line coming from the State Department up until the crisis in February 1947, prior to which it had largely been concerned with Greece's ability to stabilize its economy. As early as November 1945, in a memo to Truman, Byrnes proposed making the following point to the Greek government: "the United States…urges the Greek Government to undertake a stringent internal program of economic stabilization in order to start Greece on the path toward economic recovery" (CF Box, HST Papers, Byrnes, November 1945). Nine months later, Acheson's comments below were still in keeping with this overall position:

> The Government of the United States is aware that Greece's burden is a heavy one, but it is convinced that the assistance being extended to Greece can accomplish little toward economic recovery unless the Greek Government itself undertakes rigorous measures to control inflation and to stabilize the currency, to reduce Government expenditures and to augment revenue, to increase the efficiency of the Civil Service Administration, and to revive industry and trade (PSF Box 152, Acheson, August 1946).

Moreover, some at the State Department felt that the Greeks could meet essential import needs in 1947 if they would take action, and at that time, the "Department did not feel that it was practicable to ask Congress to appropriate additional relief funds for Greece, either through UNRRA or a new organization" (PSF Box 152, Acheson, August 1946). Prior to 1947, American involvement was limited to issuing this sort of advice to Greece, working with Britain, and providing supplementary aid through the Export-Import Bank. This was consistent with a White House policy that wanted to avoid major new obligations across economic or military dimensions.

Given the impending threat and how it was interpreted in Washington, however, it is hard to envision US officials refraining from taking any additional actions once the crisis arose. The February 1947 correspondences coming in from Athens, particularly from MacVeigh and Porter, depicted the imminent collapse of the Greek government in calamitous terms. As Porter described the situation in a top-secret cable to Marshall:

> Firmly convinced this is [the] real thing and we cannot hope for economic or political stability in absence of [an] all out effort on our part. Next few months should determine whether Greece will collapse and Secretary's presence here would probably mean we could buy much needed time in which to work out essential measures to prevent complete disintegration which is already far along. Cannot emphasize too strongly gravity of situation (FRUS V, Porter, February 1947).

MacVeagh also observed "that the KKE [sic] is accepted as 'cooperating fully with the Slav Communist Parties' in an effort to bring about a situation in Greece which will call for Russian military and political intervention" (FRUS V, MacVeagh, February 1946). Days later, Acheson would quickly adopt this concern; in a memorandum to Secretary Marshall, he also characterized the potential Soviet threat in the region this way, foreshadowing the comments he would make to Congressional members the following week: "the capitulation of Greece to Soviet domination through lack of adequate support from the U.S. and Great Britain might eventually result in the loss of the whole Near and Middle East and northern Africa. It would consolidate the position of Communist minorities in many other countries where their aggressive tactics are seriously hampering the development of middle-of-the-road governments" (FRUS V, Acheson, February 1947).

In response to these concerns, "doing nothing" in addition was quickly discarded as a viable response. Reflecting on the perceived threat at the time, Truman recalled that "if the United States did nothing…[this] would lead to the growth of domestic Communist parties in such European countries as France and Italy, where they already were significant threats. *Inaction*…could result in handing to the Russians vast areas of the globe now denied to them" (Leffler, 1994, pp. 56-57; my italics). Acheson also found that the "consequences of inaction were clear enough" (1987, p. 218). The negative ramifications of doing nothing further also extended to Turkey. Citing a report from General Smith, the US ambassador in Moscow, Truman recollected "that [Smith] had no doubt that the Kremlin would resume its efforts to encroach upon Turkish sovereignty, and he expressed the belief that, unless long-term aid was forthcoming from the United States and England, Turkey had no hope of surviving" (1956, p. 98).

Therefore, if the US had decided to maintain its current diplomatic posture, but without committing additional support, this would have been irreconcilable with the assessment of threats emerging throughout Europe. Even if the immediate military threat in Greece was not directly attributable to the Soviet Union, communism was on the rise, and "even if the Russians were restrained, the situation would remain harrowing. Everywhere in Europe governments were resorting to exchange controls, barter agreements, and national planning in order to husband scarce resources and even scarcer dollars. Truman and his advisors were terribly fearful of the implications of all this" (Leffler, 1994, p. 57).

First Stage Review of Option #2 – Provide Limited Additional Support Conditionally/Multilaterally

The necessity of providing additional support to Greece *in some fashion* would have been clear in the minds of Truman and Acheson as a necessary correlate of persisting with the firmer posture tried out in Iran and Turkey, along with how US officials viewed America's role and interests more generally. The question would become what form this support would take.

Upon obtaining the correspondence from Britain regarding its intent to pull out of the region, the US interpreted it, as Henderson pointed out, as consistent with Britain's increased inability to "maintain its imperial structure" more widely (FRUS V, Henderson, February 1947; Larson, 1985, p. 304). In light of this, there was some concern that the British might seek to broker a separate arrangement with the Soviet Union. While it was unlikely, “the British Government might decide that, in order to avert the immediate Soviet conquest of Greece it must come to an arrangement with the Soviet Union, including a military alliance and the setting up of spheres of influence. Such an arrangement would greatly strengthen the Soviet Union, would weaken Great Britain and would tend to isolate the United States, [t]he restoration of spheres of influence would furthermore undermine the foundations of the United Nations” (FRUS V, Henderson, no date).

In retrospect, this raises an interesting issue as to whether the United States could have explored more fully the possibility of working in tandem with Great Britain to support the region. Britain’s rationale for its retrenchment from Greece, along with the roles played by Ernest Bevin and Hugh Dalton, chancellor of the exchequer at the time, were the subject of some debate at the time of the US Special Committee proceedings (FRUS V; Frazier, 1984, p. 716). The case of Turkey was less worrisome because Britain already intended on proceeding jointly in this case; London was “prepared to look after the needs of the Navy and the air forces, provided satisfactory financial arrangements can be made” by the US (FRUS V, Henderson, no date). With this in mind, could the US have “pushed back” on Britain’s position regarding the region and explored the possibility of American-British support in both Greece and Turkey? Especially if Truman and Acheson were concerned with the domestic reaction at home to major new material commitments in Europe, perhaps coordination with Britian would have avoided the burden of taking full responsibility for the region, while still enabling a firm posture toward the Soviet and communist threats in the Northern Tier.

