

American Civil-Military Relations and the Political Economy of National Security

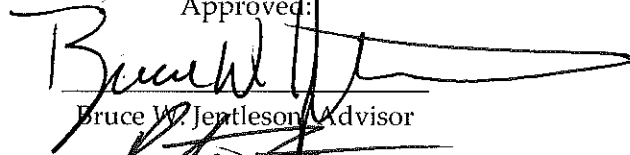
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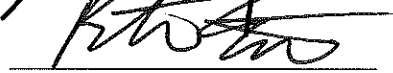
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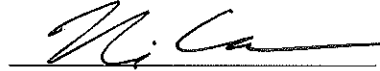
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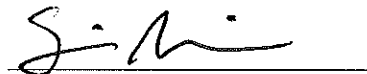
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Simon Miles

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Sanford School of Public Policy at the Graduate School
of Duke University

2021

ABSTRACT

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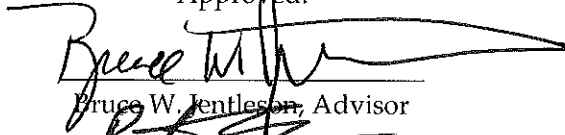
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Peter D. Feaver



Nicholas W. Carnes



Simon Miles

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Abstract

In this dissertation I analyze aspects of American civil-military relations and the political economy of national security policymaking. Specifically, I examine efforts to balance the military power necessary to secure American interests while considering the economic implications towards the national debt, veteran behavior in congressional resource allocation, and how civil-military relations relate to military effectiveness. I employ qualitative, quantitative, as well as mixed-methods research in examining policymaker rhetoric, voting records and bill sponsorship data, as well as a list of military use-of-force decisions. I find that policymakers deliberately consider the tradeoffs between debt and defense spending, that veterans demonstrate a small yet distinct behavior on military issues considered by Congress, and that operational outcomes were not more likely to be better when military authorities applied their preferences than when civilians asserted theirs. This dissertation helps fill important underexplored gaps in American civil-military relations and political economy of security studies.

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1. Introduction

“The battle is fought and decided by the quartermasters, long before the shooting begins.”

–Erwin Rommel

Resource allocation affects military effectiveness. It plays such an important role that Allied leaders Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin attributed victory in the Second World War, in part, to American industrial output and distribution to her Allies (Churchill 1941; Coalson 2020). Perhaps the most fundamental resource for the American military is the defense budget, which provides the funding to recruit personnel, train them, procure equipment, and position forces. America’s civil-military interactions often address defense budgets at the highest levels of policymaking to align resources with strategy. An ambitious strategy with too few resources courts failure. Abundant resources applied to an apathetic strategy is wasteful. Consequently, the capabilities that the United States desires of its armed forces is an important decision for the nation to make, and whether it allocates the appropriate resources to support these capabilities plays a large part in determining whether the military can be effective and efficient in defending the nation’s interests. This dissertation addresses research gaps in the topic areas of American civil-military relations and the political economy of security studies by considering issues of defense budgets, policy, and military effectiveness. First,

I introduce the scholarly fields to the reader. Then, I summarize the dissertation. Next, I follow with a detailed examination of my research projects. Finally, I close with a summary of my contributions and paths for future research.

1.1 Scholarly Study of Civil-Military Relations

Civil-Military relations is a multidisciplinary subfield of the social sciences where scholars explore how governments exercise control of the military, as well as the political influence between the two poles, and sociological aspects such as integration and culture. Sun Tzu, Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, and Clausewitz have all addressed civil-military relations in their seminal works, suggesting that the topic is a vital concern to humanity.

Different academic disciplines approach the subject from different perspectives. Historians seek to explain what happened in specific circumstances, political scientists to establish concepts that identify influential factors, and sociologists to understand connections between military culture and the society protected (Feaver 1999). Comparative civil-military studies tend to examine the threat of coups throughout the world, but also include studies that examine military institutions restricting their advice to the military realm, mutual respect between civilian and military leaders, effective

national policy or, lastly, if civilian preferences prevail when they diverge from the military (Desch 1999).

Feaver (1996) scopes civil-military relations as a “problematique” where the state must provide resources for the military to effectively defend against threats, yet not so many that the military itself becomes the main problem. The military could mass the power to challenge civilian government or consume so many resources that it economically undermines the state. McMahon and Slantchev (2015) coin a similar term to address the same concept called the “guardianship dilemma.” These two respective phrases describe the civilian incentive to balance the nation’s military strength that can effectively defend against external threats as well as manage its resources, but also ensure that the military is ill-prepared to succeed at a coup d’état. Effort spent improving one-side of the balance weakens the other.

Given little danger of an American military coup, however, and considering the challenges associated with constitutional powers divided between different branches of government, as well as democratic institutions controlling a hierarchical military establishment, American civil-military relations studies tend to address the extent of civilian control over the armed forces. Contemporary studies heavily explore the latter side of the *problematique*, or guardianship dilemma, by studying civilian control of the

military, but there has been considerably less scholarly effort to explore the former part, military effectiveness. The emphasis on civilian control leaves the relationship between civil-military relations and military effectiveness unbalanced. Previous literature reviews by Feaver, Nielsen, Travis, Risa Brooks, and Stephenson have noted the same lacuna, though the lacuna is shrinking.

This dissertation considers the problematique in American civil-military relations by 1) analyzing defense spending and resource allocation preferences, 2) exploring aspects of legislative branch oversight, and 3) examining military effectiveness. The main body chapters of this dissertation overlap in their consideration of factors that relate to military effectiveness, the understudied portion of the civil-military relations field.

1.2 Military Effectiveness

Military effectiveness is an important aspect of national security studies for scholars to understand because the stakes of war are high. Wars hold the potential to physically destroy nations, remove them from political existence, or result in annihilation of their societies. A nation concerned with preserving itself, the safety of its citizens, and protecting their way of life should seek to field its most capable, effective, and efficient force to guard against their destruction. Effective civilian control is useless

if a nation's military is unable to protect against military threats. The civilians who exercise control over the military are also responsible for the military's performance. Therefore, if a military cannot be relied upon to defend the state, civil-military relations have failed.

The few studies that examine military effectiveness tend to attribute effectiveness to material advantages in resources, regime type, and efforts at coup-proofing. Civil-military relations coincide with all three. Some studies examine how political institutions address military threats to determine defense spending or national effort to prepare against adversaries (Biddle 2004, 21). Others claim that democracies have inherent advantages or disadvantages in fighting wars (Hanson 1999). Recent studies argue that domestic efforts to guard against coups decrease military effectiveness towards external threats (Talmadge 2015). There are also historical analyses that examine case studies of effectiveness, or lack thereof (Bruneau and Croissant 2019). However, few studies specifically address the relationship between American civil-military relations and military success. This dissertation addresses military effectiveness indirectly, by examining defense spending as an input to effectiveness, and directly, by testing the validity of arguments between the military professional prerogative and civilian prerogative schools of thought (Feaver 2011; Betts et al. 2011/12).

1.3 The Political Economy of Security

The political economy of security is also a burgeoning subfield of the social sciences. As the costs of recent American wars mount, the study of political decisions that juxtapose tradeoffs between, and identify complements among, economic and security considerations have increasingly gained scholarly attention (Poast 2019). Traditionally, scholars cast this as a “guns versus butter” debate that evaluate tradeoffs between military spending and domestic welfare initiatives. However, further studies observe that the choice between “guns versus butter” is a false one (Heo and Bohte 2012; Mintz 1989; Russett 1982). In fact, the two can complement one another. For example, Keynesian economic theory suggests that defense spending can spur economic growth. Perhaps the most prominent example of this are assertions that the massive military spending and resource investment during the Second World War brought America out of the Great Depression (Krugman 2009). Another theme in the subfield addresses the tradeoff between international retrenchment versus engagement, where economic incentives influence some to protect domestic production while others seek to establish niche products and services in a global trade system (Klinger 2010). While studies on the political economy of security provide excellent quantitative analysis, fewer studies attempt qualitative research. Scholarly studies have not examined the rhetoric that

policymakers have articulated nor thoroughly explored the extent they weighed the tradeoffs between military spending and budget deficits (Mok and Duval 1992). This dissertation examines the political economy of American national security by studying defense spending preferences expressed through executive branch rhetoric as well as the legislative behavior in the US House of Representatives.

1.4 Dissertation Overview

This dissertation follows a three-paper model that researches topical gaps in American civil-military relations and political economy of security studies. Specifically, I first analyze America's policymaking efforts to balance the military power necessary to secure its interests with economic implications towards the national debt. Next, I examine veteran behavior in congressional resource allocation such as combat troop deployments and military spending. Finally, I investigate how different characteristics of civil-military relations relate to military effectiveness. These papers employ qualitative, quantitative, as well as mixed-methods research.

The first essay is a qualitative study which examines the extent policymakers since the end of the Second World War have expressed concern towards balancing adequate defense spending with the hazards of accruing national debt. Defense spending affects military capabilities and, hence, effectiveness (Biddle 2004). However,

deficit spending that incurs a large national debt could lead to economic crises. Some possible consequences of uncontrolled national debt include hyperinflation, loss of confidence in bonds, the diminution of the dollar as the primary global currency, and worst of all, default on the debt (Fergusson 1975). While there are political forces at work to sustain and grow deficit spending, there is also political will to restrain it.

Led by Alan Simpson and Erskine Bowles, the 2010 National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform recognized adverse consequences of the national debt and demonstrated national interest in controlling it. The commission recommended caps to defense spending among a host of other solutions, including substantial entitlement reform and efforts to constrain the large and difficult problem of mandatory spending. However, few reforms have been implemented. The debt continues to grow. Military spending plays a part in America's deficit spending, and presidents from Eisenhower to Trump have considered how military spending contributes to fiscal insolvency. How have policymakers balanced defense spending with concerns over debt since the sustained increase in defense spending following the Second World War? I observe that modern presidents have considered reducing defense spending as part of a plan to reduce deficits, but they have also found there is a level of defense spending they dare not fall beneath. This first essay provides a fiscal context for the subsequent essay on

legislative behavior of military veterans and holds implications for the third essay's subject of military effectiveness.

The second essay is a quantitative study which examines the relationship between the military service and legislative behavior of US Representatives in recent Congresses. American civil-military relations studies tend to focus on the executive branch of government, frequently examining presidential policies as well as processes internal to the Department of Defense. Influential works in American civil-military relations such as Cohen's *Supreme Command* and Feaver's *Armed Servants* primarily consider the president as the official through which the military interacts with civilian government. Indeed, the commander-in-chief may be the single most important civilian official that holds the military accountable. However, in *The Soldier and The State*, Huntington recognized that constitutionally-separated powers within government pull the military in different directions. There is value in exploring these other forces that pull the military besides the executive branch. A study of Congress expands research on the less frequently studied civil-military relations with the legislative branch.

Particularly, studying military veterans' voting behavior on defense budgets helps indicate their views on the state of military effectiveness. Military veterans in Congress influence national defense budgets and the nation's choice to use military force

through voting and bill sponsorship. Since military service may play a formative role in developing personal policy preferences, military veterans in Congress that demonstrate legislative behavior distinct from their non-veteran colleagues can provide clues how military experience relates to judgment on defense issues, and may indicate what military effectiveness improvements elite, office-holding veterans think should be implemented. This study adds to this understudied area by investigating civil-military relations in Congress, finding a small yet discernible difference in legislative behavior between veterans and nonveterans in the House of Representatives, where veterans are more likely to oppose troop reductions for ongoing conflicts and to sponsor pro-military legislation.

Finally, the third essay is a mixed methods study which examines the relationship between American civil-military relations and military outcomes. Military effectiveness should be a critical concern for defense policy scholars. Instead, the civilian-heavy academic institution exerts greater research effort in determining how to strengthen civilian control. Within effectiveness literature, the scholarly effort to explore civilian control and towards coup-proofing is overemphasized, while efforts devoted to understand the civil-military relations that lead to military effectiveness is understudied. Researchers must pay attention to the second condition of the problematique and

guardianship dilemma as well as the first. Civil-military relations mean little if a nation cannot defend itself against external threats. Further exploration is needed in this thread of American civil-military relations, and I take a step forward in this direction. Testing the acumen of each side's judgment, I investigate which side of the American civil-military relationship enjoyed greater rates of military success when their policy prevailed, finding that military judgment on choices whether to use force have not been superior to civilian judgment.

While scholars have demonstrated interest in seeking firmer civilian control of the military, and others have sounded alarms of politicization as well as conflict within society, more research should pay attention to civil-military relations that improve military effectiveness. I address this gap by looking at policymaker rhetoric towards defense spending, congressional legislative behavior towards resource allocation, and seeking how civil-military relations affect military use of force. Separately and together, these 3 essays help fill important underexplored gaps in American civil-military relations and political economy of security studies.

2. Debt as a Defense Spending Consideration Since the End of the Second World War

In August 2010, then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen declared, "The most significant threat to our national security is our debt." With this comment, the nation's top military officer used his official platform to express concern that excessive debt could lead to an economic crisis, and suggested the nation enact greater fiscal discipline.¹ Although a crisis could intrinsically cause hardship and suffering, it was not readily apparent how it would weaken American security. An economic crisis would not present a direct physical danger to the United States. However, it could indirectly undermine security by reducing national power (Kennedy 1987, xvi). A loss of national power could provide opportunities for enemies to exploit, as a weaker America would be easier to challenge.

Mullen's statement coincided with Obama administration efforts to reduce military spending. Supporting the commander-in-chief's budget priorities, Mullen implied that reducing defense spending could, counterintuitively, increase national

¹ I do not use the terms fiscal or budget "discipline" and "responsibility" in a normative sense in this paper. These phrases simply reflect the terms often used in the literature (see Peterson 1985-1986, Inman and Fitts 1990, Alesina and Perotti 1996, Enthoven and Smith 2005, Meagher 2017, and Barta 2018). Quotes are attributable to the speaker but, when I use the terms myself, I use them synonymously with the term "balanced budget."

security by forestalling an economic crisis. Defense spending at the time was only 20% of total US government expenditures at 4.5% of GDP, which was roughly half of the Cold War average of 40% expenditures and 7% GDP while slightly above the post-Cold War average of 18% expenditures and 3.6% GDP, though defense spending contributed to America's fiscal imbalance nonetheless. The 2010 Simpson-Bowles commission proposed defense spending limitations as one of many measures to restore fiscal balance and slow, or reverse, debt growth. Simpson-Bowles showed that there has been a desire to address the national debt, but how much of this desire also relates to one of government's most basic responsibilities: to provide for the common defense?

Defense policymakers in previous decades have alternated their concerns over debt, often within administrations and some consistent with Mullen's declaration, but at other times incongruent. For example, upon reducing the military budget after the Second World War, the Truman administration broke the long-running trend of financing wars through increased taxes by turning to deficit spending during the Korean War (Kreps 2018). The Eisenhower administration, on the other hand, restrained defense spending in order to avoid fiscal deficits (Huntington 1961) and avoid turning into a "garrison state" (Lasswell 1941), but also famously warned of the military-industrial complex that had been established. Each presidential administration has had its own

outlook towards deficit spending and military budgets, which an effective “military manager” has had a role to advise (Janowitz 1960, 246). I find the different outlooks of these administrations reveal common traits.

In this paper I investigate the extent that key executive-branch policymakers since the end of the Second World War expressed concern that military spending contributed to budget deficits. Similarly, I examine the rhetoric these leaders have articulated that consider the tradeoffs between the economic costs of deficit spending with the military budgets necessary to defend the nation against military threats. I begin by describing the economic and political contexts of defense spending in the post-Second World War era and survey the literature. Next, I describe the research methods employed. Then I provide qualitative findings organized by presidential administration which highlight policymaker deliberations over the impact of defense spending towards US government fiscal behavior since the beginning of the Cold War-era, examining their language to assess their priorities. I analyze the results and, finally, state the contribution of this research.

I observe that modern presidents have considered reducing defense spending as part of a plan to reduce deficits, but they have also found there is a level of defense they dare not fall beneath, even if that spending results in uncomfortable levels of debt.

Partly due to the circumstances in which they found themselves, such as the unique challenges encountered during their particular administrations, but more often due to their policy preferences, Presidents Truman, Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Trump were more vocal advocates of defense spending than others.² I note a shift in rhetoric beginning with Nixon and Ford when defense spending changed from the majority of national expenditures to less than half, where resolving budget deficits primarily with defense cuts appeared less practical. Aware that defense spending reductions would aggravate those dependent on military spending, administrations rarely advertised cuts. They lauded programs which would be increased, instead.

The more we understand America's fiscal and defense spending behavior, as well as how policymakers understood and rationalized why they were making the trade-off choices they made, the better we can understand how other political leaders are likely to make choices in the future. Presidents have consistently expressed that they have been willing to run deficits in order to sustain the level of defense spending they

² Although the Lyndon Johnson and George W. Bush administrations oversaw significant increases of defense spending, these were direct costs of specific wars the nation engaged for a temporary duration, and not out of an expressed preference to bolster military capabilities more broadly. Even the Bush administration restrained growth of the Army during the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, despite the apparent demand for a long-term ground forces-centric campaign.

thought necessary. This implies that the nation is unlikely to balance the budget in the future through defense spending cuts alone.

2.1 US Military Budgets, Deficit Spending, and the National Debt³

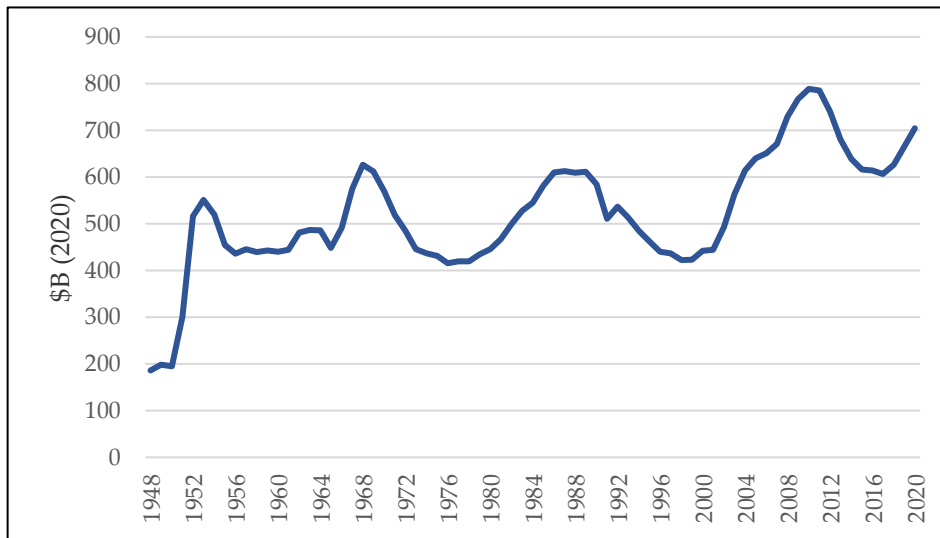


Figure 1: Real US Defense Spending, 1948–2020

Source: Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) FY2020 Green Book Table 6-11

³ This section is intended more as a summary of publicly available data and public policy concepts that serve to describe the context of this study more than to provide a literature review. The literature review follows in the next section. Nonetheless, for more information on public policy, finance, and economic concepts, see Gruber 2019, Mankiw 2009, Schick 2007, as well as Case and Fair 1994. For additional information on defense budget considerations, see Adams and Williams 2010, Alesina and Carliner 1991, Alesina and Perotti 1996, Allen and DiGiuseppe 2013, Bank et al. 2008, Barta 2018, Bent 2018, Brawley 2010, Cappella Zielinski 2016, Chan 1985, Daggett 1998, DeGrasse 1983, DiGiuseppe 2015, Dixon and Moon 1987, Fergusson 1975, Flores-Macías and Kreps 2013, Fordham 2002, Gaddis 2005, Griffin et al. 1982, Hitch and McKean 1961, Hobkirk 1983, Heo and Bohte 2012, Huntington 1961, Inman and Fitts 1990, Krause 2000, Kreps 2018, Kunz 1997, Lee and Vedder 1996, Lewis 1990, Meagher 2017, Mintz 1988, Mintz 1989, Mintz 1992, Mintz and Huang 1991, Neu 1990, Nincic and Cusack 1979, Poach 2019, Slantchev 2012, Toprani 2019, Weidenbaum 1989, and Whitten and Williams 2011. These works are described more later.

Accounting for inflation, defense spending has gone through several peaks and troughs since the end of the Second World War (see Figure 1). Real defense spending spiked during the Korean War, Vietnam War, the Reagan-era defense buildup, and the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Real defense spending bottomed during 1970s détente, the 1990s post-Cold War “peace dividend,” and after the end of combat operations in the Iraq War.

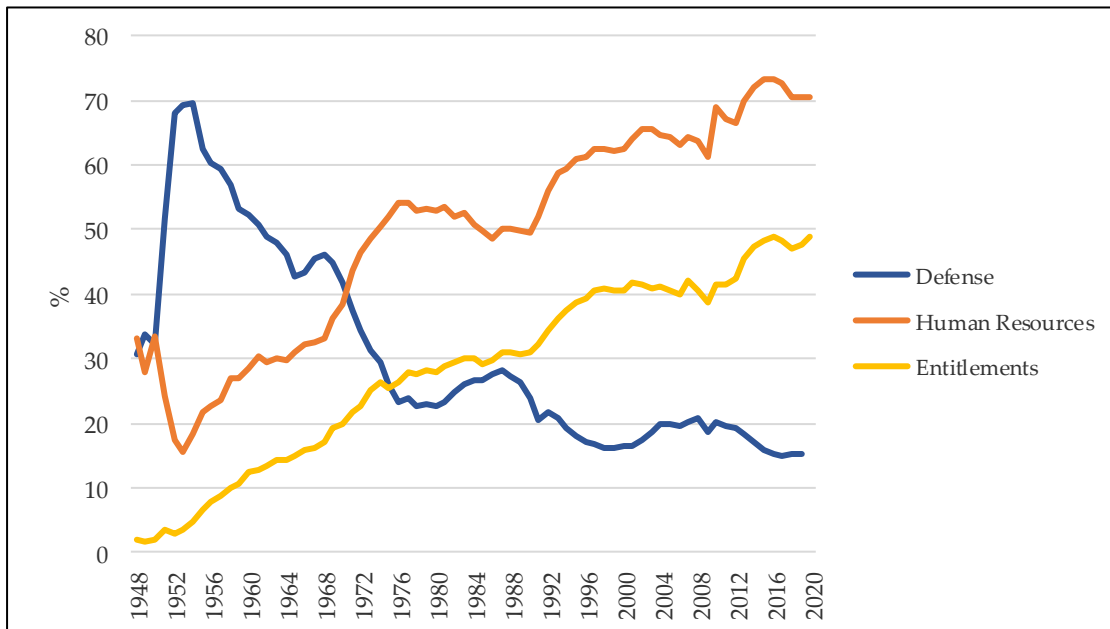


Figure 2: Proportion of Federal Expenditures⁴

Source: Office of Management and Budget Historical Tables 3.2 and 11.3

⁴ The Office of Management and Budget defines human resources expenditures as education, training, employment, social services, health, Medicare, income security, Social Security, as well as veterans’ benefits and services. Entitlements are defined as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Defense spending has decreased as a proportion of the national budget over time (See Figure 2). Defense expenditures constituted 70% of US Government spending in 1954, but only 15% in 2016. Mandatory spending such as entitlements have grown as a share of the budget over the same timeframe, and the budget itself has also grown in real terms (see Figure 3).

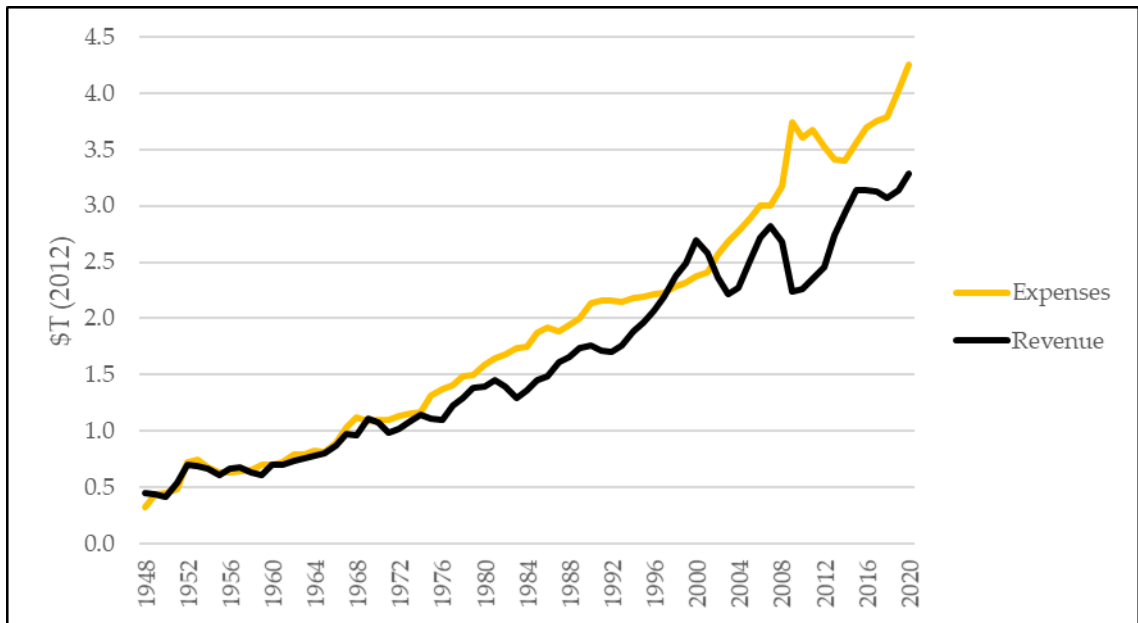


Figure 3: Results of US Government Fiscal Policy, 1948–2019

Source: Office of Management and Budget Historical Table 1.3

National debt, on the other hand, began to significantly grow during the Ford administration, then skyrocketed after the nation implemented stimulus plans in response to the Great Recession of the late 2000s (see Figure 4). The relatively small fluctuations in defense spending do not appear to correspond with the rapid increase in debt. This suggests that the combination of changes in nondefense expenditures as well as revenue collection, through taxes and tariffs for example, account for debt growth.

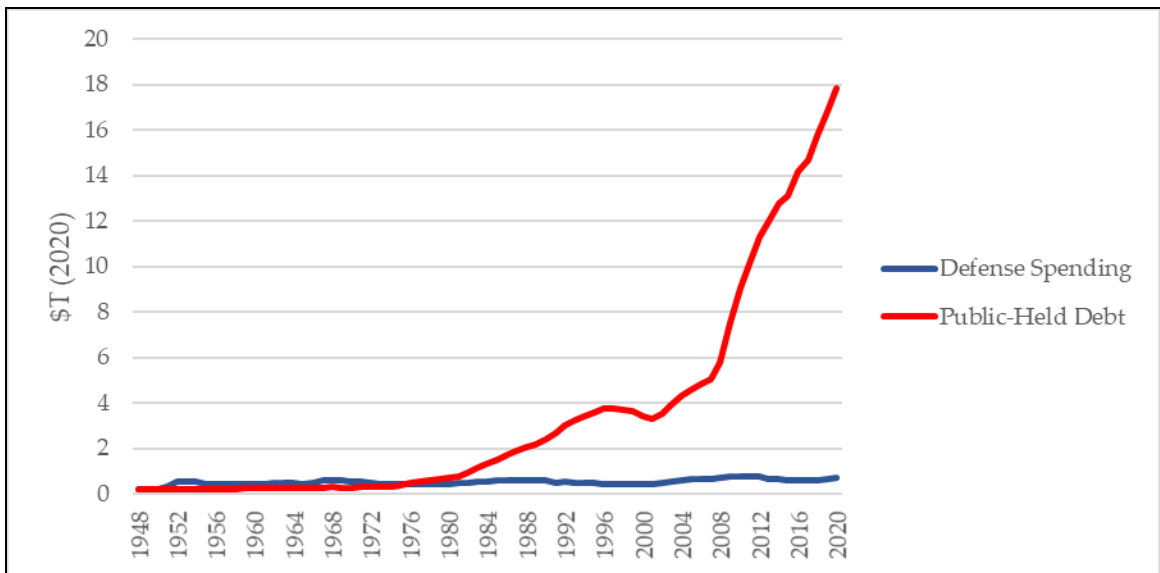


Figure 4: American Defense Spending and National Debt, 1948–2020

Sources: Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) FY2020 Green Book Table 6-11 and Congressional Budget Office Historical Budget Data March 2020

Although useful to give an initial appreciation, real defense spending and real debt do not tell the complete fiscal story. Economists often express defense spending and debt in a percentage of GDP as a frame of reference for what a national economy may be able to support. For instance, a nation with a 100% debt-to-GDP ratio would need to completely apply one full year of domestic production to remunerate its debt. Expressed in relation to GDP, defense spending has remained comparatively constant, fluctuating from 11.4% (1953) to 2.8% (1999–2001). Publicly-held national debt, however,

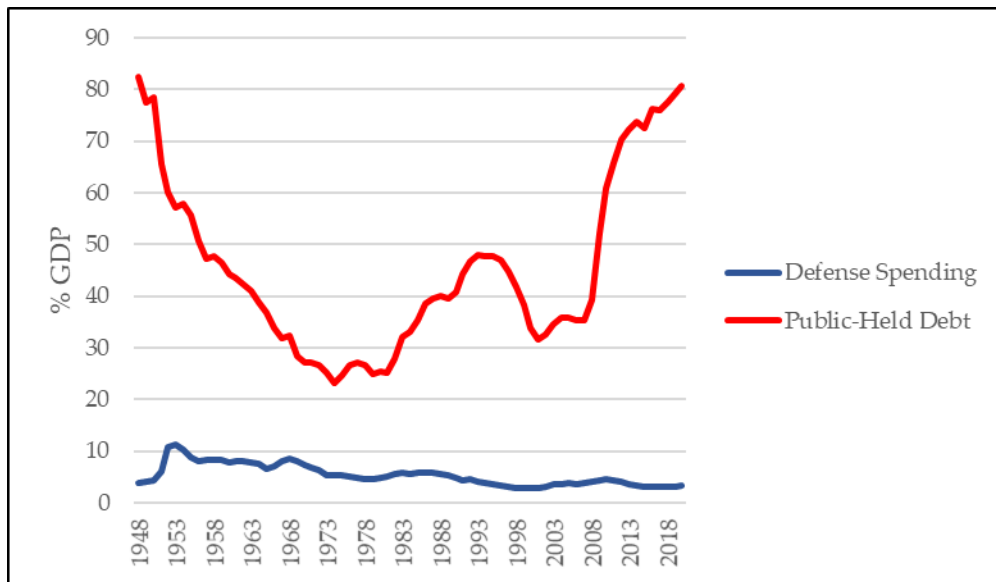


Figure 5: Defense Spending and Debt as a Pct. of GDP, 1948–2020

Sources: Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) FY2020 Green Book Table 7-7 and Congressional

Budget Office Historical Budget Data March 2020

has fluctuated more, forming a “W”-shape from 1948–2020 beginning and ending at about 80% (see Figure 5).

Budget surpluses and economic booms reduced debt-to-GDP in the immediate decades following the Second World War, as well as the 1990s. Conversely, budget deficits and economic contraction increased debt-to-GDP in the 1980s and 2010s. Changes in fiscal behavior as well as economic growth balanced each other in the 1970s and 2000s to result in a relatively static debt-to-GDP ratio for those particular decades. The upshot here, too, is that fluctuations in debt-to-GDP do not appear to correspond with changes in defense spending as a percentage of GDP. This reinforces the suggestion, as we will see in the rhetoric of some policymakers, that changes in nondefense expenditures and revenue collection account for changes in the growing debt-to-GDP ratio.

Figure 6 shows the costs that defense spending has imposed on the federal budget and the corresponding annual budget surplus or deficit. In years where the budget result line exceeded or equaled the defense spending line, cutting all defense spending could have eliminated any deficit. This reveals that, if the nation chose to completely eliminate its military, however unwise that might be, the nation would have run budget deficits from only 2008–2013 and 2016–present. Theoretically, presidents

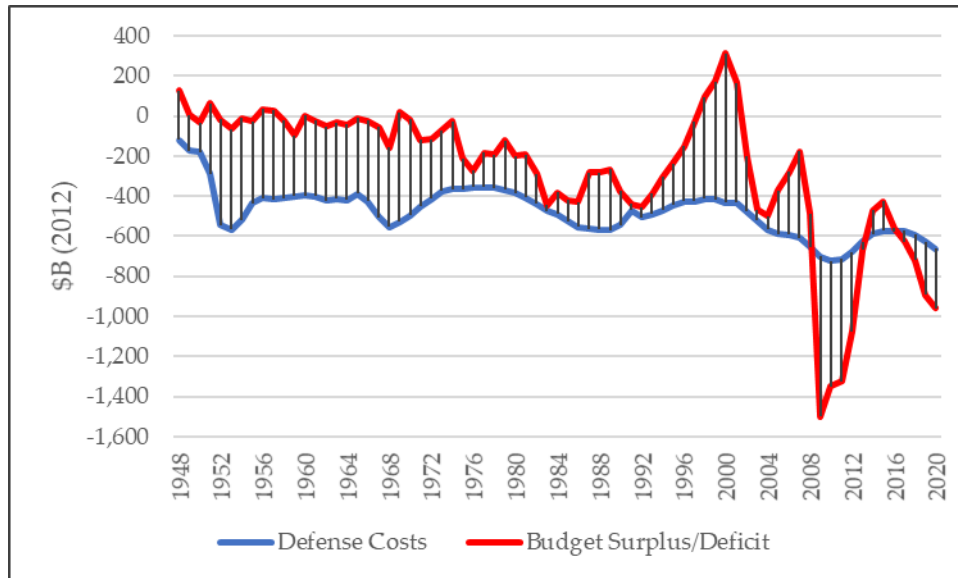


Figure 6: Defense Costs and Budget Balances

Sources: Office of Management and Budget Historical Table 1.3 and Office of the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) FY2020 Green Book Table 7-2

could have proposed to zero-out defense spending and often achieved a balanced budget. Cutting defense spending can be hard for policymakers, but cutting entitlement programs, such as social security, harder still because defense spending is part of discretionary spending in the national budget while entitlements are legislated into mandatory spending (Gruber 2019, 93–96). Confronting the voter support that sustains social programs is more difficult than confronting the military-industrial complex that favors defense spending because the former requires a positive act to reverse existing

legislation, whereas the latter requires new approval each budget cycle (Schick 2007, 62; Levit et al. 2015, 2). Since cutting this discretionary spending would have been an easier task for presidents than reducing mandatory spending, the fact that they did not cut defense budgets further implies that they valued some extent of defense spending more than a balanced budget.

Regardless of the proportion of spending between defense, nondefense, discretionary, and mandatory spending, peacetime defense spending since the beginning of the Cold War have contributed to America's fiscal deficits. Understanding how policymakers have deliberated on deficits and debts will add to understanding the extent which these concerns have influenced defense policy and spending.

2.2 The Political Economy of American National Defense⁵

Victory in the Second World War dramatically changed America's role in the world, catapulting the nation from global power to superpower. The nation recognized

⁵ This section focuses on scholarly literature closest to the study of defense budgets and debt. There are additional works on defense financing that partly relate but do not directly address the subject of this study, captured in the political economy of security field. Readers may still find these works useful to review nonetheless. For instance, Hitch and McKean (1961) make the basic argument that national security depends upon economic factors to match strategy with resources. DeGrasse (1983) argues that defense spending is an inefficient economic stimulus. Hobkirk (1983) argues that the ideal defense ministry would have a "powerful central policy and planning staff," with planning, programming, and budgeting functions organized to correspond with the service branches, strong administrative control, a multiyear budget process, and permanent civilian administrators that have equal partnership with the service branches. Peterson (1985) notes the incentive politicians hold to postpone costs by accruing debt. Dixon and Moon (1987) find that citizens' participation in the military increases social welfare, but defense spending decreases welfare. Weidenbaum (1989) argues that there is no set level of military spending burden that is universally appropriate, but instead, it varies with the times based on national security threats and political choices. Inman and Fitts (1990) analyze budgets and deficits since the end of the Second World War and argue that "price incentives and presidential constraints as institutional mechanisms [can] improve fiscal policy." Lewis (1990) compares military service budgets over time. Mintz and Huang (1991) find that defense spending inhibits long-term economic growth by crowding out investment. Chan (1995) provides an excellent contemporaneous literature review addressing the economic impacts and political motivations of defense spending. Hahm et al. (1996) "find that the state of the nation's economy affects its deficit."

The Congressional Research Service has several related studies including Hicks (1995) who notes that the declining value of the dollar caused a DOD budget request to be underfunded, Tyszkiewicz and Daggett (1998) provide a budget primer, and Belasco (2015) examines the 2011 Budget Control Act caps on defense spending as well as options to reconcile shortfalls.

Most recently, Brawley (2010) argues that international competitors have an incentive to balance against superior American economic and military power, but corresponding action may only come to fruition when a crisis exacerbates opposing interests. Adams and Williams (2010) provide a comprehensive review of national security budgeting. Whitten and Williams (2011) contend that left-wing governments use defense spending to boost employment. Flores-Macías and Kreps (2013) find that America funds its wars in ways loyal to political constituencies. Allen and DiGiuseppe (2013) observe that nations build alliances, in part, to reduce the likelihood of incurring debt from military spending. Bent (2018) offers another primer on the US defense budgetary process. Poach (2019) acknowledges a relationship between political economy and war finance. Toprani (2019) observes that inter-service rivalry and forcing the military to live within prescribed budgetary constraints provoked open defiance during the so-called "Revolt of the Admirals" in 1949.

that it had to increasingly engage the international community to protect its security (Kunz 1997). Seeking to guard its democratic and economic interests, the nation served as the Western world's leader to resist communism's advance, negotiated the challenge posed by the Soviet Union, flexed its military muscle by positioning large-scale military forces in foreign countries, demonstrated unprecedented and sustained high defense spending, and engaged in military conflicts across the globe.

Scholars worried that military influence over other institutions could grow over time, possibly leading to a "garrison state" where military officials would ascend to dominance in government (Lasswell 1941). Others expressed concern that government institutions, like the military, would seek to expand their prestige, autonomy, and resources, as described by bureaucratic political theory (Peters 1978). Indeed, foreign policy and military institutions tend to exhibit these very tendencies (Allison 1971). If the military grew to consume so many resources that it undermined national economic stability, they worried, investing too much in national security would prove counterproductive.

America became the key actor in the West to undergird a global system of international commerce, diplomatic relations, and its security architecture in no small part due to the military power supplied by its national defense spending. The nation

elevated the importance of military power in its foreign policy, and its defense spending grew to accommodate large, standing forces. Peacetime military budgets carved a larger allocation of the federal budget than in previous generations, which heightened their salience in political discourse.

Much of the scholarly attention has focused on explaining the ebb and flow of budgets. The consensus is that budgets are partly driven by external conditions and especially by domestic politics. Cappella Zielinski et al. (2017) examine how economic growth and military threats affect defense spending, finding that a contracting economy lessens defense spending more than an expanding economy increases it and, similarly, that growing international threats lead to increased defense spending more than diminishing threats lead to decreased spending. Moreover, the different ideologies and perspectives of competing political parties lead to different revenue collection and spending priorities. Unified control of federal governments, where one party controls the executive and legislative branches of government, more greatly facilitates spending cuts than divided government (McCubbins 1991, 90). Divided government leads to deficits because raising taxes is politically costly, spending on preferred programs is not, and each side attempts to gain a political advantage to achieve superiority. Opposing parties achieve compromise by increasing spending on preferred programs without

increasing revenue (McCubbins 1991, 103). Krause (2000) as well as Heo and Bohte (2012) find consistent with McCubbins (1991) that divided control of Congress leads to increased deficit spending (Heo and Bohte 2012, 429).

There is a scholarly thread specifically focusing on tradeoffs between “guns and butter.” Russett (1982) finds “no systematic tradeoff between military spending and federal health and education expenditures” in the United States, and Mintz (1989) also finds a “lack of a defense-welfare tradeoff in the 1947-1980 era, but very specific tradeoffs during the Reagan years.” Heo and Bohte (2012) corroborate Russett (1982) and Mintz (1989), and further find that political ideology in Congress has had a stronger relationship with social welfare spending than tax policy, and America has both increased taxes and increased deficit spending to fund peacetime defense budgets. Mintz (1988) compares Israel and the United States to find that Israel has had a more observable tradeoff which redistributes funding from guns to butter near elections. Though the United States may not exhibit a preference to choose either guns or butter over the other, the lack of a relationship between the two does not explain the growth of entitlement spending over time.

Partisan preferences likewise influence defense budgets. Republicans tend to favor defense spending to a greater extent than Democrats (Tier 2021b), and each party

tends to prefer spending defense dollars differently. In funding the military and determining defense budgets, Fordham (2002) observes that Democratic administrations have tended to prefer policies favoring conventional forces because, despite the increased costs, they encouraged multilateral solutions and required codependency between allies. Republican administrations, on the other hand, have tended to prefer policies that favored nuclear forces because the policies were financially cheaper and facilitated unilateral action.

American defense spending during the Cold War demonstrated a new propensity to finance expenditure with debt. America intervened in the Korean War initially with strong public support, but after reversals in fortunes and a growing perception that America's fate was not strongly tied to the war's outcome, the Truman administration faced increasing challenges to support the war with public taxes. Instead, the administration turned to deficit spending because the costs were less directly felt by the public and, consequently, less politically costly (Kreps 2018). The same may also be true for nondefense spending in addition to defense budgets (Mok and Duval 1992, 213). Kreps finishes by arguing that financing wars through debt has led to less accountability of military operations, resulting in longer and more expensive wars.

America has not been the only nation to show reluctance to tax its population in order to fund wars, though. Nations tend to borrow more when they have the creditworthiness to avoid war's immediate financial costs (DiGiuseppe 2015). War may even be more likely if nations borrow to support their military because nations that lose wars are less likely to have their debts recouped (Slantchev 2012). National leaders' financial strategies are influenced by concerns about inflation, popular support, and means of funding, where they choose between a mixture of taxing, monetary expansion, and incurring debt based on their appraisal of which combination will incur the lowest net cost (Cappella Zielinski 2016). If politicians seek to push the burden for wartime defense spending to the future by incurring debt, this factor contributes to America's consistent budget deficits. However, this phenomenon is likely true for nondefense spending as well, since short-term electoral horizons will lead to short-sighted strategies designed to optimize benefits in the present while postponing costs until the future.

The military-industrial complex may exert political pressure to sustain and grow programs, which Lasswell worried and Eisenhower took heed, but, as discretionary spending, these programs are less well-protected. Defense spending requires a positive legislative act each year to authorize its annual expenditures, while entitlement spending can only be changed by a positive legislative act that alters what has

previously been authorized (CBO 2021; New America 2021).⁶ While domestic politics may not consistently demonstrate a tradeoff between defense spending and social programs, as Americans seem to want both, the choice of which to cut is different than previously conceived (Heo and Bohte 2012; Mintz 1989; Russett 1982). The growing proportion of entitlement spending in the federal budget, the diminishing proportion of defense spending, and the continued expected growth attest to the momentum of higher entitlement expenditures (Smith and Thorpe 2013; Austin 2017, 4). Consequently, guns have been the easier target for an accountant's axe than butter.

While international relations, military threats, strategy, and policy may influence defense spending, there is also evidence that leaders consider domestic economic factors in defense spending decisions. Polarization over fiscal policy due to social conflict leads to substantial debt accumulation, but this can be attenuated in competitive international economic environments (Barta 2018, 24–25). Voters reward politicians for periods of economic prosperity, politicians seek policies that enrich constituents to improve their electoral chances, and defense spending appears to be one lever politicians have used to spur economic growth (Nincic and Cusack 1979). Furthermore, there is a correlation

⁶ As an illustrative hypothetical, consider the reverse. If defense expenditures were mandatory spending that required an act of legislation to alter, and entitlement spending were discretionary spending that required annual renewal, which spending would then be harder to change?

between economic downturns and increased defense spending. When unemployment rises and commercial profits decrease, politicians appear to respond with Keynesian stimulus in the form of increased defense spending (Griffin et al. 1982; Mayer 1992, 29; Chan 1992, 128). These observations corroborate a theory that economic considerations influence foreign policy and national grand strategy (Narizny 2007).⁷ Changes in American defense spending may have as much to do with the economy as security.

Think-tanks such as the Center for a New American Security as well as The RAND Corporation, and government agencies such as the Congressional Budget Office have analyzed defense strategies and budgets (Barno et al. 2011; Neu 1990; CBO 1980; 1983a; 1983b; 1992), but scholarly studies have not examined the rhetoric that policymakers have articulated, nor thoroughly explored the extent they weighed the tradeoffs between military spending and budget deficits (Mok and Duval 1992). Concerns and persistent discussions about the growing national debt compel investigation into its contributions, one of which is defense spending. I fill some of this gap with this study.

⁷ Economic considerations include international competition, and domestic production excesses as well as shortages (Narizny 2007).

2.3 Research Design

I seek to identify the extent to which top-level executive branch officials expressed concern about national deficits, accumulated debt, and tradeoffs between the two since the National Security Act of 1947 reorganized the national military establishment. I conduct a qualitative historical study in this vein, examining policy documents, speeches, and other resources to describe the extent which executive branch policymakers considered fiscal balances when making defense spending decisions.

Consequently, I begin with the year 1948. 1948 was a pivotal year for foreign and defense policy and key to begin research. Following Kennan's 1946 "long telegram" and 1947 "X" article, Congress approved the Marshall Plan, the Truman administration began applying Kennan's containment concept, and held extensive talks to form the alliance which would become NATO in 1949. 1948 reflects the first full year policy discussions the newly instituted Secretary of Defense had the opportunity to consider the balance between defense budget requests and fiscal health.

Public official records provide most of the evidence that I consider. My main data comes from presidential and defense department annual budget messages to Congress from 1948–2016. I also draw on national security documents such as the library of national security council memoranda produced under various nomenclature from

each presidential administration, official national security strategies and national defense strategies required in the Goldwater-Nichols era, as well as supplementary projects such as quadrennial defense reviews (QDRs) and the Solarium Project of 1953. Additionally, I use meeting transcripts, notes, minutes, or other records of conversations held during policymaker deliberations using documents produced over the period by the national security council, DOD Historical Office, State Department records published in the “National Security Policy” sections of the *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* series, and UC-Santa Barbara’s American Presidency Project. I include the personal memoirs of presidents, national security advisors, secretaries of defense, secretaries of the treasury, and secretaries of state as available to add explanation, description, individual perspective, and context to my analysis.⁸

⁸ I initially attempted to apply a coding scheme to budget statements I gathered, but I found my scheme inadequate to make meaningful distinctions of policy. The general problem I found was that all presidents seem to have paid at least fair attention to fiscal balances in their published rhetoric. While each administration may have had different outcomes with the actual results of their fiscal policy, and I discuss in the results section, the substantial majority of documents in my coding scheme resulted in a “high” level of attention to fiscal balance, and policymakers made “clear” recognition that deficit spending tradeoffs they decided were “worthwhile.” On only a few exceptional occasions did I find their attention to be “medium” or recognition “unclear” but, even then, still apparently deciding “worthwhile.” There was only one instance where I coded the administration’s attention as “low,” and that was for the Bush administration in 2003. Since I found this coding scheme to add little value, I discarded it from further consideration. Consequently, I use my best judgment in selecting quotes that I found most representative of policymaker sentiments, most revealing, or most contradictory to other statements to characterize policymaker’s rhetoric.

One final note about sources. Memoirs offer a benefit that authors, editors, and professional assistant writers can organize fragmented thoughts and seemingly unconnected stories into comprehensive themes after the moment has passed. However, they suffer a disadvantage in that they are biased and often self-serving accounts in characterizing their own actions. Where necessary, I supplement description of these primary sources with secondary materials, though I consulted secondary sources first and throughout my research to guide my own understanding of the context of the policies and their scholarly interpretation.

2.3.1 Document Inclusion Criteria

The sheer volume of documents I reviewed required that I develop rules to decide whether to include them in the study or not. To narrow my search, I specifically looked for discussions on fiscal behavior, national debt, or the defense budget. Using manual text search tools, I searched for keywords “debt,” “deficit,” “cost,” “financial,” “fiscal,” “economy,” “budget,” and their close variants (e.g. financially, economic, etc.). When found, I checked the textual context to verify that the terms were used in connection with domestic defense spending. For example, the term “fiscal” can appear as an adjective or as a noun. I discarded the term “fiscal” when used in the latter sense,

as in “fiscal year.” The term “fiscal” remained applicable when used to express interest in the fiscal health of the United States.

When I found the keywords “debt” or “deficit” in a document or when two or more other keywords present in these contexts, I included the document for further analysis in this study. I looked through the indexes of memoirs and books and read sections which appeared to fit the focus of this study, particularly common index items listing the terms “budget,” “defense,” “military,” “debt,” “deficit,” “federal,” “Pentagon,” and so forth. I discarded documents and portions of books that did not meet these criteria. This narrowed my search from approximately 12,500 qualifying documents comprising 100,000 pages to roughly 1,500 documents with about 30,000 pages of text. I believe this provided the most practical and efficient way to analyze the topic, but it also runs the risk that side conversations or discussions hidden under different topics could have escaped my review.

2.4 Defense Spending and Budget Deficit Rhetoric by Presidential Administration⁹

2.4.1 Truman: The Korean War Disrupts a Plan to Pay Down the Debt¹⁰

Kennan's "long-telegram" and "X" article laid the foundation for the Truman administration's perception of the Cold War dilemma, as well as how to respond.

