2005

The influence of presidential operational code beliefs on U.S. foreign policy actions in the Middle East

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THE INFLUENCE OF PRESIDENTIAL OPERATIONAL CODE BELIEFS ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY ACTIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

in

The Department of Political Science

By
Samuel Berwyn Robison
B.S., University of Southern Mississippi, 2002
December, 2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks go out, first and foremost, to all my friends and family in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and elsewhere. The support and friendship of these individuals has been critically important toward getting me where I am today. This work is dedicated to all of you.

Regarding this project and my other academic endeavors at LSU, special thanks go to Mark Schafer for the example he sets, for his patience and guidance, and for pushing me to keep at it and to get things done. Thanks regarding this project also go out to David Sobek, Leonard Ray, James Garand and Eugene Wittkopf for input, help, and constructive criticism.

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ABSTRACT

Empirical research on U.S. foreign policy has largely assumed that the president's influence is subordinate to global and domestic political constraints. This idea is given further weight by the fact that, even within the political psychology literature, there is scant large-n, quantitative evidence supporting the notion that leaders matter. This study is an attempt to explore the influence of U.S. presidential psychological characteristics on foreign policy actions through assessment of two operational code constructs: "image of the political universe" (P-1), and "strategic preferences" (I-1). This is assessed through an extensive sample of operational code beliefs for every president from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush. The dependent variable of policy actions is measured with event data. Findings show that previous actions by the U.S. toward the Middle East, previous actions by Middle Eastern states toward the U.S., and the president's perceived image of the political universe are significantly related to foreign policy outcomes. This supports the policy continuity argument that pre-existing policies influence U.S. policies in the present, the policy reciprocation/escalation argument that the U.S. is influenced by what other states do, and the psychological argument that elites influence outcomes based on their personal belief systems.

INTRODUCTION

Of critical interest in the analysis of American foreign policy is the influence of the president. Fred Greenstein (2002) notes that following the Depression, World War II, and the associated precedents set by Franklin D. Roosevelt, U.S. presidents gained an unparalleled level of influence over U.S. foreign policy, particularly in the security domain. The president plays an exceptional role, acting in both a substantive and symbolic sense as the chief figurehead, diplomat, and decision-maker in foreign affairs. This stems both from constitutionally mandated authority and his unparalleled level of visibility and influence (McCormick, 2005). As such, it is not surprising that the president is unambiguously viewed as the most powerful individual in the world, often being attributed both the credit and blame for what happens during, and often following, his watch as Commander-in-Chief.

However, in opposition to Greenstein's claim, Neustadt (1990) states that "most of the time, [the president] is supposed to be weak. And in the normal course, getting what he wants is supposed to be hard" (p.xvii). In this framework, the president is not an autonomous decision-maker in U.S. politics. Though Greenstein is correct in that the president, technically, can exercise a great deal of power, the ability to wield this power when and how a president sees fit may not be self-evident once existing Congressional, public, bureaucratic, and global constraints are taken into account (McCormick, 2005). These "checks and balances" clearly constrain the U.S. president's range of movement, and notwithstanding special circumstances such as the occurrence of major national crises right before or during his time in office (Halverson, Holladay, Kazama, Quiñones, 2004), a president must typically limit his fights to issues that matter the most to him, even in foreign policy, where the president has traditionally held sway (Olson, 1976; Marshall, 2003).

A caveat added to Greenstein's point might then be that if existing political constraints and opportunities are well understood by the individual in office, and if these factors are in a position to be manipulated, the president is certainly capable of exercising control beyond that of any other individual in the world (Rothkopf, 2005; Neustadt, 1990; McCormick, 2005). Following the above, the broad purpose of this study is to further understand the degree to which presidents influence foreign policy outcomes, given a range of both domestic and international constraints and opportunities. More specifically, I attempt to ascertain the degree to which the personal preferences and beliefs (in terms of the operational code) of U.S. presidents have influenced foreign policy actions in the Middle East in recent years. This is assessed in a systematic, quantitative fashion examining presidential belief systems and corresponding international events from 1981 to 2004 (Ronald Reagan through George W. Bush). Expectations are that the president will yield control over outcomes following his beliefs about the nature (image) of the political universe and his preferred strategies for dealing with such.

The Neglect of Presidential Autonomy

Arguments that minimize the degree of U.S. presidential autonomy on outcomes are widespread and fairly well-accepted in the political science literature. The president must, out of necessity, delegate nearly all low-level executive decisions to subordinates (George, 1980). In addition to this, the impetus to survive as a politician, to reward those who have in the past and can in the future help the president achieve his goals, to leave behind a favorable legacy, and to act in the interests of "the state" above the president's own, personal well-being are very strong. Thus, factors constraining the president in pursuit of foreign policy include levels of public backing (Risse-Kappen, 1991; Collier and Sullivan, 1995; Page and Barabas, 2000; Clark, 2001; Sobel, 2001; Nincic, 2004) and Congressional support (Olson, 1976; Wittkopf, 1990; Meernik,

1993; Wittkopf and McCormick, 1998; Schraufnagel and Shellman, 2001; Marshall, 2003), bureaucratic factors (Holland, 1999; De Castro, 2000; Drezner, 2000; Christensen and Bedd, 2004;), domestic ethnic and business interests (Allison and Halperin, 1972; Lindblom, 1977; Mitchell, 1997; Brener, Haney, and Vanderbush, 2004), and international constraints (Waltz, 1979; Fordham, 2002) to name a few. In truth, a constellation of these factors act together at a given time to influence policy outcomes (Ostrom and Job, 1986), but even this is not the whole story. In attempts to explain exactly who or what affects presidential decisions most strongly, these studies overlook certain critically important factors emanating from the president himself. The president is not simply an automaton, through which policies are decided based on a procedurally rational, cost-benefit analysis solely regarding the interests of "the state." Rather, presidents, like anyone else, are human beings with ideas, prejudices, motives, and beliefs that make decisions based purely on objective reality and external stimuli impossible. Thus, though "structural" factors certainly facilitate and constrain presidential actions, they do not *determine* them. This is an important point, as the president, an individual with suboptimal decision-making abilities, must ultimately provide leadership for the most powerful state in the world, and set the tone for much of a given administration's policies, with significant ramifications particularly in the world's political and economic spheres (Neustadt, 1990).

Though the argument that a strong, independent presidential influence on foreign policy exists seems intuitive, and is backed by a wealth of support from qualitative case studies and historical analyses (Neustadt, 1990; Beschloss, 1995; Greene, 2000; Bermann, 2001; Mann, 2004; Moens, 2004), this is still in many ways an empirical question. Can presidential decision-making be determined essentially through examination of outside factors, or does presidential psychology really tap into something substantively important apart from these other, "structural"

concerns? The nature of studying elite-level political psychology can make answers to these questions unsatisfactory to skeptics, who may prefer to let large-n, quantitative studies dictate their understanding of the political world (rather than theories that are overly reliant on qualitative and smaller-n empirical support). Thus, though the use of more in-depth, qualitative analyses that examine the psychological characteristics of leaders often provide useful, detailed explanations of how psychological factors influence policy decisions, this is unsatisfactory to some who see these results (and often political psychology in general) as too idiosyncratic to be of real, "scientific" use.

Relating to the above, though it is commonplace for research focusing on individuals to argue for the importance of psychology, this argument is often made without the high levels of statistical confidence in findings traditionally found in other areas of political science. This is due, in part, to the general logistical problems of exploring the mind of individuals who can not typically be interviewed or tested via traditional psychological methods of clinical analysis. Thus, there is a dearth of available tools and data in political psychology work to explore large-sample, replicable analyses with their associated statistical methodologies. This study attempts to address these concerns by examining psychological explanations in a fairly "rigorous" manner, testing the utility of an accepted representation of elite-level psychology (the operational code) as an influence on policy outcomes in a large-n, time-series fashion.

Psychological Factors Affecting Foreign Policy Decision-Making

Before discussing the details of this study, previous works have suggested that presidential psychological characteristics matter in specific domains regarding foreign policy-making, and these works have helped to lay the groundwork for this study. One popular area of research in this vein explores presidential "leadership style." This refers to the "ways in which

leaders relate to those around them . . . and how they structure interactions and the norms, rules, and principles they use to guide such interactions" (Hermann, 2003, p.181). These characteristics include feelings of control over the environment, the need for power, conceptual complexity, self-confidence, problem vs. orientation preferences, level of distrust toward others, and the intensity of in-group bias (Hermann, 2003). Though leadership trait analysis (L.T.A.) has been largely concerned with U.S. presidents, it has been shown to matter in other world leaders as well (Hermann, 1980, 1984, 1995; Stewart, Hermann, and Hermann, 1989; Kaarbo and Hermann, 1998). Also, typologies have been developed from this that may be useful toward simplifying political understanding. For instance, Hermann (2003) shows that how an individual's constellation of scores match up on a given type of motivation, degree of responsiveness to constraints, and degree of openness to information places this individual on a typology (for example, as evangelistic vs. expansionistic, or opportunistic vs. collegial-p.185).

Hermann (1984) also argues that an individual's degree of interest in foreign policy and level of sensitivity to outside events (similar to the "openness to information" and "responsiveness to constraints" concepts mentioned above) strongly affects presidential control over outcomes. For example, those highly sensitive to the environment with high levels of interest in foreign policy are likely to become over-involved, micro-managing policy decisions. Conversely, those low in both categories are likely to rely completely on their own dispositions when making policy, irrespective of contextual information (Hermann, 1984, p.77). These personality features thus act as a "filter" through which we can understand decision-making processes (Hermann, 1984, p.55).

Another important individual-level component affecting presidential influence on policy action is that of motivation. Motives are basically the "goals" or "needs" of individuals that

indicate a certain direction and persistence of behavior (Winter, 2003, p.23). These are reflected in Freud's conception of "libidinal" vs. "aggressive" motives, and in clinical settings are typically assessed through indirect means such as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Winter, 2003). Regarding the analysis of *political leaders* specifically, however, motives are typically assessed "at-a-distance" in three, separate domains: power, affiliation, and achievement (Winter, 2005). David Winter (2005) has made an important contribution to the understanding of presidents specifically through examination of these motives, finding that the "power" motive is strongly associated with "greatness" as measured by presidential historians, entry into war, and James David Barber's "active-positive" type (i.e. employing a high degree of energy in one's work and enjoying one's job). He also shows that the "achievement" motivation is positively associated with Barber's "active-negative" type (i.e. employing a high degree of energy in one's work, but gaining no joy from such) and level of presidential idealism (Winter, 2005). This seems counterintuitive, as we might expect a focus on achievement (being driven by a need to get things done) to better represent effective presidents than the need for power. However, the pleasure and drive intrinsic to the work of power-motivated individuals are more conducive to positive outcomes overall than the squashed idealism of achievement-oriented presidents such as Woodrow Wilson and Richard Nixon (Winter, 2005, p.561). Further, Winter (2005) shows that presidents scoring highly in "affiliation" are more likely to conclude arms control agreements and to become involved in scandals than others; this indicates that, similar to power and achievement, affiliation contains both positive and negative characteristics.

The Operational Code

Apart from traits and motives, another psychological component of political leaders studied by political scientists is that of "cognitive belief system" in terms of the "self in

situation." This construct is assessed through the "operational code" (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998), originally developed by Nathan Leites (1951) in a study funded by the U.S. government to assess the beliefs of the Soviet Politburo. Leites found through qualitative, interpretive analysis that these individuals possessed values, beliefs, and schema for understanding the world that was very different from the average American policy maker. Since Leites's initial foray, operational code analyses have evolved significantly, becoming a replicable, "scientifically" acceptable system of analysis (see George, 1979) that is now examined through a computerized content analysis program. The operational code looks at both philosophical and instrumental beliefs based on the rhetoric of political leaders, assessed through verb usage and strength (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998). More specifically, the operational code deals with schemata: an individual's private and subjective principles that order his/her relationship with the social environment (George, 1979).