The UN might also have served as a forum for increased American diplomatic efforts to mobilize a multilateral approach toward Greece and Turkey. Domestically, there appeared to be meaningful public support for this. Following the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, in April 1947, the pollster Elmo Roper conducted an analysis of public attitudes and found that while "a large number of people are in favor of the proposal because it seems to 'take a firm stand against Russian aggression and the spread of Communism'…Roughly, half the people said there 'were some things they didn't like about the proposal.' Of these, the largest group objected to unilateral action – that is, [they] thought that aid should go through United Nations or UNRRA" (CF Box 32, Roper, April 1947). Yet, in the course of decisionmakers' deliberations on recommended actions, using the United Nations did not appear to be a central consideration. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that Greece had already appealed to the UN for support and was currently awaiting for the results of the UN Commission for Investigation of Greek Frontier Incidents, which was reviewing border incidents between Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. This also probably presented issues across the cognitive attributes of Truman's decisionmaking structure and approach: US policymakers likely felt that UN processes of this nature simply would not have the immediacy required to quell a crisis of this severity which had now emerged, particularly in Greece. As Porter indicated: "the country [simply] cannot afford to wait until [the Commission] successfully completes its work before instituting obvious economic reforms" (FRUS V, Porter, February 1947).

Could a multilateral effort to stabilize the situation also included the Soviet Union? While this may initially seem farfetched given the state of Cold War hostilities, Moscow was not the direct and immediate threat, and since the days of World War II, "allaying Soviet suspicions and keeping the Soviets informed of Allied actions in the Balkans were uppermost in Washington's thoughts about Southeastern Europe" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 100). As the war was ending, Roosevelt inquired with Churchill about an early allied mission including the Soviet Union to assist Greece; with an eye toward the region's geopolitics, Churchill brusquely responded that "we cannot expect any help from the Russians in the economic sphere, and to include them in the mission would be purely political gesture…There is the further disadvantage that at a time when the Russians are firmly excluding both you and us from any say in the affairs of Roumania, it would be rather odd to invite them unsolicited to assume some degree of responsibility in Greek affairs" (PSF Box 152, Churchill, April 1945). By 1947, the US had come around to Churchill's view on this point: the decisionmaking context in terms of tone and threat perception had shifted drastically, and Acheson had begun to rule out negotiations "for the foreseeable future." According to the undersecretary: "'We must not believe that the fundamental problem between us and the Soviet Union, which is the inherent expansionism and aggressiveness of communism, is soluble by one or any number of talks between the Big Three or in the United Nations'" (Larson, 1985, p. 316). After the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, and notwithstanding later officially inviting the Soviet Union to participate in the Marshall Plan, "Truman no longer had any faith in negotiations as a means of settling…[America's] differences with the Soviets" (Larson, 1985, p. 318).

First Stage Review of Option #3 – Provide Full Additional Support Independently with an Emphasis on Economic Aid

Under this alternative, the US would seek to go beyond the second option by providing full support. With agreement on the ramifications of the regional threat, and the need to maintain a firm posture against communist/Soviet advances definitively established among Washington policymakers, America would essentially supplant Britain's role in the region and provide whatever aid to Greece was required, while emphasizing the economic dimension.

There is a good deal of empirical evidence following Britain's decision, through the Special Committee and in military planning documentation, that this is indeed where American deliberations focused. The argument for this path was that not only was it extremely urgent and necessary to the Greek government's survival that it should receive aid, but also that the US was the *only* actor capable of taking ownership of the situation following British withdrawal. Also, as MacVeagh argued keenly, in the grand scheme of things this was a relatively cheap option for the US to ensure that Greece, Turkey, and the region did not fall under the Kremlin's dominion. As he stated in a memo to Marshall: "If Greece falls to communism the whole Near East and part of North Africa as well are certain to pass under Soviet influence and to prevent this and the world-wide complications it would entail a premium of not only five but of many times 5 million dollars would seem cheap insurance for the US" (FRUS V, MacVeagh, February 1947).

If the US were to extend this kind of support, American officials thought, then unilateral ownership of the situation would necessarily and naturally follow. As Henderson stated "if this Government is to provide immediate financial assistance to Greece, U.S. interests can be adequately served only by establishing immediately the controls necessary to assure the effective utilization of such assistance. The Greek Government cannot itself provide these controls in the near future" (FRUS V, Henderson, no date). The Turks, in addition, required "economic assistance that the British could not provide" (Kuniholm, 1980, p. 408). Moreover, unilateral support would allow the US greater direct control over the future of the region, which would redound to their benefit should further conflagrations arise with the Soviet Union in the Mediterranean or in Eastern Europe. This option would also align well with the parameters of acceptable action with which Truman and Acheson were working at the time: it could serve as a White House "win" on the foreign policy front, at acceptable cost.

First Stage Review of Option #4 – Provide Full Additional Support Independently including Direct Military Assistance

As a final option for consideration, American planners might have considered the situation so dire that the emphasis of any aid package would need to be focused on direct military support. With the ongoing civil war, the "communist-led guerrilla movement, supplied from Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Albania and feeding on the economic distress wrought by years of war and government ineptitude, threatened to move into the power vacuum left by the British withdrawal" (Gaddis, 2000, p. 348). Early in the postwar period, however, there was a reticence to get involved in the region via military means. As Byrnes stated, "it is the conviction of the Department that military responsibilities in Greece should not be undertaken by this Government since such cooperation would contribute nothing to the solution of present problems in that country" (FRUS V, Byrnes, November 1945). Even by 1946, while "the United States Government were prepared to do everything they possibly could to help the two countries economically" it would only be possible for them to "*supply* the military equipment" at most (FRUS V, Byrnes; my italics). By the time of the crisis in 1947, however, some wondered if economic aid alone was enough. According to Acheson, "it has been informally agreed that Great Britain should be responsible for equipping the Greek armed forces while US assistance to

Greece would be confined to the economic and financial field. However, if the Greek Army is to become an effective organization able to deal with guerrilla activities and maintain internal order, it must be increased and better equipped in the very near future. The British are unable to meet scheduled needs" (FRUS V, Acheson).