Beginning with Truman, America sought a strategy of containment to prevent Soviet and communist expansion. Containment evolved from primarily a political approach of limited geographic scope, to one that increasingly emphasized military power and took on a global purview (Gaddis 2005).

⁹ In addition to literature already discussed, there are two notable works which cover the functional topic of defense spending, span multiple presidential administrations, analyze historic trends, and apply across much of the era considered in this paper. Gaddis (2005) discusses the evolution of US containment strategy during the Cold War focusing on Kennan's concept, then NSC-68, Eisenhower's New Look, Kennedy and Johnson's Flexible Response, détente, and Reagan's end game. Kunz (1997) records how the Cold War changed American thinking on international security, argues that America's economic success became the envy of the world, the nation leveraged its trade policy to political advantage, and this led to a synergy of international economic, political, and military success. For further context of defense policy, see Smoke (1993) and Walker (1995) who separately record the Cold War's sinews, contending that new international security architecture prevented a nuclear holocaust. These works help the reader organize and understand considerations, behavior, and evidence concerning defense policy and spending to place this study in context. There is not a great deal of literature on the defense spending inclinations by each presidential administration, which is one of the gaps I hope to partially fill with this research.

¹⁰ For background on the Truman administration and defense policy, see Brands's (2014) chapter 1 which examines "the relationship between planning and policy, goals and tactics, and means and ends during the Cold War," finding that "the Truman years were certainly a time of great purpose and accomplishment" (17). Miscamble (2009) asserts that Truman overcame naïve idealism and "navigated a way between appeasement and war" to address, in a practical way, the dramatic changes in strategic environment his administration faced (569). Leffler (1988) describes the epochal Marshall Plan's role as a federal spending for broader benefit of national security.

The concepts of containment and deterrence promulgated into diplomatic efforts and defense planning in the late 1940s. Few knew, at that nascent stage of a dramatically different post-Second World War international environment, what combination of diplomatic, military, economic, and social efforts would most efficiently fulfill the tasks. The more hawkish advisors, such as Secretary of State Dean Acheson, policy planning director Paul Nitze, and economic advisor Leon Keyserling thought that containment would require a great deal of resources, while more dovish advisors, such as ambassador George Kennan and chief economic advisor Edwin Nourse, thought that containment could be managed primarily with strong resolve, political will, and firm alliances (Brune 1989). There were others, however, like Senator Robert Taft and former president Herbert Hoover, who eschewed containment and favored a less expensive strategy of disengagement instead (Hayes 2004).

Truman (1947) himself was hoping that a coordinated, multilateral effort of Western nations would quell the communist threat. Perhaps prominent Soviet inclusion at the United Nations might soothe all parties' security concern and win Soviet acquiescence. Nonetheless, he maintained that heightened peacetime defense spending was prudent, yet he was mindful of the national debt accumulated during the Second World War. In his budget message to Congress for 1948, Truman (1947) asserted,

Though we expect the United Nations to move successfully toward world security, any cut in our present estimate for 1948 would immediately weaken our international position. This large part of the Budget, in my judgment, represents a proper balance between security and economy.

Although the defense budget was still costly in Truman's view, the \$9.4 billion proposed spending represented a cut from \$12.8 billion spent the previous year, and the lowest level of defense spending since America entered the Second World War. Military advisors noted the mismatch between low military spending and the grandiose design of containment, advised Truman accordingly, and even expressed regret that they had not pushed more forcefully to reconcile the disparity (Bradley 1983, 487). Accordingly, Truman recognized that the coming 1949 budget would "provide only for the minimum requirements of the National Military Establishment" (Truman 1948a). In his estimate of the competing interests between high defense requirements, the government's financial health burdened with war debt and, perhaps most of all, political constraints where rivals were in close pursuit of the presidency, Truman plotted a course that he thought favored financial health, even at the cost of what some of his advisors considered to be national security risk. His 1948 and 1949 budgets yielded surpluses, and he proposed raising taxes in 1950 to continue reducing the national debt.

Truman's defense secretaries followed suit in their public statements. In his 1948 report to Congress, James Forrestal expressed that his military spending proposals were

done with efforts in “securing proper balance between military necessities and national solvency,” as well as remarking how economic factors were intertwined with molding the right military capabilities (Forrestal 1948a). Louis Johnson’s 1949 budget report took the same tack, highlighting considerations that “we must do this [defense spending plan] economically and judiciously, without expending an excessive portion of our national income or otherwise impairing the national economy” (Johnson 1950a). Beneath the surface, defense hawks argued that increased government spending would stimulate the economy and pay for itself through increased revenue (Brune 1989, 363).

The defense spending sufficiency question came to a head during the development of NSC-68. In 1948, the nation had enacted a \$12 billion defense budget out of a total federal budget of \$30 billion. Defense secretary Forrestal was “greatly shocked” and “seriously troubled” at Truman’s decision to accept the most frugal of the military’s spending proposal for the 1950 budget underway in 1948, at \$14.4 billion, while he had requested \$16.9 billion, even though the military estimated much higher costs at \$30 billion (Bradley 1983, 496–497). Two years later, in 1950, after Mao Tse-tung’s communists had prevailed in China’s civil war and the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb, experts then estimated a containment strategy would cost about \$50 billion per year (Acheson 1969, 377).

Truman quietly referred NSC-68 to a broader committee for more thorough study, perhaps out of sticker-shock at a proposal which implied quadrupling the defense budget to a size nearly double that of contemporaneous total federal spending. Acheson and Nitze continued to advocate in vain for increased defense spending. They argued, for containment to work, the United States must possess sufficient military capability to respond to Soviet aggression (Brune 1989, 366). Truman acted quickly on NSC-68 after North Korea invaded South Korea, however. With fears of Soviet expansionism seemingly confirmed, Truman pursued a program that tripled defense spending from \$12 billion to \$39 billion in three years (State Department 2021). He shifted his preferences from financial health towards defense requirements. His primary fiscal advisor agreed with the move. Keyserling, who had been promoted to chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, wrote to Truman in 1951 of (FRUS 2010a, 252),

...a serious deficiency in the security strength of the free world, or of the United States, would be infinitely more dangerous and devastating than a sizeable deficit in the Federal budget. Whether the national debt increases by 5 or 10 or even 20 billion dollars over the next few years is of great economic importance; but it is of relatively minor importance compared with the satisfaction of defense needs.

Even at this late date after the Korean invasion, Truman remained mindful of deficit spending. He rejected the Joint Chiefs' budget request of \$70 billion, establishing a cap of \$45 billion (Bradley 1983, 651). He announced to Congress that "I shall shortly

recommend an increase in tax revenues in the conviction that we must attain a balanced budget to provide a sound financial basis for what may be an extended period of very high defense expenditures" (Truman 1951). Despite Truman's rhetoric, the nation relinquished surpluses and began deficits. Defense spending encompassed most of the national budget.

The new defense secretary, Robert Lovett, continued paying attention to financial concerns but judged the benefits as worth the costs. From his perspective military spending was "within limits that the United States should be able to sustain for as long a period as necessary" (Lovett 1952).

Deficits would continue for the remainder of Truman's administration. He concluded his presidency contending that he had diligently weighed choices and found the deficit worthwhile, arguing that the deteriorating international situation, already high tax rate, and sustained effort necessary to continue the containment strategy would only purchase "the minimum level [of national security] consistent with our national objectives" (Truman 1953a).

Truman set the trend that most post-Second World War presidents followed by advocating balanced budgets but judging defense spending too important to cut beneath a certain threshold. Truman avoided nondefense spending cuts to compensate for

increased defense spending as well as raising taxes further by reasoning that it would harm the economy (Truman 1953a; 1950). He was more resolute in facing military threats at the moment, whereas remedying the nation's fiscal health could be postponed until the future. The nation, he concluded, would have to resolve its debt at a later time.

2.4.2 Eisenhower: A Narrow Loss to the Forces of Debt¹¹

President Eisenhower acceded to office after the nation had been fighting the Korean War for more than two years. He had been sent to the presidency with a perceived mandate to end the war and a desire to curb spending. Eisenhower's plan to balance the federal budget, however, may have had the more prominent impact. He arrived following three consecutive budget deficits under the Truman administration, where the fiscal year 1953 deficit was \$6.5 billion. Eisenhower wasted little time, directly confronting the defense spending and national fiscal health problem by organizing the Solarium Project. He initiated this effort with a mind to analyze the Cold War problem anew, and a goal of developing policy that would both provide adequate national

¹¹ For background on the Eisenhower administration's approach to strategy, defense policy, and spending, see Huntington (1961) who describes the evolution of defense strategy and budgets, remarking surprise at America's "unforeseen powers of endurance in foreign policy" (446). Brawley (2010) argues that the Truman administration possessed a near-term view of the Cold War which required a quick response to be ready for peak years of danger, but Eisenhower transformed this into a long-term view of sustained preparedness. Stueck (2009) contends that, despite intending to pursue a distinctly different path than his predecessor, Eisenhower's policy reflected Truman's.

security as well as balance the budget. Though, from the start, Eisenhower was looking to reduce defense spending.

Ending the war in Korea would reduce defense spending considerably.

However, defense spending still composed the preponderance of the national budget even besides the war, comprising 70% of the federal budget in 1954, which necessitated scrutiny and perhaps tough defense choices to achieve fiscal balance. Eisenhower structured his staff accordingly, adding the Secretary of the Treasury to National Security Council meetings (Eisenhower 1963, 131) and keeping counsel with a group of advisors that shared his goal to restore fiscal balance (127).

This national security team viewed deficit spending as a serious danger to the United States. In a national security council meeting, treasury secretary George Humphrey “emphasized the vital need for a reversal of the previous administration’s spending policy,” asserting that “continuation of this policy would bankrupt the free world and force the United States itself to abandon its way of life,” (FRUS 2010b, 265) and that “the money and resources required by the great security programs which had been developed since Korea...simply could not be borne by the United States unless we adopted essentially totalitarian methods” (FRUS 2010c, 262). Noting the Joint Chiefs of Staff description of the extreme Soviet military threat and the dramatic spending they

advised necessary to defend the nation, Eisenhower wryly observed, “perhaps the Council should have a report as to whether national bankruptcy or national destruction would get us first” (FRUS 2010c, 260).

With defense spending comprising the majority of federal expenditures, the tradeoff between sufficient defense spending and a balanced budget was hotly contested. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles argued in a meeting that national defense requirements outweighed the dangers of budget deficits, while budget director Joseph Dodge argued the Soviets were counting on American financial collapse (FRUS 2010d, 516). The president agreed with Dodge (Eisenhower 1963, 131; Brawley 2010, 23). Eisenhower did not want to kill the patient, America, with the treatment, high defense spending (Gaddis 2005, 289).

As a result of Solarium, the administration published NSC memorandum 162/2 which established Eisenhower’s “New Look” policy to reduce defense spending. NSC 162/2, consistent with other Eisenhower administration documents titled “Basic National Security Policy,” contained a section on economic defense and national fiscal health which articulated the desire that (FRUS 2010e, 594),

the Federal Government should continue to make a determined effort to bring its total annual expenditures into balance, or into substantial balance with its total annual revenues and should maintain over-all credit and fiscal policies designed to assist in stabilizing the economy.

Nevertheless, Eisenhower held that, when push came to shove, national security superseded his desires to balance the budget (Eisenhower 1963, 130). Key members of his staff, however, believed he cut the trade-off in a different way. His Army chief of staff foils, General Matthew Ridgway and subsequently Maxwell Taylor, perceived that other priorities drove Eisenhower's decisions. Ridgway thought Eisenhower prioritized balanced budgets over defense requirements for political gain (Ridgway 1956, 272). Indeed, director of the budget bureau Dodge noted that a poll indicated the public favored four policy priorities: "(1) Korea; (2) tax reduction; (3) economy in government; and (4) a balanced budget" (FRUS 2010f, 537).¹² Fiscal responsibility issues appeared a high priority for the public, making policymakers sense the issue to offer political opportunity.¹³ Taylor perceived Eisenhower's motivation differently, simply observing that Eisenhower favored a balanced budget as an end in itself, and this goal superseded fulfilling the defense requirements that Taylor judged necessary (Taylor 1972, 169). The

¹² This contrasts with contemporary public sentiment, as a recent Pew poll found reducing the deficit to be the 13th highest public policy priority. See <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/01/28/economy-and-covid-19-top-the-publics-policy-agenda-for-2021/>, accessed on April 28, 2021.

¹³ Using historic polling data on the public's concern over federal budget deficits is problematic. Gallup has registered the trend of budget deficits as a "most important problem" question since 1990, and other agencies have sporadically polled the question back to 1980. However, prior to 1980, poll data simply reflect the question on deficits simply as question without comparison to other priorities, which make the results impractical to use. Nonetheless, analyzing this data reveals that the public has consistently responded that it is an important issue, with small peaks and valleys over the decades. See ropercenter.cornell.edu/balance-public-budget-and-deficit for further details.

Army chiefs of staff perspectives were parochial, however. Eisenhower's policies economized defense spending by prioritizing airpower and nuclear deterrence over ground force capabilities, which likely frustrated the Army chiefs.

According to a staff member's record of a meeting with select congressmen, Eisenhower rebutted their accusations by claiming his broader perspective weighed considerations with which Army chiefs of staff were unburdened (FRUS 2010g, 39),

...as Commander-in-Chief, I have to make the final decisions. I have to look at this whole question of the military establishment as one which must be kept in balance. I have to consider—which the heads of the services do not—the very delicate balance between the national debt, taxes and expenditures. I have to decide what is necessary for adequate security.

He argued that he had accounted for national economic health where these generals did not. Eisenhower asserted that he decided the right balance, arguing that "We must maintain expenditures at the high level needed to guard our national security (Eisenhower 1955)," but "I am convinced that the defense programs and funds for their support as recommended in this budget provide a wise and reasonable degree of protection for the Nation" (Eisenhower 1957a). Satisfied with the balance he had chosen, Eisenhower's efforts were rewarded with results. The nation began to achieve budget surpluses at the end of his first term.

Then, the question whether Eisenhower had shortchanged national defense returned. America was shocked on October 4, 1957 when the Soviet Union launched the Sputnik satellite into orbit. This achievement demonstrated the Soviet capability to launch nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles at the United States and sparked a crash American program to catchup. In his budget message to Congress for 1959, Eisenhower described this program and determined his budget request “adequately provides for our Federal responsibilities in the year ahead” (Eisenhower 1958). Defense secretaries Charles Wilson and Neil McElroy similarly described the necessity to conduct ballistic missile research and development, improve air forces, and that this would provide “the necessary security at a reasonable cost” (McElroy 1958, 67).

Defense spending increased from \$39.2 billion to \$41.5 billion from 1958 to 1959, which was a real increase of 0.8% when accounting for inflation. Real defense spending declined in the following year, and the 1958–1959 increase of 6% was proportionately less than the deliberately planned defense spending increase from 1956 to 1957 of 8%. The defense spending response to Sputnik was not dramatic, with changes more apparent in nondefense spending such as space exploration and education as well as defense-internal accounts that reallocated funds to missile development, rather than increasing the defense department’s top line.

Eisenhower actually presided over a decrease in defense spending authorization in the few years after Sputnik.¹⁴ The 1959 and 1960 defense budget authorizations declined from \$41.4 billion to \$40.1 billion. His administration secretly enacted NSC 5906/1 on August 5, 1959 which described his revised perspective to “make a determined effort to hold Federal expenditures to levels which over time will permit reductions in the public debt,” remain “prepared to increase taxes if necessary to avoid extended budgetary deficits,” ensure adequate spending “for all programs essential to U.S. security,” with aspirations to sustain economic growth and progress, low unemployment, and avoiding government intervention in free enterprise through price controls (FRUS 2010h, 311). This was essentially the same policy as earlier in the administration which expressed an ultimate purpose to protect and promote national economic health, but consolidated several different considerations to encourage business, reduce the national debt, and also ensure sufficient military spending to defend the nation.

¹⁴ While much of the nation was shocked at Sputnik’s launch, there is a misconception that the Eisenhower administration panicked. Rather, Eisenhower sought to downplay the significance of the launch and attempted to avoid dramatic spending changes in response. Attempting to contrast himself with Eisenhower’s conservatism and reassuring the nervous sense of the population, Kennedy claimed his administration would attempt to put a man on the moon before the end of the 1960s. See Peoples 2008 and McDougall 1985 for more.

Approving the balance his administration had reached, Eisenhower concluded his term stating, "For the fiscal year 1962 I send you budget and legislative proposals which will meet the essential domestic needs of the Nation, provide for the national defense, and at the same time preserve the integrity and strength of our Federal Government's finances" (Eisenhower 1961). However, the president also cautioned (Eisenhower 1961),

Over the next ten years and beyond, we will be faced with the consequences of many commitments under present laws for nondefense expenditures, in addition to the heavy military burden we must continue to bear...New and expanded Federal programs being urged by special groups are frequently appealing, but, added to existing commitments, they threaten to swell expenditures beyond the available resources.

This caution later proved prescient.

Echoing fears of a "Garrison State," Eisenhower also famously warned against the military-industrial complex which Lasswell (1941) claimed would seek to perpetually grow America's security apparatus until it consumed more resources than the nation could afford. Eisenhower attempted to fight forces that sought ever-expanding defense spending but only achieved three budget surpluses in his presidency, accruing net debt of \$15.5 billion in eight years. Eisenhower articulated willingness to run temporary deficits if security circumstances warranted, such as existed when he arrived at the White House, but was also unable to achieve consistent

surpluses like he planned. His detractors, meanwhile, accused him of spending too little on defense and leaving America exposed to military threats.

2.4.3 Kennedy: Defense Spending Insures National Survival¹⁵

Kennedy won the presidency after hawkishly campaigning to the right of Eisenhower's vice president, Richard Nixon, on national security. Kennedy claimed that Eisenhower and Nixon had inadequately provided for national security, having spent too little on defense. Accordingly, Kennedy acceded to office claiming that the U.S. needed to "pay any price" and "bear any burden" for its defense. Noting Soviet brinkmanship as well as observing a flaw that the New Look might fail to deter incremental communist advances that individually did not warrant a nuclear response, the Kennedy administration adopted Maxwell Taylor's idea of "Flexible Response" articulated in the book *The Uncertain Trumpet*. Flexible Response entailed procuring more conventional forces that would allow a greater range of military solutions individually-tailorable to the specific circumstances of a crisis. Conventional forces and military responses would be more financially expensive than nuclear options, though.

¹⁵ For background on the Kennedy administration and defense policy, see Smoke's (1993) chapters 6 and 7 that discusses the "missile gap" as a political issue, Flexible Response as a policy response to the New Look, and the military buildup that ensued. Enthoven and Smith (2005) record McNamara's implementation of the PPBS, noting the need for the Secretary of Defense to overcome military biases and bureaucratic conflict to establish comprehensive, visionary defense strategy.

Kennedy also sought to develop unconventional forces that could counter communist subversion and to increase investment in ballistic missiles in order to close the alleged “missile gap” (McNamara 1962, 79; 136; 138).

The Kennedy administration inherited a surplus from Eisenhower, but also oversaw an important change in budget outcomes. Nondefense spending began to exceed defense expenditures in 1962, ceasing the military’s decade-long run of constituting the majority of federal spending. Despite the domestic aspects of his New Frontier program, Kennedy seemed not to recognize this development, instead publicly attributing growth in spending to the military budget (Kennedy 1962),

Increases in expenditures for the Nation's defense are largely responsible for the rise in the budget of this administration compared to that of its predecessor. Indeed, apart from the expected increase in interest payments, expenditures for the so-called ‘domestic civil’ functions of government [will be] held virtually stable between 1962 and 1963.

Regardless, from this moment until the present, spending on social programs has consistently grown to consume larger portions of the federal budget, rendering defense spending a less consequential tool to reduce total expenses, or to use as economic stimulus (see Figure 2; Laird 1971, 152).

Kennedy nonetheless remained cost-conscious about defense spending. He threatened to withdraw conventional forces from Europe, expressed concerns that fielding military forces pushed America to incur debt while European allies acted as

security free-riders. He relied on nuclear forces to defeat potential Soviet invasions, and eventually maintained forces in Europe to preclude West Germany from developing its own nuclear program (Gavin 2001). Kennedy recognized a tradeoff between the benefits of improving America's ability to counter inconspicuous Soviet aggression with the economic challenges that Flexible Response incurred.

Kennedy affirmed his new Flexible Response policy in his annual budget message for 1963 by touting that he had strengthened the military and increased the types of circumstances which they could be applied (Kennedy 1962). Defense secretary Robert McNamara elaborated on Kennedy's assertions, stating that the administration had "substantially strengthened our armed forces but has also given the United States a greater range of military alternatives with which to meet threats of aggression," by quickening the pace of developing nuclear weapons, increasing the size and mobility of conventional forces, and improving general readiness (McNamara 1962, 4). He also noted that, to restrain growth in defense spending, "numerous steps were taken to reduce the higher cost of our increased strength by curtailing or canceling projects that offer little or no gain in military effectiveness" (5).

This was a subtle change in emphasis from the Eisenhower administration. The defense secretary emphasized efficiency in spending rather than restraint in spending.

McNamara praised the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) he instituted at the defense department, which sought to coordinate and economize both strategy and budget choices. He liked that his PPBS trimmed fat, but McNamara did not express desire to limit defense spending writ large like the preceding administration had.

Kennedy envisioned that, despite the increased defense spending his administration planned, the nation would retain a fiscal surplus. However, Kennedy enacted a program with a recipe to return deficit spending by decreasing taxes and increasing defense spending. "My tax proposals include substantial permanent reductions in individual and corporation income tax rate" (Kennedy 1963). This represented a deliberate choice. Kennedy argued that a tax cut would stimulate the economy and increase revenue in the long run, but the nation could not afford defense budget cuts because the threat was too grave (Kennedy 1963),

The immediate effect of my proposed tax program will be to increase the deficit... This issue must be faced squarely. Our present choice is not between a tax cut and a balanced budget. The choice, rather, is between chronic deficits arising out of a slow rate of economic growth, and temporary deficits stemming from a tax program designed to promote fuller use of our resources and more rapid economic growth. Considerations of sound fiscal policy as well as concern for the Nation's economic wellbeing have led me to the conviction that the latter choice is the only sensible one... In national defense and space programs—where false economy would seriously jeopardize our national interest or even our national survival—I have proposed expenditure increases.

Kennedy had deliberately chosen temporary budget deficits to maintain defense spending. If the nation were to make spending cuts, it had not been too long since the defense budget had held the preponderance of spending to target, with 51% of federal expenditures in 1961, yet the administration decided the risks of cutting defense spending were too high. McNamara stressed, “The decisions reached involve more than half of the annual Federal budget and, indeed, may determine our national survival” (McNamara 1962, 6).

Like Eisenhower, however, Kennedy tried to find the optimal balance. He told the Joint Chiefs “that they had to be mindful—although it was not their primary concern—that he was facing a budget with a \$9 billion deficit and that this had to enter into the Chiefs’ consideration” (FRUS 2010i, 452). Even if only a little, he pressured his senior military advisors to tighten their belts and restrain their financial appetites.

The Kennedy administration continued working hard to control the deficit. A notetaker on the NSC recorded, “the President emphasized the major effort which has been made to hold down the budget deficit now estimated at about \$12 billion. The current budget shows increases only for defense, space and the fixed charge of interest on the national debt” (FRUS 2010j, 461). But Kennedy observed another reason that deficit spending should only be temporary, attributing it to the necessity for national

survival to endure the Cold War. “An unbalanced budget as such is not worrisome especially when we realize that our present deficit is a reflection of the hot and cold war we have been fighting during the past fifteen years” (461). This implied that, if America were victorious in the Cold War, deficit spending would no longer be necessary or wise. Nonetheless, Kennedy judged that the Soviet threat at the time warranted defense spending that would yield fiscal deficits.

2.4.4 Johnson: Return to Surplus Despite the Vietnam War¹⁶

The Johnson administration’s most famous legacies were to dramatically escalate the Vietnam War as well as enact the “Great Society” social programs. Before acting on either of these, however, the administration inherited a deficit, and the new administration still perceived that the public considered balanced budgets a high priority (Johnson 1971, 37). Johnson accordingly sought to balance the budget. He described his first budget proposal as president by saying, “It cuts the deficit in half, and carries us a giant step toward the achievement of a balanced budget...” (Johnson 1964).

¹⁶ There is a great deal of literature on the Vietnam War which is beyond the scope of this study but, besides this discrete but consequential foreign policy instance, Johnson policy was largely consistent with Kennedy’s. Indeed, perhaps McNamara, defense secretary for both presidents, is perhaps the more consequential figure for studying defense policy and spending in the 1960s. The works from the Kennedy administration remain relevant for this section. For background on what may be more unique aspects of defense policy under the Johnson administration, see Kunz (1999) who notes that, despite the Vietnam War, American economic power allowed Johnson to provide security while attempting to maintain his electorate (229). Miles (2016) argues that the Johnson administration planted the seeds for 1970s détente.

He credited defense budget cuts of more than \$1 billion in helping to reduce the deficit but noted that, due to the serious and continuing Cold War threat, “national defense expenditures will remain high” (Johnson 1964).

Despite the increased costs of the Vietnam War and Great Society programs, the Johnson administration was able to achieve a budgetary surplus in fiscal year 1969 upon leaving office. The nation achieved this with an expanding economy that increased revenues, combined with tax increases. Johnson told Congress (Johnson 1966),

We are a rich nation and can afford to make progress at home while meeting obligations abroad—in fact, we can afford no other course if we are to remain strong. For this reason, I have not halted progress in the new and vital Great Society programs in order to finance the costs of our efforts in Southeast Asia...I want to insure [sic] that the necessary increase in budget expenditures is so financed as to promote economic stability. For this reason, I am proposing several tax measures designed to increase Federal revenues.

Johnson felt he had achieved the right balance between defense requirements and deficit spending at the time. This resulted in another year of budget deficit for 1967. He argued against further spending cuts or tax increases that would attempt to balance the budget (Johnson 1967),

...to seek a lower deficit or a surplus through a more restrictive fiscal program would be unwarranted and self-defeating under present economic conditions...The economy, the budget, and the aims of our society would be jeopardized by either a larger tax increase or by large slashes in military or civilian programs.

The next year, however, he advocated revising the tax scheme to generate more revenue by targeting tax hikes “equitably and rationally,” while warning that defense spending would remain very high (Johnson 1968).¹⁷

Johnson, like Kennedy, made a deliberate choice to maintain temporary budget deficits with substantial defense spending, but strived to return long-term fiscal balance (Connally 1993, 212). He achieved this with the fiscal year 1969 budget, as the nation realized a surplus. The fact that his administration submitted and presided over a balanced budget in his final year, despite having raised defense spending substantially for the Vietnam War, attests to the seriousness with which the Johnson administration attended to this priority. This feat was easier to achieve when policymakers perceived the public placed higher priority on balanced budgets than in subsequent years.

¹⁷ “...we can choose the path of responsibility,” Johnson went on, “We can adopt a reasoned and moderate approach to our fiscal needs. We can apportion the fiscal burden equitably and rationally through the tax measures I am proposing...The costs of that defense [spending]—even after a thorough review and screening—remain very large.”

2.4.5 Nixon/Ford: Spending on Social Programs Cross a Threshold¹⁸

The Nixon presidential campaign pledged to end the Vietnam War, which implied significantly reducing military spending. When in office, the administration also implemented the policy of “détente” which sought to ease international tensions and deescalate the Cold War. Considering the entire federal budget, however, the Nixon administration observed a significant development in considering the decision to tradeoff between defense spending and balanced budgets. Spending on social programs overall, as well as entitlements particularly, began to exceed defense expenditures.

Defense secretary Laird summarized the change (Laird 1971, 152),

The defense budget no longer consumes the large percentages of our government resources that it did in the 1950's. In those years, it could play a key role in financing increases in other segments of the federal budget — and in the employment and unemployment trends. But as a result of this changed complexion of the federal budget, the opportunity to use changes in the defense program to finance non-defense programs is significantly reduced. Thus, the period of defense dominance in resource allocation is over.

¹⁸ For background on the Nixon and Ford administration's defense policy, see chapter 2 in Brands (2014) who argues that, despite its shrewdness, unforeseen events disrupted the administration's strategic plans (100). Kimball (2006) describes the Nixon Doctrine and the administration's contradictory policy in Vietnam, but its attempt to distribute the burden of international security to allies and partners. Chapter 9 in Walker (1995) describes the economic conditions and oil crisis that weakened the administration's negotiating position at Helsinki/SALT I, and planted seeds for the rise of Reagan. Laird (1985) reviews the strategic issues and decisions that faced the administration, and articulates their lessons learned to rely less on military strength and more on other sources of national power, hold greater humility after observing the limitations of American power in Vietnam, as well as make necessary adjustments to defense bureaucracy.

Nonetheless, Nixon cut defense spending as part of a comprehensive plan to maintain the surplus his administration inherited, though much of the cuts were the result of curtailment in the Vietnam War. In his first budget report to Congress Nixon noted (Nixon 1970),

For the first time in two full decades, the Federal Government will spend more money on human resource programs than on national defense...Spending for national defense, despite continued improvements in our military forces, will claim a smaller percentage of the budget than in any year since 1950... Although 1971 outlays are \$5.5 billion higher than the total originally proposed a year ago for 1970, outlays for national defense and space activities have been reduced by \$10.8 billion.

Secretary Laird asserted that this defense spending was “a rock bottom budget,” (Laird 1970, 1), though national security advisor Kissinger claimed that Laird’s rhetoric was at least partially a parochial attempt at bureaucratic maneuvering. According to Kissinger, Laird was over-emphasizing international dangers to pad his budget requests (Kissinger 1979, 397). Laird countered that those wielding the accountant’s ax were continuing a trend in the nation’s budget to prioritize “spending more on human needs than on Defense needs” (Laird 1971, 7).

With spending on social programs growing as well as a set of fiscal troubles brewing, budget surpluses yielded to deficits.¹⁹ On top of the complicated economic concerns — each of which would have been legacy-defining moments for other administrations — Nixon sought a balanced budget but simultaneously attempted to increase defense spending. Although the nation increased the military budget from \$78 billion in 1969 to \$96 billion in 1977, real defense spending declined from \$612 billion to \$419 billion.²⁰ His advisors noted in a staff paper that raising taxes to reduce deficits would be “extremely unpopular” and that it would be best to address imbalanced budgets solely by reducing expenditures (FRUS 2010k, 560).

When the administration mulled defense spending cuts to balance the budget in another staff paper, they concluded that the threats were too high, preferring a budget deficit to the increased risk of a weaker military (FRUS 2010l, 844). Nixon attempted to protect the defense budget, exclaiming “I urge the Congress not to make the costly

¹⁹ Nixon responded to the deteriorating economic situation, in part, by ending the gold standard for American currency as a move to combat inflation (Kennedy et al. 2002, 954). The dollar had been gaining value in the international currency markets and became increasingly expensive for foreign buyers to acquire, raising demand to exchange American currency for its gold reserves (Mankiw 2009, 361). Furthermore, the balance of international payments favored foreign countries for successive presidents, particularly West Germany because of America’s large body of troops stationed there. Kennedy and Johnson had attempted to resolve net cash outflows by having countries compensate for American defense expenditures through various remuneration schemes, especially arms sales (Schelling 1978, 256). The Oil Crisis of 1973 added to economic woes, causing gasoline prices to skyrocket (Case and Fair 1994, 108–110).

²⁰ Real spending in FY2020 constant dollars per FY2020 OSD Green Book Table 6-13.

mistakes it has made in previous years in its defense cuts; the budget as submitted represents America's actual military needs, and offers the best means to secure peace for the coming generation" (Nixon 1972). These expressions all reflected a considered and deliberate choice to maintain the defense spending that accompanied budget deficits.

Nixon explained the deficit and defense spending problems his administration faced along with the approach he had taken (Nixon 1973a),

The 1974 budget fulfills my pledge to hold down Federal spending so that there will be no need for a tax increase...The increase in government claims on taxpayers was not for defense programs...the total budget has grown by 50%, and nondefense outlays have grown by 91%, or \$90 billion...But, while this Administration has succeeded in eliminating unnecessary defense spending, it is equally determined to spend whatever is necessary for national security. Our 1974 budget achieves this goal. It assures us of sufficient strength to preserve our security and to continue as a major force for peace. Moreover, this strength will be supported, beginning this year, without reliance on a peacetime draft.

Nixon's concluding comments for defense spending in his presidency characterized his proposed military budget as the "minimum prudent levels of defense spending consistent with maintaining adequate armed forces to assure our national security" (Nixon 1974). Measured in terms of percentage of the GDP, Laird had previously argued that "an adequate defense effort imposes a smaller economic burden upon the nation than at any time for more than 20 years" (Laird 1972). This language, combined with the reality of deficits, demonstrated that the administration made a conscious choice to maintain the defense spending they considered necessary to protect the nation even if it

incurred greater debt. Like the presidents before him, Nixon too expressed a desire “to wipe out the deficit altogether and to balance the Federal budget” (Nixon 1973c), but made a deliberate choice to run budget deficits rather than reduce defense spending.

President Ford affirmed Nixon’s appraisal when he took office (Ford 1975),

I regret that my budget and tax proposals will mean bigger deficits temporarily, for I have always opposed deficits...The proportion of the budget devoted to defense has declined substantially since 1964, with a corresponding increase in the nondefense proportion of the budget...Defense programs have undergone large reductions in real terms—reductions of about 40% since...Therefore, this budget proposes an increase in defense outlays in current dollars that will maintain defense preparedness and preserve manpower levels in the face of rising costs. These proposals are the minimum prudent levels of defense spending consistent with providing armed forces which, in conjunction with those of our allies, will be adequate to maintain the military balance. Keeping that balance is essential to our national security and to the maintenance of peace.

Defense secretary James Schlesinger acknowledged the size of the defense budget he requested by expressing his view that the value, “is high but quite tolerable”

(Schlesinger 1975). Schlesinger’s successor, Donald Rumsfeld, consciously favored increased defense spending over a balanced budget because the benefits of greater security outweighed the costs of increased debt (Rumsfeld 2011, 204). Ford continued in the same vein the following year (Ford 1976),

I am recommending a significant increase in defense spending for 1977. If in good conscience I could propose less, I would. Great good could be accomplished with other uses of these dollars. My request is based on a careful assessment of the international situation and the contingencies we must be prepared to meet. The amounts I seek will provide the national defense it now appears we need. We dare not do less.

Together, Presidents Nixon and Ford struggled to achieve a balanced federal budget but would not accept reducing defense spending beneath the extent their advisors recommended as necessary to deter the Soviet threat. They attributed deficits to the growth of nondefense spending, particularly social programs. Regardless, leaders were conscious of the impact defense spending had on the budget, and they deliberately decided that benefits exceeded the costs.

In contrast to preceding administrations, Nixon and Ford seemed to sense a changed public attitude that viewed balanced budgets as less important than in the recent past. Balancing the budget did not seem as much as politically-rewarding as it had previously. Policymakers perceived higher political costs for running deficits before Nixon but, beginning with his administration, seemed to perceive diminishing potential punishment over deficits. As spending on social programs increased, presidents sensed a shift in the public's priorities where public services appeared to eclipse balancing the budget, despite the real growth in spending and social programs consuming larger portions of expenditures.

2.4.6 Carter: A Reverse in Course²¹

The Nixon and Ford administrations had expressed apprehensions about a long-term, sustained high-level of Soviet defense spending over the course of the 1970s (Rumsfeld 1977, 2). Ford proposed substantial defense spending increases during the final year of his term claiming to hedge against this perceived growing threat, though election year politics may have also been a factor in an attempt to contrast with Carter. Having defeated Ford and succeeded to presidential office, the Carter administration was nonetheless aware of the growing Soviet military strength (Carter 1982, 222–223), and, consistent with Carter’s stance on the inordinate fear of communism, sought a more modest increase in defense spending than Ford. President Carter’s advisors recommended a real increase of 3% in defense spending per year (Vance 1983, 65). Carter agreed, taking credit for the reduced growth in defense spending in his first annual budget report. “The 1979 defense budget is prudent and tight, but consists of a real growth in outlays of 3% above the current year’s budget. Consistent with campaign pledges to the American people, it is \$8 billion below the defense budget projected for 1979 by the previous administration” (Carter 1978).

²¹ For additional context of Carter administration defense policy, see Auten (2008) who describes Carter’s change from dove to hawk over the course of his presidency. Walker (1995) records the end of détente and a renewal of hostility between the Soviet Union and the United States during the period. Nichols (2002) attributes Carter’s change to a focus on human rights.

However, Carter adjusted his perspective over the course of his four-year administration. By the end of his term he sought greater defense spending increases than those he had originally proposed. He attributed this revised outlook to the same “sustained expansion in the Soviet defense effort” that Ford attempted to address, yet Carter had stymied, as well as the Iranian hostage crisis, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and other secondary security concerns (Brown 1980, 2). Defense secretary Harold Brown first equivocated in his 1980 budget request, stating that the administration was choosing a middle course between the extremes of cutting spending to an extent which might invite aggressive behavior from adversaries on the one hand, to overspending which might trigger an aggressive adversarial response on the other (Brown 1979, 26–29). Brown subsequently advocated a more hawkish policy, proclaiming that “the Carter administration has concluded that the defense program must be substantially increased over the next five years, and that we must begin the effort now” (Brown 1980, 2). Carter had earlier touted the restraint in his defense spending growth, but now sought credit for greater growth than before. “The long decline in real spending for defense that began in 1969 has been reversed. The uncertain and sometimes hostile world we live in requires that we continue to rebuild our defense forces” (Carter 1980, M4). He

emphasized, "I am committed as a matter of fundamental policy to continued real increases in defense" (M5).

Encountering Reagan as his main Republican foil for the 1980 presidential election, Carter was outflanked to the right on defense spending. He changed his rhetoric to emphasize fiscal responsibility while also maintaining his investment in defense. Carter proposed a 1981 budget which would yield "the lowest deficit in 7 years" (Carter 1980, M3). He concluded his term in office stating, "The budget request reflects a careful balance between the need to meet all critical defense needs, while maintaining fiscal restraint" (Carter 1981, M7). Reagan had galvanized support to rally against the Soviet threat, while few were enthusiastic at the prospect of Carter's more and greater taxes. Carter sensed political pressure to reduce taxes that were perceived to be stifling economic growth, and noted a seemingly incongruent pressure to increase defense spending (Carter 1982, 539–540).²²

In his final budget report, Brown expressed concerns about national fiscal solvency but rendered no explicit judgment weighing the costs and benefits. He simply implied that the course the Carter administration sought considered the issue well enough. The administration recognized (Brown 1981, 10–11),

²² The 1970s had produced stagflation, a condition where a stagnating economy was exacerbated by monetary inflation. Consumer purchasing power and, consequently, quality of life was not increasing.

... the need to keep a balance among the demands of national security and those of domestic programs, as well as the requirement for economic growth and stability...The proposed FY 1982–1985 program is, in my judgment, feasible without adverse economic effects, and the rate of expansion of real defense spending is sustainable past 1985, if that proves necessary in politico-military terms.

He described the concerns and tradeoffs but did not state whether this defense spending would be enough. He simply asserted that the nation could afford it.

Carter demurred on an explicit value judgment. He approved of the balance between the concerns between deficit spending and the military threats that defense budgets sought to counter, but did not express a sense of which danger was greater. He paid heed to the deficit, but seemed to emphasize it more when Reagan appeared as his rival. He claimed credit for deficit reductions as well as defense spending increases. In the end, Carter seemed genuinely trapped on the issue, having been outflanked by Reagan on defense spending, and sensing that the public seemed less concerned with deficits than in the past.

2.4.7 Reagan: Kennedy Doubled-Down²³

Reagan most explicitly articulated his priorities between deficit spending and the military budget. His position on having a strong military was well known. He would often encounter questions at what costs he would adhere to this position, however. “If it comes down to a choice between national security and the deficit,” he said, “I’d have to come down on the side of national defense” (Reagan 1990, 235; 1982b). He consistently argued for a fiscal policy of lowering taxes, reducing overall federal spending, but increasing defense spending (Reagan 1982a). Where Carter saw these actions as incongruent for achieving a balanced budget, Reagan surmised, like Kennedy had beforehand, that lower taxes would stimulate the economy and produce more revenue (Reagan 1990, 232).

Revenue decreased for two years after the 1981 tax cuts during a recession, but consistently increased after the tax 1986 cuts to achieve the highest annual revenues for the nation up to that point, even accounting for inflation. Reagan requested increased

²³ For additional background of Reagan administration defense policy, see Alesina and Carliner (1991) who compile eight essays which “study voting patterns, monetary and fiscal policies, welfare spending, tax reform, minimum-wage legislation, the savings and loan debacle, and international trade policy” that indicates “a sharp temporary shift to the right” in the public’s preferences following the 1980 election, followed by a moderation in Reagan policies after his first term (1). Brands’s (2014) chapter 3 argues that Reagan sought to “provide diplomatic leverage for the United States” (103). Snyder and Brown (1988) compile a collection of essays on important strategic concepts of the period, including a chapter by Issolito that analyzes the relationship between 1980s defense spending and growth in budget deficits.

defense spending from Congress to expand military capabilities in order to protect against growing Soviet strength (Reagan 1982a, M4). He sought 1983 defense authorization for \$257 billion when the 1981 authorization had been \$178 billion.

By the time the Reagan administration entered office in 1981, growth in nondefense spending had surpassed defense spending so that the latter composed 26% of federal expenditures. This was a substantial change from the beginning of the Eisenhower administration. In 1954, defense comprised 70% of federal spending. By 1981, however, social programs accounted for 53% of federal expenditures. Despite the preponderance of the budget devoted towards nondefense items, increases in defense spending under Reagan became increasingly contentious. Democrats preferred spending on social programs but some Republicans also wavered in their support of the president on his trademark issue, even in his own Cabinet. Seeking balanced budgets and concerned over the possibility of losing Republican congressional seats in the 1982 midterm elections, treasury secretary Donald Regan tried enlisting Nancy Reagan to persuade her husband to concede defense spending cuts in order to forestall the alternative approach of raising taxes (Regan 1988, 177). Director of the Office of Management and Budget David Stockman also wanted to curtail increases in defense spending to buoy the nation's fiscal health (Meese 1992, 178). Still, most of Reagan's

political base as well as his inner circle of advisors held that cuts to social programs were the key to fiscal balance, not reduced defense spending (Shultz 1993, 779; Meese 1992, 177; Weinberger 1990, 68).

With the deficit growing rapidly in the 1980s, there was a resurgence in popular support for balanced budgets. Republicans proposed a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget, which was supported by prominent Democrats such as presidential candidates Jerry Brown and Paul Simon. The amendment passed the Senate but was narrowly defeated in the House of Representatives in 1982. In 1977, 33 states had instituted formal balanced budget requirements.²⁴ This increased to 46 states by 2015 and, by 2021, all but one state had them (Rueben and Randall 2017, 2). Various polling agencies sporadically began to track budget deficits as a “most important issue” in 1980, and Gallup began to consistently pose the question starting in 1989.

In his 1983 State of the Union address, Reagan attributed deficit spending to large social programs. “Contrary to the drumbeat we've been hearing for the last few months, the deficits we face are not rooted in defense spending...The fact is, our deficits come from the uncontrolled growth of the budget for domestic spending” (Reagan 1983b). He accurately identified, and directly confronted, the growing factor that

²⁴ States began instituting balanced budget requirements in the mid-1800s. New Jersey was the first in 1844. States steadily but gradually introduced them thereafter (Smith and Hou 2013, 7).

previous administrations had more quietly noted, while also advocating increased military spending. Defense secretary Caspar Weinberger observed (Weinberger 1983, 67),

It has been argued that the size of the projected deficits, and the implications of these deficits for the economy, present a strong case for cutting defense spending. This argument does not consider the national security concerns that justify the levels of defense spending proposed by the Administration. Moreover, strictly on economic grounds, even drastic cuts in the proposed Five-Year Defense Program would not produce dramatic reductions in the deficit.

The Reagan administration consistently defended increased military spending as necessary to safeguard against Soviet military power.²⁵ In his budget request for 1985, Weinberger entrenched the administration's position (Weinberger 1984, 8-9 and 69).

The Fiscal Year 1985 Annual Report to the Congress presents a prudent and responsible defense budget, and provides a thorough rationale for that budget. It shows that we arrived at this budget not by picking a budget number arbitrarily, but by weighing the threats and challenges to our interests, by refining our strategy for meeting those threats, and by identifying the capabilities we need to fulfill that strategy...The prospect of continuing high federal deficits has increased pressure to lower the level of resources available to meet our defense commitments. There seems to be a belief in some quarters that large defense-spending reductions must be made as the primary means of lowering future federal deficits. However, the defense budget is not and should not be used as a fiscal shock absorber – a task for which it is not designed or suited.

The administration's rhetoric began to shift in Reagan's second term, however.

The language began to change emphasis towards balancing the budget, sought to resist

²⁵ Reagan held the idea that America could outspend the Soviet Union's defense effort, forcing the Soviet Union into insolvency and, combined with demonstrating the moral superiority of democracy, could ultimately vanquish the USSR as a rival (Gaddis 2005, 375-376).

pressures to reduce defense spending, but also expressed willingness to cooperate with political opposition. The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act, more commonly known as the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings compromise, accompanied this shift. Reagan reported to Congress (Reagan 1986a, M4),

...there is a major threat looming on the horizon: the Federal deficit. If this deficit is not brought under control, we risk losing all we've achieved—and more. We cannot let this happen. Therefore, the budget I am presenting has as its major objective setting the deficit on a downward path to a balanced budget by 1991.

Weinberger affirmed his support for this effort (Weinberger 1985, 3), but expressed misgivings that defense spending cuts would undermine national defense while also failing to balance the budget (77–78). He reported that he “scaled back budget requests significantly to help reduce the federal deficit” (3), while pointing out that defense threats had not receded (77). He asserted, again, that cutting defense spending would not remedy deficits but it would expose America to military threats (78). If the nation were going to balance the budget, budget hawks would have to focus on nondefense spending (77).

Shortly afterwards, Reagan perceived that Congress had overcorrected and defense spending had fallen too low. He complained that real defense spending had decreased in consecutive years and declared the situation intolerable (Reagan 1987a, M7). He proposed a three percent real increase in spending, noting that this was still \$8

billion less than the previous year's proposal, and was "the minimum level consistent with maintaining an adequate defense of our Nation" (M7).

Weinberger reinforced Reagan's caution, stating "The budget proposed for FY 1987 is the minimum I can recommend in good conscience to fund a secure deterrent at a prudent level of risk" (Weinberger 1986, 4), and that "...defense spending has borne more than its fair share of cuts to lower the federal deficit" (1987, 91). Frank Carlucci succeeded Weinberger in office but reiterated his outlook by writing, "President Reagan and I believe that this budget preserves the common defense, but we agree as well that it forces us to accept greater risks than we think wise," (Carlucci 1988, 4) and "continued funding constraints have forced us to accept increased risks" (Carlucci 1989, 81).

Reagan summarized his views of deficit spending and military budgets at the conclusion of his presidency by lamenting the nation's inability to balance the budget, (Reagan 1989, 1.5–1.7),

The one area in which I have been persistently disappointed throughout my term of office has been in the efforts to bring the budget under control. Time and again I have proposed measures to help curb Federal domestic program spending. Time and again these proposals have been rejected by Congress...even after including necessary increases for defense, my March 1981 budget called for net spending reductions totaling \$331 billion over five years; but Congress approved less than 40 percent of those reductions. Wasteful programs continued to be funded. The necessary reductions have still not been made...Defense budget authority declined in real (inflation-adjusted) terms for the fourth straight year with funding of \$299 billion for 1989. This trend cannot continue without severe

impact on combat readiness. Therefore, my budget requests [increased] defense funding...

Reagan favored increased defense spending until the end. He wanted a strong military in order to negotiate with the Soviet Union from a position of strength (Brands 2014, 103). The administration felt that increased military power would increase their bargaining power in arms control talks with the Soviet Union. However, Reagan's desire to reduce deficits by decrementing social programs was unrealistic while Democrats still held significant power in Congress. Divided government between the executive and legislative branch led to disagreements over spending and revenue options, leading to a lack of national resolve to make hard tradeoffs, thus producing greater deficits (McCubbins 1991, 103).²⁶ Goldwater-Nichols legislation changed the nature of how the military operated, but it did not make an impact on deficit spending and defense budget rhetoric during his administration.

²⁶ Some apply a counterintuitive logic that Reagan's deficit spending eventually produced balanced budgets. Former Vice President Dick Cheney argues that America's increased defense spending threatened the Soviet Union with an accelerated arms race, caused the nation to bankrupt and collapse, which led to the "peace dividend" spending reductions of the early 1990s, and ultimately facilitated balanced budgets by the end of the century (Cheney 2011, 311).

2.4.8 George H.W. Bush: Economic Woes and the Growing Deficit²⁷

The Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended shortly after Bush assumed office. When the Soviet threat evaporated, so did the main justification for much of American defense spending. Deficit hawks employed the term “peace dividend” as a benefit of reducing defense spending (Lee and Vedder 1996), while advocates for a strong post-Cold War military espoused a “Base Force” beneath which reductions would be unwise (Jaffe 1993). In his first annual budget message, President Bush proclaimed “savings in the defense budget are now possible” (Bush 1990a, 152). The question remained, how much savings would the new circumstances warrant? Bush vowed not to raise taxes during his presidential campaign, which committed him to balance the budget through spending cuts and further economic growth to increase revenue.