Operational code beliefs are further broken down from their philosophical and instrumental subgroups into 10 indices that evaluate specific beliefs regarding preferences for conflict or cooperation, the kinds of tactics preferred for achieving these ends, risk orientation, perceived hostility or friendliness (image perception) of the international system, likely realization of political values, predictability of the political future, perceptions of control over others, and the role of chance regarding political outcomes (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998). It is important to note that operational code beliefs are not deterministic as a rational actor explanation would be, but are used by individuals as a "set of guidelines-heuristical aids to decision," that define an individual's particular type of "bounded rationality" (George, 1979, p.103).

In recent years, the operational code belief systems of presidents have been explored at length. Presidents examined include Woodrow Wilson, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush (Walker, 1995; Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998, 1999, 2003; Walker and Schafer, 2000a; Schafer, Young, and Walker, 2002; Robison, N.d.). Regarding U.S. presidents, operational code analyses have examined the effects of the end of the Cold War on beliefs and the incidence of foreign policy conflicts, the effects of examining spontaneous versus prepared and private versus public remarks on belief measurement, the effects of crisis situations and learning on belief change, and the effects of individual differences regarding the democratic peace thesis, amongst others (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998, 1999; Dille, 2000; Marfleet, 2000; Schafer and Crichlow, 2000; Walker and Schafer, 2005).

Examinations of presidents have also shown that an individual's operational code, though fairly stable in a peace-time environment, can change over time following from an insidious, slow-moving crisis such as Vietnam, or quickly given a strong shock to a policy-maker's system such as the Iranian hostage crisis and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan late in Carter's Presidency (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998; Walker and Schafer, 2000b). This conflicts with Alexander George's (1979) argument that the operational code deals with *generalized*, interconnected beliefs as opposed to "specific or delineated objects" (George, 1979, p.97).

Despite the appealing suggestions stemming from all this work on the U.S. Presidency, however, the relationship between these psychological factors and large scale, quantitative outcomes have not been explored at length. This is surprising, as connections between event data and the operational code were recognized as early as the initial phases of the current operational code computer program's construction (Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998, p.182).

For this paper, operational code beliefs regarding the international environment will be examined to assess the degree that these presidential beliefs influence foreign policy "events." Specifically, this study is a time-series analysis looking at the relationship between presidential world image perceptions (or perceived "nature of the political universe"- measured in terms of friendliness or hostility), and strategic orientation (measured in terms of cooperation or conflict) on foreign policy actions (also measured in cooperation or conflict) toward the Middle East, as initiated by the U.S. This study differs from those done before in two important ways. First, no study to date has looked so extensively at presidential operational codes over time. In collecting data, I attempted to measure (at least) every *major* U.S. presidential foreign policy speech from Ronald Reagan until George W. Bush, resulting in over 1500 speeches being assessed in whole or in part. These range from those as central to outlining foreign policy as State of the Union addresses to relatively insignificant comments from photo sessions (see the method section for a fuller description of speeches chosen). Secondly, this study differs from others in that no known previous study on presidential influence has looked at such an extensive number of policy events as here. For the dependent variable of "U.S. foreign policy action," 20,392 U.S.-initiated events toward the Middle East were coded overall (14,313 events initiated in the Middle East toward the U.S. were coded as a control). Thus, the scope of this project is larger than any known work on the operational code (on both the independent and dependent variable sides of the equation), and the hope is that generalizations following from findings here will be justifiable and useful toward understanding what role the operational code plays in foreign policy decision-making.

HYPOTHESES

For this analysis, I examine the degree to which U.S. presidential operational codes coincide with U.S. foreign policy. Specifically, I am exploring the influence of presidential "image of the other" and "strategic preferences" on U.S. foreign policy outcomes in the form of "events" directed toward Middle Eastern states, each aggregated monthly. Broad expectations are that U.S. presidential operational codes will demonstrate a moderate to high level of association with policy actions, controlling for contextual constraints. I hypothesize that those presidents who see the international environment as hostile and prefer the use of conflict abroad will influence U.S. actions in the Middle East in a negative and conflictual direction, whereas those whose beliefs are more positive and co-operational will influence U.S. policy actions in a cooperative manner. Therefore:

H1: U.S. presidential operational code measures on the P-1 (image of the international environment) index will be positively and strongly associated with U.S. policy actions toward the Middle East (on a -=conflict, +=cooperation scale).

H2: U.S. presidential operational code measures on the I-1 (strategic orientation toward the international environment) index will be positively and strongly associated with U.S. policy actions toward the Middle East (on a -=conflict, +=cooperation scale).

The above will likely be conditioned by various contextual factors.[1] Some of these constraints are added here in order to promote the explanatory robustness of the model, and to help isolate independent variable effects (see the method section for a fuller discussion of these variables). While most of the variables included examined in this project come from other research on U.S. foreign policy influences of one type or another, two of these are novel, lagged variables which were created from the event database from which the dependent variable was

drawn. As such, and as I expect that these variables will yield a strong degree of influence on the dependent variable, I will describe and spell out hypotheses for these variables here. The first of these is a measure assessing the degree of U.S. policy continuity over time, and the second is a measure of "policy reciprocation," stemming from the realist notion that external events dictate, to a large degree, what a policy-maker must do in order to survive in an anarchic international system (Greenstein, 1992; Astorino-Courtois, 1998-see the method section for a fuller explanation). The influence of these variables will be tested by examining (in the month prior to U.S. action as measured with the dependent variable) the influence on U.S. foreign policy actions in the Middle East by previous actions of the U.S. toward the Middle East (policy continuity) and of Middle Eastern states toward the U.S. (reciprocation). Expectations are that U.S. actions at one month will logically carry over to the next, and that as states act belligerently or peacefully toward the U.S., the U.S. can be expected to retaliate in kind, following the literature on reciprocation and escalation (Axelrod, 1984; Holsti, 1989; Leng, 1993, 2004). Therefore:

H3 (Policy continuity hypothesis): Earlier actions taken by the U.S. toward Middle Eastern states will determine U.S. action toward Middle Eastern states at a later time.

H4 (Reciprocation hypothesis): Actions taken toward the U.S. by other states prior to U.S. action determine what the U.S. will do in response.

METHOD

Statistical Methodology

An OLS regression analysis is used to test the hypotheses laid out in the theory section. Due in part to their method of construction, high levels of multicollinearity are likely between the two psychological variables of interest here.[2] Thus, separate models were run for analyses examining the image of the other (P-1) and strategic orientation (I-1). Other independent variables measured include lagged actions by the U.S. toward the Middle East, lagged actions from Middle East states directed toward the U.S., degree of public support for the president, the price of oil (adjusted for inflation), percentage of the U.S. populace unemployed, and the average S-Scores between the U.S. and Middle East states, as each of these variables might be expected to have an influence on foreign policy outcomes (Ostrom and Job, 1986; Scanlon, 1992; Dassel, 1998; Lindley-French, 2003; Jhaveri, 2004-see below for more). The dependent variable is U.S. foreign policy actions toward other states as measured through event data from the Levant database. Regression analyses were conducted for the U.S. relationship with all Middle Eastern states generally, with non-Israeli states alone, with Israel by itself, and with all Middle Eastern states for each president individually.

The Operational Code

The operational code scales leaders on two broad indices: that of philosophical and instrumental beliefs. As no one is all knowing, actors' "philosophical" perspectives in the form of heuristic beliefs frame their understandings of and expectations about the world, "bounding" it to their perceptions. Conversely, an actor's instrumental beliefs reflect how an actor "bounds" alternative methods of dealing with a given situation (Hermann, 1980). These two broad categories are further broken down into ten indices (five philosophical beliefs and five

instrumental beliefs-Walker, Schafer, and Young, 1998) which make up the operational code as it is currently used. These specific beliefs are arranged in hierarchical order, where the first measures of each type (the nature of the political universe [P-1] and strategic preference [I-1]) are the "master beliefs" that summarize the overall balance of a speaker's attributions across all specific beliefs. As such, the perceived image of the political universe (P-1) and strategic approach to goals (I-1) are the operational code indices examined for this project. The perceived image (P-1) variable measures the actor's perception of the other in terms of friendliness and hostility, whereas the strategic approach variable (I-1) measures the actor's perception of the self in terms of conflict and cooperation (see below for a fuller explanation of these variables). The beliefs tapped by the P-1 and I-1 indices are assessed in this study in order to gauge their relative merit regarding influence on foreign policy actions.

Other operational code indices were excluded from this analysis because most of these *shouldn't* have an effect on the dependent variable of interest here. For example, an actor's belief in the role of chance, belief in the predictability of the political future, and risk orientation do not intuitively indicate a direct, linear relationship with degree of cooperative/conflictual actions abroad. These variables might facilitate whether or the degree to which a leader may pursue a particular strategy, but a theoretical justification for a direct linear effect here is not apparent. On the other hand, the perception of the opposition as hostile (as assessed here with the P-1 variable) could easily be imagined to correlate with hostile actions toward this opposition (to act otherwise would be to court disaster in a realist framework). Further, one might expect that a leader's preference for cooperation (assessed here with the I-1 variable) would lead to cooperative action abroad. These expectations are intuitive and straightforward. Additionally, the two variables examined here are the "master" beliefs that are disaggregated or manipulated in

some way to create the other operational code measures. Thus, P-1 and I-1 are seen to be the most explicit, intuitive, and important direct, linear operational code influences on foreign policy actions (as measured in a cooperative/conflictual fashion), and thus are the indices used in this study.

The operational code was evaluated through the Verbs in Context System (VICS) in the "Profiler Plus" computer program (Young, 2001). This system focuses on verbs, as they are the direct linguistic representation of power relationships (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998). Operational codes were assessed through this method for every U.S. president from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush. Only general foreign policy-oriented speeches were coded, taken from presidential web sites (Bush, George H.W., 2005; Bush, George W., 2005; Clinton; 2005; Reagan, 2005). Further, only prepared speeches were assessed, including personal remarks prior to press conferences and photo sessions, State of the Union addresses, isolated statements, radio addresses, and speeches to foreign governing bodies, interest groups, "town hall" meetings, and the United Nations, among others. Selection criteria were to collect as many of these speeches as possible given the broad "foreign policy" criteria. Further, pleasantries and references to Congress were minimized to reduce bias (of overly cooperative measures in the former, and treatment by the computer program of Congress as a foreign entity, or "outgroup," in the latter). No systematic sampling was attempted beyond this, as the largest possible "population" of speeches was desired.[3] Ultimately, more than 1,500 speeches were measured from 1981 to 2004.

Spontaneous remarks were not used, as previous research has shown that coding these will lead to different results than coding prepared speeches (Schafer and Crichlow, 2000). Apart from this issue, however, some may argue that measuring prepared speeches is inferior to measuring spontaneous responses, as the former are too prone to impression-management and

influence by speech writers, making them generally less "realistic."[4] Though these arguments would be valid if we were interested in assessing private beliefs regarding life outside the political arena, they are less relevant regarding presidential "operational codes." Jerel Rosati (2002) argues that operational code beliefs are "those beliefs to which an individual subscribes *as an actual decision maker*" (p.142-emphasis added). What this means is that the operational code is a reflection not of unconscious psychological attributes, but of overt, cognitive beliefs associated with political decision making specifically. Thus, even if a speaker does not write a speech, as long as the speech reflects the policies and beliefs of a given administration from that speaker's point of view, then this is a reflection of that speaker's operational code. Further, despite the fact that U.S. presidents typically speak with a surplus of spin and seem to have an aversion to specifics, it is doubtful that a president would speak words incompatible with his beliefs about the nature of things and his preferred policy outcomes.