In the course of working up a proposal for Truman, military aid comprised an important component of an overall aid package: "if the Departments of State, War, and Navy should come to the conclusion that Greece must have continued assistance from abroad in the form of military supplies if it is to maintain its independence and restore domestic tranquility, the United States Government so far as it is able furnish an appropriate share of such supplies" (FRUS, Special Committee, no date). But even though the importance of supplying and equipping the Greek military was deliberated, American discussions stopped short of seriously contemplating a show of force on the part of the United States itself, or – even more daring – the possibility of direct military engagement by the US on behalf of Greece or Turkey. This could in theory have included a wide spectrum of outcomes, from bolstering its naval presence in the Mediterranean at a minimum or embedding troops with the Greeks. But there is little evidence in the historical record that these options were seriously entertained by Truman or other key decisionmakers.

Interestingly, such a course of action might have been a more realistic option some months *after* the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, when "Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall and Army Chief of Staff Dwight D. Eisenhower recommended that the United States send ninety military advisors to Greece to offer operational advice to the forces fighting the Communist uprising…[and] in the following months, Truman also considered the deployment of U.S.

combat troops. The president's advisors, tempted to commit troops, held back because they feared the domestic political costs of partial mobilization and because they knew that the same soldiers might be needed elsewhere" (Leffler, 1994, p. 70). Proceeding this way in March 1947, however, would have likely required a far more substantial commitment than the administration was at that time prepared to contemplate. Their strong desire was to stay consistent with the policy trajectory of firmness already set, but without escalating to any major new direct commitment on the ground.

First Stage – Conclusions

Truman, Acheson, and other US policymakers felt that the status quo of providing limited, conditional support would not be enough to save Greece, Turkey, or potentially the entire region in the long run. This reflected the reading and heuristics of Soviet conduct developed during the Iran and Straits crises, and aligned with Truman's action-oriented disposition. Given the cohering sentiment within and around the administration in support of taking a firm stance toward the Soviet Union, simply continuing "business as usual" in the Greek case could be seen as deviating from the established policy trajectory, which was noncompensatory and unacceptable on political grounds, both domestically and internationally. Even if this option avoided significant immediate economic or military costs, the overall threat perception and the desire to take proactive measures – and be seen to do so – would have invalidated this option in the eyes of Truman, Acheson, and other key personnel.

The second alternative of working with others to address the situation multilaterally had more viability. In practice, this would have been more straightforward if limited to Britain bilaterally, but more challenging if this option was extended to encompass the UN or even Moscow. It could have been legitimized as consistent with the direction of White House policy and did not necessarily conflict with what was noncompensatory for Truman and Acheson. And it did not present significant challenges across key decision dimensions, particularly on the economic and military fronts. As such, it could have survived as a viable alternative for cost-benefit analysis in stage two of the PH model.

Option #3 – in which the US would independently provide full additional economic support – also represented a "taking action" alternative for the Truman administration. The difficulty lay primarily in the economic and political dimensions, which would involve communicating and garnering support for potential fiscal sacrifices beyond what was called for in the prior option. Therefore, this selection would require a careful weighing of costs and benefits during the second stage of the process. But it did not deviate dramatically enough from already-established policy to be ruled out at this stage.

The fourth choice, however – at least to the extent it incorporated direct military intervention from US forces – would likely have been excluded from the outset. Military preparedness remained a key domestic issue, and it represented a cost and commitment across the military and political dimensions significantly beyond what the nation was prepared to take on at this time. More significantly from a first stage decisionmaking standpoint, this option would have been a far more radical departure from existing policy, and would have posed far graver risks to Truman's political standing as its sustainability and viability in practice would have been more doubtful. While there may have been some hawkish constituency in the United States in favor of such actions, actual decisionmakers would have discounted it in this stage.

PH - Second Stage

In the second stage of the PH decisionmaking process, where a more detailed cost vs. benefit evaluation comes to the fore, policymakers would have been left, for serious consideration, with the options of either partially supporting Greece and Turkey through possible bilateral/multilateral efforts, or becoming the primary Western patron of these countries by taking over the British role in the region and supplying aid.

The first of these alternatives would have provided the benefit of signaling increased US support to the Greek and Turkish governments, and served as a response of sorts to the KKE, European communists, and the Soviet Union, while having the advantage of not having to call upon substantial new commitments across the economic and military dimensions. It would have assisted in maintaining the support and legitimacy already secured for the administration's policy domestically, by standing firm and backing a sovereign, democratic nation against communist encroachment, and internationally, through seeking to work with others, perhaps even through the UN. The incentive to keep potential costs of foreign aid down was real: as Forrestal warned "Americans wanted a 'firm foreign policy,'…but they also wanted 'high wages, low prices for manufactured goods, reduced taxes, a balanced budget, [and] debt reduction'" (Brands, 2014, p. 31). But given the threat perception, efforts to skimp on costs in dealing with the crisis now could also be framed in terms of potential negative long-term outcomes. As MacVeagh had reasoned, half measures in 1947 could contribute to the collapse of the Greek state, and a cascade of communist gains that could result in widespread Soviet control of key areas, which could have drastic economic consequences – and possible military ramifications – in the future.