The 1991 Gulf War did not impact the Bush administration’s long-term defense budget much. It was financed in the short-term through separate supplemental budget requests not considered part of the regular budget, and these costs were, in large part,

²⁷ For background on the strategic approaches that faced the George H.W. Bush administration at the end of the Cold War, each implying a different level of defense spending, see Krauthammer (1989) who argued that the United States should maintain its hegemony, Fukuyama (1989) who some mistakenly interpret to advocate the United States need not play an active military role around the world but whose actual message had less to do with policy prescriptions, and Huntington (1996) who foresaw an era of conflict and struggle between the most populous cultures. Additionally, Tucker and Hendrickson (1992) discuss the challenges of the post-Cold War new world order, arguing that a new, American-led international security arrangement of restraint should attempt to maintain the status quo.

reimbursed by foreign contributors. The United States spent \$61 billion on the Gulf War, but received \$54 billion as compensation by contributing members of the coalition (Cheney 1992b, 634; Horan 1997). Although not affecting Bush's budget planning, the Clinton administration later planned defense budgets to maintain a capability to conduct an operation similar to the Gulf War.

The Bush administration decided on a steady, gradual drawdown that would last until 1997 and result in a "Base Force" level of 1.6 million active-duty personnel. This decision hedged bets about the international security situation, eschewing forecasts on strategic threats and, instead, retaining capabilities to deploy significant forces across the globe (Jaffe 2000, 56–58). While reducing personnel by 25%, it would only reduce the defense budget 10% in current dollars by 1995 (64). The administration emphasized that this would still achieve a real reduction of 29% in defense spending since entering office in 1989 (Bush 1992, 9). Defense secretary Dick Cheney declared, "The pace of the planned defense drawdown – reflected in the average 4 percent per year real decline in spending projected through FY 1997 – is prudent, from both a security and a budget standpoint" (Cheney 1992, 26–27).

Bush's 1991 national security strategy concurrently espoused cutting the national deficit and defense spending (Bush 1991b, 19). His administration initially forecast a

balanced budget by 1993 (Bush 1990a, 3) but a struggling national economy led Bush to resign this as a long-term goal to be achieved at an indeterminate point in the future (Bush 1992, 3). His final national security strategy in 1993 echoed this aspiration. "At home, our long-term growth strategy must include: sustained measures to bring federal spending more into line with available resources and to lower the federal deficit significantly..." (Bush 1993, 10).

A recession and stagnant recovery slowed growth in revenue. Infamous for compromising his "read my lips" campaign promise when it came to "no new taxes," Bush endorsed Democratic tax hikes intended to reduce the deficit. He proposed spending cuts consistent with the Graham-Rudman-Hollings agreement (Bush 1990a, 3) which Congress only partially implemented. Nonetheless, deficit spending consistently increased during his administration. Bush paid lip service to achieving a balanced budget, but did not exhibit determination to achieve it. He did demonstrate courage to raise taxes and willingness to cut defense spending, but provided insufficient explanation that spending could not be cut further. Whether hamstrung by economic challenges, inability to achieve partisan agreement during divided government, or lacking sufficient resolve to balance the budget, the Bush administration effectively

reduced the military budget, but deficit spending still increased because growth in total spending outpaced growth in revenue.

2.4.9 Clinton: Economic Joys and a Return to Surplus²⁸

The Clinton administration came to office with a mandate to repair the flagging economy, which had been the undoing of Bush's reelection effort. President Clinton quickly announced that his economic recovery plan would consist of stimulus, public investments, and deficit reduction (Clinton 1993). Indeed, his political advisor James Carville expressed apprehension about the deficit by joking that he would like to be reincarnated as the federal bond market because bond investors held so much power over fiscal policy. Part of the deficit reduction would entail decreased defense spending. Clinton claimed credit for reducing entitlement spending by \$300 billion (Clinton 1994a, 4), but also oversaw the defense department's "Bottom-Up Review" (BUR) which sought military spending reductions.

In contrast to the "Base Force" upon which the Bush administration had decided, the BUR chose to examine the potential threats and corresponding military capabilities

²⁸ For additional background on Clinton administration defense policy, see Mandelbaum (1996) who argues that Clinton acted as a humanitarian interventionist that insufficiently guarded against threats to American security. Bossie (2004) contends that Clinton failed to adequately secure America from the terrorist threat of Al Qaeda. On the other hand, O'Hanlon (2003) argues that Clinton successfully managed a military drawdown to produce a capable and flexible military prepared for 21st Century conflict.

required to meet forecasted threats in order to determine the defense budget. It was a clever way to maneuver for the predetermined outcome of reducing defense spending. The BUR started by assessing the post-Cold War era, devising a new defense strategy to defeat two regional aggressors at roughly the same time, identifying the military capabilities necessary to fulfill that strategy, then finishing by making budgetary, programmatic, and policy decisions to procure the necessary forces (Aspin 1993, 4). In his 1994 national security strategy, Clinton pledged to reject cuts below the BUR-endorsed military capabilities and declared deficit reduction a high priority (Clinton 1994b, 2). By 1998, the BUR process had reduced real defense spending from \$537 billion in 1992 to \$422 billion, a real 22% reduction.²⁹

A string of small interventions during the 1990s led the Clinton administration to review whether the BUR had gotten it right. American forces deployed to Somalia, the Balkans, Kuwait, and Haiti. Defense secretary William Perry and his successor William Cohen found the spending sufficient to meet these contingencies while also helping to improve the nation's fiscal health. They endorsed the same phrase nearly verbatim across five successive budget reports, declaring their policy to support "a prudent

²⁹ Expressed in inflation-adjusted FY2020 constant dollars per FY2020 OSD Green Book Table 6-13.

defense posture...while remaining fiscally responsible" (Perry 1996, 278; Cohen 1997, 248; 1998a, 187; 1999, 185; 2000, 174).

Clinton's 1995 and 1996 national security strategies placed the nation's fiscal health as a notable priority. He encapsulated his approach with a repeated statement, "Our primary economic goal is to strengthen the American economy. The first step toward that goal was reducing the federal deficit and the burden it imposes on the economy and future generations" (Clinton 1995b, 19; 1996b, 27). In the 1997 version, he added a goal to balance the federal budget by 2002 (1997b, 18).

This aspiration was fulfilled. In 1999, the nation achieved its first budget surplus since 1971. Clinton concluded that not only had the nation achieved fiscal balance, but defense spending was adequate to defend American interests (Clinton 1998a, 3),

This budget is not just balanced, it is balanced the right way. It not only ends the deficit, it reflects the values that Americans hold dear—the values of opportunity, responsibility, and community...It invests in our communities at home while providing the resources to maintain a strong defense and conduct the international relations that have become so important to our future.

Clinton's final three budgets carried surpluses. Congress made tough choices to bring spending and revenue into balance, the administration frequently expressed a desire to enact stable fiscal policy and, most importantly, a booming economy strengthened revenues. The administration deliberately chose between options, one of which was a decision to substantially reduce defense spending and strengthen the post-

Cold War “peace dividend,” which helped produce a balanced budget.³⁰ Although the first Republican-majority Congress in 40 years precipitated the return to balanced budgets, the Clinton administration consistently espoused significant deficit reductions, chose a level to reduce defense spending but also identified a level beneath which cuts would not go, and resisted temptations to increase spending that would produce budget deficits. His administration deserves a portion of the credit for managing the return to budget surpluses, though how much portion is a topic of debate between those who argue that Republican congressional leaders drove fiscal policy versus those who argue credit belongs to the Democratic Clinton administration.³¹

³⁰ Clinton infrequently discussed defense budgets in his memoirs. When he did, it often fell under the broader context of the federal budget and political jockeying with Republican opposition. His memoirs reinforce the notion Clinton prioritized domestic politics, particularly towards the economy, and attending to foreign policy issues, second. Among foreign policy issues, trade and economic negotiations took precedence over military efforts. There was sufficient material to research the intersection of defense budgets and fiscal behavior in the main resources I used (e.g. annual budget statements and national security documents) to compensate for the lack of material in Clinton’s memoir, however.

³¹ For competing, yet comprehensive descriptions of whom to credit for the millennium surpluses, see Schick 2007, 22–27 and Fisher 2003.

2.4.10 George W. Bush: 9/11 Attacks Disrupt Surpluses³²

President Bush inherited a budget surplus from the Clinton administration and maintained a surplus in his first budget, despite the appearance that his first budget message seemed to promise everything: he vowed to strengthen all major government programs, provide tax cuts to the general population, and still yield a surplus which would pay down the national debt at the fastest rate in history (Bush 2001a, 3). His administration subsequently maintained a surplus in fiscal year 2001. Despite the economic shock of the September 11th terrorist attacks that badly damaged an already slowing economy as well as the unforeseen cost of a military response in Afghanistan, the fiscal year 2002 budget only incurred a deficit of \$158 billion (see Figure 6). Deficits would increase in his second term, however.

Bush deliberately chose to incur deficits to increase defense spending in order to fight the Global War on Terrorism. “A recession and a war we did not choose have led to the return of deficits. My administration firmly believes in controlling the deficit and reducing it as the economy strengthens and our national security interests are met”

³² For additional background on Bush administration defense policy, see Brands’s (2004) chapter 4 who argues that, although there could be a reappraisal of his vision in the future, Bush’s sweeping grand strategy of democratization overreached, has had disappointing results, and squandered American power. Bank et al. (2008) observe that the Bush tax cuts during wartime were an aberration from past revenue practices that tended to use taxes to fund wars.

(Bush 2003a, 1). In successive budget messages Bush explicitly stated his priority was for military spending necessary to fight the wars (2003a, 1; 2004, 1). He shifted this priority slightly in subsequent budget messages, shuffling between statements that protecting citizens in the homeland was his priority as well as combining homeland defense with military spending as a merged top priority (2006a, 1; 2007, 1; 2008, 1). These statements implied that balanced budgets were a secondary priority to national security, and the lack of the former did not imperil the latter.

Returning to the position he had held during the Ford administration, Defense secretary Rumsfeld's annual budget statements as well as a Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) provided almost no rhetoric paying heed to national fiscal considerations. Instead, returning to McNamara-esque language, he focused on "efficiency" to make the most out of the funds allocated to the defense department. Rumsfeld did not consider budget deficits or the national debt to be his department's concern. The primary implication of deficits was the threat of budget reductions (Rumsfeld 2011, 332; Shelton 2010, 506), whereas balanced budgets fostered prospects of increased defense spending (Shelton 2010, 323). Rumsfeld's successor, Robert Gates, moderated this approach somewhat. In the 2008 national defense strategy, Gates directed the military to perform its tasks "within budget constraints" (Gates 2008, 18).

Nonetheless, together the rhetoric these officials used implied that the military had wide latitude in their military budgets.

Bush expressed a desire to balance the federal budget, but he clearly articulated willingness to run deficits in order to prosecute the nation's wars. Yet his strategy to achieve a balanced budget was vague (Bush 2007, 1),

My formula for a balanced budget reflects the priorities of our country at this moment in its history: protecting the homeland and fighting terrorism, keeping the economy strong with low taxes, and keeping spending under control while making Federal programs more effective.

Exactly how he was going to accomplish any one of these very difficult tasks, let alone combining them all together, was not clear. How the administration planned to make programs more effective without increasing spending on them remains opaque. Bush seemed to overestimate the practicality of these ideas, which casts doubt on how realistic his idea of balancing the budget really was. The economic crisis of 2008 and Great Recession significantly reduced revenue further, and Bush correspondingly proposed economic stimulus spending which exacerbated the deficit. Bush decided again that the benefits of deficit spending outweighed their potential consequences. Similarly, and like

his post-Cold War predecessors at some point in their administration, Bush deliberately expressed a preference of defense spending over balanced budgets.³³

2.4.11 Obama: An Unlikely Similarity to Reagan³⁴

President Obama retained Gates as Secretary of Defense in the new Democratic administration, and assumed office during a severe economic downturn that came to be known as “the Great Recession.” Gates adjusted his defense spending and fiscal discipline rhetoric according to the new president’s priorities, which favored reducing the deficit even if at the expense of the military budget (Gates 2014, 548). He affirmed his support for Obama’s changed approach in the 2010 QDR by announcing, “In balancing resources and risk, the QDR recognized the current fiscal challenges facing the United States [the Great Recession] and made difficult tradeoffs where these were warranted” (Gates 2010, 2). This indicated that the defense department’s budgetary discretion previously granted by Bush was being tightened under Obama.

³³ Bush’s memoirs are a concise collection of discussions on discrete issues, rather than a continuous account of his presidency. Following this approach, Bush did not discuss defense budgets and deficit spending to an extent that provided value not previously supplied by my main research resources.

³⁴ For additional background on Obama administration defense policy, note the bibliography by Tier (2014) who argues that the “pivot to the Asia-Pacific” was misguided and misdirected defense resources from the more dangerous threat of terrorism. On the other hand, Rose (2015) contends that Obama’s “ideological liberal with a conservative temperament” policy of temporary retrenchment would stabilize international discord.

Indeed, Obama expressed a desire to rein in defense spending, particularly in limiting the resources devoted to the long-running war in Afghanistan (Obama 2020, 319–320; Woodward 2010, 251). He curtailed the increases Gates sought for the department, “reducing its funding by \$78 billion over the next 5 years on a course for zero real growth in funding” (Obama 2011a, 4). Nonetheless, his administration claimed that Republican deficit hawks in Congress were the real culprits for reductions in defense spending (Carter 2019, 6). The partisan budget gridlock of sequestration, a compromise to reduce budget deficits by cutting government spending categories by equal proportions, characterized the political battle over fiscal policy.

Obama did not seem to share Reagan’s judgment that defense spending should automatically outweigh deficit concerns. Not only did Obama hold different ideological beliefs, but the times were considerably different. Cold War-era Soviet threats were much different than the twenty-first century challenges of terrorism and growth of regional powers. Obama’s first national security strategy devoted substantial attention to the deficit as a security issue. He espoused reallocating spending in favor of “education, energy, science and technology, and health care” (Obama 2010b, 9), while his second national security strategy implied restructuring military forces to meet different threats which did not entail the expensive cost of large ground forces required

to fight wars in Afghanistan or Iraq (Obama 2015b, 24). This would yield reductions since “the military no longer will be sized for large scale, prolonged stability operations” (Obama 2012, 3).

Although Gates adjusted his approach to align with the new president, he dueled with Obama over defense spending. Gates argued that, at 15% of the national budget, defense spending “was a very modest part of the nation’s fiscal problems” and that the country’s military challenges were more concerning (Gates 2014, 549). Similar to Eisenhower’s rebuttals of Ridgway and Taylor, Obama noted that his perspective as president obliged him to consider a broader picture which placed a greater value on fiscal concerns that Gates could afford to discount, but also recognized his commitment to supporters who were opposed to the conflicts that would approve his reallocating defense dollars (Obama 2020, 436–437). Obama’s desire to reduce defense spending requests won out with his appointment of Leon Panetta as defense secretary. Panetta prided himself in fiscal responsibility as a personal value as well as public policy (Panetta 2014, 82), but also expressed appreciation for spending on social programs (105). Panetta had previously been appointed as Director of the Office of Management and Budget at the beginning of the Clinton administration.

Primarily by ending combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Obama's subsequent budget requests planned to reduce defense spending by "\$487 billion over the next 10 years" (Obama 2012, 3) and \$100 billion in 2014 alone (Obama 2013, 35). According to defense secretary Chuck Hagel, the cuts were done "recognizing the fiscal imperative of deficit reduction" (Hagel 2014, iv). Obama then criticized sequestration reductions as excessive and sought a rebound in defense spending towards the end of his administration (Obama 2015a, 45).

At the end of his presidency, Obama expressed satisfaction that he had found the right balance in the defense budget at \$583 billion in current dollars (Obama 2016, 71). Defense spending had been reduced by more than 25% since 2010 (Obama 2015a, 45), but still the nation maintained a budget deficit. His attempts to reduce the deficit were "primarily from reforms in health programs, our tax code, and immigration" (Obama 2015a, 1), but also included an adjustment to a less expensive defense strategy (Obama 2012, 3). Deficits were growing in his second term but, to him, national security threats nonetheless warranted continued deficit spending. Although he may have disagreed with Reagan that defense threats automatically superseded fiscal concerns, Obama's final decisions on defense spending demonstrate similar choices that Reagan made, where spending on defense outweighed desires to eliminate the deficit.

2.4.12 Trump³⁵: Espousing Theodore Roosevelt's Big Stick³⁶

Theodore Roosevelt's famous foreign policy dictum was to "speak softly and carry a big stick." The idea was quiet intimidation. Few would characterize President Trump as a soft-speaker, but there is substantial evidence he espoused the latter portion of Roosevelt's maxim. Like Brands attributes to Reagan (Brands 2014, 103), Trump's idea was leverage. And, like his predecessors, he was willing to tolerate deficits to achieve the strong military he sought.

One of Trump's most prominent policy preferences was to increase defense spending. He took personal interest in, and credit for, boosting the military budget (Bolton 2020, 32). In his first budget message, Trump sought a 9% increase in defense spending compared to the funding enacted in Obama's final year in office, but Trump also expressed that he wanted to avoid a simultaneous increase in deficit spending. His proposed increase was "fully offset by targeted reductions elsewhere" (Trump 2017a,

³⁵ The Trump administration is very recent history where there are not as many research resources available to harness. This reduces some of the fidelity to describe his administration's consideration of defense spending and budget deficits. Furthermore, the story may not yet be over. Trump may run for president again and has sufficient support to conceive of a second administration. Nonetheless, there is enough information available to make a less extensive analysis of the Trump administration's consideration of the balance in comparison to previous administrations.

³⁶ For additional background on Trump administration defense policy, see Bowman (2021) who records Trump's increases in defense budgets, readiness levels, modernization, and success in pushing allies to shoulder more security burden, but also controversial allegations of politicizing the military, transactional adjustments of deployed troop strengths and defense senior leadership.

17), though the political viability of the offsets were another matter. He preferred a stronger military, but his rhetoric suggested that he did not prefer to increase defense spending at the expense of accruing greater debt, rather, the difference would be made up by nondefense spending cuts.

Trump favored disengagement from conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and, once ISIS's territorial control had been neutralized, Syria as well (Woodward 2018, 229). He sought to withdraw forces from Korea (230), while devoting resources to fortify America's southern border. His effort to increase the military budget while also trying to reduce military commitments demonstrated an attempt to strengthen American military power from both supply and demand perspectives. He claimed his desire to strengthen the military was not necessarily to use force, but that it would help in "preserving peace through strength" in three consecutive budget messages (Trump 2018, 1; 2019, 2; 2020, 2). Indeed, billed as a deal-maker, Trump seemed to value the power that a strong military could provide in diplomatic negotiations. He prized the military as a tool to influence the international stage with its potential to use force at least as much as force could actually be applied in-being (Fisher 2017).

Like the Clinton and Obama administrations, but unlike George W. Bush's, the Trump administration prominently expressed a desire to curb deficit spending as part of

the national security strategy. Viewing fiscal health as an important pillar of American power, the Trump administration planned to reduce the debt by “restraining Federal spending, making government more efficient,” reforming tax policy, and promoting economic growth that would increase revenue (Trump 2017b, 19). In a succinct summary of the Pentagon’s corresponding national defense strategy, defense secretary Jim Mattis proclaimed his effort to, “drive budget discipline and affordability to achieve solvency” (Mattis 2018, 10). This approach was successful in at least one aspect, as Trump’s tax cuts were followed by a 0.4% real increase in revenue from 2017–2019 (Treasury Department 2019, 5; Wall Street Journal Editorial Board 2019).³⁷

Nonetheless, annual budget deficits increased to as much as \$1 trillion under Trump. Spending accelerated faster than revenue. The Trump administration blamed Congress for failing to heed the spending cut proposals he had implored (Trump 2020, 7),³⁸

³⁷ See Office of Management and Budget data table 1.3, “Summary of Receipts, Outlays, and Surpluses or Deficits (-) in Current Dollars, Constant (FY 2012) Dollars, and as Percentages of GDP: 1940–2025,” available online at [whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/hist01z3_fy21.xlsx](https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/hist01z3_fy21.xlsx), accessed on May 28, 2021. 2019 is the most recent actual data, and the estimates for 2020 and 2021 are even higher still.

³⁸ I would cite an opposing viewpoint here that accuses Trump’s tax cuts for increasing deficits but, although there are a large number of criticisms along this line, I have not been able to find one that accounts for the fact that revenue actually increased after the tax cuts. These criticisms fail to consider increased spending. Consequently, I disqualify these critiques as biased to such an excessive extent that leads them to draw a false conclusion. Instead, see Novak 2020 and Wall Street Journal Editorial Board 2019.

The President has laid out a vision to drive down deficits and debt through spending restraint in every Budget he has submitted to the Congress. This administration's Budgets have proposed more spending reductions than any other administration in history. This year's Budget includes \$4.4 trillion in savings—bringing deficits down each year, and putting the Federal Government on a path to a balanced budget in 15 years...Unfortunately, the Congress continues to reject any efforts to restrain spending. Instead, they have greatly contributed to the continued ballooning of Federal debt and deficits, putting the Nation's fiscal future at risk.

Naturally, Congress held a different mixture of revenue and spending priorities to Trump's.

Similar to Reagan's admonitions of Congress in his first term, Trump's proposals may not have been politically practical. Just because he proposed cuts to reduce deficits did not mean that Congress would agree to those same cuts. The disparity between partisan ideologies and respective control over various governing institutions were too much to overcome (Krause 2000). Indeed, journalist Bob Woodward described a condition in the White House where many of Trump's own appointees, such as chief of staff John Kelly, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, and defense secretary Mattis sought to wrestle policy control away from the president. Schisms within the Republican party, congressional Democratic opposition, and other bureaucratic resistance were obstacles as well (Woodward 2018; 2020).³⁹ Trump, like many presidents, lacked the power to

³⁹ Woodward goes so far as to characterize resistance to Trump as a "coup d'état" (Woodward 2018, xix).

enact the policy he espoused (Neustadt 1991). Nonetheless, despite the increased revenue, budget deficits grew during the Trump administration and his efforts to persuade Democrats to agree to his proposed budgets failed.

Trump proposed reductions to the deficit as his presidential predecessors had, but his awareness of running consistent budget deficits while proposing increases to defense spending demonstrated his willingness to tolerate deficits in favor of the military budget he desired. A strong military, in Trump's view, was at least tacitly preferable to a balanced budget. Although he proposed cuts in the federal budget to offset increased defense spending, he did not propose to reduce the defense budget when these cuts were rejected by Congress. Instead, Trump implicitly chose to continue increasing defense spending despite also increasing deficits. Even when some national security threats to the United States seemed to diminish, as American wars in the Middle East wound down and North Korea paused its aggressive weapons testing, Trump placed a high premium on being able to negotiate with adversaries from a position of strength by buttressing the military. He might not have agreed with Theodore Roosevelt's dictum to "speak softly," but he did agree that America should "carry a big stick."

2.5 Observations

Based on the rhetoric that post-Second World War presidential administrations have articulated to explain their choices between military budgets and deficit spending, presidents have both expressed and demonstrated a willingness to cut defense spending in order to reduce deficits, they have argued that they have reached the bottom of what they are willing to cut from defense, they have accounted for campaign promises, infrequently publicized defense budget cuts, observed a shift in the proportion of budget expenditures by spending type, and attempted to reconcile policy preferences with contemporaneous economic circumstances. While their rhetoric may have indicated their preferences, it is less clear to what extent their rhetoric translated to action, was simply posturing, or was superseded by other priorities.

Defense spending has been a tool to reduce deficits, but there is a limit to which each president has conveyed they are willing to cut. This reveals similarities of presidents from both parties, connecting otherwise dissimilar presidents from Kennedy to Reagan to Obama. However, some presidents have been stauncher defense hawks than others. The latter portion of the Truman, as well as Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Trump administrations stood apart from the others with more hawkish rhetoric espousing increased long-term defense spending. The Eisenhower and Obama

administrations expressed the most willingness to reduce military spending. Since leaders often at least pay lip service to balancing defense concerns with budget deficits, it is hard to identify when policymaker rhetoric really drives policy choices.

As one would expect, campaign promises affect an administration's actions when in office. Rhetoric on defense spending has a couple of unique characteristics, however. While both incumbent and new administrations can use rhetoric for political posturing, each may do so differently. First, by procedure, an incumbent administration almost always proposes a budget that his administration will never really implement, and issues a budget statement that all know will be changed by the new, incoming administration.⁴⁰ This budget statement tends to be more backward-looking than the administration's previous statements, claiming credit for achievements accomplished or laying blame for failed efforts, such as Reagan's lament that he had not balanced the budget because of legislative-branch obstructionism. Second, an incumbent administration can use election year budget statements to posture against opposing rivals, as the Ford administration may have done in 1977 to advocate a more hawkish defense policy in proposing more defense spending than his opponent, Carter. Incoming

⁴⁰ This is unlike the president's state of the union address which outgoing presidents have not recently delivered in the year of a presidential changeover, but incoming presidents have addressed a joint session of Congress in February of their first year in office to serve the same functional purpose.

administrations are also committed by their campaign rhetoric to deliver on promises but might be caught by circumstances that they had previously not appreciated. For instance, the Kennedy administration came to office promising to significantly increase defense spending across the board, but then found itself threatening to withdraw forces from Europe as punishment to allied free-riders. The Obama administration famously promised to close the military detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, but became lackadaisical in following-through after failing to solve the dilemma of what to do with imprisoned detainees.

Administrations have infrequently promoted defense spending cuts in public. Instead, they have employed language that tended to change emphasis towards programs they have proposed increased spending on, such as transportation, education, and healthcare. For example, Carter may have made the boldest public statement in favor of defense budget “reductions” compared to his colleagues, but even he qualified that these were actually reductions in the amount that defense spending would increase rather than decrease (Carter 1978). When post-Second World War presidents have portrayed defense cuts in a positive light, they have claimed credit for improving the nation’s fiscal wellbeing, as Truman did with the 1948 budget (Truman 1947). Aware that defense spending reductions imply losers on the issue, however, presidential

administrations have demonstrated political acumen to limit their public pronouncements, and have more frequently saved their criticism and tradeoff discussions for behind-the-scenes deliberations as Nixon's staff did in 1970 (FRUS 2010k, 560).

Administrations from Truman through Kennedy managed budgets where defense spending composed the majority of national expenditures. Policymakers sensed that the public also placed high priority on balanced budgets as a political issue through these years, as Truman, Eisenhower, and Johnson noted. This dynamic changed over time, crossing a threshold during the Nixon administration when expenditures on social programs began to exceed defense spending. Presidents from Ford until the present have presided over budgets where spending on entitlement programs have exceeded defense spending.

Policymakers have also appeared to sense less threat of public punishment over concern for balanced budgets than before this changeover, as they appeared to demonstrate less rhetoric expressing political concern over failing to balance the budget. Correspondingly, 10 of the nation's 14 balanced budgets occurred in the 27 years between 1948 and 1975, while there were only four balanced budgets in the 42 years between 1972 and 2020. A sense of diminished public demand for balanced budgets

corresponds to less of it. Increased public concern over deficits seems to relate to more policymaker attention, as was the case when Clinton exclaimed “the era of big government is over” after the Republican Revolution of 1994, and Obama appointed the Simpson-Bowles commission in 2010 following record deficits. Gallup polls since 1989 have shown public concern over federal deficits as the most important problem peaking at 21% in 1990 when Bush compromised his no new taxes promise, 28% in 1996 when balanced budgets soon followed, and 17% in 2011 in a time of record deficits, while concern in other years has routinely been below 5% (Jones 2011). The most recent poll in May 2021, however, finds that 3% of those polled indicate budget deficits are the most important problem today (Gallup 2021a), despite the return to trillion-dollar deficits. Policymaker attention corresponds with public attention.

Defense spending has also steadily decreased as a proportion of national expenditures, lessening the practical utility of cutting defense spending as a tool to reduce deficits. The Nixon/Ford and Reagan administrations most publicly advertised this fact, while defense secretary Gates privately emphasized this point with President Obama, imploring his restraint in defense budget cuts. Although lessened, cutting defense spending still provided opportunity to balance the budget, as eliminating all defense spending would have returned the federal budget to solvency from the Truman

through George W. Bush administrations as well as in Obama's second term. The Trump administration was the only presidency not to have this opportunity, as budget deficits exceeded defense spending in each year.

Concerns about the deficit have also been balanced with concerns about contemporaneous economic performance. Presidents have been keen to express their willingness to cut taxes and increase spending in order to alleviate poor performing markets, and reluctant to advocate spending cuts or tax hikes that could dampen markets. Administrations have argued that defense spending serves as a form of economic stimulus related to economic performance, where defense spending produces a secondary benefit in spurring growth (e.g. Truman 1950 and Weinberger 1985, 78). Naturally, areas near military bases or defense industries would more acutely observe this benefit, forming geographic focal points for the military-industrial complex.

2.6 Conclusion

Defense analysts assert that the United States should conduct a new appraisal of the value in contemporary defense spending (Hoffman 2021). Given the explosive growth of national debt, American military power of years past may not suit the national security threats it will face in the future, as defense spending continued in the same manner will produce the same capabilities as it has in the past. Indeed, if the

national debt itself is a security vulnerability as Admiral Mullen declared, such a sizable debt may expose America to a different set of threats to its vitality and its citizens' way of life than it has faced before. Different threats to security likely require different solutions to address them.

Modern presidents have considered reducing defense spending as part of a plan to reduce deficits, but they have also found there is a level of defense they dare not fall beneath. The military capabilities of competitors are very real. The choice America faces once again is between the risks and consequences of fiscal imbalance versus the services that government provides, where it must consider how and what level of military spending is prudent to provide security. As even the more dovish presidents have valued substantial defense spending over balanced budgets and, more importantly, the fact that nondefense spending presently constitutes 85% of federal expenditures, balancing the budget through defense spending cuts is unlikely to be fruitful. In fact, even completely eliminating the military budget would not have balanced the federal budget during Obama's first term nor the Trump administration. Nonetheless, as part of the federal budget, cuts in defense spending offer opportunities to reduce the federal deficit.

The more we understand America's national fiscal and defense spending behavior as well as the factors that influence them, the better we can understand what policies might be more effective in the future. This study indicates key executive branch policymakers have deliberately considered the tradeoffs between accruing national debt versus the military budgets necessary to sufficiently protect American interests. Presidents paid attention to the issue and expressed willingness to cut defense in order to reduce the deficit when they perceived the risks were affordable, but they also determined a minimum threshold with which they would not spend less or else run an intolerable risk to national security. They did not necessarily view the debt itself a national security risk as Admiral Mullen declared, but they were concerned about the implications towards the economy and expressed desires to right the nation's fiscal behavior when they perceived dangerous to sustain.

This research helps illuminate the priority American policymakers have expressed towards defense spending and fiscal deficits, finding that it is a substantial concern, but even more of a concern when policymakers perceive the public view balanced budgets as a top priority. The results of this study should help inform future debate on the implications of the national debt, deficit spending considerations, and their relationship with defense budgets.

3. The Relationship Between Military Service and Legislative Behavior for US Representatives in Recent Congresses

Military veterans in Congress may exhibit distinct legislative behavior from nonveterans on issues they consider salient, such as particular defense-related issues.⁴¹ Experience in the military may give veterans different attitudes towards defense issues and influence their policy preferences distinctly from those who have not served or, alternatively, the attitudes veterans hold that first led them to join the military may shape their policy preferences differently than nonveterans. These different attitudes might be strong enough to lead to different behavior. If so, identifying distinct veteran legislative behavior on military issues would indicate a civil-military gap on defense policy worth investigating. Knowing that veterans and nonveterans hold different preferences on certain issues could provide important information on debates over national defense policy.

Although examining individual behavior may yield valuable insights, focusing on issues that veterans consider salient is more likely to detect distinct legislative behavior than on broad topics (Burden 2007). Veterans may hold use of force, military

⁴¹ For the purposes of this essay, legislative behavior refers to roll call voting and bill sponsorship.

readiness, and effectiveness issues salient given their service in the armed forces. Indeed, previous works argue that use of military force is a salient issue for office-holding veterans as well as congressional oversight of military operations (Lupton 2017). Veterans may seek policies to escalate use of force in order to achieve victory on the battlefield (Gelpi and Feaver 2004), but there apparently was a recent reversal where contemporary veterans demonstrably sought to deescalate force in Iraq and Afghanistan (Lupton 2017).

In this essay, I primarily seek to determine if veterans continued to exhibit distinct legislative behavior on military use of force and congressional oversight in the 113th–115th Houses of Representatives as in previous Congresses, and determine if veterans exhibit distinct legislative behavior towards defense budgets.⁴² Defense spending could be a salient issue because it is tied to military effectiveness. I focus on the House because distinct behavior should be more easily detectable there than in the Senate due to the larger population, if there is in fact a civil-military gap on these issues. If a gap exists in the House, this gap may also exist in the Senate, and other key policymaking bodies.

⁴² See Appendix A for contemporaneous political and social contexts of the 113th–115th Congresses as well as demographic composition of their members.

This essay provides new insight on contemporary veteran legislative behavior. I study how veterans behave in recent Congresses because the makeup of congressional veterans has changed over time in important ways. The proportion of military veterans in the House steadily declined after the Vietnam War and only recently reversed to yield an upswing in the number of veterans (see Figure 7). Considering this trend, an examination of the current veteran cohort in Congress could reveal discernibly different preferences and behaviors. As a result of the unique character of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) including wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the fact that a new generation of veterans are increasingly achieving elected office, I

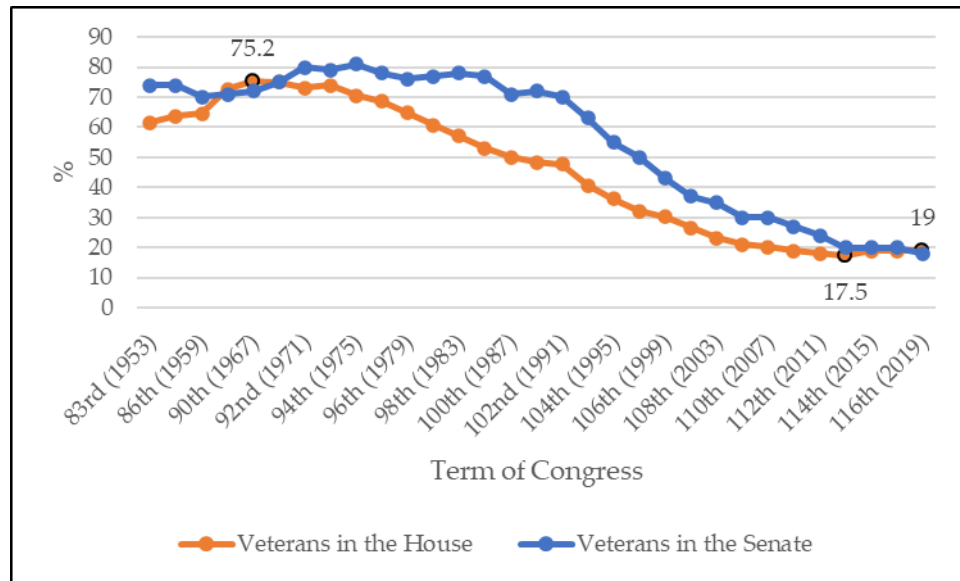


Figure 7: Veterans in Congress

Source: Pew Research Center "Fewer Veterans in Congress," February 15, 2019

subsequently study whether post-9/11 veterans demonstrate distinct legislative behavior from their predecessors.

3.1 Individual-Level Influences on Legislative Behavior

Personal attributes influence the legislative behavior of individual members of Congress to some extent. Demographic factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, and other attributes play a role in explaining their actions. The personal experiences of members of Congress “affect their roll call votes” and can be detected on specific issues or topic areas (Burden 2007, 110). For instance, congressmen who father daughters are more likely to favor legislation that increase women’s reproductive freedom than congressmen without daughters (Washington 2008). Individually, veterans have shown distinct legislative behavior on salient issues but also towards topics seemingly unrelated to military service, such as local economic and insurance policy (Best and Vonnahme 2019). However, veterans have not exhibited distinct behavior in broader topic areas (Bianco and Markham 2001; Bianco 2005).

3.1.1 Attributes Unrelated to Military Service

In a comprehensive work on voting, speechmaking, and bill cosponsorship that examined congressional consideration of tobacco legislation, education policy, and human cloning controversies, Burden attempted to determine whether individual

characteristics influenced legislative actions. He found that an individual's background and personal experience were associated with their choices while in office.

Burden determined that descriptive factors had their greatest and most observable effect upstream of the voting process in the "proactive" aspects of legislative behavior, which consisted of shaping the agenda, maneuvering support, crafting legislation, logrolling, and making personal appeals to persuade stakeholders such as congressional colleagues (Burden 2007, 146–147). Classifying roll call votes as "reactive" behavior that occur at the end of a process, where one's individual policy preferences are diluted by an aggregate of influences affecting voting decisions (Burden 2007, 145), he determined that individual preferences "affect roll call voting" and could be detected on specific issues or topic areas (Burden 2007, 110). They were not entirely constrained by their parties or constituents. "Members of Congress do shirk from their constituents' and party's preferred positions, relying on their own personal values and experience when deciding how to vote" (Burden 2007, 110).

Using an anecdote to describe how personal attributes made an observable difference, he contrasted the legislative behavior of then-Senators Arlen Specter and Rick Santorum, both Republicans from Pennsylvania, to explain their substantially different legislative behavior on the controversial issue of abortion. When both first

achieved office, abortion was not a priority issue for either, although Specter was pro-choice and Santorum pro-life. However, each separately experienced a transformative personal event which appeared to drive them further apart to their respective poles. Specter had a tumor removed in the 1990s and, afterwards, became a fierce advocate for embryonic stem-cell research. Santorum on the other hand, suffered the loss of a child when his wife survived a premature birth in 1996, which “intensified his views about abortion, which he now sees as the great moral issue facing America” (Burden 2007, 3). Despite representing the same constituency, belonging to the same party, and considering such a controversial issue in a moderate state where candidates might benefit from more moderate positions rather than staking polar opposite grounds, Burden concluded that personal attributes led to their dramatically opposite legislative behavior, in this case based on formative personal experiences.

Personal attributes such as gender can also explain some legislative behavior. Dolan (1998) found that women in the House were more likely to vote for women’s interests. Swers (1998) similarly found distinct voting behavior by women representatives, detecting a correlation between gender and legislative behavior on abortion and women’s health topics, issues highly salient to women. Women’s voting behavior in broader categories were indistinguishable from men, however. “The

influence of gender was overwhelmed by other factors such as party, ideology, and constituency concerns on votes that were less directly related to women, such as education” (Swers 1998, 435). In a similar vein, Boles and Scheurer (2007) found that women representatives were more likely than their male colleagues to support the arts. This is consistent with Burden’s findings that show personal attributes can be found on specific issues, but are less observable in overall voting behavior.

There have been occasions, however, where studies have found personal attributes that explain voting behavior in broader categories. In a study using all House roll call votes from 1961–1975, Frankovic (1977) analyzed composite voting scores similar to DW-NOMINATE and found a small but distinct difference that women in the House tended to exhibit more liberal voting behavior than men. For the four Congresses from 1972–1980, Welch (1985) found that gender played a significant role in explaining Congressional Quarterly’s conservative support score, another voting measurement, determining that women “consistently vote in a direction more liberal than men.” Rocca, Sanchez, and Nikora (2009) analyzed House roll call votes from the 101st–108th Congresses and showed that religion, military service, generation, and membership in fraternities or sororities had statistically significant correlations with voting behavior.

3.1.2 Attributes Related to Military Service

Military veterans may demonstrate distinct legislative behavior on issues uniquely salient to them, as well. Although study results are mixed, the evidence tends to fit Burden's concept that distinct legislative behavior can be better observed on precisely defined salient issues than on broader topics. For example, Bianco and Markham (2001) found little difference in voting behavior between veterans and nonveterans in the 102nd–104th Congresses. Similarly, Bianco (2005) concluded that "military experience did not have a statistically or substantively significant impact on vote decisions or legislative outcomes" for both the 102nd–104th Congresses as well as the 91st–92nd Houses (98). However, Bianco and Markham (2001) did find that a lower proportion of veteran members voted in favor of the 1993 "don't ask, don't tell" bill than non-veteran members. Together, this lends weight to Burden's concept that the influence of personal attributes may not be readily apparent in broad behavior, but more apparent on precise and salient issues.

Bianco and Markham state that it is premature to conclude veterans vote no differently on military issues than nonveterans and premature to rule out any other noteworthy impact unique to veterans in Congress. Veterans might vote differently on matters of specific interest to veterans, or that they might have some distinct influence in

committees or other “proactive” processes (Bianco 2005, 98). There is an interesting aspect in Bianco’s data regarding congressional voting behavior for defense budgets that he does not explore, however. Veterans demonstrated statistically significant behavior on two out of five defense spending roll call votes he considered (Bianco 2005, 94–97). Consequently, Bianco’s study reveals the possibility that veterans in Congress could vote distinctively on defense budgets. Both studies note that veterans may indirectly shape policy by exerting more influence in less public fora such as committee debates (Bianco and Markham 2001, 285–286; Bianco 2005, 98), which is also consistent with Burden’s observation that the influence of legislator’s personal attributes is more apparent in earlier stages of legislative behavior. This conclusion opens the door for further studies to discover unique veteran legislative behavior on precise topics.

Despite Bianco and Markham’s lack of a smoking gun, there is evidence that military veterans indeed demonstrate distinct legislative behavior, even on roll call voting. Analyzing 22 “key” roll call votes in the House from the 108th–112th Houses, Lupton (2017) found that veterans voted differently than nonveterans by exerting more oversight of DOD policy on Iraq and Afghanistan which required the Pentagon to provide more detailed information on combat operations, attempting to limit the numbers of troops deployed to these operations, as well as hastening their

redeployment home when possible. On the precise and salient issues of congressional oversight towards presidential wartime policy and the level of American military force committed to combat, veterans distinguished themselves from their nonveteran colleagues by opposing the president's wartime policy.

Besides Lupton's (2017) findings, evidence of distinct veteran voting behavior is thin but not totally absent. Robinson et al. (2018) found that veterans in Congress tend to have more moderate voting records than nonveterans. However, their evidence lacked sufficient statistical significance to draw an authoritative conclusion to that effect. In performing a correlation of roll call voting, examining Lugar Bipartisan Index scores, and checking if the partisan composition of constituents exhibited a relationship with veteran members of the House from the 104th to 115th Congresses, they describe that veterans of the all-volunteer force (AVF) era appear more bipartisan than non-veteran members of Congress.

There is stronger evidence that veterans demonstrate distinct legislative behavior in "proactive" stages. Distinct veteran legislative behavior has been observed in bill sponsorship for issues not clearly linked to military policy. Best and Vonnahme (2019) explored veteran bill sponsorship in four southern state legislatures from 1999–2011 using a database of more than 62,000 bills, each bill categorized by their state's

respective statutory code, then used Poisson regression to find that veterans demonstrated statistically significant sponsorship behavior in unexpected categories. Veterans were more likely to sponsor business bills in Alabama and less likely to sponsor insurance bills in Texas than their respective nonveteran colleagues. Best and Vonnahme attribute this to an interactive effect between veteran identity and the political and legislative context of their particular states.

Despite the mixed evidence that veterans demonstrate distinct legislative behavior, veterans nonetheless impact policy and legislation. For instance, veteran officeholders measurably influence outcomes on political decisions to use force. Investigating American use of force decisions from 1816–1992, Feaver and Gelpi (2004) observed that the more veterans compose the United States Congress, the less likely America was to initiate military conflicts. However, once the nation committed to use military force, the nation was more likely to escalate conflict in order to decisively win when there were more veterans in elite policy positions (88; 185). If it is apparent that veterans traditionally influence political outcomes on use of force, this behavior may also reveal itself in contemporary roll call voting.

3.2 The Salient Veteran Issues of Congressional Oversight and Troop Deployments

War is a life and death issue for service personnel. These are the most salient types of issues, and the emotional impression of facing war may have long-lasting effects where veterans carry enduring views. If true, veterans in Congress should demonstrate distinct voting behavior on use of force decisions, and they may demonstrate distinct behavior on other defense issues such as military spending and congressional oversight. Given their greater familiarity with the topic than those without military experience, veterans may hold stronger preferences about sending forces into combat. They might also have distinct preferences for defense budgets, since resource allocation is an important factor in enabling military preparedness. Do military veteran members of the House exhibit distinct behavior on military use of force and defense spending?

Lupton (2017) argues that the effects of military service should be most pronounced on issues where military experiences and expertise are directly applicable, such as during periods of armed conflict, regarding civilian control of military operations, and military force deployments (328–329). Although she acknowledges that previous studies indicate officials with military experience are more likely to favor military escalation in order to defeat an enemy (Feaver and Gelpi 2004), are less casualty

averse (Gelpi and Feaver 2002), and more skeptical of civilian oversight (Gronke and Feaver 2001), her study finds that military veterans in the 108th–112th Houses were more likely to vote to reduce the number of troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as increase congressional oversight of combat operations. Her findings diverge from the previous literature.

Lupton's findings may be an aberration from established trends. Representatives in the 108th–112th Congresses held office from 2003–2013, a period marked by controversy and increasing polarization over the Iraq War. In fact, candidates in the 2004 and 2008 presidential campaigns made Iraq War policy a central position in their campaigns, the major candidates sharply disagreed, and the public considered the Iraq War to be a major issue (Newport 2011, 391). Following Bush's 2004 win, Democrat victories in the 2006 mid-term elections were considered a rebuke to Bush administration Iraq War policy. After the Obama administration ended direct combat operations in Iraq in 2011 and, even despite the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria in 2013, the Iraq War faded as a political issue compared to its importance throughout the 2000s. Lupton's study may have captured unique veteran expressions specific to the period during the Iraq War. A study addressing the post-Iraq War era might find a return to the previously established trend.

There are three gaps in the literature which this paper attempts to fill. First, there is a cohort gap. There has not been sufficient examination of distinct veteran behavior in the most recently concluded Congresses. Post-9/11 military veterans bring recent military experience to policy discussion, their views may carry increased weight, and their voices may remain influential further into the future than older veterans. Second, there is a topical gap. There is a gap that fails to address the voting behavior of military veterans on defense budgets when they are in Congress. If veterans act distinctly from nonveterans, their views on defense spending could be viewed as referenda on their perception of contemporary military effectiveness. Third, there is little research on the “proactive” legislative behavior of veterans in Congress. Distinct veteran proactive legislative behavior would more clearly indicate veterans’ policy preferences, strengthening the conclusions made towards the first two gaps.

It remains possible that military veterans demonstrate distinct legislative behavior to increase troop deployments for ongoing conflicts as well as increase defense spending. Veterans could seek to increase troop deployments consistent with literature that indicates veterans more frequently prefer military escalation to achieve a decisive victory than nonveterans. Since veterans have committed part of their lives to national defense, they may place greater value in increasing defense budgets than nonveterans in

order to bolster military preparedness, thus improving military effectiveness and strengthening national security. Conscious of military autonomy and partial to military effectiveness, veterans may hold a predilection to decrease congressional oversight.

Consistent with these suppositions, I test three possible patterns:

H₁: Veterans in Congress will oppose reductions in troop deployments for ongoing conflicts.

H₂: Veterans in Congress will oppose reductions in defense budgets.

H₃: Veterans in Congress will oppose increases in congressional oversight.

3.3 Research Design

I use multiple regression to determine how members voted on troop deployments, defense budgets, and congressional oversight, as well as their propensity to sponsor defense-related and nondefense-related bills. I test if Lupton's findings held true for the three successive terms of the House which held office from 2013–2019, a period after the end of direct combat operations in Iraq, or if different factors changed the outcomes. Furthermore, this essay tests my argument that, out of sympathy towards their institutionalized military judgment, veterans in the House demonstrate distinct

legislative behavior to reduce congressional oversight of the military and to increase defense spending.

First, I identified military veterans of the 113th–115th Congresses using resources such as the Congressional Research Service, official biographies on the House.gov website, military special interest organizations such as the Military Times and Association of the United States Army, as well as biographies published on the respective representative's election website. I used these same resources to identify further military-specific information such as era of most recent service, branch of service, officer or enlisted rank, active duty or reserve component service, operational deployment experience, and years of service (see Appendix B). Next, I collected information on all the representatives of the 113th–115th Congresses, gathering basic demographic information such as gender, race, congressional district, and birth year, as well as a commonly-accepted ideological indicator in DW-NOMINATE score, and constituent political leanings as measured by Cook Partisan Voting Index (PVI). I identified 113 military veterans out of a total 565 representatives across the three Congresses.

Next, I tested this battery of descriptors and compared the results to previous literature. In a method parallel to Lupton's, I generated a score for each House member

for the three categories of roll call voting behavior on GWOT troop deployments, defense budgets, and congressional oversight. I searched for legislation that qualified in each of these categories on the Congress.gov website by reviewing all the legislation listed in the “Armed Forces and National Security” category, eliminating actions that resulted in an outcome other than a roll call vote, and then eliminating all actions that had no discernible relation towards the categories on which I focused.⁴³ I made these determinations based on the title of the legislation and substantive description given by neutral researchers of the Congressional Research Service. In order to minimize my own implicit bias, I included legislation that seemed to be on the fence rather than discarding items. If an issue seemed marginally related to congressional oversight, such as directing the particular brands of dining utensils DOD must use for example, I included the vote in this study. This yielded a total of 208 roll call votes considered, totaling more than 90,000 representative votes cast (see Appendices C through F for the itemized lists). I collected their votes using ProPublica API’s voting record database.