Prior to coding, references to "in-groups" by each president were noted, and used by the Verbs in Context System (VICS-the computer program used to run the operational code) to differentiate "self" from "other" references, as this is key to extracting operational code indices (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998). Following coding, results were aggregated to the month to provide enough data for adequate assessment of the operational code (the minimum acceptable number of verbs coded per month were 18). Where data were unavailable or insufficient for a given month, averages were used from the three months prior to and after the month of interest.[5]

P-1: Image of the External Political Environment

The first operational code index used here is identified as "P-1," or perceived image of the political "universe." This variable addresses the assumptions and premises made by political actors regarding: "the fundamental nature of politics and political conflict, and the image of the

opponent" (George, 1979, p. 100). Walker, Schafer and Young (1998) go into more detail, stating that:

> The key assumption here is that beliefs about how *others* approach and pursue their goals in the political universe define the nature of politics, political conflict, and the image of the opponent for the leader. (p. 178, emphasis added)

In other words, this is a critical component of one's interpretation of political reality as seen through the actions of others in the political system. The P-1 scale is calculated in VICS by the speaker's net attribution of cooperative versus negative valences to *others*, the justification/belief being that ". . . the more cooperative the leader's diagnosis of the nature of the political universe, the higher the net *frequency* of cooperative attributions to others in the political universe" (Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998, p. 178, emphasis in original). Thus, positive scores regarding perceived image of the other represent a feeling of friendliness in the international system, whereas negative scores signify perceived hostility. The literature on Image theory more fully explores this issue, specifically regarding how this phenomenon affects policy selection and associated tactics.[6]

I-1: Strategic Preferences

The "I-1" index is also assessed in this study, and this refers to the "strategic orientation" of a political actor. In George's (1979) assessment, this belief is an actor's perceived "best approach for selecting goals for political action" (p. 100). Again, Walker, Schafer and Young (1998) elaborate, stating that I-1 identifies the "strategic direction the leader adopts" which influence which goals a leader will select and how s/he will select them (p. 179). This index is calculated through VICS by assessing a leader's net attribution of positive versus negative *self* valences. The justification/belief for this calculation is that "the more cooperative the leader's strategic approach to goals, the higher the net frequency of cooperative attributions to the self"

(Walker, Schafer and Young, 1998, p. 179). In other words, a positive score on this index indicates a preference for cooperation and a negative score indicates a preference for conflict. Thus, the P-1 index is concerned with the actor's perceptions of the other, whereas the I-1 index relates to the actor's perceptions of the self.

Event Data

Event Data as the Dependent Variable

In an attempt to assess U.S. foreign policy actions beyond the overly narrow range of that found in the "use of force" and associated literatures looking only at conflict (Clark, 2001), this study assesses all kinds of actions taken by the U.S., both cooperative and conflictual, in the form of event data in World Event/Interaction Survey (WEIS) format. The event data used were taken from Reuter's news service leads in Lexis-Nexis regarding dyadic events between states of interest. Following this, a computer program used pattern recognition and grammatical parsing to determine the kinds of events that occurred, and the actors who were involved in a given event. Filter programs were then used to eliminate irrelevant information, and results were displayed in a text file ("Introduction to Event Data Analysis"). Outputs in this text file are given in the WEIS format noted above, which includes the country initiating action, the country being acted upon, and the numerically coded type of event taking place (which was later rescaled).

Specifically, the Levant data set was used here, which includes dyadic interactions between Middle Eastern states, the US, and the Soviet Union primarily, from April of 1979 until June of 2004 ("Levant Data Set," 2005). Despite the dataset containing information for the USSR, Western Europe, South America, et cetera, this analysis only looks at the interactions between the U.S. and states in the Middle East.[7] This data includes U.S. actions toward both

friendly actors such as Israel, sometimes foes such as Iraq, and others in-between such as Egypt. Further, though these actors are generally states, actions by non-state actors are included here as well, such as those by "Palestine" and "Kurds" (for the sake of simplicity, however, these actors will all be referred to as "states" in the results/discussion sections). The WEIS event outputs noted above were rescaled into a cooperation/conflict interval-level scale (lower scores=more negative events, higher scores=more positive events) based on Goldstein conversions ("Keds Project Modified WEIS Event Codes," 2005). Data were aggregated monthly corresponding with the operational code aggregation. The method of aggregation to replace missing data noted in the operational code section was also used when aggregating event data.[8]

Event Data as a Measure of Short-Term U.S. Policy Continuity

The lag (by one month) of the dependent variable was included in models here as an independent variable to assess short-term continuity in U.S. foreign policy. This follows from the bureaucratic politics approach, which argues that standard operating procedures, constant bargaining between agencies, and maintenance of the status quo are strong influences on foreign policy making (Allison and Halperin, 1972; Drezner, 2000; Jones, 2001; Christensen and Redd, 2004). Following from this, policies over time could be expected to remain more comparable than divergent. As such, the similarity of U.S. policy actions from one month to the next will be taken into account in this analysis as a test of policy continuity.

Event Data as a Measure of Reciprocation against Actions by Middle Eastern States

Apart from looking at event data purely in an attempt to assess U.S. actions abroad, this study is also interested in actions against the U.S. by Middle Eastern states. These actions may constrain the president and the U.S. foreign policy apparatus toward acting in a knee-jerk fashion, particularly if an act (or a set of actions, in this case) is conflictual, following from Leng

and others' work on escalation (Schelling, 1960; Snyder and Diesing, 1977; Holsti, 1989; Leng, 1993, 2004). However, this study examines both conflict and cooperation, and as such more closely tests Axelrod's (1984) "tit-for-tat" hypothesis that reciprocation works both ways. Thus, an eye for an eye is expected, as is reciprocal back scratching. As with the continuity variable, actions by Middle Eastern states toward the U.S. lagged by one month will be added into this study's models to account for the realist notion that a state will largely act following the actions of another.

Public Support

Analysis of international versus domestic factors regarding the president's decision to *use force* has shown that this is explained largely by influences from three domains: the international, domestic, and personal/political environments (Ostrom and Job, 1986, p.541). Though all of these factors have been shown to matter significantly in Ostrom and Job's (1986) study, public support for the president was shown to be the most important, as changes in public support levels strongly affected the likelihood of the use of force abroad. Ostrom and Job (1986) further found that high levels of public support allow a "buffer zone" for political use of force, mid-range levels *may* lead to the use of force if the president believed he would regain lost approval levels, and low levels of support result in presidential inaction (p.558). Thus, the greater the degree of public support, the greater the likelihood that force will be used abroad. James and Oneal (1991) supported Ostrom and Job's finding by showing through more complex analyses that domestic political variables, particularly presidential popularity, were still of the utmost importance in determining the use of force. Though these and other works (Morgan and Bickers, 1992; Miller, 1995) generally give support the traditional "diversionary war" hypothesis, Clark (2001) argued that similar processes lead to less extreme outcomes by moving

the debate away from "the use of force" bias, and into the realm of aggressive economic policies abroad. This distinction may have repercussions for the larger "use of force" literature, and certainly for this study, which examines a broad range of both cooperative and conflictual policy actions, be they economic, political, or military.

Public support data were assessed through monthly Gallup polls taken from Reagan's inauguration until June of 2004. Findings from the use of force literature would suggest that higher levels of public support would result in the increased incidence of conflictual actions abroad (i.e. a negative relationship between degree of public support and the dependent variable of U.S. policy actions toward the Middle East is expected). This, if found, would signify that the increased use of conflict abroad is an automatic preference of the president, constrained only by the public's willingness to support him and his policies. Obviously, this perspective significantly downplays the role of presidential agency.

Price of Crude Oil

Oil is of critical strategic importance to the United States. Often the protection of oil resources and the development of foreign policy around this goal is taken as a given when assessing U.S. foreign policy (Razi, 1976; Fishlow, 1978/79; Khokhar and Wiberg-Jorgensen, 2001). As a fair percentage of U.S. oil has originated from the Middle East over the years, the price of oil was included here to account for the power of this resource. This variable reflects "spot oil" prices in dollars per barrel taken from the St. Louis Federal Reserve web site ("Spot Oil Prices: West Texas Intermediate," 2005), which takes its data from "Wall Street Journal / Haver Analytics." This data were adjusted using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers monthly ("Consumer Price Index," 2005) to account for the affect of price inflation

over time. Additionally, to facilitate interpretation of descriptives in the results section, prices were represent "December 2004" dollars.

Certainly, rising prices of oil result in increased attention by the U.S. public, and thus increase the likelihood that some U.S. action will result. Expectations might then be that the rise in oil prices by OPEC states would result in sticks by the U.S. toward Middle East states in the hopes of forcing these states to reduce oil prices and thus stave off domestic anxiety (i.e. a negative relationship is expected between levels of unemployment and the dependent variable). Though these sticks would usually be found in terms of trade or reduced aid, this could also be extrapolated from the often-used argument that the 1990 war against Iraq was initiated in order to protect threatened oil reserves in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Unemployment

The economy is an essential component to almost all political decisions made by the president. The use of force literature takes this into consideration (Ostrom and Job, 1986; Fordham, 1998), where increased unemployment (or "economic misery") was found to equate with higher levels of conflict making the use of conflict "more useful and less costly to employ" (Fordham, 1998, p.567). Unemployment is used in this study (as it was with these other studies) as a proxy to represent the robustness of the American economy. This measure represents seasonally adjusted percent of the population aged 16 and over unemployed monthly. Data were taken from the U.S. Department of Labor website ("Bureau of Labor Statistics online", 2005). As the use of force literature argues that the worse off the economy, the more conflictual the U.S. will be abroad (i.e. a negative relationship between unemployment and the dependent variable of U.S. policy actions toward the Middle East), this is the expectation here.[9]

S-Scores

The final variable included in this study is the regional weighted "S-score," a measure of the type of alliances held between state dyads. This measure is similar to the "tau b," and evaluates the "rank order correlation for two states' alliance portfolios" (Scott and Stam, 2000).[10] More specifically, the degree of agreement between "alliances" are assessed here, ranging (similar to tau b outcomes) on a scale from -1, representing totally opposite alliance agreements, to +1, indicating complete agreement in the alliances formed. The average S-score between the U.S. and relevant Middle Eastern states (either all these states, all non-Israel states, or Israel alone) were calculated for each year through the "EUGene" program (Scott and Stam, 2000), which only provides data up until the year 2001.[11] Further, as data are only available yearly, each score is used twelve times in this analysis.

FINDINGS

Descriptives

General Descriptives

Table 1 gives the means, standard deviations, sample sizes, and lowest and highest values for all variables used in this analysis. Some general observations can be made here. First off, based on an assessment of event data, it appears that the U.S. treats Israel (mean=.552) far more favorably than it does non-Israeli Middle Eastern states on average (mean=-.213; recall that the range of possible scores on the event data variables is from -10 to +10, and that positive scores here indicate cooperative actions, whereas negative scores indicate conflict). Israeli (mean=.541) and non-Israeli (mean=-.464) actions toward the United States yield similar findings. Following this, it seems strange that the U.S. and Israel's S-Scores are so dissimilar (mean=-.187). Regarding psychological measures, the presidents examined here appear to see the political universe (P-1) as more friendly than hostile (mean=.373), and prefer cooperative over conflictual strategies (I-1: mean=.595).[12]

Table 2 is a correlation matrix of all general variables examined here (excluding non-Israeli and Israel-specific variables). Many of these variables are extremely highly correlated (at the .001 and .05 two-tailed significance levels). Of particular interest here is that, relating to the dependent variable ("U.S. Action"), the scores for P-1 (image of the political universe), actions by Middle East state actors, unemployment, public support, and S-Scores are all significantly correlated. This makes a regression analysis useful in teasing out which of these relationships matter more. Unfortunately, the correlation matrix also seems to indicate already that the I-1 variable (presidential strategic preferences toward foreign actors) will not yield significant

findings in the statistical analysis below as hypothesized, as it is not highly correlated with the dependent variable.