The benefit of the third option, on the other hand, was that it would send a stronger, less equivocal, message to Greece and Turkey, the Soviet Union, communist parties, and international observers that the United States was willing to provide all assistance necessary – beyond merely diplomatic support – to peripheral nations facing Soviet or communist advances. The main costs would naturally be in the economic sphere, given that a significant aid package would require measures which had not yet been asked of the American public in previous crises. This may call on the citizenry to "accept lower living standards that would otherwise be the case, pay higher taxes, live with economic controls, and borrow against the future" (Hogan, 1998, p. 16). On this topic, we find a key statement from Henderson amid policymakers' internal deliberations after receiving Britain's note regarding the region:

> We realize, however, that grave difficulties are involved since certain responsible officials of the Administration and members of Congress, as well as large sections of the general public, are not as yet fully cognizant of the seriousness of the situation and would not like for the United States to expend large sums of money in the Near East or for it to undertake to play a leading role in that part of the world. It is not yet generally realized that the future of the Near East is no less important to the security and welfare of the United States than is that of the Far East and Europe. (FRUS V, Henderson, no date)

Others, like Joseph Jones, had recognized that this case to the American public had not yet been made, and "although resistance to Soviet expansion had stiffened significantly within the administration in 1946, national leaders 'who saw the pattern of inexorable Soviet pressure [had not yet] described it wholly to the American people, explained what it meant to their security, or outlined a policy for dealing with it'" (Oneal, 1982, p. 142). If this option were to be exercised, new political messaging would be an essential next step.

Ultimately, this was the alternative deemed preferable by the administration. It satisficed by bolstering policy legitimacy and by aligning with the White House's previously-established foreign policy direction, while keeping costs and risks within reasonable bounds across the military, political, and international decision dimensions. From a PH model perspective, however, the initial option of partial support would seem to be preferred. It did not contradict with what the Truman administration considered noncompensatory in this case and was consistent with cognitive decisionmaking factors in the first stage. Additionally, costs would be minimal, and it would lessen potential risks to the administration that could arise in the economic and political dimensions. Given that the third option called for greater economic action, but was nonetheless the course of action selected, the Greek case reflected a discernable shift in administration's calculations from the previous crises. Then, largely due to concerns over domestic constraints and political consequences, the president and his senior advisors had ruled out options that would have imposed a significant economic cost upon the United States. In this case, however, the Greek decision and the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine signaled a new willingness to pay such a cost; to, as one author put it, "bear the burdens that leadership entailed" (Hogan, 1998, p. 16).

What made this circumstance different? Out of the factors impacting decisionmaking – particularly in this second stage – one aspect appears to have held greater weight in this circumstance: threat perception. Given that the perceived dangers to US interests over a failing Greece and the potential for Soviet and communist expansion were significantly higher than had been the case with the prior conflicts this thesis has reviewed, it could be argued that the security threat *outweighed* apprehensions over the noncompensatory issue and domestic political factors emphasized in the PH model. While there were similarities with prior crises, as a European country and Britain's key ally in the region Greece was seen as a strategically vital, democratic nation with strong Western ties that needed to be preserved. While the issues surrounding Iran, the Straits, and other arenas presented challenges, the failure of this sovereign state could also lead to a true power vacuum, which, in conjunction with communist political advances in Europe, likely tipped the scales in the minds of US policymakers. Furthermore, with Washington decisionmakers now essentially "locked in" to a policy of strength vis-à-vis Moscow, there was a willingness to continue meeting any new potential threats in this way *despite* rising costs. Since these contextual attributes essentially superseded concerns across all dimensions in the decisionmaking calculus for Truman, Acheson, and other key officials, PH analysis of the administration's decision in the Greek case would seem to hold less explanatory power in interpreting the ultimate outcome.

Strategy Implications and Conclusions

The proclamation of the Truman Doctrine, and the substantive decision that underlay it, was a pivotal moment in the emergence of America's Cold War foreign policy. As Brands puts it, "between early 1947 and early 1948, the Truman administration thus began to transform containment from a lofty but vague idea into a more fully developed grand strategy" (2014, p. 31). From Iran to the Turkish Straits to Greece and other events in parallel, there had been a foreign policy evolution shaped by both developments on the ground and lessons learned through the process of how America responded to them. How does this last case fit within this study's conception of grand strategy and "emergent" strategy discussed previously?

In terms of grand strategy as "intellectual architecture," by the time of the Truman Doctrine decision the White House's foreign policy approach was all-but established as the new prevailing wisdom in Washington. A mindset that had only been nascent when the Iran crisis arrived – with tenets including an expanded conception of US national interests, and an understanding that Soviet ambitions should be met with firm counterpressure – had by early 1947 coalesced among policymakers. As noted in this chapter, by the time that the Greek crisis came to a head, the shift in thinking about the Soviet threat was complete and was about to solidify into the wider organizing principle of containment. This view had cohered across key decisionmakers within the administration, secured vital support in Congress, and aligned with public opinion in ways that rendered dissent increasingly marginal.

Moreover, the employment of PH in this case also demonstrates how foreign policy learning continued to play an important role in solidifying this line of thinking. Fresh off the heels of perceived foreign policy victories in Iran, Turkey, and other regions, the White House undoubtedly felt emboldened by the notion that toughness works in the face of Soviet demands, and a strong foreign policy was therefore necessary to preserve interests abroad and to combat Stalin's and Molotov's machinations. This was not a minor change in course; adapting to this general consensus not only satisfied the intellectual grounding required for a grand strategy, but also constituted a landmark shift in the history of US foreign policy. Truman himself later reflected on the gravity of this moment: "This was the time to align the United States of America clearly on the side, and the head, of the free world. I knew that George Washington's spirit would be invoked against me, and Henry Clay's, and all the other patron saints of the isolationists. But I was convinced that the policy I was about to proclaim was indeed as much required by the conditions of my day as was Washington's by the situation in his era and Monroe's doctrine by the circumstances which he then faced" (1956, p. 102).