Previous studies such as Lupton (2017) and Bianco (2005) tended to apply more exclusive selection than mine by identifying “key” votes to test. Lupton identified 13

⁴³ Examining roll call voting studies “reactive” legislative behavior. It does not capture the agenda setting and pre-vote influence of “proactive” behavior that veterans might exert which, according to Burden, is where personal attributes should be more pronounced but less observable. Examining bill sponsorship more closely addresses “proactive” behavior.

troop deployment votes and nine congressional oversight votes across five Congresses. Bianco identified five defense spending votes across five Congresses. I identified 13 troop deployment votes and 76 defense spending votes across three Congresses. Since my defense spending votes were more than five times the number that Bianco used, my results should yield greater statistical precision by having a larger sample size, should be less susceptible to subjective judgment and implicit bias error, but may also measure different behavior given my broader issue inclusion.

I identified 122 roll call votes that addressed congressional oversight over the DOD. In order to keep this congressional oversight portion comparable with Lupton's, I divided the category by separating issues that specifically addressed combat operations from all others. Congressional oversight of combat operations is consistent with Lupton's approach, but not a direct match, as her criteria specified "information access" in congressional oversight. The votes she identified sought access to technical information, such as providing operational update reports to Congress, while the votes I identified issued directives to DOD such as instructions to spend funds on Afghan infrastructure projects and procure helicopters for Afghan National Security Forces. I found no votes that exactly fit Lupton's criteria across the three Congresses I studied. Paring my votes down this way yielded 11 roll call votes on congressional oversight of

combat operations which correspond with Lupton's nine on information access. In the results, I compare both my congressional oversight categories separately with Lupton's. I compare the more exclusive oversight of combat operations, as well as the more inclusive general congressional oversight of DOD, with Lupton's single corresponding topic of information access. Ultimately, comparing my results with Lupton and Bianco are apples-to-apples comparisons on troop deployments, but may be different types of apples for the defense spending and oversight categories.

Next, I determined whether the legislative measure considered during each roll call vote sought to increase or decrease their respective category measurement. I determined whether troop deployment votes sought to increase or decrease the number of deployed troops, whether defense spending votes sought to increase or decrease the defense budget, and whether congressional oversight votes sought to increase or decrease oversight.

In order to reduce my potential subjective errors, I employed two Research Assistants (RAs) as referees to verify the increased/decreased coding scheme for each piece of legislation considered. The RAs were separately presented an itemized, unbiased list of the legislation, given weblinks to neutral references for the legislation at Congress.gov, and a description of the topic category with a definition of what an

increase or decrease would mean. They were not told the original judgments I had rendered. The RAs made decisions without consulting one another, were explicitly unconstrained to use whatever additional resources they chose to make their decision, and reported their decisions along with a brief description of their rationale. With these initial reports, the RAs unanimously agreed with 177 (83%) of the codes I determined. I reversed eight of my own coding decisions based on effective justifications provided by at least one of the RAs. I removed five votes from consideration because the issues were intractably intertwined (i.e. the 114th Congress' consideration of Amdt. 1030 to H.R. 4909 which prohibited presidential executive orders from directing DOD to implement the administration's green energy initiatives; referees could not agree who was conducting oversight of whom). For issues that were not unanimous, I decided the coding by majority referee agreement. This resolved 19 further non-unanimous agreements. In seven instances where I felt the RAs had misjudged, such as increasing per unit shipbuilding costs in the 113th House's H.R. 1960 which actually reduced expenditure from the previous year, I applied a reconciliation process whereby I revealed my rationale for the votes in question, and at least one RA changed their judgment on the vote for each. This resolved the remaining disagreements.

Next, I scored each vote depending on whether the member voted for or against the respective measure and tallied these individual vote scores into an aggregate score for each House member per category. I scored House members differently than Lupton by instituting a scheme of -1, 0, and +1 points for each vote, while Lupton merely scored 0 or +1. My coding scheme makes a more refined distinction than Lupton for members who did not vote. In her analysis, members who did not vote were lumped together with those who voted against increased oversight. Both were coded "0" under her scheme. In assigning a "0" for members who did not vote and "-1" for those who voted against, my coding allows more meaningful interpretation of regression coefficients. It results in a positive or negative score. Scores that are increasingly negative denote greater voting propensity to oppose increases in troop deployments, defense spending, and decreases in congressional oversight. Scores closer to zero more accurately capture a neutral voting pattern. Scores that are increasingly positive indicate greater propensity to vote to oppose reductions in troop deployments, decreased defense spending, and increases in congressional oversight. Regardless, I tested results using both scoring methods to determine if the scoring scheme changed the results. It did not. Both scoring techniques resulted in the same levels of statistical significance for their coefficients and demonstrated the same ordinal ranking of outcomes.

Since roll call voting is an imperfect measure of policy preferences, I sought empirical data beyond voting behavior to develop dependent variables that could better measure Burden’s “proactive” legislative behavior. Following the same method as past studies such as Schiller (1995) and Rocca and Sanchez (2008) that measure number of bills sponsored by type, I used regression analysis to find relationships between bill types and personal attributes. Using data collected by the Congressional Bills Project, I examined bill sponsorship of more than 19,000 bills categorized as either defense-related or nondefense-related to detect whether veterans demonstrated discernible sponsorship preferences. My findings broach new ground by exploring veterans’ legislative behavior in Congress beyond roll call voting as well as determining whether veterans have been more likely to sponsor defense or nondefense-related bills.

Table 1: Dependent Variables Examined

GWOT Troop Deployment Voting Score
Wartime Congressional Oversight Voting Score
Defense Budget Voting Score
DOD Oversight Voting Score
Average GWOT Troop Deployment Voting Score
Average Wartime Congressional Oversight Voting Score
Average Defense Budget Voting Score
Average DOD Oversight Voting Score
Defense Bills Sponsored
Non-defense Bills Sponsored

The Congressional Bills Project categorizes bills by major and minor topic areas that they define. Defense-related bills are one of 23 major topic areas and there are 22 minor topic areas within the category. To take bill sponsorship analysis further, I selected subcategories of defense-related bills that originated in the House and most closely corresponded to the areas of this study to investigate. These subcategories were “foreign operations” and “readiness.” They correspond to roll call voting on troop deployments and defense spending, yielding a subset of 28 bills that I more closely examine. Similar to the logic for congressional oversight of DOD, I coded these 28 bills as either “pro” or “anti” military based on whether the bills sought to augment or reduce defense authorities. Then, I identified which bills were sponsored by veterans and which sponsored by nonveterans to compare each’s propensity to introduce the respective types of bills.

I report OLS regression results which test the null hypothesis that a representative’s veteran status explained no variation in the respective DV score. Regression models successively build on one another, first testing veterans’ correlation with each of the categories of bills, then add a set of control variables to measure demographic characteristics applicable to all members, another model to test military-

related explanatory variables to dissect possible attributes unique to veterans, and the final full model tested all explanatory variables together including veteran-specific attributes such as former branch of service, time in service, and rank.⁴⁴

3.4 Results

3.4.1 Overview

Consistent with Lupton's finding for the 108th–112th Houses, veterans in the House voted a little differently on troop deployments. Inconsistent with Lupton, however, veterans in the 113th–115th Houses tended to oppose reductions in troop deployments, whereas Lupton found veteran representatives in the 108th–112th opposed increases. Although party affiliation explained a much greater amount, prior military experience still explained some behavior even after controlling for party. This suggests that veterans may have switched their preferences during the second term of the Obama administration, or they may have simply opposed both Bush's and Obama's commander-in-chief initiatives. Nonetheless, consistent with Burden, veterans demonstrated slightly different roll call voting behavior than nonveterans for this salient issue.

⁴⁴ Regressions conducted with RStudio software (2012) and reported with Stargazer (Hlavac 2018).

Veterans comprised 20% of House members in the 113th–115th Congresses but introduced a slightly higher proportion of defense-related bills (21%). Veterans introduced defense-related bills in greater proportion than nondefense-related as well (21% compared to 18% of bills), but neither correlated closely enough to affirm distinct behavior ($p_{\text{Veterans}} = .29$). Nonetheless, there is sufficient evidence to warrant more refined research. Veterans disproportionately introduced foreign operations and readiness bills, including 75% of the pro-military bills. This lends weight to my argument that veterans' sympathy towards their former military institution leads to distinct legislative behavior, seeking to reduce congressional oversight of the military as well as increase military spending.

Veterans did not demonstrate distinct voting behavior on roll call votes for defense budgets, wartime congressional oversight, or broad congressional oversight of DOD. This lack of distinct behavior adds weight to Bianco's findings towards defense budgets, but the lack of distinct behavior on congressional oversight is inconsistent with Lupton's. It is possible that veterans became less concerned with congressional oversight during the Obama administration's second term given the reduction in deployed troop strength over time (see Figure 8). However, considering their distinct behavior to oppose those same troop reductions, it would have made sense if veterans demonstrated greater

voting tendencies to scrutinize the president’s actions. Instead, their voting behavior was not discernibly distinct. Perhaps veterans fatalistically resigned themselves to the end of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and demurred additional congressional oversight. It is also possible that the wartime oversight topic I identified was not similar enough to Lupton’s information access topic to draw a sufficient comparison.

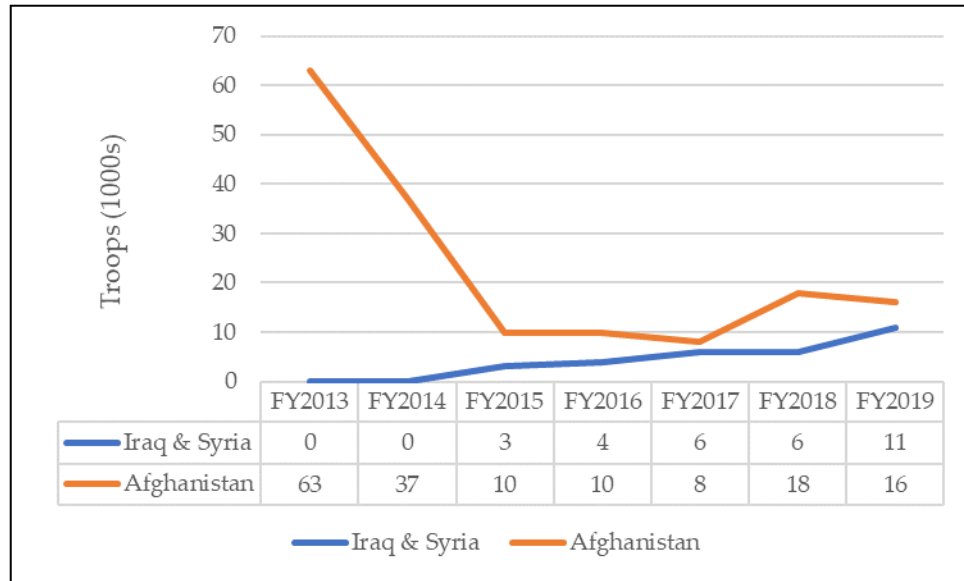


Figure 8: High-Profile American Troop Deployments, 113–115th Congresses

Source: OUSD (Comptroller)/CFO FY2020 Defense Budget Overview Figure 6.3

A pair of secondary explanatory variables seem to capture veteran behavior more than a simple statistical aberration might explain. First, veterans with active-duty experience tended to oppose reductions to troop deployments, defense budget

decreases, and decreases on congressional oversight of DOD. They exhibited more “militarized” policy preferences in favoring increased military effort and resources to bring ongoing wars to a successful conclusion, yet sought greater congressional influence on decisions than those without active duty experience. The former two results are consistent with Betts (1977) as well as Feaver and Gelpi (2004). The inclination for congressional oversight is consistent with Lupton (2017). Former active-duty personnel may feel more strongly about defense issues, or may exhibit stronger loyalty towards their former employer. This supports my argument that stronger institutional affiliation with the military establishment increases sympathy towards national security, military readiness, and defense issues.

Second, veterans with deployment experience in the discrete cases of the 113th and 114th Houses tended to oppose reductions in troop deployments as well. There was evidence that veterans with operational deployment experience may hold this conviction more strongly than those who have not deployed. This further supports my argument that more intimate experience with military institutions increase sympathy for and loyalty towards them. It is unclear why this phenomenon was not apparent in the 115th House, however, nor for the additional descriptive attributes that may indicate

stronger affiliation with military service such as Years of Service. Further research could provide more insight.

3.4.2 “Reactive” Roll Call Voting

Military veterans in the 113–115th Houses demonstrated distinct roll call voting behavior on GWOT troop deployments. All other factors held constant, veterans were 4% more likely to vote against troop deployment reductions ($b_{\text{Veterans}} = 0.08$). This factor only explained a small amount of behavior, as well. At most, distinct veteran behavior explained less than 3% of variation in House voting behavior ($R^2 = 0.028$). Consistent with Burden’s conclusion that personal preferences could be detected in roll call voting on salient issues but exert less influence than other factors, party membership explained 12 times more variation in voting on troop deployments than one’s status as veteran or nonveteran ($b_{\text{Republicans}} = 0.96$).

Subsets of veterans may also play a role in influencing voting preferences as participation in combat operations may hold a positive relationship with troop deployment voting ($p_{\text{Deployment}} < 0.05$). Veteran members that had deployed were slightly more likely to oppose deployed troop reductions. Active-duty experience may also explain some veteran behavior ($p_{\text{Active Duty}} < 0.01$), but the coefficient sign change from model 3 to model 4 precludes concluding a definitive relationship. Representative age

played a role. As birth year increased, House members were slightly more likely to oppose reductions in deployed troops ($b_{\text{Birth Year}} = .01$). See Table 2.

Table 2: GWOT Troop Deployment Roll Call Voting

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Voting Average (-1.0 through +1.0)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veterans	0.356** (0.071)	0.083* (0.048)		
Republicans		0.959** (0.125)		0.985** (0.125)
DW-NOMINATE		-0.141 (0.162)		-0.188 (0.163)
Cook PVI		0.017** (0.003)		0.018** (0.003)
Women		0.047 (0.050)		0.051 (0.050)
Non-Whites		0.026 (0.054)		0.024 (0.054)
Birth Year		0.008** (0.002)		0.007** (0.002)
1940s Service			-0.089 (0.623)	
1950s Service			-0.222 (0.391)	
1960s Service			-0.159 (0.225)	

1970s Service			0.132 (0.174)	
1980s Service			0.418* (0.247)	
1990s Service			0.746*** (0.265)	
Post-9/11 Service			0.327 (0.241)	
USA				-0.109 (0.104)
USAF				-0.228* (0.132)
USCG				-0.467 (0.560)
USMC				-0.254 (0.168)
USN				-0.103 (0.157)
Officer			0.083 (0.167)	-0.080 (0.097)
Active Duty			-0.043 (0.156)	0.244*** (0.091)
Deployment			0.101 (0.162)	0.211** (0.097)
Years of Service			0.001 (0.009)	0.003 (0.005)
Constant	0.111*** (0.031)	-15.625*** (3.444)	0.111*** (0.031)	-14.954*** (3.520)

Observations	874	874	874	874
R ²	0.028	0.600	0.053	0.606
Adjusted R ²	0.027	0.596	0.041	0.599
Residual Std. Error	0.823 (df = 872)	0.530 (df = 866)	0.817 (df = 862)	0.528 (df = 858)
F Statistic	25.178*** (df = 1; 872)	185.219*** (df = 7; 866)	4.383*** (df = 11; 862)	87.967*** (df = 15; 858)

Note: *p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

Although veterans tended to vote against defense budget reductions ($b_{\text{Veterans}} > 0$), their voting behavior is better explained by measures of partisanship such as party, ideology, and constituency. Interestingly, while party and constituency suggest that Republican members and congressional districts were more likely to vote to increase military spending than decrease ($b_{\text{Republicans}} > 0$; $b_{\text{Cook PVI}} > 0$), political ideology indicated that the more conservative the representative was, the more likely the House member would vote to decrease military spending ($b_{\text{DW-NOMINATE}} < 0$). Further analysis indicates a curvilinear relationship between ideology and defense budget voting. Squaring DW-NOMINATE resulted in a statistically significant and negative coefficient demonstrating that, when forcing DW-NOMINATE scores to be a positive number, budget voting scores trended downward. Taken together, this suggest that representative ideology fits an upside-down parabola for defense budget voting. Indeed, Figure 11 confirms this.

Active-duty experience exhibited a positive correlation with the dependent variable again, this time indicating that former active-duty personnel in the House were about 8% more likely to vote in favor of increased military spending ($b_{\text{Active Duty}} = .15$). Younger representatives demonstrated a propensity to oppose reduction in defense spending ($b_{\text{Birth Year}} > 0$). In the most notable instance of distinct post-9/11 veteran behavior in this study, post-9/11 veterans tended to oppose defense budget decreases ($b_{\text{Post-9/11 Service}} = .20$, $p_{\text{Post-9/11 Service}} < .05$). Besides this, post-9/11 veterans did not exhibit much further distinct legislative behavior as a distinct subgroup. See Table 3.

Table 3: Defense Budget Roll Call Voting

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Voting Average (-1.0 through +1.0)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veterans	0.145*** (0.031)	0.001 (0.023)		
Republicans		0.055 (0.066)		0.058 (0.066)
DW-NOMINATE		0.662*** (0.097)		0.655*** (0.097)
DW-NOMINATE-squared		-1.284*** (0.088)		-1.289*** (0.088)
Cook PVI		0.003** (0.001)		0.004*** (0.001)
Women		0.042*		0.046*

	(0.024)		(0.024)
Non-Whites	0.134***		0.134***
	(0.026)		(0.026)
Birth Year	0.001		0.001
	(0.001)		(0.001)
1940s Service		-0.100	
		(0.320)	
1950s Service		0.062	
		(0.185)	
1960s Service		-0.219**	
		(0.100)	
1970s Service		0.067	
		(0.077)	
1980s Service		0.149	
		(0.105)	
1990s Service		0.285***	
		(0.109)	
Post-9/11 Service		0.199**	
		(0.101)	
USA			-0.121**
			(0.051)
USAF			-0.136**
			(0.065)
USCG			-0.594*
			(0.323)
USMC			-0.103
			(0.081)
USN			-0.100

				(0.075)
Officer			-0.068	-0.037
			(0.071)	(0.047)
Active Duty			0.066	0.157***
			(0.066)	(0.044)
Deployment			-0.024	0.048
			(0.071)	(0.048)
Years of Service			0.002	0.002
			(0.004)	(0.003)
Constant	0.203***	-1.565	0.203***	-1.110
	(0.013)	(1.665)	(0.013)	(1.707)
Observations	1,318	1,318	1,318	1,318
R ²	0.017	0.492	0.036	0.498
Adjusted R ²	0.016	0.488	0.028	0.492
F Statistic	22.522*** (df = 1; 1316)	158.172*** (df = 8; 1309)	4.456*** (df = 11; 1306)	80.661*** (df = 16; 1301)

Note:

*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

Veterans did not demonstrate distinct voting behavior on congressional oversight of wartime operations or broader oversight of DOD. Although veterans tended to favor decreased oversight when testing veteran status as a sole explanatory variable, the coefficient sign flipped when controlling for the battery of basic descriptors. Personal ideology seemed to wash out veteran preferences.

Veterans with military service from the 1970s–1990s tended to favor decreased oversight through the entire period ($b \approx 0.11$), however, House members with active duty experience exhibited a voting tendency to increase congressional oversight of DOD ($b_{\text{Active Duty}} = -0.08$). This means that generational factors may play a part in determining veteran preference for DOD oversight, as well as whether they served on active duty. The observation on active duty contradicts H_3 . Perhaps the relationship actually runs in the opposite way I predicted, where veterans with more intense service experience seek to increase oversight of DOD.

Once again, age exhibited a relationship with the dependent variable, where younger members demonstrated a small but statistically significant increase in congressional oversight ($b_{\text{Birth Year}} = -0.001$). Younger representatives seemed more willing to exert their oversight powers over DOD than their older colleagues. See Table 4.

Table 4: Congressional Oversight Roll Call Voting

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Voting Average (-1.0 through +1.0)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veterans	0.035** (0.016)	-0.005 (0.016)		
Republicans		0.040 (0.042)		0.037 (0.042)
DW-NOMINATE		0.122**		0.128**

	(0.054)		(0.054)
Cook PVI	-0.00001		-0.0002
	(0.001)		(0.001)
Women	-0.013		-0.012
	(0.016)		(0.017)
Non-Whites	0.012		0.012
	(0.018)		(0.018)
Birth Year	-0.001**		-0.001**
	(0.001)		(0.001)
1940s Service		0.190	
		(0.169)	
1950s Service		0.113	
		(0.098)	
1960s Service		0.041	
		(0.053)	
1970s Service		0.097**	
		(0.041)	
1980s Service		0.130**	
		(0.056)	
1990s Service		0.121**	
		(0.057)	
Post-9/11 Service		0.048	
		(0.053)	
USA			0.051
			(0.035)
USAF			0.040
			(0.045)
USCG			0.075
			(0.226)

USMC				0.051 (0.056)
USN				0.094* (0.053)
Officer			0.031 (0.038)	-0.001 (0.033)
Active Duty			-0.078** (0.035)	-0.047 (0.031)
Deployment			-0.029 (0.038)	-0.033 (0.033)
Years of Service			-0.0001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)
Constant	0.021*** (0.007)	2.645** (1.138)	0.021*** (0.007)	2.457** (1.170)
Observations	1,311	1,311	1,311	1,311
R ²	0.004	0.098	0.013	0.102
Adjusted R ²	0.003	0.093	0.004	0.092
Residual Std. Error	0.227 (df = 1309)	0.217 (df = 1303)	0.227 (df = 1299)	0.217 (df = 1295)
F Statistic	4.693** (df = 1; 1309)	20.223*** (df = 7; 1303)	1.529 (df = 11; 1299)	9.815*** (df = 15; 1295)

Note:

*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

3.4.3. “Proactive” Bill Sponsorship

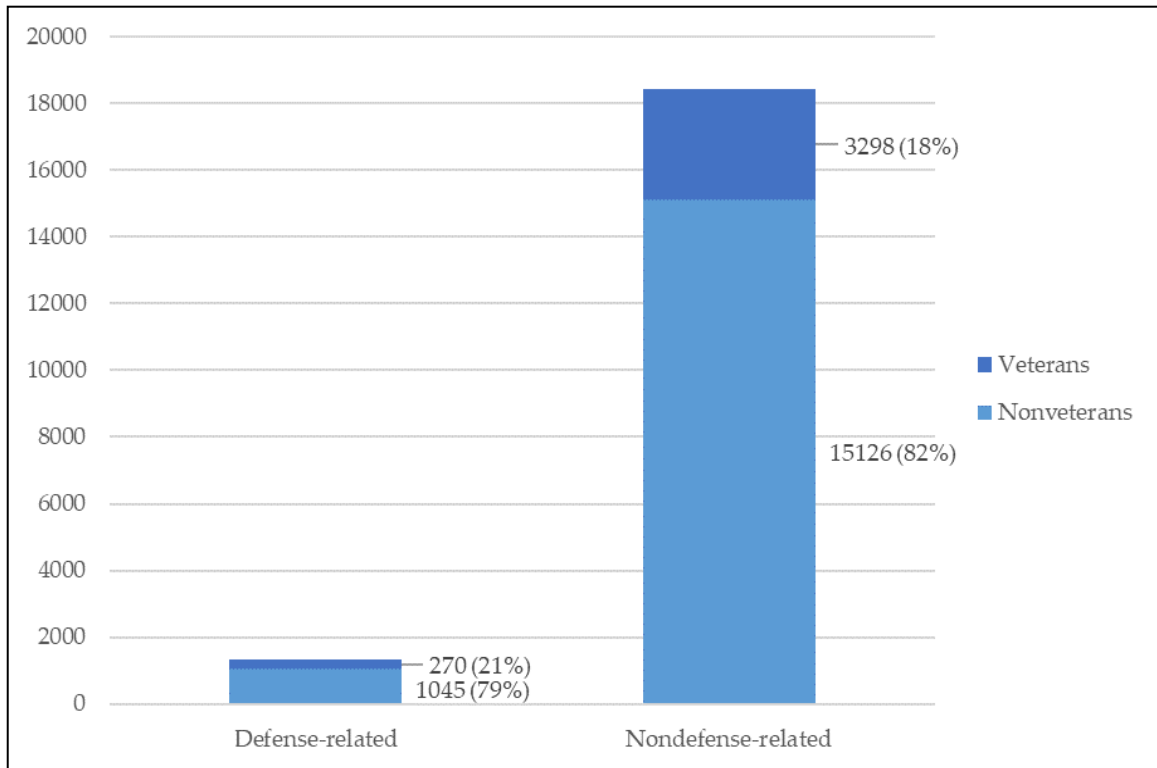


Figure 9: Bills Introduced by Representatives in the 113–115th Congresses

Veterans introduced a slightly higher proportion of defense-related bills than nondefense-related bills (21% to 18%; see Figure 9). Although veterans as a sole descriptor did not exhibit a significant relationship towards sponsoring defense-related bills, veterans did distinguish themselves when controlling for partisanship and basic personal attributes ($b_{\text{Veterans}} = 0.21$). Additional veteran indicators provided no further

statistically significant findings (see Table 5). As “defense-related bills” is a broad category, it may be too broad to register distinct veteran behavior, nor precisely target salient issues where veterans’ passionate participation may be more apparent. Although further research is necessary to detect distinct proactive veteran legislative behavior, this study advances the field as the first to investigate it in the US Congress.

I observed statistically significant results for defense-related bill sponsorship that were not the focus of this study, however. Younger representatives tended to introduce more defense-related bills than their older colleagues ($b_{\text{Birth Year}} = 0.01$). Consistent with previously discussed voting behavior, this suggests younger members of the House are more interested in overseeing defense-related issues than older members. Additionally, women in the House were more likely to introduce defense-related bills ($b_{\text{Women}} = 0.24$). It is unclear why women would demonstrate more interest in defense-related legislation than men in the 113th–115th Houses. Future studies should test for distinct behavior of women representatives to deny the possibility that these results were a statistical aberration.

Table 5: Defense Bill Sponsorship

<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
Number of Defense-Related Bills Sponsored			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)

Veterans	0.127 (0.121)	0.210* (0.126)	
Republicans		-0.081 (0.326)	-0.094 (0.327)
DW-NOMINATE		0.157 (0.420)	0.178 (0.424)
Cook PVI		-0.004 (0.007)	-0.004 (0.007)
Women		0.242* (0.129)	0.243* (0.130)
Non-Whites		0.052 (0.139)	0.052 (0.140)
Birth Year		0.012*** (0.005)	0.012** (0.005)
1940s Service			-0.762 (1.279)
1950s Service			-0.437 (0.739)
1960s Service			-0.453 (0.395)
1970s Service			0.081 (0.307)
1980s Service			-0.100 (0.420)
1990s Service			0.303 (0.431)
Post-9/11 Service			0.444 (0.404)

USA			0.059	(0.277)
USAF			0.315	(0.356)
USCG			-0.858	(1.780)
USMC			0.106	(0.443)
USN			-0.081	(0.407)
Officer			-0.295	(0.282)
Active Duty			0.175	(0.261)
Deployment			-0.098	(0.284)
Years of Service			0.007	(0.015)
Constant	0.961*** (0.052)	-22.448** (8.937)	0.961*** (0.052)	-22.706** (9.195)
Observations	1,335	1,335	1,335	1,335
R ²	0.001	0.009	0.006	0.012
Adjusted R ²	0.0001	0.004	-0.002	0.001
Residual Std. Error	1.714 (df = 1333)	1.711 (df = 1327)	1.716 (df = 1323)	1.714 (df = 1319)
F Statistic	1.115 (df = 1; 1333)	1.770* (df = 7; 1327)	0.762 (df = 11; 1323)	1.046 (df = 15; 1319)

Note:

*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

In contrast with sponsorship of defense-related bills, veterans were slightly less likely to introduce nondefense-related bills in the 113–115th Houses. However, there was not strong enough correlation to decisively conclude distinct veteran bill sponsorship behavior ($p_{\text{Veteran}} = 0.67$).

Two other notable results address issues outside the focus of this study, where Republicans tended to submit more nondefense-related bills ($b_{\text{Republicans}} = 3.8$) and that younger representatives tended to submit fewer ($b_{\text{Birth Year}} = -0.06$). Republicans may have been more active to oppose Obama administration policies, seize control of opportunities presented with control of Congress and, eventually, the presidency, as well as for public position taking purposes. Younger members of the House may have submitted fewer nondefense-related bills due to a generational change in attitudes that a representative's true contribution would be made in floor speeches and voting. The fact that they tended to submit a greater than average number of defense-related bills and fewer than average number of nondefense-related bills may be coincidental. It is not readily apparent why the younger representatives would be more focused on military issues than their older colleagues. Further studies are necessary to explore these issues in greater depth. See Table 6.

Table 6: Nondefense Bill Sponsorship

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>			
	Number of Nondefense-Related Bills Sponsored			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Veterans	-0.617 (0.723)	-0.315 (0.747)		
Republicans		3.830* (1.936)		3.965** (1.938)
DW- NOMINATE		-4.718* (2.499)		-4.857* (2.509)
Cook PVI		-0.059 (0.039)		-0.061 (0.040)
Women		1.029 (0.766)		1.046 (0.767)
Non-Whites		-1.164 (0.829)		-1.197 (0.829)
Birth Year		-0.057** (0.027)		-0.049* (0.028)
1940s Service			-13.076* (7.551)	
1950s Service			19.457*** (4.360)	
1960s Service			-2.391 (2.333)	
1970s Service			0.531 (1.812)	

1980s Service			-5.129**	
			(2.480)	
1990s Service			-5.552**	
			(2.542)	
Post-9/11 Service			-7.169***	
			(2.383)	
USA				-1.374
				(1.641)
USAF				2.530
				(2.109)
USCG				-8.279
				(10.539)
USMC				-3.634
				(2.623)
USN				-2.370
				(2.407)
Officer			3.814**	0.867
			(1.668)	(1.515)
Active Duty			1.496	2.074
			(1.543)	(1.431)
Deployment			0.408	0.156
			(1.677)	(1.556)
Years of Service			-0.023	-0.113
			(0.087)	(0.083)
Constant	13.915***	123.228**	13.915***	108.933**
	(0.312)	(53.145)	(0.307)	(54.438)
Observations	1,335	1,335	1,335	1,335
R ²	0.001	0.024	0.035	0.035

Adjusted R ²	-0.0002	0.019	0.027	0.024
Residual Std. Error	10.272 (df = 1333)	10.173 (df = 1327)	10.130 (df = 1323)	10.146 (df = 1319)
F Statistic	0.729 (df = 1; 1333)	4.696*** (df = 7; 1327)	4.400*** (df = 11; 1323)	3.206*** (df = 15; 1319)

Note: * p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

Veterans disproportionately introduced bills that closely related to the salient issues of troop deployments and military effectiveness. They submitted 32% of the smaller subset of 28 defense-related bills introduced by House members in the foreign operations and readiness subcategories, while only comprising 20% of representatives. Of these, 75% of the bills I coded as “pro-military” were introduced by veterans, while veterans only introduced 14% of bills I coded “anti-military.” Two out of the three “pro-military” bills that veterans submitted directly corresponded with use of force and military effectiveness issues. For example, Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA10), a 1960s-era veteran of the US Army, introduced H.R. 5415 in the 113th Congress which proposed a new authorization for military force to augment the existing GWOT AUMF by adding more terrorist organizations to target. This sought to escalate use of force in ongoing wars. Similarly, Representative Chris Gibson (R-NY19), a post-9/11-era veteran of the US Army, introduced H.R. 4534 in the 114th Congress that proposed halting the drawdown of Army and Marine Corps troop strength. This attempted to preserve military strength

to enable greater troop deployments for the GWOT, and opposed reductions in DOD resources. Together, these observations provide evidence in support of the argument that veterans in Congress demonstrate distinct legislative behavior seeking to reduce congressional oversight and oppose reductions in defense spending. See Table 7.

Table 7: Foreign Operations and Readiness Bill Sponsorship

Source: Congressional Bills Project

	Pro-military	Anti-military	Neither	Total
Veterans	3	2	4	9
Nonveterans	1	12	6	19
Total	4	14	10	28

3.5 Discussion

I found evidence that supported two of my three hypotheses but did not find consistent evidence to support the third. Veterans tended to oppose reductions in deployed troops as well as oppose reductions in defense budgets. This lends weight to my argument that military socialization enhances awareness, increases sympathy, and elevates priority of salient defense issues for veterans in Congress. However, the lack of statistical significance for a key indicator of socialization, years of service, cuts against my argument. The data does not decisively conclude in my argument's favor.

Additionally, I collected evidence which did not consistently support my hypothesis

that veterans seek to decrease congressional oversight of DOD. This indicates that either this topic was too broad to precisely target a salient issue, or that veterans did not hold distinctly different preferences than nonveterans on congressional oversight.

I make three further observations with implications outside the emphasis of this study. First, different terms of the House treated my focus issues differently. Above and beyond measurements of partisanship, representatives in the 113th House demonstrated a voting propensity to decrease the defense budget ($b_{113^{\text{th}} \text{ House}} = -0.32, p_{113^{\text{th}} \text{ House}} < 0.001$), while roll call votes in the 114th House indicated a greater propensity to increase the defense budget ($b_{114^{\text{th}} \text{ House}} = 0.26, p_{114^{\text{th}} \text{ House}} < 0.001$). This observation may record a change in attitudes that demonstrated concern over Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea. The 114th House may have been stimulated to bolster military strength at the prospect of Russian aggression. The 115th House also indicated a greater propensity to increase the defense budget ($b_{115^{\text{th}} \text{ House}} = 0.06, p_{115^{\text{th}} \text{ House}} < 0.05$), but less than the 114th. Additionally, representatives in the 114th House sought to decrease congressional oversight of DOD, while members of the 115th House sought to increase oversight. This could reflect increased congressional scrutiny of the Trump administration.

Second, like members with active-duty experience, younger representatives tended to distinguish themselves by voting for comparatively more militant policies.

Younger legislators tended to oppose reductions in troop deployments, decreases to the defense budget, and were more likely to oppose less congressional oversight of DOD. The legislative behavior of younger representatives trends in similar directions as veterans. Furthermore, there appears to be a clear break between representatives born before and after 1965 (see Figure 10). This adds further weight to claims that the “Vietnam Syndrome,” or the “reluctance to commit American military power anywhere in the world” (Kalb 2013), is diminishing. Further research on these findings could

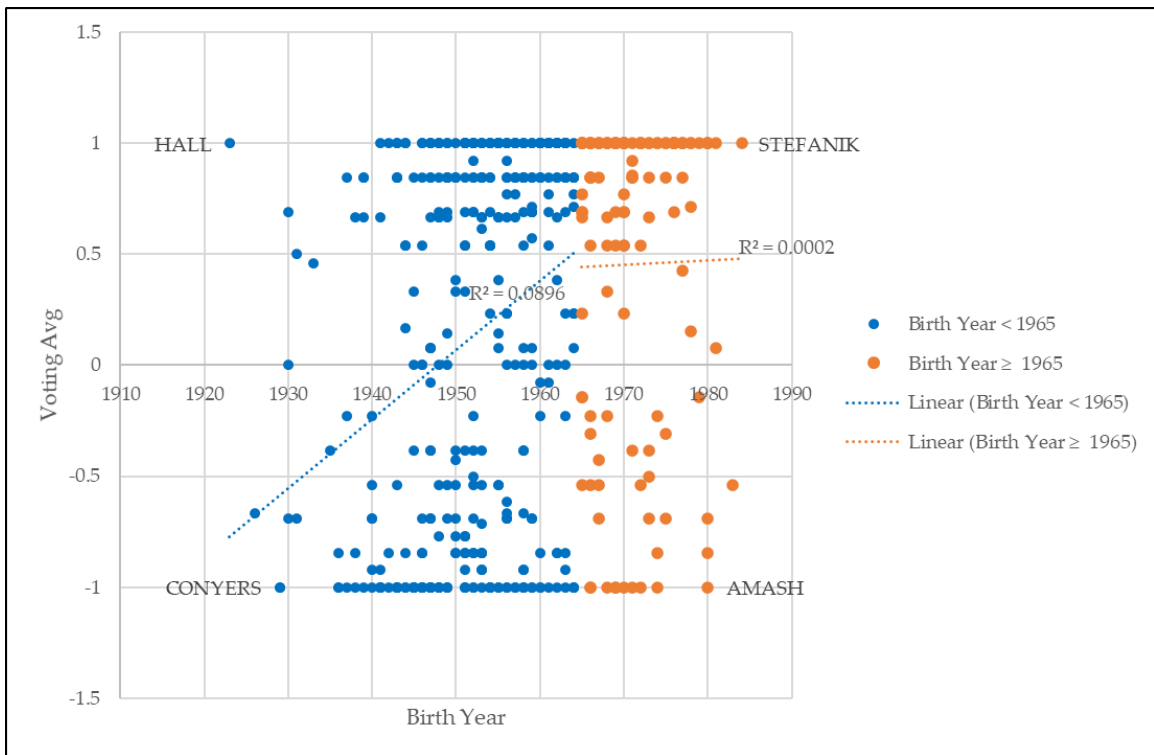


Figure 10: Troop Deployment Voting by Generation, 113–115th Houses

provide more light on this as well.

Third, members of the House on either ideological pole were more likely to oppose defense budget increases, while members at the ideological median were more likely to oppose defense budget reductions. Not only was ideology a statistically significant explanatory variable, but the coefficient for defense spending votes was negative. The reason it was negative was probably because the issue was, and is, non-linear for political ideology. Although Republicans purportedly favor a strong military as a plank in their platform, they hold a competing value on spending issues. On the one hand, a major plank in the platform is that defense spending should be among the highest budget priorities. On the other hand, Republicans express a desire to restrain total spending in order to exercise responsible, conservative fiscal behavior. Therefore, Republicans should favor defense spending increases more than Democrats but we should find there are limits to which some Republicans are willing to spend.

The results support this description. A curvilinear line more closely captures the data recorded, implying that the relationship between political ideology and defense budget voting was represented by an upside-down parabola as shown in Figure 11. This captures the tension between the two Republican values. There appears to be a shared interest between both ideological poles of the House to oppose defense spending. Could

there also be a converse relationship on a budget issue were both extremes prefer increased spending while the middle is less sanguine? Additional researchers should explore whether this similarly holds true for other issues.

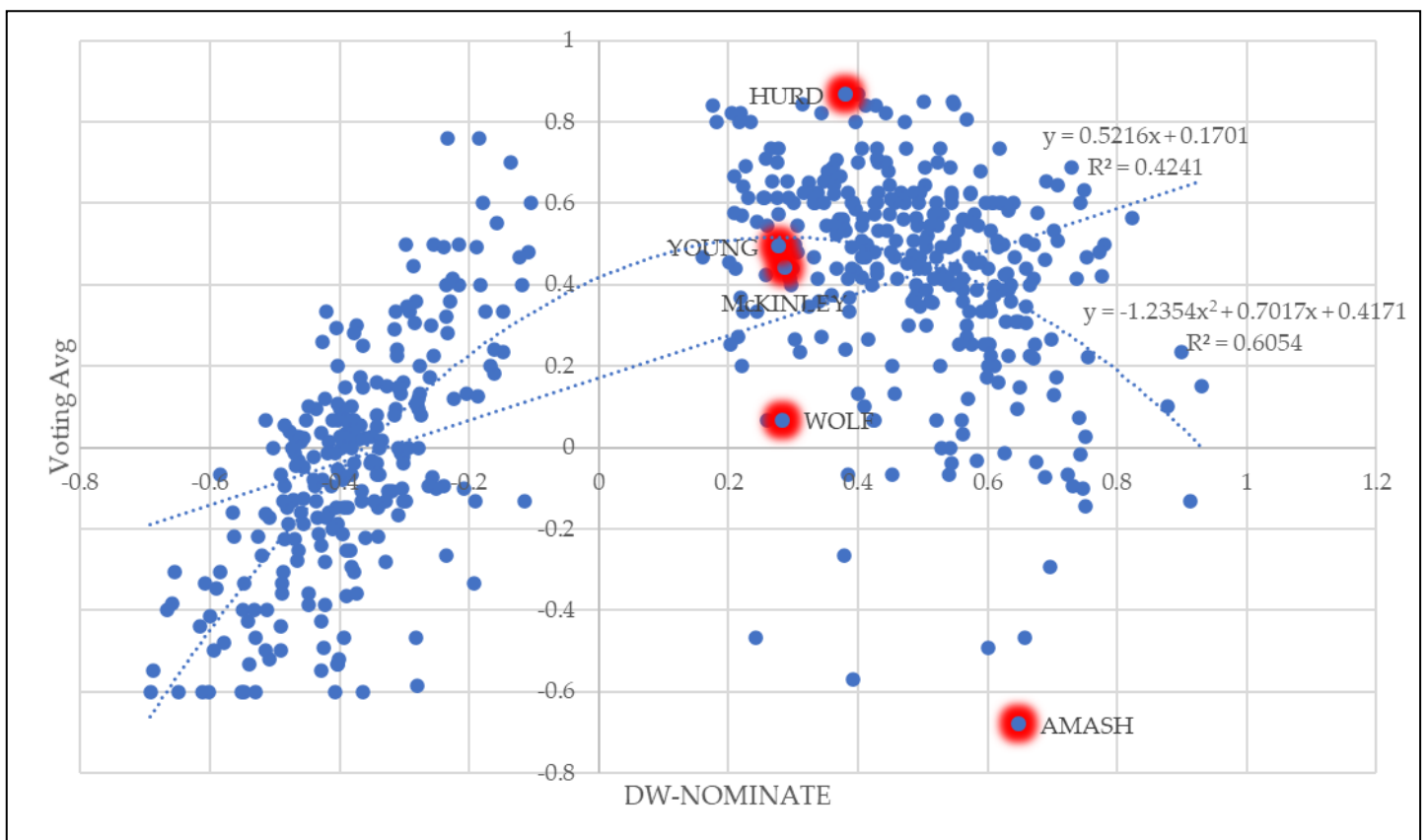


Figure 11: Defense Budget Voting

3.5.1 Limitations of Findings

There are four caveats to these findings. The first caveat is about roll call votes. Reinforcing arguments already made by Burden and others, roll call votes are an observable measure of policy preferences but they are less than perfect. Roll call votes account for concrete actions made for record, but these individual actions do not account for strategic voting behaviors, political, or parliamentary maneuvering that may not measure a sincere decision on a particular issue called to question. Roll call votes also do not account for legislative preferences that may be expressed away from the public eye, and do not capture side conversations and negotiations, committee hearings, committee votes, and House-wide voice votes.

The second caveat concerns qualitative measurements of the selected roll call votes. In this study, each roll call vote was weighted equally. There could have been votes that were substantively more important or more indicative of voting preferences than others. Researchers that continue to study along this line may want to employ evaluation criteria and weighting schemes that place the issues in question under more precise context, or apply greater selectivity in choosing which votes to consider and which not to. This would require developing more specific selection criteria, which may also lead to greater subjectivity. When in doubt, this study included a vote rather than

discard it in order to avoid subjective selection, counting it equally with the others.

Another study could exclude certain votes and measure others at a discounted value.

The third caveat is on the volume of legislation undertaken by modern Congresses. When categorizing bills as DOD oversight or defense spending, there could have been riders in the tens of thousands of pages in other bills that this study overlooked, which would have led to a different set of bills in the respective categories. It might have been possible that any of these potential riders could also have slipped by the members of Congress themselves, just the same. For the purposes of this study, the perception representatives had for these bills was at least as important as their actual meaning, because one votes on one's perceptions, not reality. Any actual changes to US government policy resulting from these bills that were overlooked or unintended by members has been deliberately excluded. The focus of this study has been veterans' preferences, not actual policy outcomes.

The fourth caveat is on defense spending bills that resulted in no substantial change from the previous level of spending. Future studies could attempt to characterize defense spending bills or member voting preferences as status quo seeking. This would require establishing a threshold of a range of small increases or decreases which would be considered status quo, distinguishing between representatives who voted in

opposition to both reductions in spending as well as increases. Characterizing defense spending bills as offering little change could add descriptive nuance to the results.

3.6 Conclusion

Military veterans serving in the 113th–115th Houses demonstrated distinct behavior different from their nonveteran colleagues in troop deployments for the GWOT. Veterans opposed attempts to decrease the number of troops deployed. This supports studies that suggest officeholding veterans prefer policies that enhance military performance and effectiveness to win wars (Feaver and Gelpi 2004), and also suggests that studies that have found veterans seeking to oppose troop increases during war (Lupton 2017) records exceptional behavior that is unique for that specific time period. The established trend remains that veterans will seek to avoid scaling down ongoing wars. Veterans did not conclusively demonstrate distinct behavior on defense budgets, in oversight of combat operations, or broader oversight of DOD.

Additionally, there is further empirical evidence that the Vietnam Syndrome is disappearing from the House. Vietnam-era representatives tended to favor GWOT troop reductions while younger representatives tended to oppose reductions. Accordingly, future Congresses may be more willing to approve military force than in previous decades.

There is also empirical evidence of a non-linear relationship between political ideology and defense spending preferences. Very liberal and very conservative ideologies both favor defense spending reductions, while those holding moderate conservative ideologies are most likely to oppose reductions. This captures a tension in conservative fiscal policy when balancing spending priorities with a preference to restrain total spending.

With this study, I examined veterans' bill sponsorship activity in the US Congress where little had been done previously. Veterans tended to sponsor disproportionately more defense-related bills in the 113th–115th Houses, and were more likely to sponsor pro-military bills. Younger representatives were slightly more likely to sponsor more defense-related bills as well, but also slightly less likely to sponsor nondefense-related bills. This indicates an increasing interest in military matters by younger members of the House.

4. The Relationship Between American Civil-Military Relations and Military Outcomes

Is civilian control of the military conducive to military effectiveness?⁴⁵

Contemporary research on American civil-military relations address at great length how civilians can enhance their control of military institutions, but less frequently address how different degrees of civilian control affect outcomes from uses of military force. Further study of military effectiveness is necessary to advance understanding of how civil-military relations can help optimize military outcomes and balance research efforts on the subject.

This essay directly contributes to American civil-military relations' military effectiveness lacuna which previous literature reviews by Feaver (1999), Nielsen (2002), Travis (2018), and Brooks (2019) have noted. Biddle and Zirkle (1996, 171) definitively state,

...the literature on civil-military relations has focused primarily on explaining why different patterns of relations emerge...but almost not at all on how such relationships affect the outcomes of wars.

⁴⁵ The cases described in this essay tend to examine limited conflicts that indirectly affect national security, but tend not to wrestle with immediate, direct, existential dangers to the United States. This is simply because none have recently occurred. However, there is the possibility of a larger war with greater stakes at any time. For example, nuclear-armed Russia can destroy the United States within 30 minutes.

The lacuna is shrinking, but the issue is still understudied. Studies by Betts (1977), Desch (1999), and Feaver (2003) have built on one another to analyze civil-military discord that evaluates the extent of civilian control. This essay builds on aspects of Betts, Desch, and Feaver, but turns towards military effectiveness by evaluating the military outcome of the incidents these authors analyzed. I search for a possible relationship between American civil-military relations and military effectiveness.

In this article, I describe scholarly attempts to study military effectiveness to date, examine 44 use of force decisions since the Second World War, then analyze their civil-military inputs to search for a relationship with the impact of the decision. This study suggests that military outcomes were not more likely to be better when military authorities applied their preferences than when civilians asserted theirs. However, military shirking away from armed interventions has led to favorable military outcomes by avoiding ill-advised wars.

4.1 Professional versus Civilian Prerogative

American civil-military relations scholars agree on the importance of assuring civilian control of the military but are divided over how best to achieve it. One of the main schisms concerns the degree that certain types of civilian control may or may not have unintended negative consequences for military effectiveness. On one hand are

those that who advocate what Feaver has called the “professional prerogative” and, on the other, those that who advocate the “civilian prerogative” (Feaver 2011; Betts et al. 2011/12). Professional prerogative advocates, such as Huntington, Desch, and Herspring, argue that the military should retain an adequate voice and keep “civilians from micromanaging and mismanaging matters” (Feaver 2011, 89). Civilian prerogative advocates, such as Cohen, Feaver, and Kohn, argue that “civilian leaders [should] involve themselves more forcefully and directly in the business of war making, even to the extent of pressing military officers on matters that the military might consider as being squarely within their zone of professional [jurisdiction]” (96).

Professional prerogative advocates argue that military effectiveness is best maintained when the military enjoys autonomy on matters squarely in their area of expertise. Civilian prerogative advocates argue that the civilian intrusion in operations does not degrade military effectiveness – at least not as much as feared. Both sides of the civilian control debate recognize that civilians must ultimately retain control over the military. The disagreement is over the extent which civilians should inject directions over military operations and the harm, if any, that comes when the pursuit of civilian control leads political leaders to over-rule military advice on use of force questions.

4.1.1 The Benefits of Allowing Military Autonomy

The progenitor of contemporary American civil-military relations theory, Samuel P. Huntington, espouses the professional prerogative and favors an autonomous sphere of military jurisdiction. His theory has been called the “normal” theory of American civil-military relations because it is so well-known and respected (Cohen 2002, 4). By implementing a concept he calls objective control where military authorities control military matters, America should be able to establish more consistent policy, strategy, and doctrine. In turn, military officers should provide assurances that they will not influence the competitive sphere of domestic politics. This understanding, Huntington argues, enables a sounder national defense. Huntington’s theory suffers a shortcoming by stressing strictly separate spheres of influence (Huntington 1957, 83–84 and 96) when, in reality, matters are not so clear cut. There can be no definitive split between strictly political issues and military issues. They two are intertwined and, consequently, perfect objective control can never be achieved. There will always be an extent of civilian intervention on military matters and vice versa.