Table 1: Descriptives for All Variables

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
P-1 (image of the other)	282	0.373	0.189	-0.222	0.960
I-1 (strategic orientation)	282	0.595	0.226	-0.429	1.000
U.S. Action toward All Middle East	282	-0.075	1.335	-6.231	2.361
All Middle East Action toward U.S.	282	-0.244	1.147	-5.496	2.486
U.S. to all Non-Israel	282	-0.213	1.465	-6.231	3.729
All Non-Israel to U.S.	282	-0.464	1.260	-5.496	2.967
U.S. to Israel	282	0.552	1.377	-4.750	4.667
Israel to U.S.	282	0.541	1.782	-9.000	6.500
Unemployment	282	6.383	2.904	3.800	48.000
Public Support	281	56.817	10.532	29.000	90.000
Price of Oil	283	34.536	15.390	13.100	83.120
S-Scores All Middle East	240	-0.283	0.190	-0.584	-0.060
S-Scores Non-Israel	240	-0.288	0.190	-0.587	-0.064
S-Scores Israel	240	-0.187	0.190	-0.510	0.031

Individual President Descriptives

Operational Code Indices

Descriptive breakdowns for each president on the psychological variables P-1 and I-1 are given in Tables 3 and 4. Based on mean scores, the president examined here who sees the international environment in most friendly terms based on his P-1 measure is George H.W. Bush (mean=.461), whereas the least friendly perceptions of the outside world are held by George W. Bush (mean=.282). Similarly, on the I-1 measure (assessing preferred strategic-orientation toward dealing with the outside world), George H.W. Bush most strongly prefers cooperation (mean=.705) whereas George W. Bush least strongly prefers cooperation (mean=.414). Though none of the presidents examined here yield a one standard deviation shift from the sample group mean, Table 4 further shows that, based on ANOVA results, there are significant differences at

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Matrix

	P-1	I-1	U.S. Action	Middle East Action	Unemployment	Public Support	Price of Oil	S-Scores (M. East)
P-1	---	0.388***	0.202***	0.152**	0.049	-0.126**	0.193***	0.010
I-1	0.388***	---	0.094	0.156***	0.045	-0.137**	-0.091	0.006
U.S. Action	0.202***	0.094	---	0.410***	0.154***	-0.142**	0.161***	0.189***
Middle East Action	0.152**	0.156***	0.410***	---	0.065	-0.169***	0.189***	0.192***
Unemployment	0.049	0.045	0.154***	0.065	---	-0.417***	0.301***	0.471***
Public Support	-0.126**	-0.137**	-0.142**	-0.169***	-0.417***	---	-.210***	-0.253***
Price of Oil	.193***	.091	.161***	.189***	.368***	-.210***	---	.592***
S-Scores	0.010	0.006	0.189***	0.192***	0.471***	-0.253***	0.592***	---

**prob <.05
***prob <.01

the .01, 2-tailed confidence level within this subset of scores. This indicates that there is a fair amount of variation amongst the presidents examined here, book-ended by the Bush's relatively extreme scores. This may make it somewhat difficult to say that there is truly a U.S. presidential "operational code" that constrains the actions of different presidents in similar ways. However, the even more extreme differences between non-U.S. leaders and U.S. presidents (see note 12 for a discussion of this finding) and the generally positive P-1 and I-1 orientations of those examined here (all presidents yield a score of at least +.28 on the P-1 index and +.41 on I-1) indicates that, despite the above, presidents may be more similar than they are different regarding image of the other and strategic preferences.

Table 3: Descriptives for Operational Code Indices P-1 and I-1

		N	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Min Score*	*Max Score*	*Z-scores**
P-1	Reagan	96	0.385	0.169	-0.070	0.714	0.075
	H W Bush	48	0.461	0.171	-0.014	0.818	0.497
	Clinton	96	0.356	0.203	-0.222	0.960	-0.087
	W Bush	42	0.282	0.174	-0.059	0.600	-0.492
	Overall	282	0.373	0.189	-0.222	0.960	
I-1	Reagan	96	0.626	0.189	-0.333	1.000	0.187
	H W Bush	48	0.705	0.169	0.300	1.000	0.553
	Clinton	96	0.588	0.215	0.000	1.000	0.011
	W Bush	42	0.414	0.278	-0.429	0.864	-0.795
	Overall	282	0.595	0.226	-0.429	1.000	

*Compared against the group average and standard deviation listed in Table 1.

Event Data for U.S. and All Middle East States

Tables 5 and 6 show descriptive and ANOVA results for all presidents examined here on the general event data variables of U.S. actions toward all Middle East states and all Middle East states toward the U.S. Unlike results regarding the psychological variables above, there are no major differences between the presidents here, signified by

Table 4: ANOVA between All Presidents on P-1 and I-1

		Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*
P-1	Between Groups	0.764	3.000	0.255	7.662***
	Within Groups	9.240	278.000	0.033	
I-1	Between Groups	2.046	3.000	0.682	15.408***
	Within Groups	12.306	278.000	0.044	

***prob <.001

insignificant ANOVA results. This indicates that though presidents may differ in their beliefs, U.S. actions toward the Middle East and Middle Eastern policies toward the U.S., *in general,* are not significantly affected based upon which given U.S. president is in office. However, the most hostile actions both toward the Middle East and the U.S. on average occurred during the George W. Bush administration, while the most cooperative (or at least the least conflictual) actions from both sides occurred during the Reagan administration.

Table 5: Individual President Descriptives for General Event Data

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
U.S. actions toward Middle East	Reagan	96	0.159	1.226	-3.192	2.361
	H W Bush	48	-0.121	1.138	-3.660	2.118
	Clinton	96	-0.176	1.628	-6.231	1.782
	W Bush	42	-0.329	0.941	-2.466	2.193
	Total	282	-0.075	1.335	-6.231	2.361
Middle East Actions toward the U.S.	Reagan	95	-0.031	1.126	-3.617	2.486
	H W Bush	48	-0.211	1.120	-4.100	1.664
	Clinton	96	-0.392	1.291	-5.496	2.254
	W Bush	42	-0.444	0.773	-1.957	1.038
	Total	281	-0.247	1.148	-5.496	2.486

Table 6: Individual President ANOVA Results for General Event Data

		Sum of Squares	*df*	*Mean Square*	*F*
U.S. actions toward Middle East	Between Groups	9.051	3	3.017	1.705
	Within Groups	491.963	278	1.770	
Middle East Actions toward the U.S.	Between Groups	8.136	3	2.712	2.081
	Within Groups	360.957	277	1.303	

Other Variables

Table 7 and 8 show results for all other variables (excluding the Israel and non-Israel specific variables) as they differed during each president's time in office. Table 7 shows that on average, unemployment was highest under Reagan and lowest under Clinton, public support was lowest for Reagan and highest for George W. Bush, the price of oil (adjusted to account for inflation) was highest under George W. Bush and cheapest under Clinton, and that S-Scores for all Middle Eastern states were the most negative under Clinton and the least negative under Reagan (though the average S-Score for the Middle East is negative for all presidents). Additionally, ANOVA results in Table 8 show that there are significant differences at the .001, two-tailed significance level for each of these variables based on inter-presidential differences.[13] Thus, though it might stand to reason that the president would only yield a low level of influence on some of these variables (the level of domestic unemployment and price of oil stick out as variables in this category), based on these findings, these variables are not stable across presidential administrations.

Table 7: Individual Presidential Results on Control Variables

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Unemployment (percentage unemployed)	Reagan	96	7.536	1.457	5.300	10.800
	H W Bush	48	6.304	0.944	5.000	7.800
	Clinton	96	5.204	0.958	3.800	7.300
	W Bush	42	6.533	6.581	4.200	48.000
	Total	282	6.383	2.904	3.800	48.000
Public Support	Reagan	96	53.005	7.575	35.000	68.000
	H W Bush	48	60.375	14.460	29.000	89.000
	Clinton	96	55.500	7.378	39.000	73.000
	W Bush	41	64.659	12.167	47.000	90.000
	Total	281	56.817	10.532	29.000	90.000
Price of Oil (per barrel)	Reagan	96	48.536	18.159	44.856	52.215
	H W Bush	48	30.881	5.455	29.297	32.465
	Clinton	96	24.114	5.188	23.063	25.165
	W Bush	42	30.380	4.587	28.951	31.810
	Total	282	34.513	15.413	32.706	36.320
S-Scores for U.S. and All Middle East States	Reagan	96	-0.074	0.013	-0.105	-0.060
	H W Bush	48	-0.448	0.150	-0.584	-0.214
	Clinton	96	-0.411	0.070	-0.457	-0.233
	W Bush	---	---	---	---	---
	Total	240	-0.283	0.190	-0.584	-0.060

Table 8: ANOVA results for All Presidents on Control Variables

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Unemployment	Between Groups	262.378	3	87.459	11.542***
	Within Groups	2106.573	278	7.578	
Public Support	Between Groups	4690.094	3	1563.365	16.421***
	Within Groups	26371.217	277	95.203	
Price of Oil	Between Groups	30608.226	3	10202.742	78.478***
	Within Groups	36142.223	278	130.008	
S-Scores All Middle East States	Between Groups	7.074	3	2.358	360.430***
	Within Groups	1.544	236	0.007	

***prob < .001

Regression Results

U.S. Actions toward All Middle Eastern States (Including S-Scores)

In Table 9 I report OLS regression results for both the philosophical (P-1) and instrumental (I-1) psychological models regarding U.S. interactions with all Middle Eastern states from the Levant database from 1981 to 2001 (the years 2001-2004 are not included in Tables 9-11 as no S-Scores are available for this timeframe--Tables 12-14 exclude S-Scores and thus include the George W. Bush years). The first model examines the perceived image, or nature, of the political universe as perceived by U.S. presidents (P-1) on U.S. foreign policy actions. Based on this model, the coefficients for U.S. policy continuity (b=.341, t=5.085, prob<.001), previous actions by Middle Eastern states (b=.205, t=2.606, prob<.05), and presidential image of the political universe (b=.861, t=2.026, prob<.05) yield strong, statistically significant effects at the .05, two-tailed level on the character of U.S. action toward Middle Eastern states.[14] Findings for the policy continuity variable show that, regarding Middle East states, previous actions by the U.S. provide a good indication of how the U.S. will act in the present. Thus, if the U.S. acts in a generally cooperative manner toward Middle Eastern states this month, it is a safe bet that more cooperative actions can be expected next month, and the same can be said regarding conflict. The significant findings for the reciprocation variable indicate that previous actions by Middle Eastern states also provide a powerful indication of how the U.S. will act in response.