Indeed, the establishment of this thinking as the intellectual architecture for US policy was ultimately so successful that it would, in time, present challenges of its own for American policymaking, by constricting strategic nuance and flexibility. One issue was that casting US foreign policy in terms of a sweeping doctrinal principle could be read as implying an open-endedness of American commitment that made it harder to keep strategic ends coordinated with available means. Far-reaching rhetoric, Brands notes, such as that contained in "the Truman Doctrine…[was] unlikely to encourage sober thinking about limits and trade-offs" (2014, p. 51). For realists like Hans Morgenthau, "The Truman Doctrine stood…as the prime example of

America's third basic error, sentimentalism. This 1947 statement of policy cast what was a wise and necessary response to events in Greece and Turkey in the inflated terms of a universalist doctrine: 'The Truman Doctrine transformed a concrete interest of the United States in a geographically defined part of the world into a moral principle of worldwide validity to be applied regardless of the limits of American interest and power.'" He also worried about "the doctrine's failure to discriminate between 'what is desirable and what is possible'" (Smith, 1986, pp. 148-149). The unanswered question of limits was one recognized to some extent by US policymakers during the Greek case as they consciously deferred important questions regarding specifics and resourcing: "After a lengthy discussion it appeared to be the view of most of those present that this Government should decide in principle to assume the responsibility involved, *leaving for later* determination the question of whether it was financially possible to do so and how it should be done" (FRUS V, Jernegan, February 1947, my italics).

A second, related issue was that universalist rhetoric had lasting implications for future US relations with the Soviet Union, reducing scope for opportunistic flexibility. While the Truman administration "managed to shock Congress and the public into providing the support necessary to implement a tough policy,…they trapped themselves in a new cycle of rhetoric and response which in years to come would significantly restrict the administration's flexibility in dealing with Moscow" (Gaddis, 2000, pp. 317-318). Even the primary conceptual architect of containment, George Kennan, "objected both to the tone of the message and its sweeping language but also to some of the specific actions it proposed, namely military aid to Greece and assistance to Turkey" which he felt went beyond the scope of his intended construct (Miscamble, 1992, p. 32). Just a few years later, this language would form the basis of NSC-68, the later-famous document which laid out what Kennan, among others, considered an overextended and overly militarized American approach to counteracting the threat posed by the USSR. So while the intellectual grounding of this strategy may have come to fruition, other strategic drawbacks, including its inattention to appropriate means and ends and the indiscriminate, binary messaging that accompanied it, would come at a cost to future Cold War decisioning.

Early signs of this trend toward later inflexibility were already detectable in the case of the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine itself. Maintaining policy legitimacy by adhering to the parameters and trajectory already established by the previous two crises had become a noncompensatory imperative in itself for the administration, serving to narrow perceived options. To the extent that the concept of "grand strategy" implies applying a previously-developed framework to new events as they unfold – as distinct from the idea of an "emergent" strategy taking form through ad hoc reactions to external events – by the time of the Truman Doctrine's proclamation, the shift in US thinking from the latter to the former was underway. This line of reasoning accords with Popescu's (2017b) analysis of emerging strategy referenced in Chapter One, which finds that later foreign policy developments, like NSC-68, are better explained through a grand strategy – and not an emergent strategy – paradigm.

And what of the organizational and procedural elements of grand strategy implementation? By the height of the Greek crisis, the transition from the informal collaborative model that Truman employed at first to a more formally structured approach for deciding and implementing policy had evidently begun. The rapid nature of this development should not be discounted; as one author states, "for the State Department, the military, and the president to coalesce, in peacetime, so rapidly around such a far-reaching, potentially open-ended, American commitment abroad was unprecedented" (Steil, 2018, p. 34). Aspects of foreign policy development that, in earlier phases of his presidency, would have been limited to Truman and his inner circle now drew in other participants, including Congress. And within the executive, although Truman and key counterparts like Acheson still served as primary decisionmakers, the formal mechanisms for incorporating advice and guidance from other government channels had begun to take shape.

This would become even more formalized during 1947 with the passage of the National Security Act, which reorganized the institutions of US national security. Under its auspices, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee, witnessed in action through each crisis period covered in this thesis' analysis, would give way to the National Security Council, which formally brought together the President, Secretary of State, the Secretary of the newly created Department of Defense, as well as various other senior officials "to advise the President on integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to national security and to facilitate interagency cooperation" (Office of the Historian, 1997). These reforms reflected the concerns raised by Forrestal, discussed in the last chapter, that the institutional mechanisms for coordination of America's foreign and defense policy were inadequate to meet the challenges of the postwar world, and that the largely informal process employed by Roosevelt during the war and by Truman during his early years was simply not sustainable over the long run. While Truman was at times resistant to relinquishing control of foreign policy to the formal mechanisms of the NSC, the procedures established during his administration set in place a basic structure that Eisenhower would inherit and that future presidents would retain (Office of the Historian, 1997).

The precise moment of transition from the reactive, improvised quality associated with emergent strategy to a grand strategy more in keeping with the "grand narrative" portrayal of this period is hard to pinpoint. But the moment of the Truman Doctrine's proclamation is a plausible candidate, even if the precise boundaries remain contestable. At the time, Senator Vandenburg remarked that "the President's message defined what is being done in terms of a doctrine, a little more definitely that I interpret the situation…To me it is a plan; it is part of a pattern, and, as such, is to be distinguished from a policy" (Larson, 1985, p. 312). Others at the time found "'President Truman's speech [to be] something of an improvisation'" (Larson, 1985, p. 312). Gaddis, as noted in the chapter's introduction, believes that the onset of the Korean War served as the "real" transformation in American Cold War policy. But for the reasons outlined above, early 1947 was when key elements fell into place to represent a plausible inflection point between the more loosely constituted emergent strategy that had been taking shape since the Iran crisis and other immediate postwar events, and the coalescence of a more fully-developed grand strategy of containment that was in place by decade's end. And through these three cases, it is evident that the PH model thus provides a useful tool for not only understanding the sequence of these crisis decisions and the process by which they occurred, but in helping to demonstrate how this strategic transition unfolded through these actions.