Countering criticisms leveled by the civilian prerogative school, Desch argues that Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s disdain for military judgment was the root of many of America’s problems during the Iraq War (2007a). Desch asserts “that it was

the Bush administration's departure from objective control that led to many of the United States' difficulties" (Betts et al. 2011/12, 180). To improve military performance, civilian authorities (Desch 2007a, 107–108),

should encourage, rather than stifle, candid advice from the senior military leadership, even if it does not support administration policy. The military has a right and a duty to be heard. After all, soldiers are the experts in fighting wars – and it is their lives that are ultimately on the line. If senior officers feel that their advice is being ignored or that they are being asked to carry out immoral orders, they should resign.

4.1.2 The Case for Greater Civilian Control

Advocates of the civilian prerogative espouse civilian control as a virtue of democratic governance, and thus an end unto itself. They “argue that the primary problem is ensuring that well-informed civilian strategic guidance is authoritatively directing key decisions, even when the military disagrees with that direction” (Feaver 2011, 89–90). To civilian prerogative advocates, civilian control takes precedence over military effectiveness, or professional prerogative advocates enable tactical effectiveness at the expense of strategic effectiveness (Brooks 2020, 35–38; 43). Feaver explicitly acknowledges this in his aphorism that civilians have a “right to be wrong” (2003, 6).

In his book *Armed Servants*, Feaver examines American civil-military relations in a principal-agent framework. Elected by constitutional processes in the American republic, the civilian leadership are the nation's defense principals. Recruited from

society, military officers are the nation's defense agents. The principals are accountable to their electoral constituencies, the agents to the principals. "Civil-Military relations in the United States are about bargaining, monitoring, and strategic calculations over whether to work or shirk," (282) where "working" means obeying the principal's instructions in good faith, and "shirking" means attempting to alter the outcome towards the agent's preference.⁴⁶ When conflicts arise, civilian principals force the military to work by monitoring, and military agents decide if they can shirk based on an estimate of the expected punishment. Feaver characterizes American Cold War civil-military relations as intrusive monitoring where the military responded by working (Feaver 2003, 118). He analyzes 24 Cold War-era civil-military disagreements and 12 post-Cold War cases, assessing whether the military worked or shirked. However, he does not investigate whether these disputes resulted in favorable military outcomes.

Viewed in the civilian prerogative way, positive civil-military relations can also lead to bad military outcomes. Civilian control can produce absurd results if taken to the extreme. For instance, if Poland exhibited excellent civil-military relations in 1939 but was conquered by the Germans, or if France had excellent relations in 1940 with the

⁴⁶ Feaver's codings allow for the possibility that both military preferences can prevail and the military can simultaneously shirk. In my codings which consider cases after Feaver (2003), I code one or the other if the military objects, but not both. If the military satisfies its preferences, authorities need not shirk.

same result, then “good” civil-military relations may mean effective civilian control but not necessarily result in effective state defense, or even survival. Naturally, the extreme at the other end of the spectrum could also produce undesirable results. A military uncontrolled by civilian leaders may pursue campaigns discordant with political objectives, or even turn against its own government. The question is to find the right balance in the middle ground to optimize national interests.

The civilian prerogative school, however, also claims that pursuing civilian control will not lead to bad outcomes, at least not as often as professional prerogative advocates claim. In other words, while civilians have a “right to be wrong,” exercising vigorous civilian control will not produce wrong outcomes more frequently – or so the civilian prerogative school assert. On the contrary, in the vigorous give and take between civilians and the military, what the military experience as “micromanagement” may actually help better align military operations with strategic objectives (Feaver 2011). Cohen coins the term “unequal dialogue” to describe appropriate civil-military relations in his book *Supreme Command*. Scholars interpret this work to profess “civilian intervention at not only the strategic but also the tactical and operational levels [has been] essential for military success” (Desch 2007a, 106), and “war performance improves with vigorous civilian involvement in the details of the war” (Feaver 2003, 94). Cohen

advocates that civilian leaders ensure their policies disseminate to all levels of military command by actively selecting, questioning, prodding, monitoring, debating and, when necessary, relieving military leaders of their duties. He emphasizes that proper civilian control should exhibit give and take, but civilians must remain in firm control (Cohen 2002, 208–209). He concedes that civilians should be careful in exercising their power, however, as military professionals are more familiar with military issues. “For a politician to dictate military action is almost always folly” (12). Yet he allows for much greater civilian involvement than the professional prerogative school thinks is wise.

Cohen builds case studies on Lincoln, Churchill, Clemenceau, and Ben-Gurion, framing them as “how-to” examples to achieve success. Each closely supervised their subordinate military leaders, and their respective nations prevailed in war. Cohen’s findings thus raise the obvious question: how generalizable is his argument? Is it the case that the outcomes are better when civilian preferences prevail over military preferences than otherwise? Cohen’s work does not by itself constitute a strong foundation for generalizability. As others have alleged, Cohen’s work suffers from selection bias in choosing cases by the result he prefers (Desch 2007b, 154). A better test of Cohen’s argument would evaluate cases where a nation considered using military force, ascertain whether civilian or military preferences prevailed, and then assess the

outcome. Furthermore, if the purpose is to produce results applicable for American civil-military relations, then American-focused cases are more likely to capture the structure and consistent geopolitical factors that will make results even more applicable. This essay aims to do just that. Case selection is an important issue in this regard, since which cases I include and which I omit impacts the results. A broader, more inclusive set of cases should yield more generalizable conclusions than what Cohen argued.

In separate works, Cohen (2002) and Murdie (2011) suggest that a give-and-take relationship between civilian and military authorities improve outcomes. Cohen notes that senior military officers who contest misguided civilian leaders have a positive influence on policy (2002, 127–128). Murdie argues that a certain extent of civil-military friction is beneficial. Nations demonstrating a Goldilocks zone of friction improve their chances for success during crises (Murdie 2011, 246–249). If Cohen and Murdie are correct, then there should be a level of friction in American civil-military relations that optimize war outcomes.

4.1.3 The Post-Second World War Record

The debate between these schools of thought play out against a record of post-Second World War American civil-military relations which reveal several clear patterns. First, at the ultimate level of coup or no-coup, civilian control has never been challenged

in the United States. Second, at the more precise level of civilian preferences prevailing over military preferences, representatives from both schools – Desch and Feaver – conclude that most of the time civilian preferences have prevailed, but not all the time (Desch 1999, 135–138; Feaver 2003, 140). Third, there has been friction throughout. Episodes such as General of the Army Douglas MacArthur’s relief during the Korean War, the 1993 “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” civil-military dispute, 2006 “revolt of the generals,” and Michael Hasting’s “The Runaway General” article in *Rolling Stone* magazine highlight abrasive moments that boiled over into the public limelight. Fourth, the operational performance of the military has been mixed, with stunning successes such as the 1991 Gulf War or the initial invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and frustrating failures to achieve the larger political goals of the interventions like the Vietnam War, the 2011 Libya invasion, and the later stages of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

The question hangs in the air: does the pattern of operational success or failure align with the expectations of the civilian or the professional prerogative school? Some critics have claimed that the instances of poor military effectiveness can be traced back to civilians exercising control in a way that the civilian prerogative school advocates and the military prerogative lament. In addition to Desch (2007) critics such as Tom Ricks,

H.R. McMaster, Maureen Mylander, and Stefano Recchia have observed military leaders defer to civilians on issues they should have resisted, and military institutions inculcating a culture of “yes men.” Ricks (2012) criticizes the Bush administration for running roughshod over senior military officers in the run-up to the Iraq War. McMaster (1997) criticizes President Johnson for deceptively manipulating senior military officers against each other to produce his desired policy. Mylander observes, “to become a general, and particularly to become a high-ranking one, an officer must conform, avoid error, shun controversy, and forego dissent,” producing institutionally-groomed “yes-men” (1974, 211). Recchia recounts civilian processes to select obedient generals and use their power to quash dissent (2015, 211–215). Together, these authors form a body of literature suggesting a potentially harmful extent of civilian management of military operations. Advocates of the professional prerogative discourage excessive civilian management over military affairs, and seek a partially autonomous military jurisdiction.

4.2 Research Question and Hypothesis

In this study, I test how civil-military preferences on whether to use military force relate to military outcomes. I compare cases where civilian and military preferences differed, recording whose preference prevailed, and analyzing the resulting military outcome. If implementing military preferences or military “shirking” more

often leads to favorable outcomes, this would provide evidence that America could benefit from military authorities asserting themselves more than “yes men” critics have noted.

I proceed by examining a selection of cases where the nation considered employing military force. I predict military outcomes will more frequently be successful when military preferences prevail. An important indicator is when the military “shirked.” Since military leaders have more experience in and a better understanding of military affairs, as any expert in their field does, and will probably have a greater appreciation of the likelihood of mission success when formulating their policy preferences, I expect they will shirk only when they calculate that America’s battlefield success would be better served by resisting civilian policy.⁴⁷ I make an assumption that the senior military officers were not interested in attempting a coup d’état or politically weakening the civilian authorities for other purposes in the cases examined in this study, but that they faithfully attempted to serve what they perceived to be the nation’s best interest, even if potentially also self-serving. There may be other reasons that military authorities shirk, such as to garner personal fame and glory or to gain

⁴⁷ Although Clausewitz asserts that the military is subordinate to policy, since “war is merely the continuation of politics by other means” (1832, 87), he also states civilian authorities must not interfere with tactical details. “Political considerations do not determine the posting of guards or the employment of patrols” (606).

advantage in an inter-service rivalry, but, if so, these will unlikely improve military outcomes.⁴⁸

Shirking should only be apparent when there is a civil-military policy disagreement. To “shirk,” the matter must be so salient to military leaders that they risk punishment as well as undermine norms of loyalty to serve a different purpose and seek a different outcome than they predict the civilian policy will produce. Consequently, if senior military officers consider military success as an important reason to shirk and are better judges based on their expertise, on average we should see that when military leaders shirked, they shirked in a direction towards a more favorable outcome than when civilians preferences prevailed. When the military “worked” and dutifully obeyed civilian policy, on average we should see no better of a military outcome than when they “shirked.” For the same reasons, when the military’s preference prevailed in civil-military disagreements, the operational outcome should more frequently be successful than when civilian preferences prevail.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ My hypothesis addresses the potentially positive influences of military judgment. There may be negative outcomes associated with poor military judgment. These are considered in my results but not in the hypothesis.

⁴⁹ There are shirking techniques which may lessen risk, but there is no shirking which carries no risk. Therefore, shirking will have an impact. The only question should be how measurable the impact is. I observe a measurable relationship in this essay.

The research question of this essay is, “When their policy preferences prevailed to go to war, which side of the civil-military relationship enjoyed greater rates of military success?”

If American military leaders have become excessively deferential to their civilian masters as Ricks, McMaster, Mylander, and Recchia suggest, and if this has detrimentally affected the outcome of military operations, then the results of military outcomes following civil-military disagreements should demonstrate that military preferences would have yielded better results.

H1: In the post–Second World War era of American military deference to civilian authority, military outcomes are more likely to be favorable when the military’s preferences prevail over civilians on whether to use military force.

By using Feaver’s data as a starting point and evaluating the substantive outcomes of disputed defense policies, this paper contributes to the civil-military relations subfield by adding information on American military effectiveness. This advances discussion on whether the nation would benefit by yielding more to the professional prerogative.

4.4 Research Design

In this study I analyze 44 post-Second World War civil-military disputes. I use 32 disputes identified by combining Tables 5.3 and 6.2 of Feaver’s *Armed Servants* where

decision-makers considered a use of military force decision. These case studies are a subset of Feaver's total cases where I omit non-operational policy disagreements from consideration, such as budget, manning, and equipment fielding issues. These omitted topics are important, but connecting their relationship and attributing victory or defeat for them merits separate consideration.

Feaver's tables were originally derived from Betts's appendices A and B to *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* as well as Desch's appendix to *Civilian Control of the Military*. These cases reflect civil-military deliberations over whether to use force above the minimum threshold of "decisions in which the use of American forces in combat was considered by high-level policymakers," whether military intervention ultimately did or did not happen (Betts 1991, 239). These cases include instances where the civilian and military preferences were in accord. To this list I add the 1992–2001 cases that Feaver analyzed in the closing chapters in *Armed Servants*, which entails Somalia 1992, Bosnia 1993, and Kosovo 1999. I also add recent cases during the Twenty-First Century Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) conflicts. To remain consistent with the cases illustrated in *Armed Servants*, I select cases where either civilian or military authorities recommended using military force and discard cases where neither side seriously considered use of force.

I limit examination to *whether* to use force and do not consider disagreements over *how* to use force. Debates over *whether* to use military force are critical issues for the nation, and represent a moment where America considers the efficiency of costs, benefits, and risks of sending its forces into danger as well as employing the resources the nation has invested. Exploring this avenue first opens the door to exploring the question of civil-military track records on disagreements over *how* to use military force later.⁵⁰

I define civilian authorities as either the president himself, or the preponderance of close advisors to the president including the vice president, secretary of state, secretary of defense, and national security advisor. I define military authorities as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, preponderance of officers composing the Joint Chiefs of Staff, respective theater commander, or, lacking records of their input, high-ranking military officials attending cabinet-level meetings such as those serving as Director of Central Intelligence or deputy national security advisor by exception.⁵¹ I

⁵⁰ Exploring civil-military discord over how to use force is important to study, which deserves its own separate and deliberate consideration. A future study of disagreements over how to use force would have to establish additional rules that sufficiently distinguished whether from how decisions, ensuring that how issues were also not so trivial that they would not reasonably affect the outcome of the potential military operation. The issue is further complicated by considering criteria for counterfactuals about the level of operational decisions made and their resultant outcomes. This warrants its own separate study.

⁵¹ The military personnel appointed in these jobs act in civilian functions, but they nonetheless carry some military judgment and expertise given their professional background. Therefore, I include their input on

identify others on a case-by-case basis and omit authorities whose position was unclear or not recorded.

I define use of military force to mean combat operations where the armed forces of the United States were authorized, or given deliberate consideration, to engage adversaries with lethal force. Consequently, deployment of military forces does not qualify as use of force in and of itself. Furthermore, I omit potential military operations that planned to employ fewer than 2,000 personnel and were either forecasted to, or actually incurred, less than 10 battle deaths. These criteria focus this study on use of military force to engage in direct combat, excluding operations designed to indirectly advance national security objectives such as covert or clandestine special operations, influence, advisory, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, evacuation, or minor deterrence missions. Consequently, GWOT operations in North Africa and the Philippines as well as CIA-led anti-terrorism drone strike campaigns in Yemen, Pakistan, and Somalia are excluded from my case selection because they fall below this threshold. Consistent with these criteria, I add post-9/11 cases of Afghanistan 2001, Iraq

these matters rather than exclude them, but I do not claim that they completely represent either civilian or military sides. It would simply be foolish to consider the positions that Haig, Poindexter, and Powell have taken on use of force issues as purely representing the civilian perspective.

2003, consideration of a general campaign in Pakistan from 2004–2012, Iraq 2006–2007, and finish with Obama administration cases of Libya 2011, Iraq 2011, Syria 2013, and ISIS (Syria, Iraq, and Libya) 2014.

My case selection method omits some high-profile cases. I omit Afghanistan 2009 because it was a discussion on *how* military force should be applied rather than *whether*. In this instance there was civil-military agreement that America should continue to prosecute the war (Woodward 2010, 186).⁵² This contrasts with the 2006 “surge” decision in Iraq which considered the option to begin withdrawing American forces from combat. I exclude the 2009 counter-piracy operation to recapture the MV Maersk Alabama and 2011 special operations raid targeting Osama Bin Laden due to their small size. Similarly, I disqualify four recent North Korean crises spanning the G.W. Bush and Obama administrations, an Iranian nuclear crisis, and a South Sudan crisis identified in the International Crisis Behavior (ICB) database, as well as Benghazi 2012.

Omitting these cases should not change my findings much since they are not substantially different from Cold War-era cases that I examine. Including these most

⁵² Some critics have argued that Obama’s announcement of the arbitrary withdrawal timeline eclipsed, in strategic terms, his concurrent decision to temporarily increase resources. In effect, they claim, this may have announced a withdrawal (Koprowski 2011, 46). However, Obama never made this claim and history attests that his 18-month troop reduction timeline was, in fact, not the end of the War in Afghanistan. Consequently, the 2009 decision does not qualify for consideration in this study.

recent cases would be perilous, however, since their ultimate outcomes remain to be determined and insufficient documents yet available for thorough analysis. Including them would elevate the possibility to mischaracterize them and skew the study findings in a less reliable direction. Table 8 lists the cases included in this study.

Table 8: Use of Force Cases

Case #	Incident
1	Berlin Airlift 1948
2	Korean War 1950 (Formosa)
3	Dien Bien Phu 1954
4	Taiwan Straits 1954
5	Taiwan Straits 1958
6	Berlin Blockade 1958
7	Lebanon 1958
8	Laos 1961
9	Cuba 1961 (Bay of Pigs)
10	Berlin 1961
11	Laos 1962
12	Vietnam 1961–63
13	Cuban Missile 1962
14	Vietnam 1964 (Tonkin)
15	Dominican Republic 1965
16	USS Pueblo 1968
17	EC-121, N Korea 1969
18	Jordanian Civil War 1970
19	Cambodia 1970
20	Yom Kippur War 1973
21	Mayaguez 1975
22	Iran 1980
23	Nicaragua 1983
24	Lebanon 1982–83
25	Beirut Barracks 1983

26	Grenada 1983
27	Libya airstrikes 1986
28	Persian Gulf 1987
29	Panama 1989
30	Kuwait 1990
31	Bosnia 1992
32	Somalia 1992
33	Bosnia 1993
34	Haiti 1994
35	Iraq airstrikes 1998
36	Kosovo 1999
37	Afghanistan 2001
38	Iraq 2003
39	Pakistan 2004–2012
40	Iraq 2006–2007
41	Iraq 2011
42	Libya 2011
43	Syria 2013
44	Islamic State 2014–2016

Feaver’s work indicates whether the respective case was an episode of agreement or disagreement between civilian and military authorities, provides the nature of civil-military disagreement, as well as his determination on whether the military “worked” or “shirked” (Feaver 2003, 134–137 and 200). Desch provides the determination for whether civilian or military preferences prevailed for most cases of disagreement (Desch 1999, 135–138). In cases where Desch omits a determination and there was a civil-military disagreement, I provide my own rationale for whose preferences prevailed and explicitly state so in the case description.

The focus of this study is on military outcomes, and tests to see if there is a relationship between military outcomes and civil-military relations characterized by agreement and disagreement, whose preferences prevailed in disagreements, and whether the military worked or shirked. Military leaders' attempts to shirk are effective when they are able to overcome civilian policy preferences and implement the policy they prefer, or ineffective when the civilian policy preference prevails. Military outcomes could be different for each circumstance. Unsuccessful shirking might disrupt coordination between civilian and military authorities, inhibiting military effectiveness. On the other hand, shirking might serve to induce more attention on the matter and yield higher quality deliberation, increasing military effectiveness. Similarly, successful shirking might improve military effectiveness because implementing the military's preferred policy would yield more favorable results. However, even if it is the better judgment, shirking might also reduce effectiveness because conflict with civilian authorities could diminish the confidence of troops involved.⁵³

⁵³ My results do not find different outcomes for two different types of shirking and, since is not a central focus of the study, I omit a discussion of this issue in the results.

4.4.1 Coding the Dependent Variable: Military Outcome

To measure whether the military result was favorable (“success”) or unfavorable (“failure”), I use three scholarly databases. Their names suggest the original purpose for which they were designed. The International Crisis Behavior (ICB) database examines specific instances of crises. The Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) database addresses instances where military forces were mobilized for action. The Correlates of War (CoW) database addresses large-scale wars that may endure for long periods.

The ICB project (Brecher et al. 2020) examines cases from 1918–2016 where a nation 1) had a national value threatened, 2) had a finite time to react, and 3) perceived an increased threat of military hostilities. ICB cases tend to focus on short term state-on-state conflicts, but more frequently make a decisive adjudication for victory or defeat than other databases. I prioritize the ICB codings over the MID and CoW databases since they more frequently render definitive outcomes, examine cases which may or may not have resulted in military conflict, and their case selection most closely match Feaver’s.

I use the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) database (Gibler 2018) and Correlates of War (CoW) databases (Palmer et al. 2015) to supplement ICB information, particularly when the ICB database lacked a vignette for a selected use of military force decision. MID cases catalog instances from 1816–2010 where a threat, display, or use of

force was made by one state against another state. These tend to omit irregular conflicts but document smaller uses of force well. CoW case selection criteria requires an episode from 1818–2007 with 1) sustained combat, 2) between organized forces, 3) where at least 1,000 combined combatant battle deaths occurred in a single year. This covers what the other databases lack. The CoW database examines large scale wars including recent irregular conflicts such as the Iraq and Afghan insurgencies, albeit without an outcome in these instances because the conflict is “ongoing.” For the more recent cases where databases have not provided a judgment, I myself assess the military’s progress at achieving the goals established by civilian authorities.

In cases where Feaver’s case delineation and the timeframe given in the respective database vignette do not align with the database case descriptions, I consider historical accounts and provide my own evaluation of the outcome as justified in my case description. If it is necessary to overrule the database’s outcome, I provide rationale for these exceptions in the case description. Similarly, I provide my own rationale to determine the military outcomes when scholarly databases have not yet rendered decisions on the ultimate outcomes of recent conflicts. This method is straightforward when there was an actual military operation to assess, but more complicated when authorities decided not to use military force.

Rather than counterfactual analyses to hypothesize how unexecuted operations might have played out, I simplify my approach by following a rule that assumes a favorable outcome for a decision not to use force if a military operation never became necessary in the future. This assumes that national interests, or justifications to use force, remained sufficiently satisfied without military intervention. Consequently, I code decisions not to use force a “success” if no similar future operation was conducted.

When decisions not to use force later led to a separate, subsequent operation, I judge the military outcome of the first decision as the contrary of the eventual military result in the final operation conducted. This rewards efforts to avoid interventions that were tried later and failed, and punishes efforts to resist interventions which were tried later and succeeded. For example, America considered interventions in Laos in 1961, 1962, Vietnam in 1961–1963, and then again after 1964, all related to one another. America decided not to intervene in Laos in 1961, 1962, and Vietnam in 1961–1963, but concluded with an intervention in the Vietnam War in 1965. The Vietnam War was unsuccessful, therefore, I code the three decisions not to intervene as military “success” since they probably averted an eventual defeat. Conversely, I code the 1992 decision not to intervene in Bosnia as a military “failure” because America later conducted a successful operation.

This coding scheme carries an advantage that it is parsimonious while also minimizing subjective evaluations of counterfactual examinations applied on case-by-case bases. The latter are more subject to personal bias. However, this scheme suffers a flaw that could result in faulty coding. It is possible that an initial decision not to use force could have allowed a larger problem to occur and this larger problem doomed the later intervention; in the counterfactual, perhaps an earlier intervention would have grasped the nettle when it was more manageable and would not have resulted in failure. For instance, if one argues that an intervention in Laos in 1961 would have precluded a failed intervention in Vietnam, then my coding misjudges the military outcomes. My coding scheme assumes that the actual history that transpired tended to be subject to larger forces that were difficult to resist,⁵⁴ though this may not be true. My method is imperfect as is every other attempt to study social behavior, but makes reasonable

⁵⁴ For an examination on the inevitability of history, see: Beardsley, Monroe C. "Inevitability in History," *Philosophic Exchange*, vol. 2 no. 1 (1971): 5–17. He recognizes that there are irresistible currents in history which bring about certain outcomes, but accident and human determination also play a role to make other events random. Debates over historical determinism have existed for millennia, where questions over fate and destiny have been woven into the foundations of philosophy. The concept is controversial to be sure. For a partial rebuttal, see Stack, G.J. "Are Historical Events Inevitable?" *Journal of Thought*, vol. 8 no. 1 (January 1973): 8–18. Though arguing against inevitability, Stack concedes that the momentum of events and human behavior shrink the variation in subsequent outcomes. I partially rely on determinism despite the controversy it might attract in order to avoid criticisms that my counterfactual analyses are simply opinion and, thus, easily dismissible. Social science may offer methods to assert counterfactuals, but they nonetheless run the risk of being dismissed as opinion because they allow case-by-case subjective judgments subject to biases that potentially escape undetected. My rule is explicit, articulates its advantages and disadvantages, but is forthwith and consistently fair.

assumptions that avoid convoluted “what-ifs.”⁵⁵ That said, a fruitful robustness check that could be explored in future work might rely more extensively on counter-factual analysis to code success and failure.

In examining each case, I discuss contemporaneous background, describe the different preferences of civilian and military sides, present judgments by Desch, Feaver, as well as the ICB database for the military result. I describe rationale for any exceptions to my coding rules in the case description.

4.5 Results⁵⁶

4.5.1 Summary

Table 9: Main Results

Category	Success	Cases	%	Rank
All cases	36	44	82	-
Mil preferences prevailed	3	4	75	5
Civilian preferences prevailed	19	22	86	2
Civilian prefs prev, military “worked”	14	17	82	3
Military “worked”	15	19	79	4
Military “shirked”	7	7	100	1

⁵⁵ Although unlikely to be completely true, assuming inevitability exposes us to fewer mistakes in counterfactual judgment than alternatives. This method more accurately predicts the past than applying human intuition, understanding, reason, and judgment in all details because human understanding is limited, while reality is infinite in detail and complexity.

⁵⁶ See Table 10 for tabulated case summaries. See Appendix G for the full explanation of case description codings.

The military success rate for all use of force cases considered in this study was 82%. Although one might find this rate surprisingly high, this reflects America's powerful military strength and tendency to engage combat against and in developing and underdeveloped countries. Some might expect a lower success rate out of disproportionate attention paid to failures, or aspects of successful military operations which were less effective and create a perception that the overall operation failed. This study may correct misconceptions, as is the main purpose of academic rigor. The success rate is not buoyed by a bias to reward decisions to avoid using force either. Decisions to use force actually enjoyed a slightly higher success rate, at 83% (see Table 11).

The results of this study do not provide strong support for my hypothesis that American military outcomes are more likely to be favorable when military preferences prevail in civil-military disputes. Although there are only four cases where military preferences prevailed, the success rate for these cases is lower than when civilian preferences prevailed and the military "worked." See Table 9. The few cases where military preferences prevailed (Laos 1962, EC-121 1969, Nicaragua 1983, and Bosnia 1992) make this subset of cases more anecdotal and suggestive, rather than indicative of a strong pattern. Bosnia 1992 was the only case where military preferences prevailed but resulted in an unfavorable military outcome, because, after first avoiding intervention,

America subsequently intervened in Bosnia with a successful outcome. The small-n of military preferences prevailing lacks statistical robustness for reliable quantifiable analysis.

There is other evidence that lends weight to my theory, however. The success rate was highest in cases where military authorities “shirked.” Military leaders sought to avoid using force in all seven of these cases, and the nation chose not to use force in six of them (the sole exception was Haiti 1994). Military leaders may, indeed, feel compelled to resist civilian authority when they anticipate a high risk of failure or perceive civilian decisions as negligent. It must take a powerful motivating force to risk punishment for shirking, and the fact that shirking resulted in favorable military outcomes in every case suggests that these military authorities acted in ways that benefitted the nation.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ If there were other reasons that military authorities shirked, such as to garner personal fame, glory, or to gain advantage in an inter-service rivalry, these unlikely served to improve military outcomes or led to a 100% success rate. The best explanation is that these officers held extraordinarily intense preferences out of an impassioned sense of duty to the nation.

Table 10: Use of Force Case Summaries

Case #	Incident	Use/Continue Force?	Civil-Military Agreement?	Preference Prevailed	Work/Shirk?	ICB Outcome (#)	MID Outcome (#)	CoW Outcome (#)	Military Outcome
1	Berlin Airlift 1948	No	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (123)	Stalemate (26)	N/A	Success
2	Korean War 1950/ coincident with Formosa	Yes/ No	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (KW1/132); Compromise (KW2/133), Victory (KW3/140)	Stalemate (51)/ Unclear (633)	N/A	Success
3	Dien Bien Phu 1954	No	No	Civilian	Shirk	Defeat (145)	N/A (no US particip)	N/A (457)	Success
4	Taiwan Straits 1954	No	No	Civilian	Work	Stalemate (146)	N/A (no US particip)(2987)	N/A	Success
5	Taiwan Straits 1958	No	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (166)	Stalemate (173)	N/A (159)	Success
6	Berlin Blockade 1958	No	No	Civilian	Work	Stalemate (168)	Unclear/ Negotiated (608)	N/A	Success
7	Lebanon 1958	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Victory (165)	Unclear/ Negotiated (125)	N/A	Success
8	Laos 1961	No	No	Civilian	Shirk	Victory (180)	Unclear/ Negotiated (1363)	N/A (751)	Success
9	Cuba 1961 (Bay of Pigs)	No	Yes	N/A	Work	Defeat (181)	N/A diff dates (246)	N/A	Failure
10	Berlin 1961	No	Yes	N/A	Work	Compromise (185)	Unclear (27)	N/A	Success

11	Laos 1962	No	No	Military	Work	Victory (193)	Compromise (1353)	N/A (756)	Success
12	Vietnam 1961–63	No	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (186)	Unclear (3361)	War Changed (748)	Success
13	Cuban Missile 1962	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (196)	Victory (61)	N/A	Success
14	Vietnam 1964 (Tonkin)	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	Stalemate (210)	Defeat (611)	Defeat (163)	Failure
15	Dominican Republic 1965	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Victory (215)	N/A	Conflict continues at lower level (766)	Success
16	USS Pueblo 1968	No	No	Civilian	Work	Defeat (224)	Release (347)	N/A	Success
17	EC-121, N Korea 1969	No	No	Military	Shirk	Stalemate (233)	Stalemate (1379)	N/A	Success
18	Jordanian Civil War 1970	No	No	Civilian	Shirk	Victory (238)	Stalemate (1039)	N/A (780)	Success
19	Cambodia 1970	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Stalemate (237)	Defeat (611)	Defeat (163)	Success
20	Yom Kippur War 1973	No	Yes	N/A	Work	Victory (255)	Negotiated (353)	N/A (181)	Success
21	Mayaguez 1975	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Victory (259)	Negotiated (356)	N/A	Success
22	Iran 1980	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Compromise (302)	Negotiated (3020)	N/A	Failure
23	Nicaragua 1983	No	No	Military	Shirk	N/A (no US participation)	Stalemate (2347/2977)	N/A (828)	Success
24	Lebanon 1982–83	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	N/A (no US participation)	N/A (3444)	Defeat (833)	Failure

25	Beirut Barracks 1983	No	No	Civilian	Shirk	N/A	Unclear (3062)	Defeat (833)	Success
26	Grenada 1983	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (343)	Victory (3058)	N/A	Success
27	Libya airstrikes 1986	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Victory (363)	Victory (3636)	N/A	Success
28	Persian Gulf 1987	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	N/A	Unclear (2740)	N/A (199)	Success
29	Panama 1989	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Victory (391)	Victory (3901)	N/A	Success
30	Kuwait 1990	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	Victory (393)	Victory (3957)	Victory (211)	Success
31	Bosnia 1992	No	No	Military	Work	N/A (no US participation)	Victory (3551)	N/A (215)	Failure
32	Somalia 1992	Yes	Yes	N/A	Work	N/A	N/A	Compromise (870)	Failure
33	Bosnia 1993	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	N/A (no US participation) (403)	Victory (3551)	Victory (877)	Success
34	Haiti 1994	Yes	No	Civilian	Shirk	Victory (411)	Victory (4016)	N/A	Success
35	Iraq airstrikes 1998	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Compromise (429)	N/A diff dates (4273)	N/A	Success
36	Kosovo 1999	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (430)	Victory (4137)	Victory (221)	Success
37	Afghanistan 2001	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Victory (434)	Victory (4283)	War Changed (225)/ War Ongoing (481)	Success
38	Iraq 2003	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	Victory (440)	Victory (4273)	War Changed (227)	Success
39	Pakistan 2004–2012	No	No	Civilian	Work	N/A	N/A diff dates (4575)	Defeat (932)	Success

40	Iraq 2006–2007	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	N/A	N/A	War Ongoing (482)	Success
41	Iraq 2011	No	No	Civilian	Work	N/A	N/A	War Ongoing (482)	Failure
42	Libya 2011	Yes	No	Civilian	Work	Victory (464)	N/A	N/A	Success
43	Syria 2013	No	Yes	N/A	N/A	Compromise (470)	N/A	N/A	Failure
44	ISIL 2014–2016	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Success

4.5.2 Discussion

This study predicted that, in the post-Second World War era, favorable military outcomes would more frequently occur when military preferences prevailed over contrary civilian preferences. There were four cases where military preferences prevailed, and three resulted in a favorable outcome. This yields a 75% rate of success. The average success rate for all 44 cases was 82%. Given how these percentages might move markedly with a change of coding in just one or two cases, however, we must be careful not to reach definitive judgements about the relative merits of one civil-military configuration over another.

There may also have been a common thread tying these four cases together which made military preferences more likely to prevail, but also reduced chances of military success. For instance, if civilians were less enthusiastic about supporting actions that went against their preferences, they may have been more reluctant to provide interagency support or nonmilitary resources, thus reducing chances of success. It is possible that the inverse might also have been true for the sole case where military preferences prevailed but resulted in an unfavorable outcome (Bosnia 1992). Civilian authorities may have been so determined to succeed in their subsequent effort to intervene in Bosnia that they demonstrated stronger will and garnered stronger popular support

than military authorities previously anticipated, rendering the 1992 decision unfavorable.⁵⁸ Civilian authorities likely have a better grasp of domestic support than military leaders, which give them a more accurate perspective on this crucial ingredient to success. Indeed, the Clinton administration brought a stronger determination to succeed in Bosnia than the preceding Bush administration, leading the nation with calls to a moral conscience, which generated more support and made outcomes more likely for success under Clinton than Bush. If America were to intervene in Bosnia, it was more likely to be successful under a presidential administration that was more firmly determined to see it through than one that was not. The Clinton administration may have changed the landscape for prospects of success.

This does not excuse the military judgment for their opposition to an operation in Bosnia in either case, but it does reveal an aspect about civilian preferences that might enjoy an advantage over military preferences. Civilians have nonmilitary resources to add to the mix, and they might understand these better than military authorities.

Contrary to what I expected to find, cases of civil-military disagreement where civilians overruled military preferences resulted in a high success rate (86%). This may

⁵⁸ Had Bush defeated Clinton in the 1992 presidential election, however, Bush may have decided not to intervene in Bosnia, eliminating the 1993 case. Provided that America did not eventually intervene in Bosnia later, this would overturn my 1992 coding from "failure" to "success."

not provide as strong evidence for the hypothesis that civilians tend to judge prospects for success better than military authorities as it seems, though. This result benefits from five cases of military “shirking” that all ended in a successful outcome. There are good reasons to believe that the military shirking itself helped contribute to results. In all five cases (Dien Bien Phu 1954, Laos 1961, Jordan 1970, Lebanon 1983, and Haiti 1994), military officials shirked to diminish civilian advisors’ efforts to use force. America’s abstention to use force outright resulted in a favorable outcome in four of these cases. The fifth case, Haiti, remains an aberration which does not fit well with the other evidence.⁵⁹

In none of these cases have there been significant sentiments of regret for not intervening and, in the case where America did intervene (Haiti), there are no significant calls that America should have used force more quickly, longer, or to a greater degree. Military shirking was an impetus that lessened the likelihood of entering a quagmire, and the nation may have benefitted from military recalcitrance.

The success rate was 82% for cases where civilian preferences prevailed and the military worked. In other words, the success rate was average in cases where military

⁵⁹ The success in Haiti despite military shirking, combined with the unfavorable outcome of Bosnia 1992, might indicate a tendency for 1990s military leaders to overact on their reluctance to support use of military force. If one determines that the military shirked in the Bosnia 1992 case, a close-run judgment by Feaver, this would even be more apparent. However, this matter does not consider whether any of these military successes have been worth their costs, which military leaders likely include in their policy preferences. Despite success, key advisors may have felt the successes were not worth it. Likewise, some failures to act might have been more valuable than successes which might have come at high cost. Finally, the outcome of these small number of individual cases might also have simply been decided by luck.

authorities were unwilling to risk punishment associated with shirking resistant to civilian preferences. Civilians did not have the benefit of the military shirking away from quagmires in these cases, thus lowering the success rate when civilian preferences prevailed without qualification. Nonetheless, the civilian 82% success rate still exceeds the 75% success rate for cases when military preferences prevailed.

The professional prerogative school suggests that American military “shirking” would shirk policy towards favorable military outcomes. I found some evidence to support this. Operational outcomes were favorable in all seven out of seven cases when the military shirked. However, this evidence must be qualified that the only instances of shirking occurred when military authorities were strongly reluctant to apply military force in cases where civilians sought a limited war. Nonetheless, this supports my theory that in this one respect America’s post-Second World War military enjoyed better military judgment than civilian leaders, and that military authorities chose to shirk potential operations that were most in peril from unwise civilian judgment. This also supports the idea that military advisors were so resolute in their objection to these operations, that they risked punishment to prevent America from unwisely entering a conflict. Military shirking over Dien Bien Phu 1954, Laos 1961, North Korea 1969, Jordan 1970, Nicaragua 1983, and Lebanon 1983 likely saved America from military interventions which could have led to unfavorable outcomes. Although, despite shirking against the actual use of force in Haiti 1994 still led to a favorable military outcome,

shirking may have lessened civilian appetite for longer or additional interventions, each could also have become a quagmire, thus raising the overall success rate. In all cases where the military shirked, the military shirked in favor of restraint. This is consistent with Recchia’s conclusions that US military advisors serve as a restraint against hawkish civilian ambitions.

Table 11: Other Notable Outcomes

Category	Success	Cases	%
By topic:			
Civil-military agreement	14	18	78
Civil-military disagreement	22	26	85
Decision to use/continue force	20	24	83
Decision to avoid/discontinue force	16	20	80
Decision to initiate force	19	23	83
Decision to avoid use of force	15	18	83
Decision to continue use of force	1	0	100
Decision to discontinue use of force	1	1	50
Mil preference to use force prevails	-	0	-
By era:			
Pre-9/11	30	36	83
Post-9/11	6	8	75
By presidential political party:			
Democratic	15	20	75
Republican	21	24	88
Democratic use/continue force	9	11	82
Republican use/continue force	11	13	85
By method:			
<i>Armed Servants</i> Table 5.2	25	29	86
Post-Table 5.2	11	15	73
Feaver cases	29	35	83
Tier additional cases	7	9	78

Consistent with previous findings by Recchia, Avant, and Feaver, this study found no instances where more aggressive military preferences prevailed to use force over civilian preferences, or military shirking in favor of more aggressive action. In the cases where military advisors favored use of force but civilians did not, military advisors “worked” for civilian leaders in all cases, prudently avoiding risk that the military would drag the nation into a potential Third World War or nuclear exchange without civilian agreement.

Ironically, civil-military agreement led to a below average rate of success (78%) while disagreement led to above average success (85%; see Table 11). This suggests that Murdie as well as Cohen are correct that civil-military friction correlates with successful military outcomes, at least when the frictions are over substantive disagreements on whether to use force. The deliberate examination and deeper consideration that accompanies rigorous civil-military debate appears to produce benefits.

There was little difference in success rates between decisions in favor of using force versus decisions not to use force. Both hovered near the average, though decisions to use force were slightly more likely to result in a favorable outcome (83% and 80%, respectively). Decisions to initiate military force, which subtracted cases where decisions were made to continue, avoid, or terminate the use of force, were also slightly more likely to result in success (83%). Similarly, there was little discernible different success rate for cases where leaders decided to avoid initiating use of force. Deciding not to

initiate the use of military force resulted in an 83% chance for a favorable outcome as well. This suggests that, all other things being equal, there has been no appreciable advantage of action versus inaction on questions whether to use military force.

There were only three cases that considered a decision to either continue or terminate the use of military force already in progress.⁶⁰ The mixed results do not indicate a trend developing either. Consequently, there are too few cases to draw a conclusion on these matters. Future research should search for more decisions that consider termination of force in order to develop interpretable conclusions.

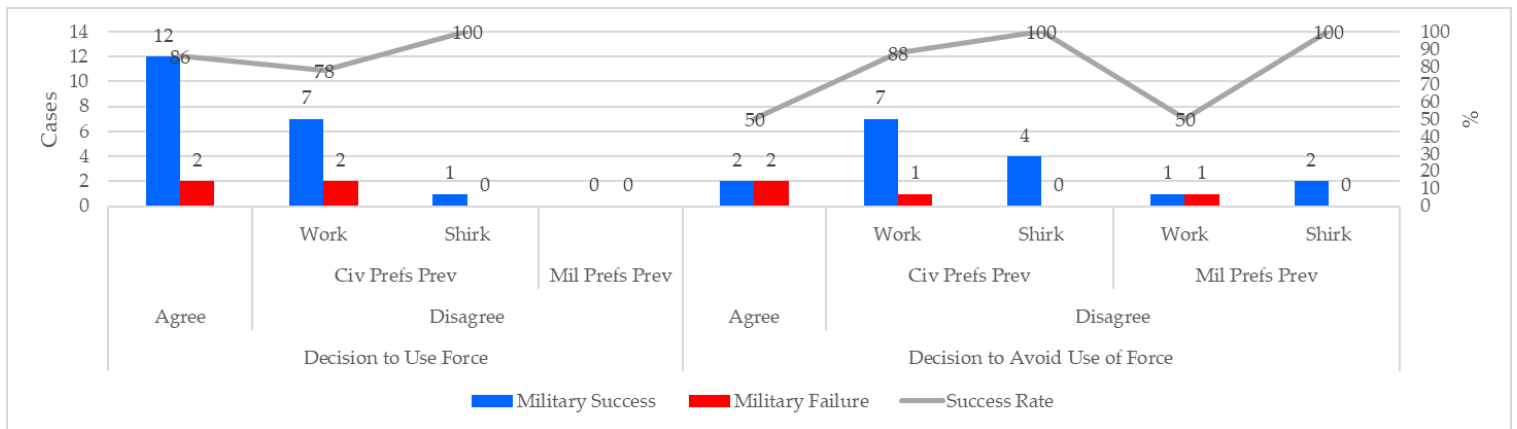


Figure 12: Military Outcomes by Category

Distinguishing between pre-9/11 and post-9/11 eras reveal that military outcomes were more likely to be favorable in the pre-9/11 era (83% to 75%). This

⁶⁰ The three continuation of force cases were Beirut Barracks 1983, Iraq 2006–2007, and Iraq 2011. These are included in my essay. Despite their slight differences from other cases, I note that there is no difference in their results than compared to the rest of the cases. See the two line-items in Table 11.

may indicate better American “strategic competence” in the earlier era (McMaster 2020), though it could also be due to the irregular nature and changed global environment that characterize the post-9/11 conflicts, or both. The Cold War threats and struggles were different than those that America experienced after 9/11.

There was a difference in the success rate between presidential political parties. Democratic presidents made use of force decisions that resulted in a 75% success rate while Republican presidents enjoyed an 88% success rate. Republican presidents could enjoy a greater rate of success because they might tend to select relatively weaker opponents to use military force against, they share a closer affinity and understanding with military authorities that reduces unhealthy friction and accentuates the healthier friction, possibly out of disreputable military attempts to undermine Democratic military uses of force, or simply out of luck of the circumstances in which questions to use force arise. I briefly explain further below.

Republican presidents could deliberately consider a military operation’s likelihood of success more, or they might have greater propensity to use military force and yet hold reservations against more difficult opponents. Indeed, despite roughly equal time spent in office, Republicans considered use of military force 24 times while Democrats 20. Either one of these possibilities would make them

more likely to target weaker opponents, thus improving their chances of success, such as with Grenada 1983, Libya 1986, and Panama 1989.

The military's right-leaning political ideology has been well-documented.⁶¹ If military authorities are more likely to share worldviews and political perspectives as Republican presidents, their interpersonal interactions might be lubricated with a greater sense of affinity for each other, which could translate into reducing unhealthy interpersonal pathologies while accentuating healthy discourse that help examine substantive issues with greater care. Rightward-leaning military authorities might suffer greater personality differences and misunderstandings with Democratic presidents, where interaction with presidents and their staffs may be more frequently snag on idiosyncrasies rather than substantive matters, thus inhibiting military success.

More worrisome, another possible reason for disparity between the success rates by presidential party could be more frequent efforts by military authorities to undermine Democratic administrations. The evidence for this is mixed. Military authorities were twice as more likely to "shirk" against Republican administrations than Democratic ones (5/24 compared to 2/20, respectively). It is not dismissible, however, as military authorities were more likely to agree with Republican administrations than Democratic ones (11/24

⁶¹ For example, see Feaver 2003, 205–206.

compared to 7/20, respectively). Although potentially interesting, the decisions of presidents from different political parties is beyond the scope of this paper to warrant deeper consideration here.

Case selection differences between Feaver and myself may possibly have influenced my findings some, but it is more likely that any differences between our two studies are explained by the differing eras. Feaver's cases contain more short-term conventional conflicts such as Libya 1986, Panama 1989, and Kuwait 1990, that enjoyed a high likelihood of success, rather than the more recent cases I added which disproportionately consider irregular conflicts, might be more difficult to win and last longer. Consequently, comparing the results between our two series of cases, whether using a cutoff of Feaver's base list found in Table 5.2 (Feaver 2003, 134–136) or including his extension cases in the latter half of *Armed Servants*, the success rates for both Feaver case groups and my case groups are similar (86% and 83% versus 73% and 78%, respectively). The greater disparity between the former cutoff than the latter is probably due to the greater distinction between Cold War cases versus post-Cold War era. Using the latter cutoff places the 1990s cases in Feaver's set, which adds cases that more closely resemble the potentially more difficult to win post-9/11 cases of irregular warfare.

4.5.3 Implications

There are at least two implications of these findings. First, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that military authorities should assert their preferences on whether to use military force based on the grounds that they hold better military judgment. It is not clear that military authorities demonstrate superior judgment when there is simple disagreement. Similarly, civilian authorities should not unquestionably defer and yield to military preferences with a sense that military judgment is more likely to produce favorable military results. The evidence suggests that the contrary may be true, and that civilians are more likely to decide outcomes that have a better chance of success.

Military judgment over use of force questions may still possibly be superior without contradicting the evidence, however, if civilians' better understanding and control of nonmilitary factors advantage their preferences. This advantage could counterbalance military authorities' better appreciation of military aspects over use of force, or even provide a net advantage for civilian officials in total, while military officials may still hold superior military judgment. In sum, this supports the civilian prerogative school.

A second, albeit partially contradicting, implication is that military authorities facilitate beneficial outcomes when they are inspired to "shirk" in the specific settings where civilians want to launch a military intervention and the military is strongly reluctant to do so. The instances of shirking exhibited common traits that civilians wanted to launch a military intervention and the military was strongly reluctant to do

so. After considering the personal risks and detrimental consequences of seeking to undermine civilian masters, military authorities that subverted civilian preferences may have helped to avoid failed uses of military force. The selection effect of military leaders acting boldly only when holding extraordinarily intense preferences provides a reasonable explanation why shirking appears to be associated with success. Imposing military preferences does not seem to produce favorable results, but “shirking” questionable military interventions does.

This raises two important questions. First, how can military authorities tell between cases where they produce a benefit by “shirking” civilian authority versus a temptation to rationalize an argument that justifies attempts to impose fraught military preferences? Second, even if there are benefits for military outcomes, at what point does “shirking” do greater damage to society by undermining the principle of civilian control? Future work should consider these residual questions.

4.5.4 Limitation to Findings

The cases in this study do not consider the role luck has had to play in military outcomes. It is possible that due to standard error, particularly on the rare occasions that military preferences prevailed over civilians on a use of force issue, results lack robustness and would not withstand statistical significance tests if there were enough samples to create a large-n study. Perhaps luck favored either civilian or military authorities in their advice on categories where there were few cases, and chance was the

mechanism for achieving favorable outcomes rather than superior judgment on military matters. Not all variables are knowable, and there are few things that are absolutely certain in social science and, as Clausewitz emphasizes, simple luck plays a role.

There is also an alternative possibility where civilians overruled military preferences on matters which were more uncertain and contentious, depressing the likelihood of success. In other words, there could be a selection effect on cases where civilian preferences prevailed and the military “worked” because the cases were so controversial that they were just tougher for the military to win. If this was the case, it could further undermine my theory and suggest military judgment is no more likely to deliver favorable military outcomes than civilians. In fairness, this selection effect could work in the other direction as well, disadvantaging cases where military preferences prevailed.

4.6 Conclusions

“War is too important to be left to politicians. They have neither the time, the training, nor the inclination for strategic thought.”

–General Jack D. Ripper, from the movie *Dr. Strangelove*

Dr. Strangelove is satire, of course. But there is always at least a little truth in jest.

There is something that rings true with Ripper’s statement, if not in reality then in representing the sentiments some hold. This study suggests that, when military preferences prevailed, military outcomes were not more likely to be better than when

civilians asserted their preferences. However, in the instances when tried, military shirking has led to favorable military outcomes by avoiding ill-advised wars.

The most reliable conclusion the evidence in this essay shows reinforces the notion, previously suggested by scholars, that senior military advisors have been “reluctant warriors” who have sought to restrain American military ambition. In each of the four cases where military preferences prevailed over civilians and the three additional cases they shirked, military leaders pressured to decrease military force. This led to favorable results, mainly by precluding an unnecessary operation.