Thus, as indicated in Table 9, U.S. actions in the present also strongly reflect the actions of Middle East states at a prior point in time. The policy continuity and reciprocation variables give support to structural theories supporting bureaucratic politics

Table 9: Influences on U.S. Action toward All Middle East States with S-Scores Regression (George W. Bush's term excluded)

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	0.312	0.396	0.484	0.603
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.341	5.085***	0.353	5.195***
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.205	2.606**	0.206	2.563**
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.861	2.026**	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.267	0.676
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.041	-.532	-0.057	-0.737
Public support for the president [-]	-0.006	-.698	-0.007	-0.799
Price of Oil [-]	0.005	.654	0.008	1.066
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Middle Eastern States [+]	0.583	1.126	0.464	.896
N	240		240	
R^2	.286		.274	
Adjusted R^2	.264		.252	

**prob < .05
***prob < .001

and realist ideas, respectively, which both downplay the role of individual agency. However, significant findings for the P-1 variable (image of the political universe) also show that general presidential perception of the "other"[15] is a powerful indicator for how the U.S. will act toward Middle Eastern states. Following this, if the other is seen as menacing and hostile by the president, the U.S. will tend to act more conflictually, whereas if the political universe is viewed as unthreatening and friendly, the U.S. will act more cooperatively. This finding supports elite psychological explanations of international behavior, and indicates that it may be in the interest of Middle Eastern

leaders to ensure that U.S. presidents view these individuals (and the state/region in which they have political power) in a favorable light. Coefficients for level of U.S. unemployment, degree of public support for the president, price of oil, and average alliance scores (S-Scores) do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance in this model, suggesting that these variables do not have a systematic effect on the dependent variable.

The second model in Table 9 tests the effect of presidential strategic orientation (I-1) on U.S. foreign policy action toward all Levant states. Based on results from this model, the coefficients for strategic preferences (I-1), unemployment rate, public support for the president, the price of oil, and average S-Scores between the U.S. and Middle Eastern states each fail to reach statistical significance. Again, this indicates that these variables have no systematic effect on the dependent variable. However, the coefficients for policy continuity ($b=.353$, $t=5.195$, $prob<.001$) and reciprocation from other states' actions ($b=.206$, $t=2.563$, $prob<.05$) still signify a strong, positive relationship with the dependent variable. Thus, the beliefs of presidents regarding others (measured through the P-1 variable: seeing "others" as either friendly or hostile) appear to have a stronger impact on U.S. policy actions toward Middle Eastern states than presidents' own preferences for action (as measured by the I-1 variable). Explained another way, the United States' presidential image of the other seems to be a far better predictor of how the U.S. will act in the Middle East than perceptions of the self. Additionally, following results from the I-1 model in Table 9, the structural factors of policy continuity and actions by other states are still shown to be strong indicators of what U.S. actions toward the Middle East might be.

U.S. Actions toward Non-Israel Middle Eastern States (Including S-Scores)

Table 10 shows results from all U.S. presidents against non-Israel Middle Eastern states from the Levant data set. These models were run in order to test the usefulness of the independent variables of interest in this study when the U.S.'s principle ally in the Middle East (Israel) is removed from the picture. Again, the coefficients for U.S. policy continuity signify a strong, positive relationship on both the philosophical (P-1) and instrumental (I-1) models (P-1: b=.382, t=5.723, prob<.001; I-1: b=.390, t=5.793, prob<.001). This indicates that pre-existing polices strongly condition current and future U.S. policy actions toward non-Israeli Middle Eastern states. Further, in the P-1 model, the coefficient for perceived image of the political universe (P-1) remains positive and moderately significant (b=.864, t=1.818, prob=.070), while instrumental, strategic preferences (in the I-1 model) still yield no statistically significant effect. When looking at non-Israeli Middle Eastern states, as with all Middle Eastern states including Israel, the image of the other (P-1) seems to have an influence on non-Israeli Middle East states beyond that of personal strategic preferences. Interestingly, the reciprocation variable loses statistical significance when Israel is taken out of the picture, and though it is unclear precisely why this may be the case, this will be further explored toward the end of the regression results section. The coefficients for unemployment rate, public support, price of oil, and S-Scores also fail to reach conventional levels of statistical significance against non-Israel Middle East states.

U.S. Actions toward Israel (Including S-Scores)

Table 11 shows regression results for U.S. actions toward Israel in isolation. Here no coefficient reaches statistical significance in either model. Previous actions by the

Table 10: U.S. Action toward Non-Israel Middle East States with S-Scores Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	0.401	0.455	0.613	0.682
Previous Actions by U.S. Toward Non-Israel Middle Eastern States [+]	0.382	5.723***	0.390	5.793***
Previous Actions From Non-Israel Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.116	1.499	0.122	1.551
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.864	1.816*	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.194	0.442
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.053	-0.609	-0.068	-0.777
Public support for the president [-]	-0.007	-0.635	-0.007	-0.705
Price of Oil [-]	0.005	0.570	0.008	0.936
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Non-Israel Middle Eastern States [+]	0.852	1.496	0.729	1.258
N	240		240	
R^2	.266		.256	
Adjusted R^2	.243		.233	

*prob < .10
***prob < .001

U.S. toward Israel and the strategic preferences variable (interestingly) yield the most powerful coefficients, but both of these variables fail to reach significance at the .10 level. Thus, this model does not seem to capture very important factors influencing U.S. policy toward Israel.

U.S. Actions toward All Middle East States (Excluding S-Scores)

Additional models were run excluding S-Scores in order to include data from the George W. Bush Administration (from 1981-2004), and these results can be found in

Table 11: U.S. Action toward Israel with S-Scores Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	0.179	0.186	-0.027	-0.028
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Israel [+]	0.087	1.318	0.096	1.461
Previous Actions From Israel Toward the U.S. [+]	0.026	0.509	0.021	0.412
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.265	0.515	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.637	1.356
Unemployment Rate [-]	0.114	1.206	0.098	1.033
Public support for the president [-]	-0.008	-0.694	-0.008	-0.718
Price of Oil [-]	-0.001	-0.127	-0.000	-0.038
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and Israel [+]	-0.080	-0.126	-0.064	-0.103
N	240		240	
R^2	.036		.042	
Adjusted R^2	.007		.013	

Tables 12-14. The P-1 model in Table 12 shows, regarding U.S. interactions with all Middle East states, that the coefficients for policy continuity (b=.340, t=5.480, prob<.001), reciprocation (b=.206, t=2.825, prob<.05), and presidential image of the political universe (b=.881, t=2.375, prob<.05) are positively and statistically significantly related to the dependent variable. These are precisely the same results as that found in the model excluding the George W. Bush Administration's data (in Table 9). Again, U.S. policy carries over from one month to the next, and this seems to be the best predictor of what U.S. policy will be toward the Middle East at a given time. Additionally, previous actions by Middle Eastern states toward the U.S. and general presidential perceptions of

Table 12: U.S. Action toward the Middle East without S-Scores (George W. Bush included) Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	-0.050	-0.077	0.239	0.396
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.340	5.480***	0.352	5.603***
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.206	2.825**	0.208	2.808**
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.881	2.375**	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.286	0.930
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.026	-0.431	-0.052	-0.767
Public support for the president [-]	-0.006	-0.891	-0.008	-1.083
Price of Oil [-]	0.008	1.265	0.011	1.705*
N	282		282	
R^2	.287		.275	
Adjusted R^2	.272		.259	

*prob < .01
**prob < .05
***prob < .001

the other (P-1) seem to strongly affect U.S. actions toward the Middle East as well.

In the I-1 model from Table 12, once again, the coefficients for policy continuity (b=.352, t=5.603, prob<.001) and reciprocation (b=.208, t=2.808, prob<.05) are strongly associated with the dependent variable of U.S. policy actions toward the Middle East. Additionally, in Table 12's I-1 model, the (adjusted) price of oil (b=.011, t=1.705, p<.10) also yields a moderate, positive influence on the dependent variable, indicating that increasing oil prices lead to an increasing degree of *cooperative* action initiated by the United States, and that lower prices equate with more conflict. The variables for

instrumental preferences (I-1), unemployment, and degree of public support for the president have no systematic impact on the dependent variable in either model. Therefore, regarding all Middle Eastern states (excluding the moderately significant price of oil variable in Table 12), findings hold whether or not George W. Bush's time in office or S-Scores are included.

U.S. Actions toward Non-Israel Middle East States (Excluding S-Scores)

Table 13 shows regression results for U.S. action toward non-Israel Middle East states, including data from the George W. Bush Administration. On both the P-1 and I-1 models, as with Table 10, the coefficient for policy continuity indicates a strong, positive relationship with the dependent variable (P-1: b=.389, t=6.317, prob<.001; I-1: b=.396, t=6.395, prob<.001). Also, in the P-1 model, the coefficient for presidential image of the political universe, again, is positive and strong (b=.834, t=2.009, prob<.05), illustrating the influence of presidential image of the other on U.S. policy actions. Further, in the I-1 model, both the policy reciprocation (b=.122, t=1.670, prob<.10) and (adjusted) price of oil (b=.012, t=1.753, prob<.10) coefficients indicate a moderately strong, positive relationship with the dependent variable, though respective coefficients only approach significance at the .10 level in the P-1 model. Thus, more positive actions by other states and higher oil prices may, to some extent, pull policy in a cooperative direction. The coefficients for presidential strategic preferences in the I-1 model, and unemployment, public support and price of oil in both models, again, are insignificant.

U.S. Actions toward Israel (Excluding S-Scores)

Table 14 shows results for a regression analysis on U.S. policy toward Israel alone, including the George W. Bush Administration. Though there are no significant

Table 13: U.S. Action toward Non-Israel Middle East States without S-Scores Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	-0.068	-0.094	0.269	0.372
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Non-Israel Middle Eastern States [+]	0.389	6.317***	0.396	6.395***
Previous Actions From Non-Israel Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.114	1.587	0.122	1.670*
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.834	2.009**	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.174	0.507
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.040	-0.521	-0.060	-0.785
Public support for the president [-]	-0.007	-0.874	-0.009	-1.060
Price of Oil [-]	-0.010	1.365	0.012	1.735*
N	282		282	
R^2	.265		.254	
Adjusted R^2	.248		.238	

*prob < .10
**prob < .05
***prob < .001

findings in Table 11 (the Israel-only model including S-Scores), the inclusion of the George W. Bush years yields two significant findings. Perhaps most interestingly, the coefficient for the strategic preferences variable in the I-1 model is strongly significant (b=.735, t=2.029, prob<.05) at the .05, two-tailed level. Thus, presidential preferences for cooperation (in general) lead to more cooperative acts with Israel, whereas preferences for conflict lead to more conflictual acts. Additionally, the coefficient for the policy continuity variable in the I-1 model is also moderately significant at the .10, two-

tailed level (b=.100, t=1.653, prob<.10), indicating that pre-existing policy seems to yield a moderate degree of influence over U.S. decisions. This indicates that Israel is a special case, requiring analysis of factors apart from those examined here, and providing an interesting puzzle regarding the strong I-1 finding (versus the strong P-1 findings with the Middle East generally). It should be noted here that, excluding the findings for S-Scores from the I-1 model in Table 10, price of oil from the I-1 model in Table 12, policy reciprocation and the price of oil from the I-1 model in Table 13, and I-1 and continuity variables in Table 14, no major differences are found from Tables 9-11 to Tables 12-14.

Individual Presidential Analyses

Each president comes into the White House holding preferences, beliefs, and ideas independent from other presidents, but do these psychological factors matter more for some than it does for others regarding foreign policy actions? To explore this question, this section looks at each president separately in order to see how the influence of beliefs differs from one president to the other regarding influence over U.S. policy actions in the Middle East.