Conclusion

Recalling Eisenhower's quote from Chapter One, "plans are worthless…but planning is everything" (Freedman, 2013, pp. 609-610), the former president elaborates on this thought later in the same passage:

> [This] is a very great distinction because when you are planning for an emergency you must start with this one thing: the very definition of "emergency" is that it is unexpected, therefore it is not going to happen the way you are planning. So, the first thing you do is to take all the plans off the top shelf and throw them out the window and start once more. But if you haven't been planning you can't start to work, intelligently at least. That is the reason it is so important to plan, to keep yourselves steeped in the character of the problem that you may one day be called upon to solve--or to help to solve (Eisenhower, 1957).

Through his remarks on the "unexpected" one is reminded of how difficult it can be to determine the precise nature of how strategies, plans, and decisions come together and work in concert. The forgoing study serves as a case in point, and the challenge involved in trying to determine where decisionmaking ends and strategy begins, or how they operate in parallel. Assessing this is invariably an art, and not at times easily reducible to a science. But the underlying decision process, and by extension, the analysis of that process and its impact on strategy is vital to our knowledge of how foreign policy actions are taken and how plans are developed. This meaningful endeavor, which served as the initial motivation for this investigation, can be used to gain a better understanding of major American foreign policy events and decisions, both past and present. And given the considerable extent to which Truman administration strategy and policy achievements have been featured and analyzed in many works of Cold War history and US foreign policy, this era seemed particularly worthy of an examination of this kind.

To that end, this thesis began by questioning how we can reconcile standard grand strategy interpretations of the Truman White House with other accounts which, particularly during the start of Truman's presidency, find less strategic cohesion and an approach that largely consisted of ad hoc responses to early Cold War crises. Grand strategy literature, the development of the "grand narrative" portrayal of the Truman years, and the concept of "emergent" strategy were all reviewed at the outset, which served as the impetus to proceed with a focused analysis of the early years of the Truman White House and moments of crisis decisionmaking. Next, to understand the process by which US decisionmaking occurred during these early Cold War responses, this study reviewed the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), which led to the selection of poliheuristic (PH) theory as a means of assessing how events transpired. The PH model, which poses a two-stage decisionmaking process and utilizes both elements of cognitive heuristics and rational calculation that factor into a foreign policy decision, was then used for the first time to understand how American policy alternatives were selected during three early crises – in Iran, Turkey, and Greece from 1946-1947 – confronted by Truman era decisionmakers.

The results of these case studies demonstrated that alternatives predicted by the PH model held well to actual US foreign policy outcomes in the first two confrontations over Iran and the

Turkish Straits. In both cases, American officials decided to hold firm and demonstrate diplomatic resolve amid Soviet provocations, which aligned with the projected alternatives that US decisionmakers would have selected through the PH process. At the same time, however, the use of PH exhibited more mixed results in the case of Greece and the Truman Doctrine. In this instance, based on noncompensatory and dimension-based factors, the PH model predicted that US planners would have selected an option of limited additional support to Greece and Turkey conditionally or multilaterally. Yet in response to this crisis, the Truman White House decided to provide full support to Greece and Turkey through economic and military assistance, assuming the mantle from Great Britain as the primary Western benefactor in the region.

In view of these findings overall, however, this assessment revealed that PH theory is a valuable tool for exploring and understanding the decisionmaking that occurred during this moment of American foreign policy, and that it provides a more detailed "lens" into the way early Cold War crises were handled by US officials. Reviewing the outcomes of the PH model in the context of the administration's developing Cold War strategy also validated how emergent strategy – and its concomitant attributes like foreign policy learning and adaptation – is the preferred "strategic" construct to describe this period when compared to standard grand strategy paradigms. By applying this novel approach toward the "wise men" era of US foreign policy, this analysis provides a means of integrating multiple perspectives (e.g. historical, strategic, foreign policy analysis) to offer a fresh view toward the period, while establishing a blueprint to examine and expand upon the decisionmaking and strategy development that occurred at the start of the Cold War and through other watershed moments in US foreign affairs.

In arriving at this synthesis of perspectives and reconciling the divergent visions of the period as one of both strategy formulation and improvisation, this study also leads to some interesting conclusions and potential avenues for further research across three key areas: (1) US strategy, the Truman case, and ramifications for understanding American foreign policy, past and present; (2) modeling the Truman age and what this holds for PH theory; (3) potential study limitations and implications for future research.

US Strategy Findings, from the Cold War to Present Day

The initial stages of this inquiry began with attempts to better understand US grand strategy, its contributions and potential pitfalls, and the prominence of the Truman era in this arena. In establishing that the emergent strategy paradigm serves as an effective concept for assessing the early years of American Cold War actions, this revealed key corollaries germane to broader strategic-oriented interpretations of this case, along with implications for present-day foreign policy. These include issues regarding the timeframe under review and the need to better define it within the strategy literature, the benefits and drawbacks of emergent strategy, and the "golden age" impact on contemporary policy.

First, from a strategy perspective, this analysis demonstrates the need for a clearer delineation of different periods within the overall scope of Truman era foreign policy. The beginning stages of his presidency – roughly late 1945 to 1947, as reviewed here – should, in general terms, not be casually lumped in or inferred in broader grand strategy assessments of his time in office. This "moment," as judged in this thesis, is better characterized as a period of crisis decisionmaking when juxtaposed with later stages of the administration. PH theory's viability, particularly through the cases analyzed in this study, shows the need for focusing efforts on this timeframe as one that emphasizes a *process* taking place and a strategy *in progress*, and not something that clearly resulted from the direction of a given plan. This also corresponds with the broader literature on emergent strategy as well, which generally finds that earlier decisions taken by leaders align better with an emerging strategy paradigm, while latter stages of an administration's or organization's strategy-making tend to be more deliberate in character.