Additionally, each time military advisors favored more aggressive use of military force, military advisors “worked.” They did not shirk. In the post-Second World War era, there have been no American mavericks that initiated use of force military against the desire of civilian leaders. Together, this indicates that American military leaders are more willing to stake their reputations and risk punishment to avoid misbegotten military ventures than to force an armed conflict when civilians are reluctant. As stated previously, this only considers decisions on *whether* to use force, not *how*.

The evidence remains mixed whether civilian or military preferences are most likely to result in military success. This study provides some evidence for subscribers to the civilian prerogative, as well as for professional prerogative advocates.

Future studies should add greater depth to this research by investigating civil-military disagreements over *how* to use force, as well as cases that examine readiness, training, and equipping issues. Testing Cohen's description of effective civilian control, future studies should explore different dynamics of civil-military relations by considering the issues of whether intrusive civilian oversight or unintrusive civilian monitoring tends to produce better military outcomes. Another study should look further into termination of force by considering issues America considered a decision whether to end the use of military force. For example, Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, and Obama entered office with an implicit mandate to end existing wars. Which advisors, civilian or military for these presidents, tended to guide the nation towards better outcomes, and what lessons can we draw from war termination debates? A final study should more closely distinguish the line between when shirking yields benefits versus causes greater net harm.

Civilian control of the military is an inflexible requirement of the American republic, but there is contentious debate over how that control should be exercised. Regardless of whether civilian or military preferences prevail in decisions to use military force, a decision to intervene does little good if the operation fails. Operational outcomes matter. The military fights to win its conflicts, and abstaining from an ill-fated fight precludes defeat. Finding the right balance of civil-military friction can optimize chances for operational success.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Contributions

This dissertation fills some important research gaps in the American civil-military relations and political economy of security studies scholarly subfields. Separately and together, these three essays identify key factors that influence defense budgets, fiscal policy, legislative behavior in Congress, and military effectiveness. My observations suggest that American policymakers will likely express willingness to tolerate budget deficits by maintaining defense spending and that veterans in the House of Representatives do not conclusively demonstrate distinct voting behavior on defense budgets. This helps us understand that fiscal policies should focus on reducing nondefense spending and raising revenue to have a feasible chance of success, as well as not to rely on veteran support to implement these measures. Veterans are more likely, however, to support additional resources towards an ongoing conflict in order to improve its chance of success. Another finding is that civilian authorities need not discount their own strategic vision when considering use of military force, but they should take heed if military authorities are so resistant that high-ranking officers are compelled to shirk because operations are less likely to succeed in these circumstances.

Collectively, knowing that veterans will support resource allocation and that civil-military interaction can afford a level of disagreement, should yield policies that improve military effectiveness. An ineffective military risks failing a vital need of the

republic to maintain its defense, and wastes resources. Policies that consider these factors should provide better national defense as well as contribute to improving national security.

5.1.1 Defense Spending and Budget Deficits

Studying defense spending and budget deficits illuminates the priority that American policymakers have expressed towards defense spending and fiscal deficits, finding that it has been a substantial concern for presidents, but even more of a concern when policymakers perceive that the public view balanced budgets as a top priority. The results of this study inform future debate on the implications of the national debt, deficit spending considerations, the mixture of spending cuts and revenue increases practical to achieving budget balance, and their relationship with defense budgets. Future studies should attempt to discover the extent which policymaker defense budget rhetoric translates to actual policy change.

5.1.2 Legislative Behavior of Veterans in the US Congress

This study adds to an understudied aspect of the literature by investigating civil-military relations in Congress, specifically the 113th–115th Houses of Representatives, finding a small yet discernible gap between the legislative behavior of its veterans and nonveterans. Veterans tended to oppose reductions to troop deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, propose more defense-related legislation than nonveterans, and their proposed legislation tended to be more pro-military than nonveterans. Veterans did not

demonstrate distinct behavior towards defense budgets or oversight of the Department of Defense. Future studies could attempt to characterize defense spending bills or member voting preferences as status quo seeking, should test for distinct behavior of women representatives to deny the possibility that women exhibited more interest in defense-related legislation than men in the 113th–115th Houses, as well as explore if there is a relationship with nondefense budgets where both ends of the political spectrum demonstrate similar spending preferences while centrists differ.

5.1.3 Military Effectiveness and American Civil-Military Relations

Military outcomes were not more likely to be better when military authorities applied their preferences than when civilians asserted theirs. However, military shirking against armed interventions has led to favorable military outcomes by avoiding ill-advised wars. The most reliable conclusion the evidence in this essay shows reinforces the notion, previously suggested by scholars, that senior military advisors have been “reluctant warriors” who have sought to restrain American military ambition. The evidence remains mixed whether civilian or military preferences are most likely to result in military success. This study provides some evidence for those that believe civilian control of the military improves outcomes, as well as for those that believe military insistence on policy preferences improves outcomes. Future research should examine issues of *how* to employ military force rather than *whether*, make a separate examination of war termination decisions, consider the issues of whether intrusive civilian oversight

or unintrusive civilian monitoring tends to produce better military outcomes, investigate readiness, training, and equipping decisions that may have influenced use of force results, attempt to distinguish cases where military authorities produce a benefit by “shirking” civilian authority versus rationalizations that justify attempts to impose fraught military preferences, as well as to seek the point where “shirking” does greater damage to society by undermining the principle of civilian control than by achieving success in war.

5.2 Future Research

If cutting defense spending will not solely complete the path to a balanced budget, scholarly research should examine how balanced budgets could feasibly be achieved. The potential for default on the national debt, hyperinflation, and the global economic turmoil that would follow obliges the scholarly community to investigate solutions that would lessen the possibility this could occur as well as attenuate its consequences. Although envisioning a scheme of revenue collection and expenditures that achieve a balanced budget is a simple exercise on paper, generating the political support to implement hard choices that result in clear winners and losers is much more difficult. Perhaps something has changed to make this political choice harder than in the past. Indeed, the US government ran a budget deficit in 84 of the last 91 years (92%), while in the previous 130 years prior to 1930, the nation ran a deficit in only 41 (32%). As a result, America’s national debt has ballooned over the course of recent decades.

The United States Congress is the institution constitutionally charged with establishing national fiscal policy, and it has exhibited a modern habit to enact budgets which consistently employ deficit spending. What factors influence this trend, and has American fiscal policy changed as a result of different legislative behavior? Congress's legislative behavior is subject to a wide-ranging spectrum of human influences. Some are individual-level forces, such as the descriptive personal attributes of its members as I have investigated with a focus on veterans in this dissertation, while others are structural forces, embedded in institutional processes. One structural force, in particular, may have influenced Congress's behavior. The 17th Amendment, which instituted the direct election of US Senators, may have changed Congress's legislative behavior to induce more frequent budget deficits.

I plan to explore these forces and test the extent which they affect legislative outcomes, particularly regarding military veterans, towards fiscal policy, and between chambers of Congress. Moving forward from research completed on the House of Representatives, I plan to examine if similar forces work in the US Senate. How have post-Second World War military veterans in the Senate acted on key use of military force issues, defense budgets, and has there been an empirically observable difference with regards to the national budget? Finally, as an institution, has the Senate exhibited more populist behavior on national budgets due to the process change in the selection of its members?

If able to identify or rule out the extent which selected individual influences and structural forces affect American policy, this research will advance societal understanding to remedy the “most significant national security threat” that trouble leaders like Admiral Mullen, and compelled President Obama to appoint the Simpson-Bowles commission. Future research should address the underlying issues that frame this policy problem. Specifically, I plan to examine whether the 17th Amendment changed Congress’s legislative behavior to induce more frequent budget deficits. This research will advance scholarly and societal understanding of certain forces on legislative behavior, which could help better forecast legislative outcomes as well as indicate potential solutions for policy problems like the national debt.

Appendices

Appendix A. Political and Social Contexts of the 113th–115th Houses

Political Context

The 113th and 114th Congresses were the two congressional terms of President Obama’s second presidential term, and the 115th Congress was the first of President Trump’s current administration. The 113th was a divided Congress where Democrats controlled the Senate and Republicans controlled the House. The 114th Congress was unified under one party, the first since the 109th when Republicans controlled both chambers, but a divided government between the Republican-controlled Congress and Democrat-controlled presidential administration. The 115th Congress was a period of unified government under Republican control. In short, Republicans progressively gained stronger control over the legislative and executive branches of government from 2013–2017.

Years	Congress	President/Term (Party)	Senate Majority	House Majority
2013–2015	113	Obama/2 (Democrat)	Democrat	Republican
2015–2017	114	Obama/2 (Democrat)	Republican	Republican
2017–2019	115	Trump/1 (Republican)	Republican	Republican

Figure 13: Political Context

According to popular news sources, some of the top political issues that attracted public attention in this timeframe were the botched health care roll-out, government shutdown of 2013, Snowden’s NSA revelations, rise of ISIS, showdown over Syria’s

chemical weapons,⁶² Russian invasion of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine, the Iranian nuclear deal, mismanagement at the VA,⁶³ Hillary Clinton's email server controversy, alleged police discrimination and violence towards blacks, Bernie Sanders' challenge to Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election, the election of Trump, investigation of Russian interference in the presidential election, and the Republican's inability to decisively repeal the ACA.⁶⁴ The nation continued to show political polarization.

America significantly reduced its troop presence in Afghanistan over the period, although the Trump administration slightly increased deployments at its beginning. The rise of ISIS sparked America to recommit itself to military operations in Iraq as well as begin a new operation in Syria.⁶⁵

Defense spending remained relatively stable overall, finishing a period of decline over the course of the Obama administration and slowly increasing since halfway through his final term.⁶⁶ One of the controversial actions in the 114th was when Congress passed a defense budget bill which lifted limits on defense spending but retained limits

⁶² NBC News, "The 10 biggest political stories of 2013", December 18, 2013, available online at nbcnews.com/news/world/10-biggest-political-stories-2013-flna2D11767518, accessed on August 22, 2019.

⁶³ PBS News, "Trump, Clinton and the Top 10 political stories of 2015, available online at pbs.org/newshour/nation/trump-clinton-and-the-top-10-political-stories-of-2015, access on August 22, 2019.

⁶⁴ Pramuk, Jacob, "2017 changed American politics forever — here are the biggest stories of the year", CNBC News, December 25, 2017, available online at cnbc.com/2017/12/27/the-biggest-us-political-stories-of-a-chaotic-2017.html, accessed on August 22, 2019.

⁶⁵ Data Source: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, *Defense Budget Overview*, (Washington, DC: DOD, March 2019), p. 6.4.

⁶⁶ Data Source: Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), *Defense Budget Overview*, p. 1.4.

on non-defense budget items.⁶⁷ Obama vetoed the bill. The showdown was resolved when the Republican Congress conceded to a defense spending cap.

Social Context

Table 12: Demographic Statistics

Sources: US Census Age/Sex Composition 2010 and the Department of Veterans Affairs Table 2L

Adults	Repub	Dem	Male	White	Med. Age	Veteran	P-9/11 Vet
Public	25%	32%	48%	65%	46	8%	1%
Veterans	29%	20%	92%	78%	58	100%	14%
Post-9/11 Vets	36%	21%	81%	65%	35	100%	100%
113–115 House (n=565)	56%	44%	82%	80%	60	20%	8%
Vets 113–115H (n=113)	76%	24%	97%	87%	60	100%	38%
P-9/11 Vets 113–115H (n=43)	79%	21%	94%	88%	51	100%	100%

Veterans across the nation self-identified slightly more often as Republicans (29%) than the general adult population (25%). Veterans were overwhelmingly male (92%) and more frequently white (78%) than the general population (65%), as were members of the 113th–115th Houses (80%). Military veterans of the House tended to have even more males than the already high proportion of male non-veteran members, with 97% male.

The demographic characteristics for members of the House differed from the general population in that they were disproportionately male, more often white, older, and contained more veterans. Compared to their non-veteran colleagues, the military

⁶⁷ US Congress, “House Floor Debate on FY2016 National Defense Authorization Act”, May 13, 2015, available online at congress.gov/congressional-record/2015/05/13/house-section/article/H2940-3, accessed on August 14, 2019.

veterans in the House were disproportionately more Republican (76%), and the post-9/11 veterans even more so (79%). Expanding disparity between themselves and the general population, and even other veterans, the veteran members of the House were even more frequently white (87%) than the already disproportionately white composition of the House.

Post-9/11 veterans comprised only 1% of the adult US population. They were less frequently white (65%) than other veterans, reflecting the same proportion as American adults. The post-9/11 veterans in the 113th–115th Houses, however, were more frequently white (88%) than the disproportionately white body of representatives (80%).

There were only 3 female military veteran members of the House, Tammy Duckworth (D-IL8), Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI2), and Martha McSally (R-AZ2), all of whom were post-9/11 military veterans. Despite the low number, there were a greater proportion of females of post-9/11 veterans (19%) than their preceding cohort of veterans, demonstrating the nation's increasing openness to women in combat.

Appendix B. Military Veterans in the 113th–115th Houses of Representatives

Member ID	Congress	Last Name	First Name	Party	State	District	Era	Service	O/E	Active?	OPN?	Yrs Service
A000361	113	Alexander	Rodney	R	LA	5	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
A000369	113	Amodei	Mark E.	R	NV	2	5	USA	O	Y	N	4
A000369	114	Amodei	Mark	R	NV	2	5	USA	O	Y	N	4
A000369	115	Amodei	Mark	R	NV	2	5	USA	O	Y	N	4
A000374	114	Abraham	Ralph	R	LA	5	7	USA	O	N	N	3
A000374	115	Abraham	Ralph	R	LA	5	7	USA	O	N	N	3
B000013	113	Bachus	Spencer T., III	R	AL	6	4	USA	E	N	N	2
B000490	113	Bishop	Sanford Dixon, Jr.	D	GA	2	4	USA	E	Y	N	2
B000490	114	Bishop	Sanford	D	GA	2	4	USA	E	Y	N	2
B000490	115	Bishop Jr.	Sanford D.	D	GA	2	4	USA	E	Y	N	2
B000589	113	Boehner	John Andrew	R	OH	8	3	USN	E	Y	N	0
B000589	114	Boehner	John	R	OH	8	3	USN	E	Y	N	0
B001251	113	Butterfield	George Kenneth, Jr. (G. K.)	D	NC	1	3	USA	E	Y	N	2
B001251	114	Butterfield	G.K.	D	NC	1	3	USA	E	Y	N	2
B001251	115	Butterfield	G.K.	D	NC	1	3	USA	E	Y	N	2
B001260	113	Buchanan	Vernon G.	R	FL	16	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
B001260	114	Buchanan	Vern	R	FL	16	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
B001260	115	Buchanan	Vern	R	FL	16	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
B001275	113	Bucshon	Larry	R	IN	8	5	USN	E	N	N	9
B001275	114	Bucshon	Larry	R	IN	8	5	USN	E	N	N	9
B001275	115	Bucshon	Larry	R	IN	8	5	USN	E	N	N	9
B001280	113	Bentivolio	Kerry	R	MI	11	6	USA	E	Y	Y	21
B001283	113	Bridenstine	Jim	R	OK	1	7	USN	O	Y	Y	15

B001283	114	Bridenstine	Jim	R	OK	1	7	USN	O	Y	Y	17
B001283	115	Bridenstine	Jim	R	OK	1	7	USN	O	Y	Y	19
B001291	114	Babin	Brian	R	TX	36	4	USAF	O	Y	N	4
B001291	115	Babin	Brian	R	TX	36	4	USAF	O	Y	N	4
B001295	114	Bost	Mike	R	IL	12	5	USMC	E	Y	N	3
B001295	115	Bost	Mike	R	IL	12	5	USMC	E	Y	N	3
B001298	115	Bacon	Don	R	NE	2	7	USAF	O	Y	Y	29
B001299	115	Banks	Jim	R	IN	3	7	USN	O	N	Y	5
B001301	115	Bergman	Jack	R	MI	1	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	40
B001304	115	Brown	Anthony G.	D	MD	4	7	USA	O	Y	Y	33
C000556	113	Coble	Howard	R	NC	6	5	USCG	O	Y	Y	27
C000714	113	Conyers	John, Jr.	D	MI	13	3	USA	O	Y	Y	9
C000714	114	Conyers	John	D	MI	13	3	USA	O	Y	Y	9
C000714	115	Conyers Jr.	John	D	MI	13	3	USA	O	Y	Y	9
C001062	113	Conaway	K. Michael	R	TX	11	4	USA	E	Y	N	2
C001062	114	Conaway	Michael	R	TX	11	4	USA	E	Y	N	2
C001062	115	Conaway	K. Michael	R	TX	11	4	USA	E	Y	N	2
C001077	113	Coffman	Mike	R	CO	6	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	12
C001077	114	Coffman	Mike	R	CO	6	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	12
C001077	115	Coffman	Mike	R	CO	6	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	12
C001087	113	Crawford	Rick	R	AR	1	6	USA	E	Y	N	4
C001087	114	Crawford	Rick	R	AR	1	6	USA	E	Y	N	4
C001087	115	Crawford	Rick	R	AR	1	6	USA	E	Y	N	4
C001093	113	Collins	Doug	R	GA	9	7	USAF	O	N	Y	11
C001093	114	Collins	Doug	R	GA	9	7	USAF	O	N	Y	13
C001093	115	Collins	Doug	R	GA	9	7	USAF	O	N	Y	15

C001094	113	Cook	Paul	R	CA	8	5	USMC	O	Y	Y	26
C001094	114	Cook	Paul	R	CA	8	5	USMC	O	Y	Y	26
C001094	115	Cook	Paul	R	CA	8	5	USMC	O	Y	Y	26
C001095	113	Cotton	Tom	R	AR	4	7	USA	O	Y	Y	8
C001112	115	Carbajal	Salud	D	CA	24	6	USMC	E	N	N	8
D000191	113	Defazio	Peter Anthony	D	OR	4	4	USAF	O	Y	N	4
D000191	114	DeFazio	Peter	D	OR	4	4	USAF	O	Y	N	4
D000191	115	DeFazio	Peter A.	D	OR	4	4	USAF	O	Y	N	4
D000355	113	Dingell	John David, Jr.	D	MI	12	1	USA	O	Y	Y	2
D000533	113	Duncan	John J., Jr.	R	TN	2	5	USA	O	N	N	17
D000533	114	Duncan	John	R	TN	2	5	USA	O	N	N	17
D000533	115	Duncan Jr.	John J.	R	TN	2	5	USA	O	N	N	17
D000612	113	Denham	Jeff	R	CA	10	6	USAF	E	Y	Y	16
D000612	114	Denham	Jeff	R	CA	10	6	USAF	E	Y	Y	16
D000612	115	Denham	Jeff	R	CA	10	6	USAF	E	Y	Y	16
D000621	113	Desantis	Ron	R	FL	6	7	USN	O	Y	Y	9
D000621	114	DeSantis	Ron	R	FL	6	7	USN	O	Y	Y	11
D000621	115	DeSantis	Ron	R	FL	6	7	USN	O	Y	Y	13
D000622	113	Duckworth	Tammy	D	IL	8	7	USA	O	N	Y	11
D000622	114	Duckworth	Tammy	D	IL	8	7	USA	O	N	Y	12
D000626	115	Davidson	Warren	R	OH	8	6	USA	O	Y	N	12
D000626	115	Davidson	Warren	R	OH	8	6	USA	O	Y	N	12
D000628	115	Dunn	Neal	R	FL	2	5	USA	O	Y	N	11
E000292	113	Enyart	Bill	D	IL	12	7	USA	O	Y	N	43
F000372	113	Frelinghuysen	Rodney P.	R	NJ	11	4	USA	E	Y	Y	2
F000372	114	Frelinghuysen	Rodney	R	NJ	11	4	USA	E	Y	Y	2

F000372	115	Frelinghuysen	Rodney	R	NJ	11	4	USA	E	Y	Y	2
F000456	113	Fleming	John	R	LA	4	5	USN	O	Y	N	5
F000456	114	Fleming	John	R	LA	4	5	USN	O	Y	N	5
G000552	113	Gohmert	Louie	R	TX	1	5	USA	O	Y	N	4
G000552	114	Gohmert	Louie	R	TX	1	5	USA	O	Y	N	4
G000552	115	Gohmert	Louie	R	TX	1	5	USA	O	Y	N	4
G000558	113	Guthrie	Brett	R	KY	2	6	USA	O	Y	N	3
G000558	114	Guthrie	Brett	R	KY	2	6	USA	O	Y	N	3
G000558	115	Guthrie	Brett	R	KY	2	6	USA	O	Y	N	3
G000564	113	Gibson	Christopher	R	NY	19	7	USA	O	Y	Y	24
G000564	114	Gibson	Christopher	R	NY	19	7	USA	O	Y	Y	24
G000567	113	Griffin	Tim	R	AR	2	7	USA	O	N	Y	17
G000569	113	Grimm	Michael G.	R	NY	11	6	USMC	E	Y	Y	8
G000571	113	Gabbard	Tulsi	D	HI	2	7	USA	O	N	Y	10
G000571	114	Gabbard	Tulsi	D	HI	2	7	USA	O	N	Y	12
G000571	115	Gabbard	Tulsi	D	HI	2	7	USA	O	N	Y	14
G000574	114	Gallego	Ruben	D	AZ	7	7	USMC	E	Y	Y	6
G000574	115	Gallego	Ruben	D	AZ	7	7	USMC	E	Y	Y	6
G000579	115	Gallagher	Mike	R	WI	8	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	7
G000580	115	Garrett	Tom	R	VA	5	6	USA	O	Y	N	5
H000067	113	Hall	Ralph Moody	R	TX	4	1	USN	O	Y	Y	3
H000329	113	Hastings	Richard Norman (Doc)	R	WA	4	3	USA	E	N	N	6
H001048	113	Hunter	Duncan Duane	R	CA	50	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	12
H001048	114	Hunter	Duncan	R	CA	50	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	14
H001048	115	Hunter	Duncan	R	CA	50	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	14
H001052	113	Harris	Andy	R	MD	1	7	USN	O	N	Y	22

H001052	114	Harris	Andy	R	MD	1	7	USN	O	N	Y	22
H001052	115	Harris	Andy	R	MD	1	7	USN	O	N	Y	22
H001055	113	Heck	Joe	R	NV	3	7	USA	O	N	Y	22
H001055	114	Heck	Joe	R	NV	3	7	USA	O	N	Y	24
H001077	115	Higgins	Clay	R	LA	3	5	USA	E	N	N	6
I000056	113	Issa	Darrell	R	CA	49	5	USA	O	Y	N	6
I000056	114	Issa	Darrell	R	CA	49	5	USA	O	Y	N	6
I000056	115	Issa	Darrell	R	CA	49	5	USA	O	Y	N	6
J000174	113	Johnson	Sam	R	TX	3	4	USAF	O	Y	Y	29
J000174	114	Johnson	Sam	R	TX	3	4	USAF	O	Y	Y	29
J000174	115	Johnson	Sam	R	TX	3	4	USAF	O	Y	Y	29
J000255	113	Jones	Walter Beaman, Jr.	R	NC	3	4	USA	-	N	N	4
J000255	114	Jones	Walter B.	R	NC	3	4	USA	-	N	N	4
J000255	115	Jones	Walter B.	R	NC	3	4	USA	-	N	N	4
J000292	113	Johnson	Bill	R	OH	6	6	USAF	O	Y	N	26
J000292	114	Johnson	Bill	R	OH	6	6	USAF	O	Y	N	26
J000292	115	Johnson	Bill	R	OH	6	6	USAF	O	Y	N	26
K000210	113	King	Peter T.	R	NY	2	4	USA	E	N	N	6
K000210	114	King	Peter	R	NY	2	4	USA	E	N	N	6
K000210	115	King	Peter T.	R	NY	2	4	USA	E	N	N	6
K000363	113	Kline	John	R	MN	2	6	USMC	O	Y	Y	25
K000363	114	Kline	John	R	MN	2	6	USMC	O	Y	Y	25
K000378	113	Kinzinger	Adam	R	IL	16	7	USAF	O	Y	Y	10
K000378	114	Kinzinger	Adam	R	IL	16	7	USAF	O	Y	Y	12
K000378	115	Kinzinger	Adam	R	IL	16	7	USAF	O	Y	Y	14
K000387	114	Knight	Stephen	R	CA	25	6	USA	E	Y	N	8

K000387	115	Knight	Steve	R	CA	25	6	USA	E	Y	N	8
K000388	114	Kelly	Trent	R	MS	1	7	USA	O	N	Y	32
K000388	115	Kelly	Trent	R	MS	1	7	USA	O	N	Y	32
L000582	114	Lieu	Ted	D	CA	33	7	USAF	O	Y	N	20
L000582	115	Lieu	Ted	D	CA	33	7	USAF	O	Y	N	22
L000583	114	Loudermilk	Barry	R	GA	11	6	USAF	E	Y	N	8
L000583	115	Loudermilk	Barry	R	GA	11	6	USAF	E	Y	N	8
M000133	113	Markey	Edward John	D	MA	5	4	USA	E	N	N	5
M000404	113	Mcdermott	James A.	D	WA	7	4	USN	O	Y	N	2
M000404	114	McDermott	Jim	D	WA	7	4	USN	O	Y	N	2
M001139	113	Miller	Gary G.	R	CA	31	3	USA	E	Y	N	0
M001151	113	Murphy	Timothy	R	PA	18	7	USN	O	N	N	8
M001151	114	Murphy	Tim	R	PA	18	7	USN	O	N	N	8
M001151	115	Murphy	Tim	R	PA	18	7	USN	O	N	N	8
M001196	114	Moulton	Seth	D	MA	6	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	7
M001196	115	Moulton	Seth	D	MA	6	7	USMC	O	Y	Y	7
M001197	114	McSally	Martha	R	AZ	2	7	USAF	O	Y	Y	22
M001197	115	McSally	Martha	R	AZ	2	7	USAF	O	Y	Y	22
M001198	115	Marshall	Roger	R	KS	1	6	USA	O	N	N	7
M001199	115	Mast	Brian	R	FL	18	7	USA	E	Y	Y	11
N000185	113	Nugent	Richard	R	FL	11	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
N000185	114	Nugent	Richard	R	FL	11	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
O000168	113	Olson	Pete	R	TX	22	6	USN	O	Y	Y	21
O000168	114	Olson	Pete	R	TX	22	6	USN	O	Y	Y	21
O000168	115	Olson	Pete	R	TX	22	6	USN	O	Y	Y	21
O000169	113	Owens	William	D	NY	21	5	USAF	O	Y	N	7

P000096	114	Pascrell	Bill	D	NJ	9	3	USA	E	Y	N	6
P000096	114	Pascrell	Bill	D	NJ	9	3	USA	E	Y	N	6
P000096	115	Pascrell Jr.	Bill	D	NJ	9	3	USA	E	Y	N	6
P000258	113	Peterson	Collin Clark	D	MN	7	3	USA	E	Y	N	6
P000258	114	Peterson	Collin	D	MN	7	3	USA	E	Y	N	6
P000258	115	Peterson	Collin C.	D	MN	7	3	USA	E	Y	N	6
P000373	113	Pitts	Joseph R.	R	PA	16	3	USAF	O	Y	Y	6
P000373	114	Pitts	Joseph	R	PA	16	3	USAF	O	Y	Y	6
P000588	113	Pearce	Stevan	R	NM	2	4	USAF	O	Y	Y	6
P000588	114	Pearce	Steve	R	NM	2	4	USAF	O	Y	Y	6
P000588	115	Pearce	Steve	R	NM	2	4	USAF	O	Y	Y	6
P000592	113	Poe	Ted	R	TX	2	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
P000592	114	Poe	Ted	R	TX	2	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
P000592	115	Poe	Ted	R	TX	2	4	USAF	E	N	N	6
P000595	113	Peters	Gary C.	D	MI	14	7	USN	O	N	Y	14
P000601	113	Palazzo	Steven	R	MS	4	7	USMC	E	N	Y	24
P000601	114	Palazzo	Steven	R	MI	4	7	USMC	E	N	Y	26
P000601	115	Palazzo	Steven M.	R	MS	4	7	USA	E	N	Y	28
P000602	113	Pompeo	Mike	R	KS	4	6	USA	O	Y	N	5
P000602	114	Pompeo	Mike	R	KS	4	6	USA	O	Y	N	5
P000602	114	Pompeo	Mike	R	KS	4	6	USA	O	Y	N	5
P000605	113	Perry	Scott	R	PA	4	7	USA	O	N	Y	33
P000605	114	Perry	Scott	R	PA	4	7	USA	O	N	Y	35
P000605	115	Perry	Scott	R	PA	4	7	USA	O	N	Y	37
P000613	115	Panetta	Jimmy	D	CA	20	7	USN	O	N	Y	8
R000053	113	Rangel	Charles B.	D	NY	13	2	USA	E	Y	Y	4

R000053	114	Rangel	Charles	D	NY	13	2	USA	E	Y	Y	4
R000395	113	Rogers	Harold Dallas (Hal)	R	KY	5	3	USA	E	N	N	8
R000395	114	Rogers	Hal	R	KY	5	3	USA	E	N	N	8
R000395	115	Rogers	Harold	R	KY	5	3	USA	E	N	N	8
R000515	113	Rush	Bobby L.	D	IL	1	3	USA	E	Y	N	5
R000515	114	Rush	Bobby L.	D	IL	1	3	USA	E	Y	N	5
R000515	115	Rush	Bobby L.	D	IL	1	3	USA	E	Y	N	5
R000572	113	Rogers	Mike	R	MI	8	5	USA	O	Y	N	4
R000578	113	Reichert	David G.	R	WA	8	4	USAF	E	Y	N	5
R000578	114	Reichert	David	R	WA	8	4	USAF	E	Y	N	5
R000578	115	Reichert	Dave	R	WA	8	4	USAF	E	Y	N	5
R000582	113	Roe	David P. (Phil)	R	TN	1	4	USA	O	Y	N	2
R000582	114	Roe	Phil	R	TN	1	4	USA	O	Y	N	2
R000582	115	Roe	Phil	R	TN	1	4	USA	O	Y	N	2
R000583	113	Rooney	Thomas J.	R	FL	17	7	USA	O	Y	N	8
R000583	114	Rooney	Thomas	R	FL	17	7	USA	O	Y	N	8
R000583	115	Rooney	Thomas J.	R	FL	17	7	USA	O	Y	N	8
R000589	113	Rigell	E. Scott	R	VA	2	5	USMC	E	N	N	6
R000589	114	Rigell	Scott	R	VA	2	5	USMC	E	N	N	6
R000604	114	Russell	Steve	R	OK	5	7	USA	O	Y	Y	21
R000604	115	Russell	Steve	R	OK	5	7	USA	O	Y	Y	21
S000051	113	Sanford	Mark	R	SC	1	7	USAF	O	N	N	10
S000051	114	Sanford	Mark	R	SC	1	7	USAF	O	N	N	10
S000051	115	Sanford	Mark	R	SC	1	7	USAF	O	N	N	10
S000185	113	Scott	Robert C. (Bobby)	D	VA	3	4	USA	E	Y	N	6
S000185	114	Scott	Robert C. (Bobby)	D	VA	3	4	USA	E	Y	N	6

S000185	115	Scott	Robert C.	D	VA	3	4	USA	E	Y	N	6
S000248	113	Serrano	José E.	D	NY	15	3	USA	E	Y	N	2
S000248	114	Serrano	Jose	D	NY	15	3	USA	E	Y	N	2
S000248	115	Serrano	Jose E.	D	NY	15	3	USA	E	Y	N	2
S000364	113	Shimkus	John M.	R	IL	15	7	USA	O	Y	N	28
S000364	114	Shimkus	John	R	IL	15	7	USA	O	Y	N	28
S000364	115	Shimkus	John	R	IL	15	7	USA	O	Y	N	28
S001187	113	Stivers	Steve	R	OH	15	7	USA	O	N	Y	28
S001187	114	Stivers	Steve	R	OH	15	7	USA	O	N	Y	30
S001187	115	Stivers	Steve	R	OH	15	7	USA	O	N	Y	32
S001192	113	Stewart	Chris	R	UT	2	6	USAF	O	Y	N	14
S001192	114	Stewart	Chris	R	UT	2	6	USAF	O	Y	N	14
S001192	115	Stewart	Chris	R	UT	2	6	USAF	O	Y	N	14
T000460	113	Thompson	Michael	D	CA	5	4	USA	E	Y	Y	6
T000460	114	Thompson	Mike	D	CA	5	4	USA	E	Y	Y	6
T000460	115	Thompson	Mike	D	CA	5	4	USA	E	Y	Y	6
T000473	114	Takai	Mark	D	HI	1	7	USA	O	N	Y	16
T000477	115	Taylor	Scott	R	VA	2	7	USN	E	Y	Y	8
W000413	113	Whitfield	Wayne Edward (Ed)	R	KY	1	4	USA	O	N	N	6
W000413	114	Whitfield	Ed	R	KY	1	4	USA	O	N	N	6
W000672	113	Wolf	Frank Rudolph	R	VA	10	3	USA	O	N	N	5
W000795	113	Wilson	Addison Graves (Joe)	R	SC	2	6	USA	O	Y	N	31
W000795	114	Wilson	Joe	R	SC	2	6	USA	O	Y	N	31
W000795	115	Wilson	Joe	R	SC	2	6	USA	O	Y	N	31
W000799	113	Walz	Tim	D	MN	1	7	USA	E	N	Y	24
W000799	114	Walz	Tim	D	MN	1	7	USA	E	N	Y	24

W000799	115	Walz	Tim	D	MN	1	7	USA	E	N	Y	24
W000809	113	Womack	Steve	R	AR	3	7	USA	O	N	N	30
W000809	114	Womack	Steve	R	AR	3	7	USA	O	N	N	30
W000809	115	Womack	Steve	R	AR	3	7	USA	O	N	N	30
W000815	113	Wenstrup	Brad	R	OH	2	7	USA	O	N	Y	15
W000815	114	Wenstrup	Brad	R	OH	2	7	USA	O	N	Y	17
W000815	115	Wenstrup	Brad	R	OH	2	7	USA	O	N	Y	19
Y000031	113	Young	Charles William (Bill)	R	FL	13	2	USA	E	N	N	9
Y000033	113	Young	Donald Edwin	R	AK	1	2	USA	E	Y	N	2
Y000033	114	Young	Don	R	AK	1	2	USA	E	Y	N	2
Y000033	115	Young	Don	R	AK	1	2	USA	E	Y	N	2
Y000064	113	Young	Todd	R	IN	9	6	USMC	O	Y	N	5
Y000064	114	Young	Todd C.	R	IN	9	6	USMC	O	Y	N	5
Z000017	114	Zeldin	Lee	R	NY	1	7	USA	O	Y	Y	4
Z000017	115	Zeldin	Lee	R	NY	1	7	USA	O	Y	Y	4
Z000018	114	Zinke	Ryan	R	MT	1	7	USN	O	Y	Y	22
Z000018	115	Zinke	Ryan	R	MT	1	7	USN	O	Y	Y	22

Appendix C. GWOT Troop Deployment Roll Call Votes

Congress	Session	Vote	Admin Title	Substance	Increased/Decreased
113	1	226	Amdt 149 to HR 1960	Accelerate reduction of troops in AFG	Decreased
113	1	410	Amdt 407 to HR 2397	Prohibit spending on operations supporting current AUMF effective 12/31/2014	Decreased
113	2	325	Amdt 908 to HR 4870	Prohibit spending on combat operations in Iraq	Decreased
113	2	326	Amdt 912 to HR 4870	Prohibit spending in support of 2002 Iraq AUMF	Decreased
113	2	330	Amdt 922 to HR 4870	Prohibit spending on operations supporting current AUMF effective 12/31/2014	Decreased
113	2	332	Amdt 928 to HR 4870	Prohibit spending on combat operations in AFG effective 12/31/2014	Decreased
114	1	346	Amdt 479 to HR 2685	Prohibit spending on OPN Inherent Resolve effective 3/31/2016	Decreased
114	1	347	Amdt 482 to HR 2685	Prohibit spending on GWOT combat operations effective 12/31/2015	Decreased
114	1	348	Amdt 484 to HR 2685	Prohibit spending on operations supporting Iraq AUMF	Decreased
114	2	210	Amdt 1033 to HR 4909	Repeal AUMF	Decreased
114	2	212	Amdt 1036 to HR 4909	Strike provisions in the bill that call on the President to expand the scope of the mission in AFG	Decreased
114	2	329	Amdt 1215 to HR 5293	Prohibit spending on ongoing combat operations	Decreased
114	2	330	Amdt 1216 to HR 5293	Prohibit spending on operations supporting 2001 AUMF	Decreased

Appendix D. Wartime Oversight Roll Call Votes

Congress	Session	Vote	Admin Title	Substance	Increased/Decreased
113	1	87	Amdt 369 to HR 2397	Reduce AFG infrastructure spending \$79M	Decreased
113	1	88	Amdt 371 to HR 2397	Cut \$279M in AFG infrastructure spending	Decreased
113	1	89	Amdt 372 to HR 2397	Reduce funding for AFG infrastructure \$139M	Decreased
113	1	90	Amdt 373 to HR 2397	Cut \$554M in spending for ANSF Mi-17s	Decreased
113	1	91	Amdt 374 to HR 2397	Reduce ANSF funding \$2.6B	Decreased
113	1	93	Amdt 376 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds on future AFG infrastructure projects	Increased
113	1	95	Amdt 382 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds on AFG special forces aviation	Increased
114	1	41	Amdt 474 to HR 2685	Deny DOD authority to transfer AFG funds for infrastructure improvement	Increased
114	2	20	Amdt 1203 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD counter-drug funding in AFG	Increased
114	2	26	Amdt 1210 to HR 5293	Deny DOD authority to transfer AFG funds for infrastructure improvement	Increased
114	2	28	Amdt 1214 to HR 5293	Prohibit use of funds on Syria train and equip program	Increased

Appendix E. Defense Budget Roll Call Votes

Congress	Session	Vote	Admin Title	Substance	Increased/Decreased
113	1	188	Amdt 77 to HR 2216	Cancel \$39M funds for new NATO HQ in Brussels	Decreased
113	1	193	HR 2216	2014 MILCON and VA-related construction	Increased
113	1	232	Amdt 159 to HR 1960	Reduce defense spending \$60B	Decreased
113	1	233	Amdt 161 to HR 1960	Decrease START treaty funding	Decreased
113	1	240	Amdt 171 to HR 1960	Reduce OCO	Decreased
113	1	244	HR 1960	FY2014 NDAA; final version	Decreased
113	1	379	Amdt 346 to HR 2397	Increase funding for Navy R&D \$104M	Increased
113	1	381	Amdt 356 to HR 2397	Reduce missile defense funding \$107M	Decreased
113	1	382	Amdt 357 to HR 2397	Reduce R&D for Ohio class submarines \$85M	Decreased
113	1	383	Amdt 359 to HR 2397	Increase cruise missile funding \$11M	Increased
113	1	384	Amdt 362 to HR 2397	Reduce missile defense funding \$70M	Decreased
113	1	386	Amdt 367 to HR 2397	Reduce Pakistan aid by \$600M	Decreased
113	1	387	Amdt 369 to HR 2397	Reduce AFG infrastructure spending \$79M	Decreased
113	1	388	Amdt 371 to HR 2397	Cut \$279M in AFG infrastructure spending	Decreased
113	1	389	Amdt 372 to HR 2397	Reduce funding for AFG infrastructure \$139M	Decreased
113	1	390	Amdt 373 to HR 2397	Cut \$554M in spending for ANSF Mi-17s	Decreased
113	1	391	Amdt 374 to HR 2397	Reduce ANSF funding \$2.6B	Decreased
113	1	396	Amdt 383 to HR 2397	Reduce spending by %1	Decreased
113	1	403	Amdt 392 to HR 2397	Reduce OCO funding \$3.5B	Decreased
113	1	413	HR 2397	Motion to recommit in order to increase funding for Israel missile defense \$25M	Increased
113	1	414	HR 2397	2014 DOD Appropriations	Increased
113	1	499	HR 3210	Pay Our Military Act	Increased

113	1	516	HR 3230	Pay Our Guard and Reserve (original title)	Increased
113	2	116	HR 3979	FY2015 NDAA; final joint version	Decreased
113	2	187	HR 4486	2015 MILCON and VA-related construction	Decreased
113	2	239	HR 4435	Motion to recommit in order to add more jobs	Increased
113	2	240	HR 4435	FY2015 NDAA; original House version	Decreased
113	2	337	HR 4870	Motion to recommit in order to add funds for sexual assault prevention	Increased
113	2	338	HR 4870	2015 DOD Appropriations	Increased
113	2	551	HR 3979	FY2015 NDAA; amended Senate version	Decreased
114	1	186	Amdt 125 to HR 2029	Cancel OCO construction funding	Decreased
114	1	193	HR 2909	2016 MILCON and VA-related appropriations	Increased
114	1	215	HR 2028	OCO continuing resolution	Increased
114	1	239	HR 1735	vetoed FY2016 NDAA; final House version	Increased
114	1	334	Amdt 442 to HR 2685	Net decrease in spending \$1M	Decreased
114	1	340	Amdt 473 to HR 2685	Reduce Pakistan aid by \$435M	Decreased
114	1	342	Amdt 475 to HR 2685	Eliminate \$715M in spending for Iraq train and equip program	Decreased
114	1	343	Amdt 476 to HR 2685	Eliminate \$600M in spending for Syrian rebels	Decreased
114	1	358	HR 2685	2016 DOD appropriations	Increased
114	1	532	HR 1735	vetoed FY2016 NDAA; conference report	Increased
114	1	618	S 1356	FY2016 NDAA; Senate version	Increased
114	2	211	Amdt 1034 to HR 4909	Reduce defense spending 1%	Decreased
114	2	216	HR 4909	FY2017 NDAA; original House version	Increased
114	2	217	Amdt 1057 to HR 4974	Reduce MILCON funding \$19M	Decreased
114	2	218	Amdt 1058 to HR 4974	Reduce MILCON funding \$60M	Decreased
114	2	219	Amdt 1059 to HR 4974	Reduce MILCON funding \$88M	Decreased

114	2	220	Amdt 1060 to HR 4974	Reduce MILCON funding \$5M	Decreased
114	2	228	HR 4974	FY2017 MILCON and VA-related appropriations	Increased
114	2	306	Amdt 1176 to HR 5293	Net decrease of \$25M	Decreased
114	2	308	Amdt 1186 to HR 5293	Increase funding for missile defense \$109M	Increased
114	2	309	Amdt 1187 to HR 5293	Reduce funding of long-range standoff weapon by \$76M	Decreased
114	2	312	Amdt 1192 to HR 5293	Cut Pakistan aid funding \$200M	Decreased
114	2	331	Amdt 1217 to HR 5293	Reduce appropriations 1%	Decreased
114	2	332	HR 5293	2017 DOD Appropriations	Increased
114	2	600	S 2943	FY2017 NDAA; Senate version	Increased
115	1	357	Amdt. 162 to H.R. 2810	Reduce proposed NDAA by 1%	Decreased
115	1	378	H.R. 2810	FY2018 NDAA	Increased
115	1	435	H.R. 3219	Increased OCO, decreased oversight	Increased
115	1	480	H.R. 601	Continuing Resolution, across-the-board cuts	Decreased
115	1	528	H.R. 3354	Increased OCO	Increased
115	1	631	H.R. 2810 Conf.	FY2018 NDAA reconciliation w/ Senate	Increased
115	2	33	H.R. 195	Continuing Resolution, new missile defense	Increased
115	2	44	H.R. 195 Conf.	Continuing Resolution reconciliation w/ Senate	Increased
115	2	49	H.R. 695	DOD Appropriations/Continuing Resolution	Increased
115	2	60	H.R. 1892	Defense Sequestration Continuing Resolution	Increased
115	2	69	H.R. 1892 Conf.	Defense Sequestration Continuing Resolution reconciliation w/ Senate	Increased
115	2	219	Amdt. 635 to H.R. 5515	Cancel OCO	Decreased
115	2	222	Amdt. 638 to H.R. 5515	Reduce nuke funding until report given	Decreased
115	2	228	Amdt. 652 to H.R. 5515	Reduce weapons funding	Decreased
115	2	230	H.R. 5515	FY2019 NDAA	Increased
115	2	251	Amdt 745 to HR 5895	1% across-the-board spending decrease	Decreased

115	2	252	Amdt 749 to HR 5895	Decrease appropriations \$1.5B	Decreased
115	2	257	HR 5895	2019 MILCON and VA-related construction	Increased
115	2	303	Amdt 816 to HR 6157	Reduce aid to Pakistan \$200M	Decreased
115	2	312	HR 6157	Motion to recommit to increase spending for TBI \$150M	Increased
115	2	313	HR 6157	2018 Defense Appropriations	Increased

Appendix F. DOD Oversight Roll Call Votes

Congress	Session	Vote	Admin Title	Substance	Increased/Decreased
113	1	190	Amdt 84 to HR 2216	Eliminates prohibitions on use of funds for GTMO detainee facility construction	Decreased
113	1	222	Amdt 142 to HR 1960	Relax statutory requirements on no. of USN aircraft carriers	Decreased
113	1	223	Amdt 143 to HR 1960	Require DOD to preserve ICBM warm status	Increased
113	1	225	Amdt 148 to HR 1960	Decrease restrictions on employment of DOD contractors	Decreased
113	1	226	Amdt 149 to HR 1960	Accelerate reduction of troops in AFG	Increased
113	1	227	Amdt 150 to HR 1960	Restrictions on detainee prosecution	Increased
113	1	228	Amdt 152 to HR 1960	Eliminate indefinite military detention	Increased
113	1	230	Amdt 157 to HR 1960	Remove missile defense stipulations	Decreased
113	1	231	Amdt 158 to HR 1960	Stipulations on ARNG recruitment activities	Increased
113	1	233	Amdt 161 to HR 1960	Intervene in nuclear force planning	Increased
113	1	234	Amdt 162 to HR 1960	Remove stipulations and instructions regarding Syria	Decreased
113	1	235	Amdt 163 to HR 1960	Require DOD to move 2CR from Germany to US	Increased
113	1	236	Amdt 167 to HR 1960	Prohibit DOD use of funds to transfer GTMO detainees to Yemen	Increased
113	1	237	Amdt 168 to HR 1960	Create framework to close GTMO detention facility	Increased
113	1	238	Amdt 169 to HR 1960	Directive to expand Chaplain Corps	Increased
113	1	239	Amdt 170 to HR 1960	Stipulations on missile defense spending/procurement	Increased
113	1	242	Amdt 175 to HR 1960	Prohibit DOD purchases from Russia	Increased
113	1	243	HR 1960	Motion to recommit in order to reconsider sexual assaults	Increased
113	1	294	HR 1864	Require DOD Inspector General to investigate sexual assaults	Increased

113	1	385	Amdt 365 to HR 2397	Repeal prohibition on use of funds for GTMO detainee transfer	Decreased
113	1	392	Amdt 375 to HR 2397	Stipulations on chaplain funding	Increased
113	1	393	Amdt 376 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds on future AFG infrastructure projects	Increased
113	1	395	Amdt 382 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds on AFG special forces aviation	Increased
113	1	397	Amdt 384 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds for use on excess of 300 ICBMs	Increased
113	1	401	Amdt 386 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds in AFG war other than explicitly directed by Congress	Increased
113	1	402	Amdt 388 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds to pay fines assessed by California	Increased
113	1	404	Amdt 397 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds for combined exercises with China	Increased
113	1	405	Amdt 399 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds to transfer GTMO detainees to Yemen	Increased
113	1	406	Amdt 400 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds to divest C-23 aircraft	Increased
113	1	407	Amdt 402 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds to deny security clearances due to sequester	Increased
113	1	408	Amdt 403 to HR 2397	Prohibit use of funds for continued detention at GTMO	Increased
113	1	409	Amdt 404 to HR 2397	Prohibit any expansion at GTMO	Increased
113	2	185	Amdt 625 to HR 4486	Prohibits use of funds for GTMO detainee facility construction	Increased
113	2	226	Amdt 666 to HR 4435	Give DOD authority to transfer funds to nuclear nonproliferation	Decreased
113	2	227	Amdt 669 to HR 4435	Strike language requiring ICBM warm status	Decreased
113	2	231	Amdt 671 to HR 4435	Prohibit DOD from spending money on climate change studies	Increased
113	2	233	Amdt 675 to HR 4435	Create framework to close GTMO detention facility	Increased
113	2	234	Amdt 676 to HR 4435	Eliminate indefinite military detention	Increased

113	2	235	Amdt 678 to HR 4435	Moratorium on insourcing contractor activities	Increased
113	2	236	Amdt 679 to HR 4435	Stipulations on START treaty funding	Increased
113	2	320	Amdt 896 to HR 4870	Repeal prohibition on use of funds for nondeployed ICBMs	Decreased
113	2	321	Amdt 901 to HR 4870	Prohibit use of funds to transfer GTMO detainees to Yemen	Increased
113	2	322	Amdt 903 to HR 4870	Prohibit use of funds to divest the A-10	Increased
113	2	323	Amdt 905 to HR 4870	Prohibit use of funds to transfer GTMO detainees to other countries	Increased
113	2	324	Amdt 907 to HR 4870	Remove DOD prohibitions on transferring GTMO detainees to other countries	Decreased
113	2	328	Amdt 917 to HR 4870	Prohibit use of funds to provide weapons to Syria	Increased
113	2	329	Amdt 918 to HR 4870	Prohibit transfer of specified military equipment	Increased
113	2	331	Amdt 926 to HR 4870	Prohibit spending on individuals that violate Fair Labor Standards Act	Increased
113	2	333	Amdt 938 to HR 4870	Prohibit aid to Pakistan	Increased
113	2	334	Amdt 942 to HR 4870	Prohibit use of funds for non-petroleum fuels	Increased
113	2	335	Amdt 944 to HR 4870	Prohibit assistance to Iran, Syria, Palestine, Hamas, and ISIS	Increased
113	2	336	Amdt 945 to HR 4870	Prohibit use of funds to divest Electronic Proving Grounds	Increased
114	1	187	Amdt 126 to HR 2029	Remove restrictions on funding GTMO facility alternatives in US	Decreased
114	1	228	Amdt 217 to HR 1735	Relax statutory requirements on no. of USN aircraft carriers	Decreased
114	1	229	Amdt 219 to HR 1735	Remove symbolic statement on alien enlistments	Decreased
114	1	230	Amdt 220 to HR 1735	Strengthen GTMO detention provisions	Increased