Ronald Reagan

I report OLS regression results for Ronald Reagan in Table 15. The average S-Scores between the U.S. and Middle Eastern states yields the only significant coefficient for Reagan on either the P-1 or I-1 model (P-1: b=-19.165, t=-2.760, prob<.05; I-1: b=-18.902, t=-2.741, prob<.05). Interestingly, this indicates a strong, negative relationship between average dyadic S-Scores and the dependent variable. Thus, under Reagan, the more the U.S. "agrees" with Middle Eastern states in terms of its alliance portfolio, the more conflictual her actions are. Additionally, coefficients for all other variables fail to

Table 14: U.S. Action toward Israel without S-Scores Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	0.298	0.382	0.118	0.152
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Israel [+]	0.088	1.447	0.100	1.653*
Previous Actions From Israel Toward the U.S. [+]	0.022	0.470	0.016	0.347
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.495	1.116	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.735	2.029**
Unemployment Rate [-]	0.102	1.239	0.078	0.950
Public support for the president [-]	-0.010	-1.165	-0.010	-1.144
Price of Oil [-]	-0.001	-0.170	0.004	0.060
N	282		282	
R^2	.045		.055	
Adjusted R^2	.024		.034	

*prob < .10
**prob < .05

reach conventional levels of statistical significance on both psychological models (P-1 and I-1). Specifically, Reagan's psychological beliefs, reciprocation against Middle Eastern actions, and policy continuity, which are all significant in the general model against all Middle Eastern states, had no significant effect on foreign policy actions toward the Middle East under Reagan's watch. Whether it was heavy delegation to activist subordinates, a preoccupation with Central America and the Soviet Union, a crafty and unpredictable decision-making process, or something else altogether, Reagan's models do not appear to capture the dynamics influencing U.S. foreign policy during the Reagan administration.

Table 15: Ronald Reagan Administration toward all Middle East States Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	-2.209	-1.366	-2.641	-1.589
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.063	0.593	0.073	0.692
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.095	0.808	0.082	0.699
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.562	0.717	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.794	1.249
Unemployment Rate [-]	0.048	0.350	0.039	0.293
Public support for the president [-]	0.004	0.227	0.007	0.368
Price of Oil [-]	0.004	0.361	0.006	0.579
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Middle Eastern States [+]	-19.165	-2.760**	-18.902	-2.741**
N	97		97	
R^2	.157		.165	
Adjusted R^2	.090		.099	

**prob < .05

George H.W. Bush

OLS results for Bush the elder are reported in Table 16. On the P-1 model, the coefficient for image of the political universe (P-1) is positive and moderately strong (b=2.107, t=1.873, prob<.10), indicating that Bush's perception of the "other" has an influence on U.S. actions in the Middle East. Specifically, when Bush, Sr. sees the general political universe as cooperative, U.S. actions toward the Middle East tend to be more cooperative. Conversely, when Bush, Sr. sees the "other" as conflict-minded, the U.S. tends to act likewise. Also, on the I-1 model, the public support variable yields a negative and moderately strong coefficient (b=-.032, t=-1.767, prob<.10). Thus, as

public support for Bush increases, U.S. actions in the Middle East become more conflictual. This gives support to the Ostrom and Job hypothesis noted above. No other variable yields a statistically significant coefficient for George H.W. Bush on either the P-1 or I-1 models. As with Reagan, it is interesting that neither policy continuity nor reciprocation play significant roles for H.W. Bush.

Table 16: George HW Bush Administration toward All Middle Eastern States Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	3.454	1.090	5.104	1.621
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.064	0.370	0.160	0.945
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.085	0.522	0.105	0.621
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	2.107	1.873*	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.876	0.858
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.355	-1.201	-0.459	-1.539
Public support for the president [-]	-0.028	-1.551	-0.032	-1.767*
Price of Oil [-]	-0.015	-0.425	-0.034	-1.010
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Middle Eastern States [+]	0.473	0.332	-0.089	-0.062
N	50		50	
R^2	.345		.301	
Adjusted R^2	.233		.182	

*prob < .10

Bill Clinton

OLS Results for Bill Clinton are shown in Table 17. In both models assessed for Clinton (P-1 and I-1), the coefficient for policy continuity by the U.S. is positive and

strong (P-1: b=.440, t=3.894, prob<.001; I-1: b=.423, t=3.642, prob<.001). This indicates that foreign policy actions during Clinton's terms in office were strongly affected by policies already in place. Also, the coefficients for the average S-Scores between the U.S. and Middle Eastern states are positive and moderately significant in both models (P-1: b=5.150, t=1.685, prob<.10; I-1: b=5.619, t=1.820, prob<.10). As opposed to the negative, somewhat counterintuitive findings with Reagan on this variable, it appears that during Clinton's time in office, when Middle Eastern states are more allied with the U.S., she acts more cooperatively toward them. No other coefficients were significant in either model for Clinton, indicating that both his beliefs and reciprocation against actions by Middle Eastern states were not significant factors for Clinton.

George W. Bush

OLS results for George W. Bush are shown in Table 18. For Bush the younger, no statistically significant coefficients are found for any variable examined on either model. Thus, variables not examined here seem to explain most of the variation in U.S. policy outcomes toward the Middle East during George W. Bush's first term.[16] As with Reagan and Clinton, George W. Bush's general operational code beliefs toward the international environment do not play a statistically significant role regarding U.S. policy actions in the Middle East. Though there is no evident reason for the insignificant P-1 finding, the lack of findings for the policy continuity and reciprocation variables may stem from the "war on terror," the efforts of which would be seriously hampered by an overly predictable, reactive United States (of which the reciprocation and continuity variables could be seen as proxies).

Table 17: Bill Clinton Administration toward All Middle East States Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	-0.615	-0.233	0.238	0.090
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.440	3.894***	0.423	3.642***
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.217	1.497	0.236	1.599
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.825	1.316	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	-0.532	-0.858
Unemployment Rate [-]	0.323	1.580	0.341	1.629
Public support for the president [-]	0.015	0.641	0.013	0.555
Price of Oil [-]	-0.004	-0.114	-0.005	-0.149
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Middle Eastern States [+]	5.150	1.685*	5.619	1.820*
N	97		97	
R^2	.473		.467	
Adjusted R^2	.431		.425	

*prob <.10
***prob <.001

U.S. Actions toward the Middle East Excluding George H.W. Bush

Following the individual presidential analyses, it becomes apparent that the significant coefficient for presidential image of the other in the international environment (P-1) does not hold from one president to another. In fact, it is only moderately significant for one president: George H.W. Bush. Therefore, in order to test the competing explanations of whether H.W. Bush's score inflated findings in the general models, or whether the lack of P-1 findings for individual presidents illustrates a

Table 18: George W Bush Administration toward All Middle Eastern States Regression

	Nature of Political Universe Model (P-1)		Strategic Orientation Model (I-1)	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	1.045	0.351	3.130	1.173
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.196	0.881	0.147	0.655
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.162	0.685	0.214	0.893
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	1.223	1.304	---	---
Strategic Preferences (I-1) [+]	---	---	0.079	0.166
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.170	-0.593	-0.361	-1.424
Public support for the president [-]	-0.005	-0.258	-0.011	-0.621
Price of Oil [-]	-0.013	-0.279	-0.023	-0.477
N	42		42	
R^2	.309		.275	
Adjusted R^2	.187		.148	

statistical power issue, P-1 models were re-run for all Middle Eastern countries excluding George H.W. Bush. Results for these regressions are given in Table 19. Model A examines the Reagan and Clinton administrations alone, as it includes the S-Scores which require the exclusion of George W. Bush from the sample. Based on this model, as the coefficient for image of the other is insignificant, it may initially seem as if George H.W. Bush was, indeed, inflating the coefficient for the model as a whole. However, Bush the younger was excluded from this model as well, leading to a decreased level of generalizability and statistical power in Model A's findings. P-1 findings from Model B in Table 19 (which includes George W. Bush though still excluding his father), however, indicates a significant influence of P-1 on the dependent variable of U.S. policy actions

Table 19: Influences on U.S. action toward All Middle East States Regression (George H.W. Bush's term excluded for both, George W. Bush also excluded in Model A)

	Model A (Including S-Scores)		Model B	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	-0.025	-0.020	-0.310	-0.396
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.339	4.353***	0.335	4.740***
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.225	2.401**	0.222	2.625**
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.728	1.431	0.849	1.943*
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.041	-0.416	0.024	0.302
Public support for the president [-]	-0.001	-0.083	-0.020	-0.219
Price of Oil [-]	0.007	0.789	0.009	1.166
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Middle Eastern States [+]	0.431	0.598	---	---
N	193		234	
R^2	.277		.283	
Adjusted R^2	.249		.264	

*prob < .10
**prob < .05
***prob < .001

toward the Middle East (b=.849, t=1.943, prob=.053). As the S-Scores seem to have only a negligible impact on Model A, it can be safely assumed that the presidential image (P-1) finding holds for U.S. presidents even when Bush the elder is not taken into account. Thus, the lack of significant findings regarding the P-1 variable for individual presidents seems to point to the explanation that this is a statistical power issue.

U.S. Actions toward the Middle East Excluding Bill Clinton

Similar to the above concerns with George H.W. Bush, there is the possibility, following from the strong coefficients for Clinton's individual regression regarding

policy continuity, the possibility that Clinton's time in office inflated the overall coefficient for this variable when looking at all presidents together. Thus, both P-1 models were re-run for Clinton both including and excluding S-Scores (the extremely weak influence of instrumental preferences in Clinton's I-1 model makes its inclusion superfluous). Results in Table 20 show that the exclusion of Clinton still yields a significant coefficient on the policy continuity variable in Model B (b=.162, t=2.094, prob<.05). Though this coefficient is not significant in Model A, again, George W. Bush is not included, and a lack of statistical power likely plays a role toward explaining this finding. Thus, policy continuity seems to matter for U.S. action abroad, even when extreme cases (such as Clinton) are not examined.

U.S. Actions toward the Middle East Excluding the Policy Continuity Variable

One final problem that will be discussed here involves interpreting the role of the realist, reciprocation variable. When the policy continuity variable (lagged U.S. actions toward the Middle East) is excluded, the reciprocation variable consistently provides the strongest coefficient of all variables examined, though it actually loses significance in the models from Tables 10 and 13. As an example of this, Table 21 examines P-1 models on all Middle Eastern states with both the inclusion and exclusion of S-Scores. Coefficients for previous actions by Middle Eastern states (reciprocation) here are positive and extremely significant at the .001, two-tailed significance level (Model A: b=.419, t=6.015, prob<.001; Model B: b=.425, t=6.646, prob<.001).[17] Though models excluding the reciprocation variable alone yield stronger t-values than those excluding the continuity variable alone, the differences aren't that big,[18] seeming to indicate that both of these variables are important regarding their influence on the dependent variable of

Table 20: Influences on U.S. Action toward All Middle East States Regression (Bill Clinton's terms excluded for both, George W. Bush also excluded in Model A)

	Model A (Including S-Scores)		Model B	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	0.582	0.540	-0.206	-0.254
Previous Actions by the U.S. Toward Middle Eastern States [+]	0.133	1.520	0.162	2.094**
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.122	1.281	0.135	1.589
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	1.201	1.998**	1.110	2.396**
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.116	-1.087	-0.097	-1.165
Public support for the president [-]	-0.009	-0.817	-0.009	-1.208
Price of Oil [-]	0.012	1.395	0.014	2.053**
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Middle Eastern States [+]	.845	1.453	---	---
N	145		186	
R^2	.158		.179	
Adjusted R^2	.115		.151	

**prob < .05

U.S. policy actions toward Middle Eastern states. One explanation here may be that the Pearson's correlation between the two lagged independent variables (the reciprocation and continuity variables) is fairly high (.574), indicating that some degree of multicollinearity is affecting results. Though these two variables clearly measure different things, they are also closely related theoretically and empirically (as the results of Table 21 show). Therefore, it is not completely farfetched to imagine that one of these independent variables could artificially deflate the influence of the other. The only reason lags are included in this study at all is to explicitly demonstrate causality. In a world where this was not an issue, the reciprocation variable would not be lagged at all (as it is likely that actions from the Middle East often lead to U.S. responses in the same

month or vice versa). However, though lags may be an imperfect solution, they help to explore causality, and are thus useful for this project. Thus, I will treat the reciprocation variable here as significantly related to the dependent variable, though it is the reader's prerogative to accept or dispute this interpretation.