Furthermore, facets of Truman's decisionmaking apparatus and approach need to be considered more thoroughly in the grand strategy literature. The president's evolving decisionmaking structure, transitioning from the informal/collaborative format of his early years to the greater formalization that arose by 1947, his closest decisionmaking aides, and his thoughts regarding presidential decisionmaking, are all key to understanding how the administration formulated its foreign policy responses and how a strategy developed over time. The case studies assessed in this thesis also demonstrate the importance of this factor; in fact, the varying PH results found in the Greece/Truman Doctrine case may be in part attributed to the Truman team's increased formalization in organizational decisionmaking, which also accords with more well-defined strategy development. This was not the case in Iran/Turkey months prior, where US decisionmaking was more fluid and executed within a structure more conducive to emergent-based strategy. The nuance gained by examining how these organizational aspects impacted outcomes requires greater elaboration in Truman era studies and should also give pause to sweeping strategic generalizations of the period.

More broadly, considering the interplay between FPA models and strategy, it was determined that the grand narrative interpretation certainly works to characterize aspects of Truman foreign policy (e.g. containment) as the administration proceeded, but more detail is needed to demonstrate how policy outcomes were realized. Emergent strategy works well as a concept for delineating both the evolution and continuity across the three cases assessed in this study. Foreign policy *learning* was found to be especially instructive here; in particular, learning helped identify areas of strategic connectivity across cases that occurred over a shorter time horizon. Results from a firmer diplomatic policy in Iran informed what was enacted by Truman and his team in response to the Turkish Straits, which in turn would impact how US planners approached the crisis in Greece and the development of the Truman Doctrine.

At the same time, however, this study shows how emergent strategy alone is insufficient to understand the full breadth of America's foreign policy during this period. The use of emergent strategy in International Relations (IR), as it currently stands, only hints at how cognitive-based, FPA-related attributes contribute to decisionmaking and the development of strategy over time. This needs to be employed, in tandem, with an FPA model – like PH – that similarly reviews these factors but seeks to model this process, providing a constructive way to characterize the period and fill in the gaps of the grand narrative. The PH model, specifically, constitutes a more fulsome approach, incorporating areas like domestic politics and psychological/heuristic considerations as part of the decisionmaking process, helping to round out our understanding of early US Cold War foreign policy. And given its focus on noncompensatory, or "deal-breaking," issues like political survival to determine courses of action, this could lead to more refined research as to how the PH process can be used to understand the *political means* of strategy development in general.

The synthesis presented through this thesis, and the caveats concerning this time period within the Truman era, have important ramifications not only for how we understand the Truman White House or the history of US foreign policy but for contemporary strategic development and attempts to recreate early Cold War strategy in our modern age. While these moments are essential for understanding means and ends, how to confront a major military power, along with many other aspects of strategic implementation, this work should also caution against grander notions and the "mythmaking" that, at times, surrounds periods cited for exemplary strategy. This reexamination is a reminder that strategies are a reflection of their time and place, and a function of underlying contextual factors that may not always be applicable in our current era. And more importantly, much of what we perceive to be "strategy" in retrospect was, at times, the result of several iterative, ad hoc decisions made in the process of taking action in real time. These instances may not appear as insightful or well-organized upon historical reflection but often need to occur first in order for foreign policy learning and decisionmaking to progress, and for the basic tenets of a strategy to eventually take shape.

This is particularly significant when considering American foreign policy and strategy today. Currently, as grand strategy critics have pointed out, the United States faces a multi-faceted, multi-threat environment and is forced to reckon with a number of issues on the global stage, making efforts to develop and implement a grand strategy vision increasingly difficult. It is, therefore, not surprising that there have been – and continue to be – many different "solutions" to a new grand strategy for the US as discussed in Chapter One. Some have sought a "new Kennan" or an approach similar to what took place during the "golden age" given its stature in the annals of US foreign policy. However, as this study helps establish, there were several strategy and policy elements during this timeframe that in hindsight may appear cohesive, but were often attributable to evolving, on-the-spot decisions, particularly when looking at the foreign policy events of the day. Given what the Truman administration was able to achieve in many early Cold War situations, however, also serves as a reminder that there is *not* inherently anything wrong with this "emergent" aspect of strategy development. Modern US foreign policy measures need not always be the result of a well-orchestrated plan to cope with the various threats facing the nation, but continued planning and learning – recalling Eisenhower's sentiment – remains key.

The Truman Era and Ramifications for PH Theory

In the case of the Truman presidency, the scholarly emphasis has traditionally been on the overall grand narrative and outcomes vis-à-vis the Soviet Union as described above, with less attention paid, at times, to FPA-related topics like domestic constraints or organizational aspects of White House decisionmaking. In general, this study demonstrates the utility of implementing FPA and the poliheuristic model to assess the Truman years, a subfield of IR that has not historically been used to analyze this administration comprehensively. While more can be done in this area, this study reveals how PH theory can be used as a productive model for interpreting how Truman and key policymakers weighed alternatives, especially in light of domestic political considerations. As a new model for viewing this period of Truman era decisionmaking, it works well due to its ability to amalgamate both threads – the rational and the cognitive – into one approach for understanding how the administration tackled the postwar environment. This has also led to noteworthy conclusions across FPA and PH, and the Truman case.

Implementation of the PH decisionmaking model demonstrated a good fit for crises like Iran and Turkey, especially in terms of how it depicted the day-to-day decisions that Truman, Byrnes, and Acheson grappled with in each successive confrontation. It is also instructive for this early period of the administration, as noted above, because the president's decisionmaking apparatus was less formalized and largely based on deliberations with close confidantes. The use of PH, however, seemed to conflict with actual historical outcomes during the crisis in Greece, as foreign policy alternatives began stemming, to a greater extent, from a more comprehensive set of guided foreign policy principles which had coalesced across Washington's defense establishment, along with greater formalization in Truman's decisionmaking process.