114	1	231	Amdt 221 to HR 1735	Create framework to close GTMO detention facility	Increased
114	1	232	Amdt 222 to HR 1735	Prioritization of equipment transfers from DOD	Increased
114	1	234	Amdt 226 to HR 1735	Stipulations on START treaty funding	Increased
114	1	235	Amdt 227 to HR 1735	Funding stipulations on submarine construction	Increased
114	1	236	Amdt 230 to HR 1735	Repeal certain environmental restrictions	Decreased
114	1	237	Amdt 231 to HR 1735	Eliminate limits on nuclear weapons dismantlement	Decreased
114	1	238	HR 1735	motion to recommit stipulating gov't shutdown instructions	Increased
114	1	335	Amdt 466 to HR 2685	Remove restrictions on German base funding	Decreased
114	1	336	Amdt 467 to HR 2685	Remove restrictions on funding GTMO detainee transfers to US	Decreased
114	1	337	Amdt 468 to HR 2685	Remove restrictions on funding GTMO facility alternatives	Decreased
114	1	338	Amdt 469 to HR 2685	Remove restrictions on funding GTMO detainee transfers	Decreased
114	1	339	Amdt 471 to HR 2685	Remove restrictions on funding sea based deterrent	Decreased
114	1	341	Amdt 474 to HR 2685	Deny DOD authority to transfer AFG funds for infrastructure improvement	Increased
114	1	344	Amdt 477 to HR 2685	Remove DOD ability to waive Pakistan aid restrictions	Increased
114	1	349	Amdt 486 to HR 2685	Prohibit DOD from creating training area in the Marianas	Increased
114	1	350	Amdt 489 to HR 2685	Prohibit USN from divesting USMC SAR units	Increased
114	1	351	Amdt 490 to HR 2685	Prohibit use of funds to transfer flash-bang grenades	Increased
114	1	352	Amdt 491 to HR 2685	Prohibit purchase of Army aircrew uniforms	Increased
114	1	353	Amdt 493 to HR 2685	Prevent transfer of MRAPs to other organizations	Increased
114	1	354	Amdt 499 to HR 2685	Prohibit spending on contractors that violate Fair Labor Standards Act	Increased
114	1	355	Amdt 500 to HR 2685	Prohibit spending on defense counsel for GTMO detainees	Increased

114	2	203	Amdt 1014 to HR 4909	Require DOD to ensure multiple suppliers for solid rocket fuel engines	Increased
114	2	204	Amdt 1016 to HR 4909	Remove prohibitions on Prohibit DOD use of funds to transfer GTMO detainees to US	Decreased
114	2	205	Amdt 1019 to HR 4909	Direct DOD to prioritize national border security for specified platforms	Increased
114	2	208	Amdt 1029 to HR 4909	Require DOD to evaluate energy efficient policies	Increased
114	2	222	Amdt 1063 to HR 4974	Prohibit DOD spending on modifying military installations to house aliens	Increased
114	2	310	Amdt 1189 to HR 5293	Cancel prohibition on DOD from planning a new BRAC	Decreased
114	2	311	Amdt 1190 to HR 5293	Cancel energy requirement for USAF base in Germany	Decreased
114	2	313	Amdt 1194 to HR 5293	Allow DOD to retain authority to provide recruits vouchers for running shoes	Decreased
114	2	314	Amdt 1195 to HR 5293	Prevent DOD spending from prioritizing climate change above national security	Increased
114	2	315	Amdt 1197 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD spending on modifying military installations to house aliens	Increased
114	2	316	Amdt 1198 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD spending on unaccompanied alien housing	Increased
114	2	317	Amdt 1199 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD spending on enlisting DACA youth	Increased
114	2	318	Amdt 1200 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD spending on enlisting DACA youth	Increased
114	2	319	Amdt 1202 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD spending to explore alternative GTMO detainee locations	Increased
114	2	320	Amdt 1203 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD counter-drug funding in AFG	Increased
114	2	322	Amdt 1205 to HR 5293	Prohibit DOD spending on certain green energy initiatives	Increased
114	2	323	Amdt 1206 to HR 5293	Stipulations on OCO spending	Increased
114	2	324	Amdt 1207 to HR 5293	Prohibit spending on GTMO closure exploration	Increased

114	2	325	Amdt 1209 to HR 5293	Prohibit spending on Pakistan aid	Increased
114	2	326	Amdt 1210 to HR 5293	Deny DOD authority to transfer AFG funds for infrastructure improvement	Increased
114	2	327	Amdt 1212 to HR 5293	Prohibit use of funds to transfer cluster munitions to Saudi Arabia	Increased
114	2	328	Amdt 1214 to HR 5293	Prohibit use of funds on Syria train and equip program	Increased
114	2	520	HR 5351	Prohibit DOD funding to transfer GTMO detainees to US	Increased
115	1	356	Amdt. 161 to H.R. 2810	Prohibit new biofuels contracts during sequestration	Increased
115	1	362	Amdt. 172 to H.R. 2810	SECDEF may include info on nukes at discretion	Decreased
115	1	363	Amdt. 169 to H.R. 2810	Extend scope of a nuke report	Increased
115	1	365	Amdt. 171 to H.R. 2810	Allow new BRAC	Decreased
115	1	367	Amdt. 178 to H.R. 2810	DOD purchase alternative fuels only if they are as cost effective as traditional fuels	Increased
115	1	368	Amdt. 179 to H.R. 2810	Delete climate change report	Decreased
115	1	369	Amdt. 183 to H.R. 2810	Prohibit funds for gender transition	Increased
115	1	371	Amdt. 181 to H.R. 2810	Strike prohibitions on Prohibit academy athletes from going pro	Decreased
115	1	372	Amdt. 185 to H.R. 2810	Require SECDEF to assess violent Islamic doctrine supporting terrorist messaging	Increased
115	1	373	Amdt. 187 to H.R. 2810	BMD acquired like other major acquisitions	Decreased
115	1	374	Amdt. 190 to H.R. 2810	Reclassifying vessels as recreational	Increased
115	1	376	Amdt. 192 to H.R. 2810	SECDEF create medal for irradiated veterans	Increased
115	1	377	HR 2810	Motion to recommit in order to prohibit border wall spending	Increased
115	1	480	H.R. 601	Continuing Resolution with new stipulations on expenditures	Increased
115	2	220	Amdt. 636 to H.R. 5515	Cancel requirement authorization to develop counter-	Increased

				Iran strategy	
115	2	221	Amdt. 637 to H.R. 5515	Extend the requirements on nuke report	Increased
115	2	222	Amdt. 638 to H.R. 5515	Demand a nuke report from DOD	Increased
115	2	224	Amdt. 648 to H.R. 5515	Require SECDEF to create new medal	Increased
115	2	225	Amdt. 649 to H.R. 5515	Require DOD to use domestic dinnerware	Increased
115	2	226	Amdt. 650 to H.R. 5515	Require DOD to use domestic flatware	Increased
115	2	227	Amdt. 651 to H.R. 5515	Restrict support to Burma	Increased
115	2	310	Amdt 837 to HR 6157	Prohibit use of funds for spaced-based missile defense	Increased

Appendix G. Military Effectiveness Case Descriptions

G.1 Berlin Airlift Crisis, 1948–49

Germany and the city of Berlin were divided into four zones of Allied occupation as a result of the Second World War, with the Soviet Union, United States, United Kingdom, and France each occupying a respective sector. The situation in Germany had been steadily deteriorating for months leading up to the crisis, as Western Allies progressively made steps to economically stabilize and politically unite their occupied zones into a sovereign West Germany, while the Soviet Union sought to maintain economic dependency and political domination of its occupied zone in eastern Germany. When the West began introducing the new Deutschemark into West Berlin, the Soviets responded first by harassing transports. On June 24, 1948, Soviet authorities blocked all ground transportation as well as severed electricity and water services.

The decision whether to use military force in response to the 1948 Soviet blockade of Berlin was hurried and decentralized. American airlift efforts first began in April when Soviet harassment demonstrated to the American commander, General Lucius D. Clay, that US forces in Berlin would require an unimpeded and reliable resupply effort to ensure Western forces could affect reasonable resistance if Soviets attacked the garrison. When the Soviets enacted a full blockade on June 24, Clay augmented the existing airlift to resupply civilians and nonmilitary elements in West

Berlin as well. The Truman administration authorized this action after the fact (McKinzie 1974, para. 38; Smith 1990, 685–686; Vaughn 1988).

Truman and his advisors considered three strategic options. One was to retreat and abandon the tactically untenable military position in West Berlin. Another was to probe Soviet resolve by sending an armed convoy along the ground resupply route through Soviet-occupied Germany and reestablish ground contact with West Berlin. Truman discarded the retreat option on July 9 (Truman 1948, 7) and decided in favor of the third option, to continue the Berlin Airlift indefinitely. General Clay, strongly supported by the aggressive US Air Forces in Europe commander, Lieutenant General Curtis LeMay, favored the ground incursion option, while the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff formally advised Truman against this course on July 28 (Forrestal 1948).

Clay exercised his own discretion to begin the “Little” airlift in April by increasing the number of military air transport flights through coordinated air corridors in Germany. It is not clear that Clay enjoyed discretion to implement the decisions he made from June 24–26, however. Truman confirmed Clay’s decision afterwards. Clay sensed he had reached the limits of his authority to escalate beyond aerial resupply and, without escalating further at his own discretion, recommended to Truman that Western Allies conduct a ground incursion into Soviet-occupied German in order to reestablish supply with West Berlin. He recognized this action would risk general war, and

cautiously avoided further escalation on his own. Feaver codes the episode as civil-military disagreement where the action to initiate the Berlin Airlift constituted “working.” Desch codes the affair as a case where civilian preferences prevailed.

The incident ended by negotiated settlement on May 12, 1949, though portions of the Airlift continued until September 30. The ICB database codes the episode as a “victory” for American interests. The MID database codes the Berlin Airlift as a “stalemate” since the military situation remain unchanged as a result. This accurately depicts an undecided standoff over Berlin that was not decisively resolved in this case, but does not seem to capture the objective of the American response. America’s strategic objective essentially was to maintain the status quo with a partitioned Germany and Berlin. Maintaining the status quo required resisting Soviet military efforts, the Berlin Airlift enabled West Berlin to stay under Allied control and eroded Soviet prestige.

Since the president decided not to use military force, my coding rules require us to determine if there was a subsequent intervention, then consider the result of that intervention to determine whether choosing not to use force suggested a favorable outcome. Although there were subsequent Berlin crises, the United States never used military force to resolve them. The crises never rose to a level that warranted war. This indicates that American interests had been previously satisfied without armed conflict. Therefore, the decision not to use military force in the first Berlin crisis led to a favorable outcome. Coincidentally agreeing with the ICB outcome, I code this instance as a

military “success.” America’s response to the crisis successfully maintained the status quo without resorting to warfare, and tensions over Berlin never subsequently suggested that a stronger response would have yielded a better outcome.

G.2 Korean War/Formosa Crisis in East Asia, 1950

After the Second World War, the Soviet Union occupied the northern half of the Korean peninsula and the US occupied the southern half. Each half yielded a sovereign client state for their patrons. Soviet-sponsored North Korea invaded American-sponsored South Korea in June 1950 in an attempt to forcefully reunify the peninsula.

The Truman administration’s policy had been that Korea was outside the American defense perimeter in the Western Pacific. Secretary of State Dean Acheson (1950, 2) affirmed a line of defense that excluded the Korean peninsula, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had “stated that Korea was not strategically important and could not be supported militarily,” (Betts 1991, 17) and General Douglas MacArthur withdrew US forces from Korea in 1949 (Moten 2014, 234). Nonetheless, when North Korea invaded South Korea, Acheson recommended that the US intervene. Truman, spurred by the general fear of appeasement as well as unfavorable developments in Greece, reacted with immediate resolve that Korea must be defended (Betts 1991, 17–18). Truman’s decision to use military force in Korea caught the defense establishment off guard. MacArthur was surprised at the policy reversal (Betts 1991, 17), but agreed with and supported the decision to deploy US forces (Moten 2014, 239).

The civil-military policy disagreement in Korea was not actually over Korea itself, but a simultaneous development concerning mainland China and Formosa (Taiwan). Coincident with North Korea's invasion of the South, communist Chinese forces massed on the mainland coast, indicating preparations for a possible Chinese invasion of Formosa (236). There was confusion as to whether the two issues were related, but Truman preferred to separate the issues, desiring a firm response in Korea while seeking to deescalate the situation in Formosa. MacArthur took a different course by viewing them as related developments. In August 1950, with the American intervention in Korea under dire straits at the Pusan Perimeter, MacArthur gave a speech that staunchly advocating defending Formosa (239). He contended that America should reverse communist gains on both fronts. Truman quickly demanded that MacArthur retract the statement. MacArthur complied (240). The incident demonstrated shaky relations between Truman and MacArthur, foreshadowing the larger rupture to come.

MacArthur sought more aggressive action in East Asia than the Truman administration, but ultimately adhered to the instructions he was given. Desch determines that civilian preferences prevailed. Feaver characterizes the episode as civil-military disagreement and determines that MacArthur "worked." The ICB codes the Korean War as a "victory" for the US, whereas the 1950 Formosa events do not meet the criteria for study as an ICB case. The MID database codes both the Korean War as a

stalemate and the outcome of the 1950 Formosa incident as “unclear.” Similar to the 1948 Berlin case, the US satisfied its strategic interests by preserving the sovereignty of South Korea, maintaining partition as the status quo. There is an argument, however, that the US failed to maintain its strategic interests in Korea if one determines the American goal to have been to reunify the Korean peninsula under South Korean control. The same is true for Formosa since the US favored a return of the nationalist Kuomintang party to return to power in mainland China. However, the ICB judgment is correct in that, through military intervention, the US prevented the fall of South Korea. The outcome in Korea was a military “success.”

As for results in Formosa, we must consider my methodological rules for a decision not to use force. Despite tense incidents that followed, the United States did not directly intervene with military force in issues over Formosa/Taiwan. Therefore, the decision not to act in 1950 resulted in “success” because it appears to have avoided an unnecessary war. American interests remained satisfied. Consequently, I credit the civilian decision with military “success” on both accounts.

G.3 Dien Bien Phu, 1954

In March 1954, France requested American and British intervention to relieve their besieged stronghold at Dien Bien Phu. President Eisenhower considered the request and “instructed [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Arthur] Radford to do anything he could to help the French commander in Indochina” (Betts 1991, 21).

Recognizing the desperation and urgency of the French situation, the Joint Chiefs developed a plan for airstrikes that included tactical nuclear weapons. Both political and military leaders were divided on the proposal, with the preponderance of civilians, led by Secretary of State Dulles, in favor of striking, while the preponderance of Joint Chiefs, led by Army Chief of Staff Matthew Ridgway, opposed. Ridgway, along with the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps, advised that no matter how much firepower was applied, airstrikes alone would not rescue the French. Allies would need to commit as many as 70,000 ground troops into battle to succeed (Patrick et al. 2004). Eisenhower declined to intervene. Since the military persuaded Eisenhower on the issue, changing civilian preferences, Desch codes the case as an instance where civilian policy prevailed.

Feaver determines that military leaders “shirked” by inflating force strength estimates and casualty costs to intimidate civilian advisors from the decision they initially preferred. As a result of persuading Eisenhower against intervention, the military did not apply limited force to support the besieged French despite the fact they could have done so. Failing to act shirked Eisenhower’s initial instructions.

The ICB database codes the episode as a “defeat” for American interests. America supported France, who was defeated. The MID database does not code an American military outcome for the episode since American forces did not participate at Dien Bien Phu. Using my methodological criteria, however, I code the American

military outcome as “success.” Since the decision in this case was not to use military force, we must determine if there was a subsequent intervention, then consider the result of that intervention. The US later intervened with military force in Indochina, including Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and the intervention was ultimately a failure. Although imaginative counterfactual analysis could attempt to describe how earlier intervention at Dien Bien Phu might have led to a successful outcome, retrospective consideration of the Vietnam War suggests that the the Joint Chiefs’ appraisal of force requirements and casualty estimates of Dien Bien Phu were not overstated. The inefficacy of airpower to defeat irregular forces, the confusion to find and apply sound policy and military doctrine to support South Vietnam, and the considerable manpower requirements to conduct counterinsurgency operations suggest that intervention at Dien Bien Phu would have likely prolonged an eventually losing conflict. It is unlikely that air-delivered firepower would have staved eventual defeat, nor the 70,000 troops the Joint Chiefs advised sending would have been sufficient to achieve an outcome that more than 500,000 US troops and 1.5 million South Vietnamese troops were unable to achieve 15 years later. Consequently, the Joint Chiefs’ opposition to intervene at Dien Bien Phu and Eisenhower’s decision likely prevented an American military defeat. Preventing defeat is a favorable military outcome. Therefore, I code the Dien Bien Phu case as an American “success.”

G.4 First Taiwan Straits Crisis, 1954

The First Taiwan Straits Crisis occurred shortly after the end of the Chinese Civil War. Communist forces had taken control of mainland China. The American-supported Kuomintang nationalist party, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, fled to offshore islands including Formosa/Taiwan and Hainan, intending to return to the mainland to restore control. The communist People's Republic of China sought to finalize their victory by seizing control of the remaining islands and destroying the Kuomintang. A set of smaller islands, the Jinmen islands, including the largest, Quemoy, lay within artillery range of the Chinese mainland (see Figure 14). The residual conflict from the civil war began to stabilize along these final territorial possessions, and the United States assisted Taiwanese defense forces with matériel, advisors, and began negotiating a series of regional defense treaties to deter China from attempting a final blow.



Figure 14:⁶⁸ Taiwan Straits

⁶⁸ Matsumoto. "The First Taiwan Strait Crisis and China's 'Border' Dispute Around Taiwan." 75.

In the interests of their sovereignty and national unity, Communist China announced an aggressive policy to “liberate Taiwan” that would preclude foundation of any such network of alliances could protect the nationalists (Matsumoto 2012, 85). The US State Department was in the process of finalizing a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan, creating the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization, and was attempting to create a Northeast Asian Treaty Organization which would include Japan and South Korea. US Navy Admiral Arthur Radford, first as Commander of Pacific Command from 1950–53, then as CJCS from 1953 through the crisis, encouraged Chiang Kai-shek’s desire to return to the mainland (Matsumoto 2012, 86–87). He may have inadvertently given Chiang the impression that American forces would participate in an invasion of communist-held territory (86–87).

The communist Chinese prepared to seize the Jinmen Islands and began an artillery bombardment of Quemoy on September 3, 1954. Consistent with forethought up until that point, Secretary of State Dulles favored military support to protect Taiwan. US Navy forces prepared to strike mainland China. Both the existing plans and contemporaneous military advice to President Eisenhower supposed using tactical nuclear weapons in order to defeat the Chinese. Appraising that the strategic value of Quemoy was not worth escalating into a general Asian war and possible nuclear exchange with the Soviets, Eisenhower ordered American forces into a defensive posture of Taiwanese possessions, directed them to prevent Taiwan from invading

China, and secured congressional authorization for military use of force. Chiang was surprised at Eisenhower's perceived sudden retreat, eventually fomenting a distrust of the American government (Matsumoto 2012, 87). Radford was also caught off-guard. Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke attempted to reconcile the unexpected changes, while Army Chief of Staff General Ridgway advised against a general attack on the Chinese.

By resisting calls for use of nuclear weapons, Desch determines that civilian policy prevailed. Judging that the military faithfully complied with civilian instructions, Feaver codes military actions as civil-military disagreement where the military "worked." Although China failed in its attempt to seize the Jinmen Islands, China did gain control of several other smaller Taiwanese possessions, to include the Dachen Islands. US air and naval forces deployed to the region in a show of force.

Both the ICB and MID databases code the incident as a stalemate because, at the end of the dispute, the strategic situation remained essentially unchanged. Once again, however, participating American forces helped protect the strategic status quo, despite the loss of several Taiwanese islands. The Sino-American mutual defense treaty was ambiguous on the status of smaller Taiwanese islands and American political objectives more closely aligned with protecting the sovereignty of Taiwan. Furthermore, since Eisenhower again decided not to use military force, nor did it become subsequently

necessary to use force at a later date, I code this case as a military “success.” America sustained the strategic status quo and American interests remained satisfied.⁶⁹

G.5 Second Taiwan Straits Crisis, 1958

The unresolved issue boiled over again in 1958. In June, American and Taiwanese intelligence detected Chinese forces massing near the coast, aerial engagements over both the Taiwan straits and mainland China interrupted the peace in July, and China began a heavy artillery bombardment of Quemoy on August 23 (Halperin 1966, v–vi). This bombardment was the prelude to an attempted amphibious invasion. Taiwan invoked the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty that had been concluded during the First Taiwan Straits Crisis, and asked to strike the mainland.

The military situation had not changed from the American perspective. Military planners had long expressed to Eisenhower that it would be necessary to use tactical nuclear weapons against mainland China in order to preserve Taiwanese possessions. Instead of this drastic measure, Eisenhower authorized distribution of new AIM-9 Sidewinder air-to-air missiles to the Taiwanese, which gave their fighters a decisive air combat advantage over the Chinese MiGs. Eisenhower also ordered the deployment of air, naval, and Army air defense forces to reinforce Taiwan. He prohibited employment of nuclear weapons.

⁶⁹ Taiwan and America maintained the status quo in both crises. The ultimate issue was unresolved, as the PRC still harbored desires to take control of the island. However, in these discrete cases, maintaining the status quo were American successes.

American civilian and military leaders disagreed over Quemoy's strategic value and measures to help Taiwan preserve it. Navy commanders and Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke favored striking the Chinese mainland as had been planned, and sought to break China's attempted blockade of Quemoy by escorting critical resupply ships closer to the island than Eisenhower permitted. Eisenhower expressed dismay that, not only had the Taiwanese imprudently staked nationalist pride on islands so lacking strategic value and tactically infeasible to defend, but senior American naval leaders encouraged them to do so (Gordon 1985, 640–641). US naval forces righted themselves to Eisenhower's instructions, and Chiang Kai-shek eventually withdrew from the most controversial offshore-island forces as well. Consequently, Desch determines that civilian policy prevailed. Feaver determines that this was a civil-military dispute where the military "worked."

The ICB database codes the outcome as a "victory" for all sides in this case, including the American side. Although the ICB case description does not explicitly state why, presumably all sides were victorious because each side's core interests were satisfied and tensions cooled. As with the First Taiwan Straits Crisis, the MID database codes the Second Taiwan Straits Crisis as a stalemate. Despite the fact that neither side achieved a decisive resolution to its interests, participating US forces helped maintain the status quo. This aligns with the actual American policy objective for this particular crisis. As with the previous Taiwan Straits case, since Eisenhower ultimately decided not

to use American military force and no subsequent intervention became necessary, the military result was a “success.” The civilians applied their preferred policy and China did not seize more islands.

G.6 Berlin Blockade, 1958

Sparked by increasing deployments of nuclear forces in Europe, the rearmament of West Germany, and growing discontent in the Eastern Bloc, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev delivered an ultimatum to the Allied powers occupying West Berlin on November 27, 1958 that they must remove their forces from the city within 6 months. If all zones of control did not become a demilitarized “Free [Open] City” by then, the Soviets would turn control of access to West Berlin over to East Germany. Since the Western Allies did not recognize East Germany as a sovereign country, the ultimatum implied that the West would either have to come to an agreement with East Germany or else overcome East German control points (Patrick et al. 2004).

The Western Allies collaborated to consider military contingency plans in preparation to reach the city by force. A renewed Berlin Airlift was infeasible since West Berlin had grown too populous and economically sophisticated to support solely by air transport (State Department 2020). Americans once again considered the contentious issue of a ground incursion to relieve Berlin and the necessity of using nuclear weapons to overcome Soviet conventional superiority. The theater commander, General Lauris Norstad, maintained that Allied forces would be unable to reach Berlin without

resorting to tactical nuclear weapons. Despite doubts that either side could limit its use of nuclear weapons in such a situation (Betts 1991, 107), Norstad apparently determined that the Soviets were bluffing. He favored calling the bluff with a conventional attack. He surmised that the Soviets would back down before it became necessary to use nuclear weapons (Janowitz 1960, 317). While other senior military officers criticized this logic (LeMay 1968, 127), political leadership preferred solutions that avoided approaching the nuclear threshold. A diplomatic settlement forestalled the Berlin issue until 1961.

Feaver categorizes the episode as civil-military disagreement where the military “worked” despite Norstad’s dissent. Desch does not consider this incident as a notable civil-military dispute in *Civilian Control of the Military*. Since military force was not used, civilian preferences prevailed. The military’s preference, presented by Norstad, was never implemented. A diplomatic solution resolved the incident.

The ICB database codes the episode as a “stalemate.” For reasons similar to the previous Berlin crisis as well as the First and Second Taiwan Straits crises, the MID database codes this incident as “stalemate” as well. However, US forces deploying in a show of force stabilized the status quo, which was actually the goal of the American response. No future use of military force, further than deterrence, became necessary to resolve the Berlin dispute. Therefore, I code the military outcome in this case as a “success.”

G.7 Lebanon, 1958

The 1956 Suez Canal crisis cemented Nasser as a formidable leader in the Arab world and a foil to the former colonial powers of the West. Concluding a union with Syria in 1958 to form the United Arab Republic (UAR), his efforts fueled pan-Arab resentment against colonial vestiges, as well as the desire to overthrow the remaining governments that colonial powers supported.

The Western-leaning Christian president of Lebanon, Camille Chamoun, maintained relations with the United Kingdom and France while Nasser had severed his, and Chamoun expressed interest in participating in the Baghdad Pact, a military alliance composed of Middle Eastern nations supporting Western efforts to resist forceful Soviet expansion. After an assassination of one of their leaders, Muslim dissidents rioted and destabilized Lebanon (Patrick et al. 2004). Chamoun deployed the military to quell violence as the situation deteriorated close to civil war. Chamoun accused Nassir of actively fomenting violent rebellion, requested the UN send inspectors to identify UAR interference, and ultimately requested American intervention to counter foreign influence.

The Eisenhower administration had previously announced the “Eisenhower Doctrine” which pledged to assist Middle Eastern nations threatened by communism (Eisenhower 1957). Chamoun’s plea, simultaneously coupled with a successful coup d’état in Iraq overthrowing the Western-leaning regime, sparked American fear. Senior

State Department, Defense, and CIA officials, including Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Nathan Twining, and Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles concluded that (FRUS 2010m, 210),

There was general agreement that the effects of the United States doing nothing would be:

1. Nasser would take over the whole area;
2. The United States would lose influence not only in the Arab States of the Middle East but in the area generally, and our bases throughout the area would be in jeopardy;
3. The dependability of United States commitments for assistance in the event of need would be brought into question throughout the world.

General Twining felt that in these circumstances we had no alternative but to go in.
(emphasis added)

The senior civilian and military authorities had agreed on the necessity to intervene in Lebanon. Betts (1991) corroborates this by stating tactical issues were the only source of civil-military disagreement (286n19).

American forces landed in Lebanon on July 15th to execute Operation Blue Bat.

The purpose of the operation was to negate Nasser's subversion of Lebanon in order to allow the Lebanese government to stabilize the turmoil (FRUS 2010n, 219–221).

Although US forces encountered no resistance and no fighting ensued, the use of force had been authorized, therefore qualifying this episode as an actual use of military force.

The crisis concluded when neighboring countries agreed not to intervene in Lebanon, and Chamoun was succeeded by a president that Nasser found more agreeable.

American forces withdrew on October 25th.

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement with military authorities “working.” The ICB database codes the outcome as a “victory,” while the MID database codes the outcome as “unclear (negotiated).” Determining that America applied actual military force in this episode and considering that Lebanon stabilized, I agree with the ICB judgment that the military outcome was a “success.”

G.8 Laos, 1961

The Soviet Union, China, and North Vietnam supported the communist Pathet Lao insurgency in Laos, which make my Laotian cases studies difficult to separate from the larger Vietnam War. The 1961 Laotian crisis began on March 9th when communist forces won a victory which threatened to defeat government forces in the Laotian Civil War (Patrick et al. 2004). Seeking to preserve the Royal Kingdom of Laos, President Kennedy’s civilian advisors favored at least “a limited show of force in Southeast Asia,” including deployment of 25,000 troops deployed to Thailand (Betts 1991, 37), a carrier strike group sent to the Gulf of Siam, and readying marines in Okinawa for action.

Military advisors almost unanimously recommended against military action. Army Chief of Staff George Decker encapsulated the Joint Chiefs position by telling “Kennedy that the army was ready to go wherever the President directed, but he hedged with so many warnings and conditions that his advice had the effect of a veto” (Betts 1991, 178). The Laotian events of 1961 resembled previous cases in East Asia by

sharing military assessment that tactical nuclear weapons would be necessary to defeat the enemy, or else a very large number of troops. At one point the Joint Chiefs estimated that an intervention in Laos might require 140,000 troops as well as the authority to use tactical nuclear weapons (Gacek 1994, 167).⁷⁰

Kennedy chose a military show of force but avoided decisive intervention directly in Laos. Only “token forces were ordered into Laos, and the advisors serving in Laos were ordered into uniform and sent into battle with the Laotians” as combat advisors along with covert support (Patrick et al. 2004). Desch does not consider the case, but the evidence indicates that civilian policy prevailed because civilians implemented at least the minimal show of force they desired, while also applying support to assist government forces. Feaver codes the case as civil-military disagreement with military “shirking” based on his assessment that military authorities inflated the costs of intervention in order to push civilians towards a policy the military preferred.

Observing that the military action helped sustain Laos through the discrete crisis, the ICB database codes this episode as a “victory.” The MID database codes the event as a “stalemate” because the conflict continued and definitive resolution was not achieved. As another decision not to use force, my methodological approach plays a notable role. Reasoning that, since American forces were not committed into a combat mission, that a

⁷⁰ The lone military proponent for force was Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh Burke, and the incongruity was not lost on McGeorge Bundy of a naval officer taking a contrary position to the rest of his colleagues on a matter over a landlocked country (Betts 1991, 177).

violent intervention was later considered the next year in Laos/Thailand as well as actually attempted during the virtually undistinguishable Vietnam War, and the war in Vietnam ultimately failed to achieve its goals in both Vietnam and Laos, then the decision not to intervene in 1961 was a military “success” because it precluded a failed military venture. Indeed, Laos fell to the communists in the following year.

Consequently, the military’s “shirking” in this case was followed by a positive military outcome. We must note that the nature of shirking was to prevent use of force when civilians seemed eager to intervene, rather than shirking in favor of fighting when civilians eschewed military force. This is consistent with Feaver (2003) who finds no cases where the military shirked in the direction of initiating military force (133).

G.9 Cuba, Bay of Pigs, 1961

During the change of presidential administrations from Eisenhower to Kennedy, the Eisenhower administration bequeathed an operational plan to oust Castro from Cuba. The Bay of Pigs invasion was an operation organized by the CIA designed to overthrow Castro with Cuban exiles. The Pentagon reviewed the operational details and noted problems, but offered no objection. Subsequently, the invasion floundered due to operational mistakes as well as Kennedy’s decision not to support with American air and naval strikes. The failed attempt bruised US national security as well as embarrassed the Kennedy administration. Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement, as the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not object to the operation, and a case of

military “working.” The ICB codes the invasion as a “defeat.” The MID database codes the outcome as “unclear,” due to the continued conflict between Cuba and the United States.

This episode is an additional case where the United States decided not to use force. President Kennedy famously withheld direct intervention with airstrikes that had been planned to support the CIA-organized rebel invasion. American forces only indirectly participated by providing logistical support. Consistent with my coding rules, I investigate whether military force was subsequently considered in Cuba. Indeed, America subsequently used force during the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁷¹ By essentially applying a naval blockade and exercising diplomacy in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States achieved a favorable outcome. Therefore, coincidentally agreeing with the ICB coding, I determine that the Bay of Pigs invasion is a military “failure.” America avoided using military force in support of the invasion, which subsequently led to a future successful intervention.

G.10 Berlin Wall, 1961

By 1961 Berlin had become a bleeding ulcer to the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc. Tens of thousands defected per month in the Summer of 1961 and more than 100,000

⁷¹ While the United States actually conducted a maritime interdiction during the Cuban Missile Crisis, it also considered an invasion of Cuba. The subsequent maritime intervention may have targeted the Soviet Union but it also involved Cuba and, without the situation in Cuba, there would have been no need to consider intervention to begin with. Whether the target was the Soviet Union or Cuba, the incident still happened, involved Cuba, and had a connection with the Bay of Pigs.

fled in the first 6 months of the year (Patrick et al. 2004). Frustrated with the international embarrassment over the flight of its denizens and guided by Moscow, East Germany began building the Berlin Wall in August 1961.

Construction of the wall generated a sense of fleeting opportunity in those who desired to escape the East, increasing international tensions. The already forlorn military situation in West Berlin became even more tenuous, as fortified encirclement further reduced the garrison's potential wartime chances to breakout, as well as reduced its unlikely chances of relief from a NATO incursion into East Germany. The Kennedy administration followed military recommendations to deploy reinforcements to West Germany, including 1,500 troops to reinforce the Berlin garrison (Betts 1991, 101; Patrick et al. 2004). The arrival of additional forces, combined with provocations by American and British officials testing their East Berlin access rights guaranteed by the Potsdam Conference agreement, led to an armed standoff. Soviet and American tanks faced off at Checkpoint Charlie in October. Kennedy and Khrushchev eventually resolved the standoff by negotiating an agreement whereby each side incrementally withdrew its tanks, effectively deescalating the crisis.

Like the previous Berlin crises, America decided *not* to use force to resolve the impasse. Feaver codes the decision to reinforce troops but not initiate conflict as civil-military agreement. The ICB database codes the outcome as a "compromise," while the MID database indicates the result was "unclear." However, consistent with the previous

two Berlin case studies, I code the outcome as a military “success.” No subsequent military intervention became necessary to resolve disputes over Berlin. The United States successfully sought to keep the status quo of West Berlin under Allied control, and officials maintained access to East Berlin.

G.11 Laos, 1962

The Laotian Civil War returned to the forefront of the Kennedy administration’s consideration when communists won another decisive victory, this time at Nam Tha in northwestern Laos, where the communists pursued defeated regime forces south to the Thai border. The communists had final victory in Laos at hand and, even more worrisome, demonstrated the potential to continue an attack into Thailand.

Civilians in the Kennedy administration, suspicious of military reticence in the previous Laotian episode as well as noting critical omissions in the Bay of Pigs fiasco, resolutely ordered a minimum of 5,000 troops to Thailand. According to Gacek (1994), the decision revealed a civil-military schism where the preponderance of military advice espoused use of military force only if the nation were totally committed to victory, contrary to the preponderance of civilian advice which advocated the incrementalism of Limited War as political signaling (177–178). The Limited War proponents saw military deployments as a signal to warn adversaries, similar to the demonstrable success that the naval “quarantine” during the Cuban Missile Crisis later achieved. Civilians sought

to directly intervene with combat forces in Laos (175), while the military opposed any course which “might lead them to a limited war or defensive position” (176).

The Joint Chiefs found the civilians’ plan “unacceptable” because it did not allow the chance for a decisive resolution to the conflict (176). If America were going to respond, better to use all means necessary than half-measures. Nonetheless, the military complied by deploying 1,000 marines to the Thai-Laotian border, deployed an additional 4,000 troops to Thailand along with supporting naval and air assets. Feaver codes this instance as a case of civil-military disagreement where the military “worked.” Desch does not consider the episode as a notable civil-military dispute but, since military force was not used in Laos on this occasion, I code the episode as a case where military preferences prevailed.

The ICB codes the episode as a “victory” for the American side because it successfully protected Thailand and temporarily halted the communist takeover of Laos, although Laos was eventually lost to the communists. Indeed, “the Pathet Lao halted their advance into southern Laos when faced with the prospect of facing American forces” (Gacek 1994, 176). The MID database codes the outcome as a “compromise” concluding with the Vientiane Treaty in 1973 where foreign nations agreed to withdraw their forces, though Pathet Lao communists ultimately gained control in 1975. The two databases considerably differ in their chronological delineation of the conflict, which makes it difficult to apply either outcome for the purposes of this study. The ICB case

considers the discrete crisis of 1962, limited to several months duration. The MID case considers the comprehensive intervention of outside forces which ended a decade later, and disregards that after the settlement communists ultimately took control of the country, much like communists did in Vietnam.

The key aspect in this episode was America's decision *not* to intervene with military force in Laos at the time. Rather, policymakers decided to deter communist invasion of Thailand with a military *show* of force instead. Since the United States did not intervene in Laos, the counterfactual methodological rules of this paper apply once again. American military forces intervened a year later by bombing Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese combined forces, halting their attack further in Laos (Gacek 1994, 177). Although this subsequent use of force was, like the 1961 case, temporarily successful in ending that discrete crisis, the fact that this subsequent intervention was necessary requires us to consider the ultimate outcome of the conflict to render final judgment. The final result of intervention in Laos was a defeat. Communists eventually won control. Accordingly, the military outcome of the decision not to intervene in Laos during 1962 is a "success" because Laos subsequent interventions failed. Assuming that this failure was inevitable, avoiding conflict in Laos precluded an earlier failure. It is possible that earlier and greater application of force in Laos could have saved the country from a communist takeover, but it is unlikely. The circumstances in Laos were similar and intertwined with the circumstances in Vietnam, which suggests a similar

chain of events would have occurred with American intervention in Laos as actually occurred in Vietnam. The communists eventually regrouped, continued their assault and ultimately took control of Laos, contrary to American desires and despite American efforts.

This outcome coding is further supported, though additionally complicated, when one considers the Laotian Civil War as an extension of a greater proxy war in Southeast Asia between Cold War belligerents. Fought between Eastern bloc communists and the American-led Western alliance across Indochina, the Laotian decisions can be grouped together under the conceptual umbrella of the Vietnam War. Considered in this context, the United States decisively intervened in the broader conflict in 1965, leading to defeat. Therefore, decisions not to intervene in Laos were a military “success” since they precluded this eventual defeat. With everybody’s hands in the Laotian pot, North Vietnam, China, the Soviet Union, and the United States, it makes sense not to distinguish the discrete case of Laos, but to group it together with the entire Vietnam War instead. In either case, the appropriate coding for Laos 1962 is a military “success.” This coding determination agrees with the ICB outcome by coincidence.

G.12 Vietnam, 1961–63⁷²

The use of force and escalation decisions in Vietnam are well-studied. Military advisors to the president initially eschewed intervention but, if committed to fight, sought decisive victory, favored greater forces, fewer restrictions, and less constraints. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Lyman Lemnitzer advised “the United States should be prepared to use its full power before deciding to intervene anywhere” while Army Chief of Staff George Decker warned “we cannot win a conventional war in Southeast Asia” (McMaster 1997, 22). With military advisors reluctant to initiate something less than decisive force in Vietnam, the Kennedy administration began replacing them with ones more sympathetic to the administration’s outlook (22). By October 1961, “both the [military] Joint Chiefs of Staff and the [civilian] National Security Council were proposing the introduction of sizable American combat forces in Vietnam” (Herring 1996, 88). General Maxwell Taylor later stated (Schlesinger 1978, 705),

"I don't recall anyone who was strongly against, except one man, and that was the President. The President just didn't want to be convinced that this was the right thing to do.... It was really the President's personal conviction that U.S. ground troops shouldn't go in.

⁷² Feaver (2003) characterizes the Kennedy administration’s 1961–1963 Vietnam policy as a use of force decision. Feaver omits both the Truman administration’s previous military advisory mission to Indochina starting in 1950, as well as the Eisenhower administration’s 1955 refashioned mission that established the Vietnam advisory mission to begin with. Feaver amalgamates the Vietnam advisory mission into one instance attributing the decision to Kennedy, but each of these instances could also be considered a discrete use of force decision that initiated American participation in the Vietnam War.

Nonetheless, Undersecretary of State Chester Bowles and diplomat W. Averell Harriman firmly opposed escalation (Herring 1996, 90–91). President Kennedy sided with the State Department officials. In doing so, the president overruled many of his civilian advisors to determine the civilian position opposed to use of force, consequently disagreeing with the military advice to escalate.

Feaver codes the episode as a case of civil-military disagreement over the decision whether to use force with military dissent advocating greater levels of force, while the military “worked.”⁷³ Desch does not consider the beginning phases of the Vietnam War a noteworthy civil-military disagreement.

The important aspects to recognize in considering this Vietnam case are, “first, it is generally conceded that the military did not press the war on reluctant civilian leaders

⁷³ This is an unusual case of civil-military disagreement, since the president was one of few civilians to oppose use of force. Sources suggest that civilian and military advisors largely agreed. In 1963, Army Chief of Staff Earl Wheeler “concluded that there was ‘no compelling reason to change’ the current policy” (McMaster 1997, 38). A joint visit to Vietnam by Kennedy’s advisor Walt Rostow and General Maxwell Taylor resulted in a common recommendation to augment American commitment to the nation (Herring 1996, 88–89). There was a State Department vs. DOD disagreement on the introduction of 8,000 new troops (90), but this may have been a cleave between hawks and doves among civilians rather than civilians and military. There is evidence of resistance to the Kennedy administration initiative to develop and employ counterinsurgency capabilities (Summers 1982, 73), though this resistance may not have been caused by a civil-military divide but by a systemic civilian fracture of control over the military between executive and legislative branches (Avant 1994, 49–50). There were civil-military tensions between the Kennedy administration and JCS holdovers from the Eisenhower administration in addition to Eisenhower’s famous parting warning of the military-industrial complex. Kennedy reduced input from the JCS in favor of ad hoc advisors (McMaster 1997, 5; Summers 1982, 146) and replaced Eisenhower holdovers with those more sympathetic to his approach (McMaster 1997, 22). However, these frictions do not necessarily infer substantive disagreement over Vietnam policy under Kennedy. Nonetheless, I proceed by accepting Feaver’s assertion that there was civil-military disagreement over Vietnam policy for the 1961–1963 timeframe. Acquiescing to the characterization that this episode was a civil-military disagreement, I credit civilian preferences for the resulting military outcome of success even though the preponderance of civilian advisors favored escalation, and military advisors were initially reluctant.

but rather the reverse” and “the Vietnam War can be coded as an instance in which the military obeyed an order to fight” (Feaver 2003, 172). This implies that, despite civil-military disagreement, civilian preferences prevailed. Second, there should be little controversy in coding the ultimate military outcome of the Vietnam War as a “failure.” However, separating different phases of the war as Feaver does creates an opportunity to render different outcomes for respective decisions. Third, Kennedy’s decision to augment the military advisory mission was also a decision *not* to intervene with military force. McMaster summarizes (1997, 37),

Although Kennedy was willing to send U.S. military ‘advisers’ into South Vietnam and mount covert operations in North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, he drew the line on U.S. combat units. The word ‘adviser’ implied that the South Vietnamese would do their own fighting. The introduction of American combat units risked transforming the war into an American war, raising the specter of high U.S. casualties, and fomenting congressional and public debate over administration policy.

The decision to expand the previously established Military Assistance Advisory Group-Vietnam into the larger Military Assistance Command-Vietnam rejected pressures to intervene directly with combat forces but, instead, served as a military operation to indirectly influence an outcome, similar to the Laos 1962 decision to deploy troops to Thailand as a deterrent but not intervene in the Laotian Civil War.

The ICB database codes America’s entry into the Vietnam War as a “victory” because the decision to increase advisory and logistic assistance efforts helped stabilize the deteriorating crisis (Patrick et al. 2004). Unfortunately, the ICB limits the timeframe considered for this crisis to three months in the latter half of 1961 rather than the more

inclusive military advisory expansion under Kennedy through 1963. The augmentation of military advisors in Vietnam was insufficient to achieve American objectives, necessitating an escalation in 1965. This demonstrates that ICB data is not a perfectly suitable fit given the bounds of this study. As a result, the ICB considers too short of a time horizon to effectively judge this decision towards Vietnam. The MID database, on the other hand, codes this portion of the Vietnam War with the indeterminate conclusion of “unclear.” The CoW similarly renders an unclear outcome that the “war was transformed into another type of war.” The MID codes the subsequent, and final, portion of the Vietnam War as a “defeat.”

My methodological decision applies in this case, where the military outcome of Kennedy’s decision to avoid direct intervention depends on whether a future intervention became necessary. Johnson’s escalation of Kennedy’s advisory mission into general warfare resulted in eventual defeat. Therefore, Kennedy’s initial decision to avoid direct military intervention (Herring 1996, 94) resulted in military success because it precluded this defeat.⁷⁴ Indeed, some suggest that Kennedy foresaw this future downfall and sought to extract American forces from Vietnam (Schlesinger 1965, 547). The Kennedy administration’s decision to overrule military calls for greater force, as

⁷⁴ This assumes that, if America’s 1965 intervention had occurred in 1961, the war would have ended with the same result.

Feaver characterizes military dissent, resulted in “success.”⁷⁵ This judgment agrees with the ICB coding only by coincidence.

G.13 Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962

American strategic reconnaissance assets detected Soviet efforts to construct ballistic missile sites in Cuba in October 1962. The Kennedy administration, still smarting from bruises suffered as a result of the Bay of Pigs invasion, considered its response. The civil-military dispute revolved around whether to use force. Consistent with the “all-or-nothing” approach, military advisors favored “all” by recommending air strikes to destroy as many missiles as possible and an invasion to clear them from the island. Civilian leaders, apprehensive of Soviet reaction to such aggression, devised their own alternative to establish a naval blockade. The blockade, characterized as a “quarantine,” sought to inspect inbound freighters for weapons that could strike the US and prevent them from reaching Cuba. Both civilian and military authorities espoused direct intervention with military force, but military authorities sought brute force while civilians sought a more nuanced application.

Feaver codes the incident as civil-military disagreement where the military “worked.” Military commanders complied with the civilian restraints, though still pressured for more aggressive action. Desch determines that civilian policy prevailed.

⁷⁵ This judgment comes with one additional caveat. If the decision to augment the Vietnam advisory mission was actually a decision to intervene with combat force, since the advisers were participating in combat, then the military outcome should be considered a “failure” rather than success, because it continued along the path to eventual defeat in the Vietnam War. This would attribute failure to civilian policy preferences.

The blockade was successful and forced a settlement that achieved the American strategic objective. Accordingly, both the ICB and MID databases code the event as a “victory.” There should be little controversy in coding the military outcome in this case as a “success.”

G.14 Vietnam Post–Gulf of Tonkin, 1964⁷⁶

America had been steadily increasing its participation in Vietnam under the Kennedy administration. After Kennedy’s assassination as well as the coup against South Vietnam’s Diem regime, President Johnson had a fresh opportunity to reevaluate America’s future in the growing conflict. His response to the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident set in motion a chain of events that led to his pivotal decision to directly intervene in Vietnam and deploy large numbers of troops for combat in 1965. Characterizing the main conflict, Feaver (2003) states “it is generally conceded that the military did not press the war on reluctant civilian leaders but rather the reverse” and “the Vietnam War can be coded as an instance in which the military obeyed an order to fight” (172). This implies that, despite civil-military disagreement, civilian preferences prevailed. Feaver codes the affair as a case of civil-military disagreement where the military “worked.” Desch considers several episodes during the Vietnam War as civil-

⁷⁶ Feaver explains that his consideration of the Gulf of Tonkin incident in the Vietnam War is not meant to examine the discrete incident in and of itself but, for the purpose of his study, serves as a turning point to demarcate a distinctly different phase of the war. The decisions made and authorities granted as a result of the Gulf of Tonkin incident reflect a separate, single use of force decision made by the Johnson administration for the rest of the Vietnam War (Feaver 2003, 133).

military disagreements over *how* to use force, but does not consider a disagreement over *whether* to use force.

Since the Vietnam War was an enduring conflict and the ICB focuses study on short crises, the ICB does not consider the Vietnam War. The MID database codes the result of the Vietnam War as a negotiated compromise during American participation and a defeat for the duration of the conflict. Although American forces departed under the Paris Treaty having secured a cease-fire and a military stalemate, thus justifying the MID coding for American participation, there was little hope of a peaceful coexistence between North and South (Herring 1996, 285). Decision makers recognized this. "We had no illusions about Hanoi's long-range goal of subjugating all of Indochina" (Kissinger 1982, 11). South Vietnam was then quickly conquered by the North once American forces departed.

There should be little controversy in siding with the "defeat" coding that the MID renders for duration of the conflict, resulting in an ultimate outcome of a military "failure" for the Vietnam War. Johnson's escalation did not end the conflict with a favorable military outcome, and further escalation proved futile. The military faithfully applied civilian wishes and followed their civilian masters to defeat.

G.15 Dominican Republic, 1965

On April 24, 1965, dissidents favoring the preceding Dominican presidential administration forcefully expelled the sitting president. Civil war immediately broke out

between the two camps. Fearing for the safety of American citizens in the country, and worried that instability would invite pro-Castro communist subversion, US Ambassador William Bennett relayed to Washington a Dominican request for military intervention, and recommended landing the marines (FRUS 2010o, 77).