Table 21: Influences on U.S. Action toward All Middle East States Regression (Policy continuity variable excluded for both, George W. Bush also excluded in Model A)

	Model A (Including S-Scores)		Model B	
	b	t	b	t
Intercept	0.428	0.516	0.001	0.001
Previous Actions From Middle East States Toward the U.S. [+]	0.419	6.015***	0.425	6.646***
Nature of the Political Universe (P-1) [+]	0.968	2.167**	0.976	2.503**
Unemployment Rate [-]	-0.024	-0.552	0.035	0.496
Public support for the president [-]	-0.007	-0.792	-0.008	-1.032
Price of Oil [-]	0.005	0.671	0.010	1.453
Average S-Scores between the U.S. and all Middle Eastern States [+]	0.738	1.357	---	---
N	240		281	
R^2	.206		.209	
Adjusted R^2	.185		.194	

**prob < .05
***prob < .001

DISCUSSION

The major findings from this project are that policy continuity (previous actions by the U.S. toward the Middle East-hypothesis H3), policy reciprocation (previous actions by Middle Eastern states toward the U.S.-hypothesis H4), and presidential operational code beliefs in the form of perceived image of the international environment (P-1-hypothesis H1) yield strong, positive influences on U.S. foreign policy actions toward the Middle East. These findings provide support for structural claims that U.S. foreign policy moves logically from one point in time to another and that the actions of other states condition the actions the U.S. will subsequently take. However, findings also support the agency argument that a president's beliefs regarding the nature of the "other" play an important role in determining U.S. foreign policy.

Regarding the psychological variables in this study, a few further observations should be noted, as this is the previously unexplored component of, and primary impetus behind this project. First, the operational code, though less than perfect, is given some strong face validity here, as findings support the hypothesized expectations for the image of the other (P-1) variable. Thus, the underlying constructs tapped by the operational code may provide greater nuance to broader theories investigating both conflictual and cooperative outcomes resulting from U.S. foreign policy decisions. Secondly, the components of the operational code assessed in this study focus on the *general* international environment (not just the Middle East), providing proxies that, at a given time, assess a U.S. president's beliefs of the international setting as a whole. Nonetheless, one of the two indices examined here was able to explain a significant degree of the variation of U.S. foreign policy actions toward a specific region of the

world. This shows that the general image of the other (as measured by the operational code) is fundamental to a leader's perception of nearly all other actors in the international arena, and as these results show, this perception colors a great deal of the influence that U.S. presidents have over world affairs. This finding may have theoretical, as well as methodological implications for future studies on image theory.

More specifically, what the psychological results of this study show is that, at a given time, the friendlier a U.S. president perceives the general international environment to be, the more cooperative the U.S. will be toward the Middle East, whereas conflict toward this region follows more hostile perceptions of the outside world by the president. This provides large-n, quantitative support to perception of threat[19] (Walt, 1987; Croci, 2003; Leffler, 2003; Huddy, Feldman, Taber, and Lahav, 2005) and image theories (Cottam, 1992; Hermann and Fischerkeller, 1995; Herrmann and Keller, 2004). Though this finding makes sense, and was, in fact, expected by hypothesis H1, support was not found for hypothesis H2, regarding the influence of conflictual versus cooperative strategic orientations of U.S. presidents. In other words, we find here that a president's *perception of others' intentions* is more important than his *personal preferences* regarding U.S. foreign policy action in the Middle East. Why is it, then, that images matter and presidential preferences do not regarding Middle Eastern policy events?

Perhaps the easiest answer to the above question is that, in a world of power politics, personal preferences may play a subordinate role to that of more pressing influences. Holding appropriate images of one's opponents are *critically* important in foreign affairs, as this affects prospects for survival (even if these perceptions are wrong), and as such, it is not surprising that these perceptions influence policy in important ways.

However, though one's personal strategic preferences may be important and may matter in certain instances, presidents may simply not be willing or able to exert the necessary political capital required to realize *broad* strategic preferences on a large scale, due to this preference's relative unimportance in a world where your priority is to survive. Related to this, Herrmann and Keller (2004), following analysis of survey results from 514 U.S. leaders, argue that:

> . . . perceptions of both intentions and culture do affect strategic decisions in systematic ways. American elites' perceptions that a country harbors hostile intentions . . . generally leads to an increased willingness to use force and to contain the target state, along with a decreased preference for engagement strategies. (p. 577)

They further argue that dispositional factors do not play a significant role in strategic decision-making. This focus on perceptions of the other as driving forces is also at the root of Jervis's (1976) work on misperception, where beliefs regarding others' intentions (even when they are wrong) affect foreign policy in important ways, potentially contributing to externalities such as arms races. Thus, it is unlikely that these authors would be surprised by the results of this study.

Secondary findings show that Israel, not surprisingly, differs from other Middle Eastern states regarding U.S. foreign policy actions, and the degree of influence by the continuity, reciprocation, and image perception variables toward producing these actions. What is particularly interesting here, however, is that in the Israel-only model including George W. Bush's scores, the strategic preferences variable (I-1) yields a positive and significant influence on the dependent variable, whereas the image of the other variable (P-1) is not significant on any model examining Israel alone; the opposite of findings from the general models (looking at all Middle East states). Though this seems strange at

first, perhaps these divergent findings are really not that surprising, and can actually tell us something about the role of images versus preferences in dyadic relationships of fundamentally different characters in the international system. If Israel is truly an unequivocal ally, and there is little to no chance that the U.S. will engage in conflict with her, then perhaps realist-based theories lose their explanatory usefulness. Following the discussion above, the image variable may matter regarding the Middle East generally because it is able to tap into realist notions of survival. The lack of influence by the image variable toward Israel, however, may be due in part to a lack of threat provided by Israel toward the U.S. As U.S. presidents typically do not see Israel in the same way that it views other countries, the president's image of the general international environment will differ significantly from the image it holds of Israel (which was not measured here), and in this sense the non-findings for this general variable in the Israel-only model are unsurprising.

Whereas allowing overt personal *preferences* (when not focused purely on maximizing power) to influence foreign policy can be dangerous, and is thus avoided in the setting of traditional power politics (explaining why this variable is not significant in the general models), the strong connections built up between Israel and the U.S. may provide a buffer to this danger. U.S. actions toward Israel are, on average, very positive, and it is highly unlikely that U.S.-Israeli relations will be strained beyond repair by any given U.S. Administration, and this allows presidential preferences (based on the limited range of policy actions available here) to be reflected in U.S. policy toward Israel. For example, if a president prefers conflict at a given point in time, the U.S. may censure Israel for not making realistic movement toward withdrawing troops from occupied

territory in the West Bank. Conversely, if a president prefers cooperation at some point, the U.S. may be more inclined to give Israel a few more advanced, "bunker buster" bombs for potential use against nuclear threats in nearby states. Whatever the action, however, the U.S. is not going to see Israel as a threat, and general foreign policy here will be, on aggregate, more positive than negative. Thus, to reiterate, for modern U.S. Presidents, the significant finding for the image (P-1) variable toward all Middle Eastern countries seems to be more strictly based on realism (focusing on perceptions of threat from the "other"), whereas the strategic preferences variable may have influence in situations where a real potential threat does not exist.

Regarding individual presidents, psychological factors do not initially seem to play much of a role. It is interesting that, despite significant findings for the general model regarding all Middle East states, image perception (P-1) only reaches significance for one president in the case of George Herbert Walker Bush, and even for him this is only a moderate finding. Only when you step back and look at the big picture (with the increased sample size and statistical power associated with such) does the image of the political universe have a really strong impact on presidential foreign policy actions. Each president yields a positive t-statistic at least approaching +1.0 on the image perception (P-1) coefficient (it surpasses this benchmark for all presidents except Reagan), and this consistent level of unidirectional influence does not hold for any other variable examined (including the coefficients for lagged actions by the U.S. and by other states toward the U.S.). Thus, presidential perceptions of the political universe appear to play an important role in foreign policy outcomes across presidents.

Regarding the idiosyncratic findings for individual presidents, Reagan is an interesting case, as his S-score coefficient is completely the opposite of what one might expect, and this cannot be easily explained. For the U.S. to act in a more hostile nature toward states that hold alliances similar to itself and more cooperative toward those that do not is odd. This finding may be the result of only having one S-Score per year, thus greatly reducing the ability of this variable to provide a nuanced explanation for alliance shifts within a given year. Conversely, this finding may have something to do with the "Reagan paradox," meaning that Reagan's rhetoric, and perhaps even actions of a formal diplomatic variety, contrasted with his actions as president. Having an "alliance" may not have meant for Reagan what it meant to other presidents. Perhaps Reagan was alone among those examined here in believing that one should "keep his friends close, and his enemies closer," signifying a realist underpinning to his foreign policy aimed at keeping all countries on their toes. On the other hand, this may have had something to do with Reagan's high degree of delegation of responsibilities to subordinates. This, if true, would additionally make an accurate assessment of Reagan's operational code difficult, as if Reagan only played a small role in speech construction, then his operational code may be difficult to realistically assess through his speeches. Finally, this finding may simply be a statistical anomaly. Whatever the reason, if the findings here do, indeed, reflect reality under Reagan's two terms, than this is a mystery that requires further exploration.

H.W. Bush's image of the political universe (P-1), though modestly influential in itself, seems to play a much more important role as an influence on foreign policy actions for him than it does for the other presidents examined here. Why is this? One

explanation may be that Bush simply had more foreign policy experience than any other president examined coming into office, being a former Ambassador to the United Nations, Chief of the U. S. Liaison Office in China, head of the C.I.A., and serving eight years as vice-president for Reagan. Thus, one might expect that Bush, first off, would have a greater interest in foreign affairs, which is hypothesized elsewhere to have an influence on outcomes (Hermann, 1984). Secondly, Bush may be expected to exhibit a greater degree of comfort in dealing with foreign affairs than the others examined here, and thus be less hesitant to have his own views dictate policy. Though the elder Bush was one of the less ideological, more consensus-minded presidents examined in this study, it appears regarding foreign policy actions that "conviction" and rhetoric may not necessarily translate into foreign policy influence. Whatever the reason, it appears that, rather than objective "reality" (assessed through the reciprocation variable), Bush's *perception* of reality (P-1) affected U.S. actions abroad.

Also under Bush, Sr.'s watch, public support is somewhat negatively related to U.S. foreign policy actions. It appears that the greater the degree of U.S. public support exhibited toward H.W. Bush, the more negative U.S. actions become, and vice versa. This seems to reflect Ostrom and Job's (1986) suggestion that presidents may be more inclined to use force abroad when public opinion is higher, meaning that this is the president's automatic preference, irrespective of his personal "beliefs." It may well be that H.W. Bush saw increased levels of public support as an opportunity to exploit a "rally 'round the flag" effect. If this were the case, however, regarding the 1992 election, the economy trumped the effects of this phenomenon. More likely, this finding seems to

follow Bush's actions toward Iraq during the first Persian Gulf War, as strong levels of public support correspond with high levels of conflict in the Middle East.

Regarding Bill Clinton, he seems the most constrained of all the presidents examined here (in terms of foreign policy influence). The previous month's actions by the United States (policy continuity) dictate U.S. action at a given time for Clinton to an extremely high degree. This, along with his moderately significant S-Score finding (indicating a kind of automatic action regarding allies and adversaries), is not incredibly surprising given the constraints placed on Clinton by the Congress during the gist of his time in office, even in foreign affairs. For example, Clinton was opposed by Congress regarding his attempted interventions in the Balkans (Sobel, 2001), and he was denied trade promotion authority twice. This, along with Clinton's overriding interest in domestic affairs, may have contributed to his weakness in personally affecting general foreign policy.