Additionally, despite the evolving noncompensatory issues in Iran and Turkey, there was greater flexibility across the four decision dimensions (economic, military, political, international), whereas later on, decisionmaking processes were influenced by other factors (e.g. threat perception) and were largely based on the White House's fixed policy position – the consensus "intellectual architecture," which was demonstrated through this study's view into the early strategy development of this period. There is value in using PH to model the decision process, but given the overriding presence of a threat to core US interests, and the rigidity that set in through alternatives across both stages of the decisionmaking process – as in the third case involving Greece and the Truman Doctrine – it appears less able to discern and predict actual policy outcomes in these instances. Additional rational/strategic aspects in the decisionmaking context therefore need to be incorporated to inform how decisions were ultimately made in these instances.

This opens the door to potential pathways of research in the context of FPA and PH theory. First, the case studies presented here suggest that what is noncompensatory can change over time, even within short timeframes and within a single presidential administration. While domestic popularity issues may have driven Truman and Byrnes in Iran, concerns over legitimacy of their new firmness approach appeared to become noncompensatory for the White House just months later, and continued to be front and center as they sought to tackle the situation in Greece. Moreover, the focus on domestic politics as the "essence of decision" in PH to determine what is noncompensatory may also need to be expanded. While some scholars, as noted in Chapter Two, cite that other considerations aside from political necessity may truly drive decisionmaking – particularly in the first stage of the model – there is little application of this in the PH literature. In the decisions regarding Greece, in which the threat posed by a failing democratic state at this juncture seemed to rise above issues related to political calculations, it is possible that other factors may override concerns over domestic politics to become what is ultimately noncompensatory for the administration. These are issues which, in conjunction with the "fixed position" that had set in as Oval Office foreign policy, can become what policymakers find necessary to hinge their policy decisions. While political considerations and domestic constraints will always remain important factors to assess when using PH, these other concerns in the moment can become the true "deal-breakers" in the minds of policymakers.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

In context of this investigation certain potential limitations were also identified, revealing prospective inroads for further study.

One area concerns the limitations of the three Mediterranean cases deployed in this study, particularly in terms of timeframe and their sequential nature. While there are benefits to examining this narrowed, targeted set of crises during the early Truman years as discussed in Chapter Two, there is a fair amount of overlap in the four key areas of the underlying US decisionmaking context and in the specific region/location, which can potentially lead to redundancies across PH decision process evaluations. While there is enough differentiation across cases to obtain useful PH results, there is benefit, as noted in the section above, to extending this analysis to other moments of decisionmaking that occurred during the administration that are nonsequential and more varied across geography, threat, etc.

The results of the analytical roadmap employed in this assessment also reveal that there is scope to explore the strategic and decisionmaking transitions that occurred not only within the Truman administration, but across other presidential administrations as well. FPA/PH analysis could be employed to model the decisionmaking process across the early stages of multiple administrations to better understand the cognitive and rational factors impacting the White House and key policymakers during critical decision scenarios. Furthermore, from a strategy perspective, this thesis' approach could prove particularly instructive to identify the strategic inflection points between different periods within an administration, with an eye toward understanding how emergent strategizing transitions to more methodical grand strategy development in other instances.

Additionally, this study suggests how other FPA models can be employed to expand our understanding of this time period and others, particularly around a leader's cognitive tendencies which are a key feature in other contemporary FPA models. In response to the some of the criticisms levied against PH theory noted in Chapter Two, FPA frameworks to study leadership analysis – like "Leadership Trait Analysis" or "Operational Code Analysis" – could supplement the analysis provided in this thesis in useful ways. For instance, cognitive aspects of Truman, Byrnes, and Acheson decisionmaking are accounted for through the first stage of the PH process, however, this could be extended to include additional psychological factors and to review other scenarios within this timeframe or later during the administration.

And lastly, in broader IR terms, more needs to be done to understand the linkage between decisionmaking processes and strategy formulation in assessing foreign policy. This study has shown one area that provides a potential connection between the two: foreign policy learning. It is this "learning" that results from policy outcomes, along with the ideas brought forth in the context of a decision process, that ultimately lead to strategy development. There has been some work done in this regard across the social sciences, but IR would benefit from further research in this space to better understand this association. As noted at the start of this concluding chapter, finding the nexus between both subjects is a difficult enterprise, but a synthesis across FPA and strategy-based disciplines can provide a valuable lens in assessing key foreign policy moments.

This thesis serves as a case in point; while implementing this combined approach may be complicated at times, it can provide a more detailed examination of US foreign policy circumstances like the early Truman era, while serving as a reality-check when juxtaposed with standard interpretations and the historical "mythologizing" that can occur. Past exemplars of strategic vision and foreign policy achievement are undeniably important, as scholars and practitioners seek to build on these models in response to America's international challenges, but as historian Robert Messer reminds us, decisions are rendered and events occur which are subject to the forces of history and are never clear cut:

> …human frailties can influence what is too often portrayed as a totally rational, systemic, or Machiavellian process. The irrational, the petty, the unintended, the vagaries of chance are also part of history. Being reminded of the truism that people make history and that people are fallible should lead not to a smug sense of superior wisdom or morality, but to feelings of sympathy for those who make history and of humility on the part of those who would write it (1982, p. 10).

To this point, we are reminded of the myriad factors influencing how foreign policy situations unfolded during the early Cold War period reviewed here. This should, however, leave us with not only a healthy appreciation for the complexity involved, but also the benefits to be incurred by enhancing our understanding of how strategies were developed and how decisions were made in the "golden age," in our era, and in the major foreign policy events yet to come.

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