Regressions examining George W. Bush's time in office indicate no significant coefficients on any variable examined. If those variables examined here do not matter so much regarding U.S. actions in the Middle East, what else might be explaining these outcomes? Recent examinations have found that foreign policy advisors have played a critical role in influencing foreign policy, at least in the first George W. Bush Administration (Mann, 2004; Woodward, 2004). Further, Bush himself often argued, when running for election in 2000, that his lack of foreign policy experience would not be a factor as he would rely heavily on his "advisors and their long record of experience" (Mann, 2004, p. 255) in the international relations realm. This extreme degree of delegation harkens back to Reagan's time in office, and, as mentioned before, may also

help to explain why the psychological variables for Reagan are so weak. Apart from this, perhaps the previous actions by the U.S. or by other states toward the U.S. do not dictate what the U.S. does exactly in the Middle East following from two major events under George W. Bush's watch: the aftereffects of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the war in Iraq.

The war on terror following 9/11 has necessarily kept U.S. actions somewhat unpredictable, particularly in the Middle East, so as to keep Islamic militants on their toes. Further, U.S. actions were generally conflictual in areas where terrorists were suspected of being trained and sheltered, both after 9/11 and during the war in Iraq. Thus, the fear of future hostile activity, as opposed to actual hostile actions by enemies of the U.S., would be the pre-requisite for hostile action by the U.S., minimizing the effect of both the lagged independent variables in this study.

On a more general note, this study has explored influences on foreign policy outcomes in ways that have been either underplayed or ignored previously. Biases toward studying the "use of force" and the occurrence of war seem to reinforce the classical realist and psychoanalytic framework of individuals as being interested only in power, exploitation, and violence. However, it has been suggested elsewhere that *cooperation* may be critical to understanding international outcomes (Krasner, 1983; O'Neil, Balsinger, and VanDeveer, 2004). This study, though not dismissive of the realist claim, supports the latter notion, and uses a continuum that explores both the negative and positive, conflictual and cooperative sides of psychology and policy outcomes. As such, I hope to demonstrate that though conflict and violence seem an indispensable component of international behavior, this does not exhaust the spectrum of important policy actions and outcomes. Though there is good reason to focus on conflict

as a means to understand, and thus hopefully reduce, the frequency and scale of conflict, that is no reason to neglect the study of positive actions, which could yield similar results.

It should also be noted that though it may be encouraging to advocates of individual agency that the image variable seems to be important in this study, the psychological variables examined here tap into only a limited domain of psychological phenomena. The examination of motives, traits, specific personality types, the effects of crises, levels of presidential interest in foreign policy, and the effects of advisors, to name a few, are factors that should eventually be integrated into this kind of analysis to provide a fuller understanding of presidential decision making and influence. Of course, other factors influencing U.S. policy actions apart from those related directly to narrow, executive influence should be taken into account as well, and the literature on the use of force, bureaucratic politics, political economy, as well as examinations of constructivist and traditional realist factors should not be ignored. Again, the purpose of this study was not to be an exhaustive examination of factors influencing U.S. foreign policy (that would likely be impossible anyway), but to argue that the U.S. president matters, and that psychological variables exist that can tap into these factors that have long been ignored in much mainstream, quantitative research in this realm.

Ultimately, findings here reinforce an often used qualification in political psychology studies: an individual's psychology matters, but this is not all there is to the story of international political action. Specifically, though external events and the necessity of policy continuity may largely tie one's hands when making foreign policy decisions, psychology may be critical to understanding responses to situations that are ambiguous or neutral (Direnzo, 1974), where the president has a strong interest or

experience in foreign policy (Hermann, 1984), when he possesses a high degree of charisma or prestige (Halverson, Halladay, Kazama and Quiñonez, 2004; Mondak, Lewis, Sides, Kang, and Long, 2004) or when Congressional and public support for the president are highest (McCormick and Wittkopf, 1990; Risse-Kappan, 1991; Meernick, 1993; Collier and Sullivan, 1995; Sobel, 2001).[20] Additionally, as this study shows, when looking at the big picture of U.S. political outcomes over a long time period, the importance of an individual's perceptions of "the other" comes through, even when taking more important variables (such as policy continuity and policy reciprocation) into account. To sum up, Randall Schweller (1998) argues that:

> . . . any interpretation of the origins of war must. . .include the particular interests and goals of the major actors as specific causes that supplement the more general causes and therefore provide greater determinateness to the explanation . . . (p.4)

Though I would qualify this by changing "war" to "foreign actions," this study supports the inclusion of individual agency in future analyses studying the determinants of U.S. foreign policy, and in the process hopes to provide those interested with a potentially very useful method of doing so.

NOTES

[1] Levels of presidential "charisma," the occurrence of major crises, level of presidential interest/experience with foreign policy, and pre/post-Cold War environment, for example, could be expected to play an important role regarding the dependent variable. However, either a lack of available measures, or scores differing on only one president (Reagan on the Cold War measure) necessitate these variables being excluded from this study.

[2] Though a Pearson correlation coefficient of only .388 is found between the image of the other (P-1) and instrumental preferences (I-1) variables, weak, often counterintuitive findings result when both psychological variables are used in the same regression model.

[3] Although I tried to read through most speeches in which foreign policy would be referred, speeches generally were not read if they seemed to focus on non-foreign policy issues, and this process may have left out a number of relevant speech acts.

[4] Of course, the influence of speechwriters may vary from one President to another. For instance, Ronald Reagan, who is perceived to have delegated a great degree of responsibility to subordinates, would likely have had less influence on what he actually said than a president more interested in micromanaging his actions, such as Richard Nixon or Lyndon Johnson. However, for this study, it will be taken as a given that each president equally represents his operational code beliefs through his speeches. This is done as the task of ranking presidential micromanagement over speechwriting is outside the realm of this study, but this issue is one worth exploring, and may help to shed added light on the empirical results here, specifically for individual presidents.

[5] This was rarely done, but necessary, particularly in early months of a given Presidency, where foreign policy is often not the focus of any given speech until late February or March.

[6] Herrmann and Fischerkeller (1995) define "strategic images" as a "subjective cognitive construct or mental representation of another actor in the political world" (p. 415). This is associated with the "spiral model" of interaction and was a popular concept used to understand U.S./Soviet interactions during the Cold War. Cottam (1992) echoes this, describing images as heuristic devices that "influence the selection of tactics and instruments used in the pursuit of policy goals" (p. 126).

[7] Middle Eastern States included here (as named in the Levant Data Set) are Afghanistan, Algeria, Al Qaeda, "Arab countries," "Arab Media," the Baath Party, Arab League, Arab League Secretary-General, Bahrain, Egypt, Gulf Cooperative Council, Iran, Iraq, "Islam," "Muslim," Israel, "Jew," Jordan, Kurds, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, "Islamic Jihad," "Militant Islamic Group," Morocco, "Moslim," Osama bin Laden, "Islamic Conference Organization," Oman, OPEC, Pakistan, Palestine, "Pan-Arab workers," Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

[8] Again, however, this was rarely done due to the vast amount of available data.

[9] One might presume, following these hypothetical expectations, that unemployment and presidential support are independent of one another and should not exhibit any relationship with one another. However, a bivariate correlation was run on these two variables from the data in this study, and a strong, negative relationship is found (Pearson's correlation=-.417, prob<.001). This is not incredibly surprising (i.e. higher unemployment leads to decreased support of the president), but raises questions regarding expectations from the general use of force literature, as increases in both of these variables are expected to lead to the increased use of force abroad.

[10] This score is calculated from a 4X4 table, where alliances are rated as either 1 (defense pact), 2 (neutrality pact), 3 (entente), and 4 (no alliance).

[11] Analyses including the George W. Bush presidency are included in this study, but obviously without S-Scores. Further, this data is not as nuanced as the event data, as only states are included, and thus interactions with Palestinians, the Arab League, Jews, Kurds, militant Islamic groups and others go unmeasured.

[12] Though not included in Table format here, on the P-1 index (assessing presidential image of the "other"), the presidents examined here as a whole yield a z-score of .54 against a broad sample of world leaders and a z-score of -.17 against a sample of post-World War II U.S. presidents. Thus, the psychological data drawn from the sample of speeches assessed here appears to measure up fairly closely with that of other U.S. presidents generally. Further, U.S. presidents generally appear to see the world in more friendly terms than the average world leader.

[13] However, the S-Scores ANOVA finding does not factor in George W. Bush, while George H.W. Bush and Clinton's scores are fairly similar, making this finding questionable.

[14] Two-tailed tests are used here to provide more confident results than one-tailed tests would yield. Though the .05 significance level is used here to indicate "strong significance," findings at the .10 level are also noted.

[15] Recall that though the event data is specific to the Middle East, the operational code data is very general, regarding presidential references to any foreign state or actor.

[16] It would be interesting to test S-Scores for Bush to see if this has an impact on outcomes as they do for Reagan and Clinton, but again, no such data were available at the time this was written.

[17] Other models were also run here to more fully explore this problem, but results were not included above to keep the discussion section from getting too unwieldy. First, models were run exactly as in Table 21, but looking only at non-Israel Middle Eastern states (examining the possibility that the exclusion of Israel from analysis eliminates the influence of the reciprocation variable following the weak findings for the lagged non-Israel Middle Eastern actions variable in Tables 10 and 13). Results here are similar to those from Table 21, as previous actions by non-Israel Middle Eastern states yield a

strong, significant coefficient (Model A (With S-Scores): b=.340, t=4.798, prob<.001; Model B (Without S-Scores): b=.349, t=5.296, prob<.001). This gives support to the notion that multicollinearity may be at play between the policy continuity and reciprocation variables. Also, models were examined against all Middle Eastern states and non-Israel Middle Eastern states excluding both the policy continuity variable and data from the Clinton Administration years (following from the discussion surrounding Table 20). Results here show that the model excluding Clinton for all Middle Eastern states still yields a strong coefficient for the previous actions by Middle Eastern states (reciprocation) variable (Model A (with S-Scores): b=.172, t=1.919, prob=.057; Model B (Without S-Scores): b=.204, t=2.594, prob<.05). Further, taking Israel out as well only removes the influence of this variable when George W. Bush's scores (and S-Scores) are removed as well (Model A (with S-Scores): b=.142, t=1.514, prob=.132; Model B (without S-Scores): b=.168, t=2.013, prob<.05). Additionally, models were run for each president separately, exploring the effect of either the policy continuity variable or the reciprocation variable alone against all Middle Eastern states (S-Scores excluded for all models). Results found that both of these factors were significant for Clinton at the .001, two-tailed level (reciprocation only: b=.670, t=6.217, prob<.001; continuity only:b=.604, t=7.423, prob<.001) while both were significant for George W. Bush at the .10, two-tailed level (reciprocation only: b=.299, t=1.709, prob<.10; continuity only: b=.299, t=1.827, prob<.10). Neither of these variables were significant at the .10, two-tailed level, for any other president in isolation. This gives further weight to the argument that these variables are very closely related, and that multicollinearity may have been a factor.

[18] For example, in a model looking at the P-1 psychological variable excluding the reciprocation variable alone, the continuity variable yields a t-value of 7.595, which is not far from the value of 6.006 for the reciprocation variable in Table 21.

[19] Threat perception theories basically argue that threats (and the fear associated with such) often play a critical role in dictating individual thought and action. This becomes non-rational, as it can lead to increased prejudice, intolerance, xenophobia, etc., and often trumps attempts to understand the "other," and personal preferences in an unthreatened state, where objective assessments are more likely.

[20] It should be noted, however, that unreported analyses here on the interaction of public support variable with the psychological variables examined here seem to lay doubt on the final claim here.

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