Military authorities including the Joint Chiefs of Staff, military members of the embassy country team, and the Secretary of Defense, agreed to the use of force (FRUS 2010p, 82–83; Betts 1991, 148). Secretary of State Dean Rusk indicated that America's goals in the crisis were, "restoration of law and order, prevention of possible Communist takeover, and protection of American lives" (FRUS 2010q, 66).

A battalion of marines landed to evacuate American citizens within hours of the president's order and an airborne brigade to subdue the violence two days later. After containing the dissident attacks, American forces began withdrawing 30 days later, though fighting continued sporadically for four more months. The combatants reached an agreement that ended the civil war in August and, following the 1966 election of a president aligned with the party deposed at the outset of the civil war, achieved a lasting peace (Fearon and Laitin 2006, 6). Communists did not come to power.

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement where the military "worked." The ICB database records the American military outcome as a "victory." The empirical evidence I found confirms these determinations. I code the outcome as "success."

G.16 USS Pueblo, 1968

The USS Pueblo was a Navy vessel collecting intelligence near the coast of North Korea in January 1968. Claiming that the Pueblo had entered her territorial waters, North Korean forces captured the ship and towed it into nearby Wonsan harbor. American forces did not quickly respond to assist the distressed crew while the ship was being captured and towed. Rear Admiral Daniel Gallery stated that, out of fear of Secretary of Defense McNamara's oversight and the "Whiz Kids" in the Pentagon, senior commanders hesitated to take their own initiative to rescue the ship while they could have (Betts 1991, 146, 286n12).

The Joint Chiefs proposed several options to President Johnson including shows of force, punitive attacks, and even nuclear strikes against North Korea (Wheeler 1968). Johnson decided that military options were too risky and none would result in return of the Pueblo's crew. Instead, he and his advisors favored a diplomatic approach. After eleven months of negotiation and a self-flagellating apology by the American military negotiator at Panmunjom, North Korea returned Pueblo's crew. However, the North Koreans kept the ship. Perceiving that commanders initially wanted to act but waited for instructions from Washington, Feaver codes the incident as civil-military disagreement where the military "worked." Desch does not code the incident but, since Johnson discarded the proposed military responses and chose a diplomatic course, I determine that civilian policy prevailed.

The ICB database codes the episode as a “defeat” for American interests because America was humiliated by a small nation. On the other hand, the MID database codes the incident as a “release,” because the captured crewmen were eventually returned to US custody, satisfying American political objectives ensuing from the incident. America may have been embarrassed by North Korea, but America eventually recovered the crew. Since Johnson chose not to employ force, I apply my coding methodology for non-use of force decisions. My rules adjudicate a military “success” in this episode because, despite military advice to the contrary, no subsequent intervention became necessary and the crew was recovered. National embarrassment aside, the Johnson administration achieved what would have been its military goal without using force. By restraining the military from using force, insistent civilian authority overrode military advice leading to a positive military outcome.

G.17 EC-121 Shootdown, 1969

Following the return of the Pueblo’s crew in December 1968, two North Korean MiG-21 fighter jets shot down an unescorted American EC-121 electronic surveillance aircraft over the Sea of Japan on April 15, 1969. The aircraft had been on a routine Cold War surveillance patrol flown out of Japan. No US forces were in position to defend the aircraft at the time, and the MiGs returned to their airbase near Wonsan too quickly to be pursued. All 31 American servicemen aboard were killed.

President Nixon's instinct was to retaliate, and he issued instructions to develop military options to respond. Aside from facing civilian resistance in his administration, the Pentagon opposed a military response. The Defense Department delayed, foot-dragged, and constrained Nixon's options, as well as accentuated the risks of retaliating (Nixon 1978, 385; Haig 1992, 206; Golby 2011, 218–224; Kissinger 1979, 317 and 320–321). Concerned that the incident would distract from more important issues in Vietnam, defense officials withheld operational details of response forces, procrastinated in giving planning instructions to the theater commander, and misrepresented military options so as not to present their full capabilities (Golby 2011, 220–222). Nixon eventually decided not to retaliate, and called the decision "the worst mistake of his administration in the field of foreign policy" (Haig 1992, 208). National security advisor Henry Kissinger declared "our conduct in the EC-121 crisis was weak, indecisive and disorganized" (Moblely 2001, 64–65).

Feaver codes the incident as civil-military disagreement where the military "shirked." Desch does not code the incident but, since the president's initial preference was not implemented, I determine that the military preference prevailed. The ICB codes the outcome as a "stalemate." The MID database does not itemize the particular incident, instead aggregating it into a longer running series of provocations and responses with North Korea. The MID categorizes this prolonged set of episodes as a "stalemate." The CoW database does not consider the episode, either. Per the coding

rules established in this study, since American forces did not engage in a response and intervention did not become necessary at some later point, I code the American response as a military “success.” Despite a tactical defeat due to the loss of the aircraft, America’s strategic interests remained satisfied and uncompromised. An escalation would have risked the outbreak of war. No wider war occurred, which may have saved far greater costs and achieved no better gains than enjoyed by avoiding escalation. Consequently, I determine that military shirking secured greater American interests by avoiding a potential general war.

G.18 Jordan, 1970

The “Black September” crisis of September 1970 involved Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) guerilla fighters, Jordan, and Syria. Evicted from the West Bank as a result of the 1967 Six Day War, PLO fighters established operating bases in northwest Jordan, destabilized the country with an assassination attempt against King Hussein, and hijacked commercial passenger planes in the region. Jordan attempted a crackdown, and Syria invaded in an attempt to protect Palestinian interests.

Both Israel and the United States considered intervention to protect Israeli security, particularly of the West Bank. American civilian leaders expressed interest to intervene, but military advisors contended they lacked capability without activating the reserves. This may have been a disingenuous position since active duty forces had the capability to intervene immediately, although reserves might be needed for “staying

power" (Betts 1991, 102). "There was little desire, particularly on the part of the military, to intervene directly in the fighting" (Blechman and Kaplan 1978, 278). Nixon indicated he would make intervention in Jordan contingent on Soviet intervention (FRUS 2010r, 833). The US alerted the 82nd Airborne Division and forces in Germany for possible deployment, positioned naval forces nearby in the Eastern Mediterranean, but no military forces participated in the conflict.

Feaver codes the incident as civil-military disagreement where the military "shirked." Desch does not code whose preferences prevailed over this incident. Since the Soviets did not intervene, Nixon correspondingly decided not to intervene. Despite the substantial policy disagreement and jockeying, I determine that civilian preferences prevailed because Nixon made a clear decision to make American participation contingent on Soviet intervention.

The ICB database codes the incident as a "victory" for American interests. Crediting the US military with a show of force but inconclusive outcome, the MID database codes the events as a "stalemate." Due to the coding rules of this study, however, where avoiding intervention is a success if no further intervention is necessary, than the Black September crisis qualifies as a military "success." Once again, by preventing American participation in a conflict, military shirking resulted in a successful military outcome. US interests were satisfied at least to the extent where it did

not become necessary to intervene later, and also did not become embroiled in a new war.

G.19 Cambodia 1970

During the Vietnam War, North Vietnamese and Vietcong forces used Cambodia as a sanctuary to launch attacks against South Vietnamese and American forces. The Ho Chi Minh trail, a logistic arterial used to supply and reinforce the war effort against South Vietnam, ran through Laos and Cambodia. American military leaders sought to disrupt the enemy support network by attacking these safe havens, but the Johnson administration would not approve conventional ground forces to interdict them (Betts 1991, 29). Despite air attacks, communist efforts to envelope South Vietnam from the west grew in strength and as a military threat.

The Nixon administration weighed the ongoing issue. National security advisor Kissinger advocated the US intervene in Cambodia but limit ground incursions to South Vietnamese troops only (FRUS 2010s, 867). Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird advised not to escalate force in Cambodia beyond the minor border operations already in progress (FRUS 2010t, 762–763). Concurring with the requests of his military advisors (Betts 1991, 29), President Nixon overruled the civilian advisors and sought bold action to decisively attack the safe havens (FRUS 2010u, 845). Signed by Nixon, National Security Council Decision Memorandum 57 of April 26, 1970 authorized conventional

ground force operations in Cambodia within 30 kilometers of the South Vietnamese border.

The allied incursion into Cambodia was an operational success but only yielded the strategic benefit of a delaying action. Allies inflicted losses estimated at more than 11,000 enemy combatants, captured large volumes of equipment and ammunition, forced the enemy to disperse from their border bases of operation, and security within South Vietnam noticeably improved as a result (Tho 1979, 172). However, North Vietnamese forces remained in control of roughly 25% of Cambodia, fanned a Khmer Rouge insurgency that would eventually come to power, and reconstituted their sanctuary over the course of the next year (182).

Feaver codes the episode as an instance of civil-military agreement. The agreement was mainly between the president and military authorities, less than it was agreement between civilian advisors in aggregate with military officials. The ICB database codes the outcome as a “stalemate” since “the situation in Cambodia remained more or less the same” (Patrick et al. 2004). The MID database incorporates the combatants, actions, and outcome with that of the broader Vietnam War, coded as a “defeat” for American forces. Consequently, the MID adjudication is irrelevant because it does not discretely consider the case of Cambodia independent from the Vietnam War.

Despite the unfavorable determinations by both databases, I make an exception to overrule them in this case and judge the outcome as a “success” for American forces.

If we conceive the Cambodia 1970 case distinctly from Vietnam where the goal in Cambodia was to deny the enemy psychological advantage of operating within a safe haven (FRUS 2010v, 902–903), the military operation achieved that goal. No leader expressed a goal of the Cambodian incursion to defeat enemy efforts in Cambodia or in Vietnam. Although the strategic situation in Cambodia and Vietnam remained essentially unchanged, the limited military campaign, constrained by geographic and time limitations by civilian leaders, achieved its objective of denying enemy sanctuary. American forces withdrew from Cambodia having achieved what they intended to accomplish. Therefore, since it achieved its limited aims, the American military effort in the Cambodia incursion was successful.

G.20 Yom Kippur War, 1973

On the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur on October 6, 1973, Egypt and Syria led a pan-Arab surprise attack against Israel to, at a minimum, recover their territorial losses from the 1967 Six-Day War. Dramatic turns of fortunes between combatants led the United States and Soviet Union to consider intervention in order to protect their clients, the delicate balance of power, and safeguard against critical blows to their own prestige. Both the US and USSR resupplied their clients with arms, equipment, and ammunition, as well as alerted their own military forces in preparation to intervene.

Israel won a decisive military victory on both fronts against its attackers. However, this victory came at high cost and with several moments of desperation where

Israeli forces were on the verge of defeat, forcing Israel to consider resorting to nuclear weapons (Patrick et al. 2004). Although neither America nor the Soviets directly intervened in combat with military forces, both deployed naval forces to the region. This ended in an unequal standoff favoring the American navy (Insight Team of the Sunday Times 2002, 271). For the superpowers, there was little change to the status quo that resulted from the conflict. Soviet prestige was bruised as their Middle Eastern clients suffered another defeat. America suffered an oil crisis at the resentful hands of Arab OPEC oil-providing nations but its leaders were determined to arbitrate a lasting peace.

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement, explicitly for the decision to resupply Israel and place nuclear forces on alert (2003, 135), but implicitly for the decision not to directly intervene. Indeed, minutes from the Washington Special Action Group meetings in the timeframe indicate harmonious collaboration and cooperation between State Department, Defense Department, CIA, and Joint Chiefs of Staff officials among each other and with the president. The only points of friction were bureaucratic hoops to expedite licensing for arms shipments, and decisions on the location where Israeli representatives would pickup the relief equipment.

The ICB database codes the episode as a “victory” for American interests. The MID database codes the episode as a negotiated settlement with an “unclear” outcome. Since America never had to engage a subsequent Arab-Israeli conflict after its non-intervention, I code the outcome as a military “success.” US forces deployed to Lebanon

approximately 10 years later but for the separate and distinct conflict of a Lebanese civil war, not to take a side in the Arab-Israeli conflict.⁷⁷ American interests were protected in the Yom Kippur War, and no further military operation was necessary in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

G.21 Mayaguez Incident, 1975

Less than a month after the evacuation of American embassies in South Vietnam and Cambodia, communist forces of the Khmer Rouge seized the American freighter SS Mayaguez in disputed waters near Cambodia on May 12, 1975. American prestige was low due to the unfavorable conclusion of the Vietnam War and, fearing another national embarrassment like the Pueblo incident,⁷⁸ civilian officials Secretary of State Kissinger, Vice President Rockefeller, and President Ford sought a strong and rapid response. They considered use of military force from the outset.⁷⁹ Their immediate aim was to rescue the crew and recover the ship, but their political objective was to demonstrate resolve to the international community in order to deter further similar hostile acts against American interests. While asking how quickly American forces could intervene, Kissinger

⁷⁷ In order to overturn this logic, one would have to argue that America's lack of intervention in the Yom Kippur War induced America's subsequent intervention in the Lebanese Civil War, which also would have led to a different result than the events that transpired in 1983. The 1983 mission would have had to have been a success because America's failure to intervene in the Yom Kippur War induced the Lebanese Civil War. That would be a complicated argument. It is far less complicated and, more importantly, far more practical to view the episodes discretely.

⁷⁸ Vice President Rockefeller and Secretary of Defense Schlesinger drew an analogy between the Mayaguez and the Pueblo incident during the first crisis response meeting. See FRUS 2010w, 981-982.

⁷⁹ Immediately upon hearing the news, Kissinger asked if the Pentagon had been informed of the situation. See FRUS 2010x, 974.

sarcastically quipped, “we haven’t reached the point yet where American ships get captured by Cambodians” (FRUS 2010x, 975).

Military authorities such as Acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General David Jones, theater commander Admiral Noel Gaylor, and deputy national security advisor Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft offered no objection to the civilians’ desire to employ military force. Navy aircraft located the captured *Mayaguez*, then attacked and sank several small Cambodian patrol boats in the vicinity. Coincident with a marine helicopter assault on a suspected island hostage site, the communist government in Phnom Penh ordered the captured crew released (Behuniak 1978, 162–166). American forces recovered the crew and ship, though the helicopter assault did not fare well. The marine assault team withdrew under fire after the ship and crew had been recovered elsewhere.

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement. The ICB database codes the episode as a “victory.” The MID database codes the outcome as “negotiated” in that the prisoners were released. Though some sources claim diplomatic pressure by China caused Cambodia to release the crew (Gibler 2018, 719), the Khmer Rouge sought to capitulate after losing vessels and personnel to American aircraft (Wetterhahn 2002, 114–118), and marines recaptured the ship by force (185–188). At a minimum, American military intervention contributed to recovery of the crew and ship. Therefore, I agree with the ICB coding the episode as a military “success.”

G.22 Iran Hostage Crisis, 1980

The Iranian hostage crisis is another well-studied episode. The crisis began on November 4, 1979 when Iranian protestors stormed the gates of the US embassy in Tehran, occupied the compound, and seized 52 embassy staff members as hostages. The crisis ended on January 20, 1981 when remaining hostages were released into US custody. The focus of this case is the large military operation attempting to rescue the hostages on April 24, 1980. The operation involved a naval task force composed of two aircraft carriers and their escorts, along with a special operations task force composed of more than 100 ground personnel and transport aircraft.

Civilian authorities made the decision on April 11 to order a rescue mission. The President, Vice President, Secretary of Defense, and national security advisor concurred with making a rescue attempt, while only the State Department dissented (FRUS 2010y, 677–678). Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General David Jones offered no dissent, though he expressed some apprehension on the likelihood of success in a NSC meeting on March 22 advising a stipulation that, if the mission were to be executed, it would be better to launch sooner rather than later (FRUS 2010z, 576–578). Director of Central Intelligence Admiral Stansfield Turner argued against the alternatives to rescue.

The mission was a dramatic failure. Aircraft attempting to land at a staging area suffered mechanical problems and more were damaged by harsh weather. Military authorities recommended aborting the mission in-progress. President Carter approved.

During withdrawal, two aircraft collided, destroying them both and killing eight personnel. The remnants of the destroyed aircraft compromised strategic surprise for a future attempt, and Carter publicly announced the failure shortly afterwards. No further military rescue attempt was made.⁸⁰

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement. The ICB database codes the outcome as a “compromise” and MID codes it as “negotiated” since the hostages were ultimately released following the Algiers Accords of January 19, 1981. However, the direct outcome of the military operation was clearly a “failure.” Despite civil-military agreement, the military operation did not rescue the hostages.

G.23 Nicaragua, 1983

The Reagan administration considered direct military intervention in the Nicaraguan Civil War during 1983. In 1979, the socialist Sandinista National Liberation Front ousted the dictatorial Somoza regime and survivors fled to neighboring Honduras. Dubbed the “Contras,” the Reagan administration provided covert support to rebels with ties to Somoza operating near the Honduran border, or from Honduras itself. By 1983 the Sandinistas had been weakened and their control destabilized enough that there was an opportunity to topple the regime and return an anti-communist

⁸⁰ For an account of Operation Eagle Claw, see Bowden, Mark. “The Eagle Claw Debacle.” *The Atlantic*, (May 2006). Available online at [theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/05/the-desert-one-debacle/304803/2/](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2006/05/the-desert-one-debacle/304803/2/), accessed on May 10, 2021.

regime to power. Civilian advisors like Secretary of State George Shultz were the most hawkish on the question, pondering invasion.

Seeking to prevent another Vietnam, military advisors actively sought to box in the administration and preclude a conventional military attack (Petraeus 1987, 210). The Joint Chiefs “resisted drawing up contingency plans for sending US troops to fight in Central America,” (216) “advised publicly against the commitment of US combat units,” and made their views known “to shape the debate and preempt certain policies” (210). The Reagan administration never coalesced on a decision to invade. Military position-taking had usurped options from the civilian authorities, dissuading use of force that the civilians otherwise may have chosen.

Feaver codes this case as an instance of civil-military disagreement with military “shirking.” Desch does not consider the episode but, since America did not directly intervene, it is apparent that military preferences prevailed. The ICB database does not code American participation in the Contra War. The MID database covers the entire civil war and determines it eventually ended in a “stalemate.” For the American military outcome, however, the decision not to invade is a “success” because the situation never deteriorated to the point where a subsequent intervention became necessary. Nor have strategic American interests suffered. Security threats from Central America are no worse today than then. Time has shown that intervention in Nicaragua was unnecessary

and likely imprudent. Military shirking resulted in a favorable military outcome by precluding an unnecessary endeavor.

G.24 Lebanon, 1982–1983

The Lebanese Civil War was a struggle that involved a cocktail of internal and external participants that lasted from 1975–1990. Lebanon had been governed by a Christian regime, but the growing Shia and Sunni populations desired policies more amenable to their interests. Unrest led to violence. Violence led to civil war. Civil war led to external intervention. First, in 1976, Syria intervened in an attempt to exert greater control over Lebanon as well as regain influence over PLO forces. Next, beginning in 1978, Israel initiated airstrikes and ground incursions to stabilize violence near their border. The UN Security Council established the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) as a multinational peacekeeping force and deployed it to the country. Then, in 1982, Israel invaded southern Lebanon to impose order on the deteriorating situation. In an effort to reduce the growing violence, Syria, PLO, and Israeli forces agreed to withdraw forces from Beirut, and allowed UNIFIL to monitor the withdrawal.

The Reagan administration, driven by the hawkish approach advised by Secretary of State Shultz, sought to reassert American military might in light of Vietnam failures as well as to preclude increased Soviet influence in the Middle East (Petraeus 1987, 177–178). The purpose of the military mission was vague. Civilian dissent within the administration, particularly from Secretary of Defense Weinberger, further obscured

the nature, extent, and objectives a military mission should undertake. The military interpreted its instructions as a mission which required “presence” and “to establish an environment which will permit the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out their responsibilities in Beirut” (180). The military establishment was virtually unanimous in its opposition to deployment in Lebanon (Feaver 2003, 139; Petraeus 1987, 177). The CJCS expressed that he was “wary of symbolic displays of power,” advised that US “armed forces should be used for precise military missions and not for vague diplomatic goals,” and he was “opposed to risking American lives for some sort of phony military and political objectives that we don’t understand” (Halloran 1984, 52). Nonetheless, the military deployed a contingent of 800 marines to Beirut for more than a year.

The episode was an instance of civil-military disagreement. Despite significant evidence of shirking, particularly on the part of ground commander marine Colonel Timothy Geraghty’s resistance to special envoy Robert McFarlane (Petraeus 1987, 186),⁸¹ Feaver codes the events from 1982–1983 as military “working.” Desch determines that civilian preferences prevailed in this case.

The episode does not meet ICB criteria for consideration because there was insufficient threat to the United States. The MID database codes American participation in the entire Lebanese Civil War as a “defeat.” The disastrous marine barracks bombing

⁸¹ Colonel Geraghty refused to call naval gun fire on Muslim forces at the insistence of McFarlane. Geraghty considered McFarlane the plenipotentiary for Reagan, an appreciation borne out by McFarlane’s appointment as National Security Advisor shortly thereafter, and Reagan supported McFarlane’s appeals to apply more force (Petraeus 1987, 187 and 185).

of October 23, 1983 portended withdrawal of US armed forces, and the Lebanese armed forces were unable to reestablish stability. Assessing the military outcome is difficult because the objectives were unclear. Although the US did reassert military power and Soviet influence did not significantly grow,⁸² it is hard to consider the loss of more than 200 marines out of a contingent of 800 worthy of the cost. Furthermore, the intervention did not preclude subsequent involvement by America's ally Israel, and did not lead to stability. If we consider the purpose of the mission to bolster the Lebanese armed forces attempt to reestablish stability, then American participation failed to achieve this objective. Consequently, the military outcome for this affair was a "failure."

G.25 Lebanon, Beirut Barracks, 1983

The aftermath of the marine barracks bombing left the military mission in Lebanon reeling. The civil-military divide remained cleaved along the same Shultz-Weinberger divide. Hawks Shultz and MacFarlane wanted strong retaliation (Feaver 2003, 137) and for the marines to stay, while dovish Weinberger wanted the marines to depart as quickly as possible. "The Joint Chiefs openly threw their support behind Secretary Weinberger" (Petraeus 1987, 194). President Reagan split the difference by deciding to terminate the mission and planning to redeploy the marines in the Summer of 1984, but US forces would employ more firepower in the meantime with naval gunfire.

⁸² Despite the fact that the growth of Soviet influence was a questionable consideration to begin with.

The civil-military disagreement came to a head (Gutman 1984, 33):

The joint chiefs resisted transmitting the orders authorizing naval gunfire. McFarlane...went to the chiefs and insisted they put specific military instructions for firing on paper. He then took this paper to Reagan, who signed it, and the plan fell into place.

The military so resisted the mission that McFarlane had to compel the Joint Chiefs to issue orders for more firepower. This may have exceeded shirking and actually been insubordination. The chiefs were thwarting civilian attempts to use military force.

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military disagreement where the military “shirked.” Desch does not consider the episode. Since the administration’s decision to both withdraw and employ more firepower was implemented, I code the incident as a case where civilian preferences prevailed.

As with the previous Lebanon case, the ICB does not consider the episode and the MID database codes American involvement as a “defeat.” However, the MID database does not distinguish between these two crises. Each are substantively different decisions to use force which merit separate appraisals. The 1982–1983 events were a decision that considered whether to continue using military force. The post-barracks bombing decision of 1983 considered terminating the mission and ending the use of force. In this case, Reagan decided the mission should end. The US cut its military losses after the barracks bombing, cashed in its chips, and left the table. By leaving the table, the US precluded further losses and did not suffer other strategic setbacks before its departure. This was a decision *not* to use force. Accordingly, since military forces

withdrew and no future intervention became necessary to defend American interests, the military outcome for the decision to disengage was a “success.” No security threat from Lebanon warranted subsequent US military effort in Lebanon. In this case the military shirked, and shirked in a direction towards a favorable military outcome.

G.26 Grenada, 1983

Nearly simultaneous with the marine barracks bombing in Lebanon, the Reagan administration ordered the invasion of Grenada. A radical left-wing faction had arrested the moderately left-wing Prime Minister of Grenada, Maurice Bishop, then executed him and imposed a national curfew with “shoot-on-sight” orders for those that disobeyed. US officials grew concerned that the new regime would seize the 1,000 American medical students on the island as hostages, destabilize the Caribbean by exporting communism, and strengthen ties with Cuba (Gacek 1994, 259). Once again but quickly, decisively, and taking advantage of his proximity to Reagan on their shared golf trip to Augusta, Shultz advised Reagan to intervene.

Civilian discussions rapidly accelerated consideration on the issue, initially contemplating evacuation of American citizens from the island but quickly deciding on invasion. The Joint Chiefs advised slowing down deliberations, which would allow the military to gather better intelligence about forces on the ground as well as develop a more well-considered plan. Agreeing with McFarlane and Shultz that America needed to rid itself of Vietnam Syndrome (199), Reagan overruled the military advisors,

instructed the armed forces to invade no later than October 25th, but gave the military virtually a free hand to decide what forces to use and how to proceed (Feaver 2003, 145 and 158; Petraeus 1987, 205 and 207–208). Given the discretion to decide, military leaders used the maximum number of forces they estimated necessary.

Feaver codes the episode as a case of civil-military disagreement where the military “worked.” Desch does not code the incident but it is clear that civilian preferences prevailed. On October 25, 1983, American forces invaded Grenada with overwhelming force. Resistance was eliminated within four days. Both the ICB and MID databases code Operation Urgent Fury as a “victory.” The best opposing argument one can make against coding the instance as a military success is that, had the military been given more time to plan, perhaps the operation would have incurred fewer casualties. However, delaying the operation could also have given the military more opportunity to resist, shirk, and dissuade Reagan from invading. Reluctant military advisors sought to delay, but aggressive civilian directives instructing the use of military force resulted in military “success” in this case.

G.27 Libya Airstrikes, 1986

The Reagan administration took a hardline against Libya upon assuming office. Libya’s Qaddafi regime had supported terrorist attacks in the 1970s against neighbors and Israel for which American listed Libya as a state-sponsor of terror in 1979 (Martel 2011, 151–152). Libya also claimed territorial sovereignty over the Gulf of Sidra, though

recognized as international waters under maritime convention. Qaddafi continued to act aggressively despite Washington rhetoric, intervening in Chad and seeking to acquire nuclear weapons (Ogunbadejo 1983, 154). Reagan directed the US Navy to conduct freedom of navigation operations in the Gulf of Sidra, leading to a 1981 aerial engagement in which Navy F-14s shot down two Libyan fighter jets, among other smaller incidents. Tensions continued to escalate. President Reagan directed the military launch punitive airstrikes against Libya after Libyan agents bombed a West Berlin nightclub that purposely targeted US service personnel on April 5, 1986 (Reagan 1986).

The objective of the military operation was to punish Libya for its transgressions in order to discourage them from sponsoring further acts of terror (Crowe 1993, 132–133; Martel 2011, 199). Reagan “felt we must show Qaddafi that there was a price he would have to pay for that kind of behavior, that we wouldn’t let him get away with it” (Reagan 1990, 518). And according to Weinberger, “the purpose of our plan was to teach Qaddafi and others the lesson that the practice of terrorism would not be free of cost to themselves; that indeed they would pay a terrible price for practicing it” (Weinberger 1990, 189).

American air and naval forces conducted a synchronized attack on Libyan targets which destroyed approximately 20 military aircraft on the ground, air defense facilities defending the sites, damaged several command and control facilities, killed approximately 45 military personnel, as well as caused 37 civilian collateral damage

deaths. A Libyan air defense gun shot down an American fighter-bomber during the raid, resulting in the death of two airmen. Although there was a brief uptick in Libyan-sponsored terrorist activity in the short-term, including the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, the long-term result was to reduce Libyan sponsorship of terrorism, and intimidate Qaddafi into reconciliation (Martel 2011, 210).

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement. Military authorities agreed to the operation (Crowe 1993, 136; Betts 1991, 220; and Weinberger 1990, 188–189), in fact, removing a routine caveat that the public should be informed beforehand (Shultz 1993, 683–684). The ICB database codes the outcome as a “victory.” The MID database codes the outcome as an instance where the Libyans yielded, which is essentially an American victory. In the case of bombing Libya in 1986, civil-military accord resulted in “success.”

G.28 Persian Gulf, 1987

An Iranian victory in the 1986 Battle of Al Faw peninsula during the Iran-Iraq War temporarily denied Iraq direct access to the Persian Gulf, compelling Iraq to seek Kuwaiti support to traffic its maritime oil exports. Iran began to attack Kuwaiti oil transports in order to prevent Iraq from circumventing its effective chokehold. Seeking to protect its vulnerable shipping from Iranian strikes, Kuwait requested American naval escorts in December 1986. The Reagan administration assented in March 1987,

partly to forestall Soviet intervention and partly to prevent a decisive victory between belligerents in the Iran-Iraq War (Shultz 1993, 926; Pelletiere 1992, 125–127).

The objective of the military operation was to maintain commercial shipping access in the Persian Gulf (Reagan 1990, 684; Shultz 1993, 926; Weinberger 1990, 402). America reflagged Kuwaiti tankers as its own, and American naval, air, and special operations forces instituted Operation Earnest Will from July 1987 to September 1988 to escort these tankers. Earnest Will also entailed several separate but subordinate active combat operations to reduce mines as well as to preempt and retaliate against Iranian attacks, such as operations Prime Chance, Nimble Archer, and Praying Mantis. The USS Stark missile strike incident occurred immediately before Earnest Will, while the USS Vincennes civilian airliner shootdown incident occurred during.

Earnest Will concluded when attacks against maritime shipping stopped upon the ceasefire of the Iran-Iraq War. US forces inflicted losses against Iranian interdiction efforts, although several civilian tankers and one American warship were damaged. Ultimately, the Persian Gulf remained open to commercial maritime traffic.

Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs agreed with the mission (Crowe 1993, 176–180), though Secretary of the Navy Jim Webb and “many high-ranking [naval] officers” (179) intimated reservations if escort duty became long-lasting or if it portended greater regional involvement (Weinberger 1990, 398 and 401; Betts 1991, 220). The episode does not meet the criteria for

consideration in the ICB database. The MID database codes the outcome as “unclear,” explaining that Iran simply switched tactics to attack Iraqi cities. However, since shipping access to the Persian Gulf was maintained, Iranian efforts to interrupt civilian traffic defeated, the costs of the operation did not become an elections-affecting issue domestically, and the operation may have even substantively contributed to ending the Iran-Iraq War (Dalton 2015), I code the episode as a military “success.”

G.29 Panama, 1989

Panama has held special strategic significance for the United States ever since the Panama Canal was completed in 1914. Panama gained even more strategic significance during the Cold War when the nation became a regional ally against the spread of communism in Latin America. Relations began to change when anti-colonial sentiment distanced the two nations, resulting in 1978 treaties that promised to return the Panama Canal Zone to its host nation. Increased drug trafficking to the United States in the 1980s combined with a thawing of Cold War pressures led America to reevaluate its policy towards Panama, as the isthmus nation became an increasing abettor of drugs trafficked, local corruption decreased Panamanian quality of life, increased instability, and authorities increasingly harassed American service personnel. The Reagan administration instituted sanctions to curb behavior of the Noriega regime, and relations quickly deteriorated after US federal prosecutors indicted Noriega for drug trafficking in 1988. Reagan advisors considered using military force to oust Noriega as early as 1988,

as depicted in Operational Plan Elaborate Maze and the theater commander's plans Fissure I and Fissure II (Gray and Manwaring 1998, 47).

Relations with the Noriega regime continued to deteriorate after the accession of the G.H.W. Bush administration in 1989. A quick succession of events including a fraudulent election that sustained Noriega, followed by a failed coup, a Panamanian parliamentary announcement that a "state of war" existed between Panama and the United States, and the final straw, a December attack on five US military personnel and a spouse, roused President Bush to order military forces to depose Noriega (GAO 1991, 1; Baker 1995, 182–189; Patrick et al. 2004). US ground, air, and special operations forces executed Operation Just Cause beginning on December 20, 1989.

Bush proclaimed that America's objectives were "to safeguard the lives of Americans, to defend democracy in Panama, to combat drug trafficking, and to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal treaty" (Bush 1989). The military interpreted additional operational objectives to neutralize the Panamanian Defense Forces and bring Noriega to justice (Cole 1995, 29). The operation was a swift success (Martel 2006, 176–177). Panamanian forces were neutralized within days. Noriega fled to sanctuary at the Vatican embassy in Panama City where he surrendered two weeks later, and Americans emplaced in office the Panamanian leader who had earlier lost the fraudulent election. As with Operation Earnest Will in the Persian Gulf, the costs of military action were not

cause for significant political opposition (Cramer 2006, 194–195). Indeed, the operation enjoyed 80% public approval (195).

The Joint Chiefs of Staff and theater commander, General Maxwell Thurman, unanimously agreed with the president's decision to use military force (Powell 1995, 422–423). Feaver codes the episode as civil-military agreement. Both the ICB and MID databases code the episode as a "victory" for American forces. Consequently, I code the episode as a military "success."

G.30 Kuwait, 1990

After Iraq invaded Kuwait on August 2, 1990, President Bush promptly responded that "this will not stand, this aggression against Kuwait." The administration considered a broad range of options including diplomatic appeals as well as sanctions but, naturally, recognized that military force would likely be necessary. Appropriate for his role, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Colin Powell provided the preponderance of military advice to the Secretary of Defense and president.

Wary of another Vietnam, Powell mixed political and policy advice with military. He forced the question of whether Kuwait was worth American bloodshed, preferred to establish a defensive military posture which would allow economic sanctions opportunity to coerce Iraq, and eschewed thoughts that airpower alone could compel Iraqi forces to withdraw (Moten 2014, 324–

325). Some suggest that Powell sought to shape the policy debate and box-in the civilian leaders by limiting their military options (Kohn 1994; Moten 2014, 324). Powell wanted to implement a defensive strategy, with sanctions and containment coercing Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait (Powell 1995, 450; Moten 2014, 327). A defensive strategy was tantamount to opposing use of military force, similar to the deterrence deployment of forces to Thailand in the Laos 1962 case. An offensive strategy, entailing forceful ejection of Iraqi forces in Kuwait, was the actual use of military force which the civilians favored (Desch 1999, 138).

Despite Powell's interest in allowing a defensive strategy to work, President Bush chose an offensive strategy, reasoning that driving Hussein's forces from Kuwait would be more decisive and quicker (Moten 2014, 327). In the end, the US deployed more than 500,000 personnel for the Gulf War and expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

Desch and Feaver register Powell's private misgivings, which coincide with former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Crowe's public objection (Woodward 1991, 331–332), to categorize the episode as civil-military disagreement.⁸³ Desch codes the case as civilian preferences prevailing over the

⁸³ When push came to shove, however, Powell did not recommend a defensive strategy to the President (Woodward 1991, 42; Atkinson 1993, 122), instead privately informing the national security advisor that the matter should be more thoroughly considered (Woodward 1991, 301). By not dissenting when there was an opportunity, the military authorities agreed with the civilian policy. Nonetheless, I default to Desch and

military. Although Feaver does not explicitly say so and offers examples of military shirking throughout war preparations, Feaver implies that the military “worked” (2003, 237–239).

Both the ICB and MID databases code the conflict as an unqualified “victory.” The story is not complete without mention of subsequent debate, however. Critics contend that America missed an opportunity to destroy Hussein’s Republican Guard as well as arm Shia and Kurdish opposition, allowing him to remain in power. At best, this critique seeks to claim that America’s victory in the Gulf War was incomplete. Although American forces would return 12 years later to invade Iraq, the military outcome in the Gulf War for Kuwait was still a “success.” “The war’s outcome was limited by the political objective of restoring the status quo ante bellum,” which America achieved (Martel 2007, 195). Critics can merely dispute the extent of that success. Civilians overrode military preferences to avoid using force, and the military outcome was favorable.

Feaver’s characterization. If coded differently, this case would credit military success to joint civil-military agreement, rather than to the civilians alone over military objection.

G.31 Bosnia, 1992

The former Cold War republic of Yugoslavia dissolved into ethnically-oriented states after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and Bosnia began to further cleave along Serb and Muslim lines. With greater representation in the armed forces, the Serbs held stronger military power in Bosnia. The Bosnian Muslims voted for independence, sparking a civil war which led to human rights atrocities. Muslims were most often the victims.

At the beginning, the Bush administration and the Joint Chiefs unanimously agreed that America should limit its involvement to diplomacy. However, congressional Democrats and presidential candidate Bill Clinton began calling for a naval blockade of the Serbs, or some low-level form of military intervention, to halt atrocities. Outflanked to the political left, the Bush administration responded by tacking left too. The State Department called on the UN to authorize use of force in order to enable delivery of humanitarian assistance supplies, and Bush considered using airpower to establish a “no-fly zone” over Bosnia.

Powell firmly disagreed with this approach. He argued against incremental measures to intervene, vague attempts at political signaling, and doubted that there was sufficient political will to follow-through to the end and provide the resources necessary to succeed (Feaver 2003, 261). Exceeding a mere role to advise the president and Congress, Powell gave an interview to the New York Times and published an article in

Foreign Affairs arguing that a military intervention would unlikely succeed. Advising behind closed doors, Powell provided military options and force estimates that scholars Russell Weigley and David Halberstam accused as exaggerated attempts to manipulate policymakers into appraising a military intervention too costly (Feaver 2003, 258–261; Weigley 1993, 28–31; Halberstam 2001, 251–252). Bush eventually overruled Powell and the Joint Chiefs opposition. Bush decided on a no-fly zone in October 1992 but decided America would not enforce it. US forces would simply monitor and record violations.

Although there is evidence to support a claim that Powell and the military shirked, Feaver argues that “given the absence of a clearly articulated administration policy, Powell was not openly defying civilian control...but [his collective actions] indicate that something short of the idealized relationship prevailed” (260). The military “worked.” Feaver decides that it is unclear whether the preponderance of civilian or military preference reigned (200). Desch determines that military preferences prevailed. Accordingly, although it is a very close decision, I categorize the episode as civil-military disagreement where the nation decided *not* to apply military force.

The ICB does not attribute American participation in this episode. The MID database classifies the American military outcome as “victory,” though the inclusive dates for American participation do not align with this particular episode, instead aggregating the outcome for the longer civil war. The coding rules in this study disagree with the MID judgment. Since the military preference prevailed to restrain American

intervention in 1992, and the Clinton administration later determined that greater American intervention was necessary, I code the military outcome for 1992 Bosnia as a “failure.” Perhaps earlier intervention could have brought about more favorable results sooner. Regardless, America’s initial abstention from intervening in Bosnia allowed the crisis to escalate. This demonstrates the sole instance in this study where military preferences prevailed but led to an unfavorable military outcome.

G.32 Somalia, 1992

Feaver composes a case study of Somalia which describes the civil-military factors involved (2003, 239–248). The Bush administration ordered the use of military force to commence a humanitarian operation in Somalia 1992. The military initially opposed the mission but changed stance and agreed in the Fall (240). Military authorities, perhaps sensing the public’s will as expressed through the results of the 1992 presidential election, may have shifted to conform to the nation’s desire. Feaver characterizes the episode as an instance of civil-military agreement. He asserts “there was relatively little shirking” (247).

Neither the ICB nor the MID database code the episode but the CoW database codes the outcome as a “compromise” where US force withdrew in 1994. Although the initial efforts to stave off mass starvation may have temporarily succeeded, efforts to impose a lasting resolution to the humanitarian crisis failed when losses suffered during the military raid in Mogadishu proved unacceptable. America withdrew its forces

shortly afterwards, and the nation has not recovered since. In fact, the situation has gotten worse at times, triggering America to subsequently attack with cruise missile strikes and special operations forces raids to prevent terrorism and piracy from spreading further. I code the military outcome in Somalia as a “failure.”

G.33 Bosnia, 1993

The Clinton administration favored military action to halt atrocities in Bosnia to a greater extent than the preceding Bush administration. President-elect Clinton called for Bush to enforce the existing no-fly zone in order to prevent aerial attacks against Bosnian Muslims. Consistent with this approach, Bush began courting European allies to participate in such an effort during his lame-duck months. Upon assuming office, the Clinton administration took up the issue and finalized the diplomatic efforts, resulting in UN Security Council Resolution 816 on March 31, 1993. This authorized member states to use military force to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia. NATO implemented Operation Deny Flight shortly thereafter.

The mission expanded to include UN authorizations for punitive airstrikes and close air support in the following months, though the first military engagement did not occur until 1994. As their initiative progressed, the administration met the same stiff Pentagon opposition that Bush had encountered. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Powell discouraged use of military force as he had previously. “Unquestionably, the military was advising against” military intervention (Feaver 2003, 264). Military

opposition to the mission lessened when Clinton appointed General John Shalikashvili as the new Chairman.

The 1995 National Security Strategy defined five American objectives to successfully resolve the conflict in Bosnia (Clinton 1995, 25):

achieving a political settlement in Bosnia that preserves the country's territorial integrity and provides a viable future for all its peoples; preventing the spread of the fighting into a broader Balkan war that could threaten both allies and the stability of new democratic states in Central and Eastern Europe; stemming the destabilizing flow of refugees from the conflict; halting the slaughter of innocents; and helping to support NATO's central role in post-Cold War Europe while maintaining our role in shaping Europe's security architecture.

After the Dayton Accords ended the conflict in Bosnia, incremental increases in use of military force in the conflict over Kosovo led to “a political-military victory and a significant change in the status quo: It compelled Bosnian Serbs to stop their strategy of genocide and intimidation against non-Serb peoples” (Martel 2007, 216). Peace and stability have since emerged, though international peacekeepers remain (215).

Without definitively stating so, Feaver characterizes the episode as civil-military disagreement where the military “worked.” He cites instances where military officials shirked by making unattributed comments to the press that criticized civilian policy but stops short of comprehensively characterizing military behavior as shirking (264–265).

Desch does not distinguish the 1993 episode from 1992 but, given that the US deliberately intervened in the conflict and increased its commitment through the mid-1990s, it is evident that civilian policy prevailed over military advice on whether to use force.

The ICB database does not include American participation in the Bosnian conflict, presumably out of a determination that the conflict did not sufficiently threaten the US. The MID database, however, codes American participation in the Bosnian conflict as a “victory.” I code the military outcome as a “success.” Despite the reluctance of military officials, civilian prodding to apply military force in Bosnia resulted in a favorable outcome. Consequently, military resistance to the Bosnia mission may have prevented an earlier successful operation, which could have potentially relieved the regional humanitarian crises sooner.

G.34 Haiti, 1994

Impoverished, persecuted, and frequently carrying an incurable infectious disease, tens of thousands of Haitians attempted to flee the nation to seek asylum in America over the final decades of the 20th Century. Their flight subsided under President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, but a military coup deposed the popular president in 1991. Disgusted with the coup, President Bush convinced Congress to apply sanctions against his junta replacements but the sanctions affected the Haitian public far greater than the junta in power (Feaver 2003, 249). Consequently, Haitians increased their attempts to flee to the US on improvised watercraft. The Bush administration continued Reagan administration policy to repatriate or incarcerate these asylum seekers, arguing that there were insufficient human rights violations that warranted their flight to the US.

Bush administration officials considered their asylum requests as an attempt at mass emigration.

The Clinton administration changed policy towards Haiti. In July 1993, the administration brokered the Governor's Island Compromise where Aristide would return to office under a power-sharing agreement with the junta regime (250). Discontent that the agreement provided 600 military engineers to deploy under a UN flag, US military officials resisted participation by presenting "conditions" to establish and "prerequisites" to achieve prior to introduction of forces (250–251). They also leaked to the press an increase in the estimated force requirements from 1,500 troops to 6000 (253). Clinton officials began planning for a military intervention anyway. Military advisors relented in August 1994, perhaps in an effort to horse-trade with civilians over intervention in Bosnia (253), or perhaps as a concession to secure greater discretion over conduct of the mission. Regardless, US troops landed with overwhelming force in September 1994.

Feaver characterizes the episode as civil-military disagreement (250) and, despite stating that "the Pentagon clearly had been resisting the mission" (252), makes no explicit determination whether the military worked or shirked. Because the military used stipulations and leaks to box-in the Clinton administration, I code this instance as military "shirking." Desch codes the episode as a case where the civilian-preferred policy prevailed. Both the ICB and MID databases code the military outcome in Haiti as

“victory.” In the case of Haiti, civilian officials insisted on their policy preferences and dragged the military onboard, resulting in a successful military outcome.

G.35 Iraq Airstrikes, 1998

As a limited war, the Gulf War of 1991 left several unresolved problems. Hussein remained a threat to Kuwait, developed an animosity for the US which, at a minimum, increased antagonism, and segments of the regional population grew to detest the ongoing presence of American forces. Part of the solution to these problems was a UN-approved campaign of economic sanctions and inspections to verify disarmament of Iraqi WMDs. UN inspectors were authorized access to any place they asked in Iraq, but Iraqi officials sometimes balked. Combined with a series of hostile military encounters enforcing no-fly zones over Iraq as well as provocative deployment of ground forces, American patience reached a limit in 1998 when Iraq refused to allow further inspections (Albright 2003, 284). The Clinton administration decided to launch a punitive air campaign against Iraq.

Clinton ordered an attack in November 1998 but aborted “with our airplanes already in the air” when Hussein conceded to further inspections at the last minute (Clinton 1998). However, Hussein reversed course soon thereafter. With “the unanimous recommendation of my national security team, including the Vice President, Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Adviser,” the US warned UN inspectors to withdraw for their own

safety and launched Operation Desert Fox on December 16 (Clinton 1998). Indeed, General Hugh Shelton, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, implies his assent in his memoirs (Shelton 2010, 366). The goal of the operation was “to degrade Saddam Hussein's ability to make and to use weapons of mass destruction, ...to diminish his ability to wage war against his neighbors, and... to demonstrate the consequences of flouting international obligations” (Cohen 1998).

The result of the military action was (Olsen 2002, 174),

In military terms, Operation Desert Fox is regarded as a success: The bomb-damage assessment indicates that smart bombs and improved cruise missiles resulted in one of the most accurate bombing campaigns in the history of warfare. The political effects of the air campaign are disputed. U.S. and British leaders claimed that the air strikes achieved their mission, whereas others speculate that Saddam Hussein succeeded in weakening the cohesion of the 1991 Coalition and halting UN inspections.

Indeed, proscribed weapons inspections did not resume until November 2002, when the threat of an invasion of Iraq loomed. Nonetheless, Secretary of State Albright remained clear-eyed when she said (Albright 1998),

I don't think we're pretending that we can get everything, so this is, I think – we are being very honest about what our ability is, we are lessening, degrading his ability to use [WMD].

The objectives of Operation Desert Fox had been deliberately limited. Although the objective to “degrade” an enemy's capability can be easily achieved, the military operation cleared this minimal hurdle. The costs of the campaign, almost totally financial, were not sufficient to become a politically significant issue for the domestic opposition.

Neither Desch nor Feaver consider this episode. I code the episode as civil-military agreement. Observing that “there was still no agreement within the UN Security Council about its policy toward Iraq, nor was Iraq willing to accept UNSCOM inspectors back into the country,” the ICB database codes the outcome as a “compromise” (Patrick et al. 2004). The MID database verdict does not apply because it aggregates the episode with the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which I consider separately and takes a different character. The political goals were significantly limited and easy to achieve, so I code the military outcome as a “success.”

G.36 Kosovo, 1999

Heartened by the achievements that Bosnian Muslims made gaining power during the Bosnian War, Kosovar Muslims became emboldened to resist rule by the rump Yugoslavia. The Kosovo Liberation Army began an insurgency which sought to sever ties with Belgrade and enhance them with Tirana. Yugoslavia, composed of contemporary Serbia, Montenegro, and the disputed Republic of Kosovo, instituted a campaign to forcibly remove ethnic-Albanian Kosovars from the nation in response. Diplomatic efforts to halt violence failed and NATO nations agreed that the alliance should intervene.

Acting without UN authorization, NATO implemented Operation Allied Force from March 29 to June 10, 1999. The objective was “the withdrawal of Serbian forces, the demilitarization of Kosovo, the deployment there of an international military force, the

return of all refugees and displaced persons, and the establishment of a provisional administration in Kosovo under international control" (Martel 2007, 213). Civilian officials in the Clinton administration tended to support use of military force (Feaver 2003, 274), while military officials tended to oppose (Clark 2001, 165; Albright 2003, 383).

NATO forces, led by an American aerial bombardment campaign combined with the threat of ground assault, achieved their objectives (Martel 2007, 215). Losing only two aircraft in combat but recovering both their crews, the costs of American military force did not yield a sufficient domestic political opposition to compel its cessation (Clinton 2004, 859). The threat of violence continues as peacekeepers remain in the territory, yet the size of their mission continues to shrink.

Feaver describes the episode as significant civil-military disagreement. Although he uses the term "shirk" frequently in his account and never describes military behavior as "working" in Kosovo (Feaver 2003, 272–282), the theater commander, General Wesley Clark, obediently complied with civilian policy to the extent that military authorities forced him into retirement. The Pentagon may have offered points of resistance by leaking doubts about the operation to the press, but military forces, commanded by Clark, dutifully enabled intrusive civilian control. Clark complied with intense "micromanagement" and detailed civilian scrutiny of target lists that were "an obvious if awkward echo of the Vietnam War" (277). Feaver claims that Clark's repeated requests to prepare a ground campaign constituted shirking on his part because President

Clinton had expressly ruled it out (278). However, Clark's calls were made privately, and not unwelcome to the president (Clinton 2004, 855 and 859). I determine that the military "worked." It is also evident, by the fact that the war was prosecuted, that civilian preferences prevailed.⁸⁴

Both the ICB and MID databases code the outcome as a "victory." Critics may complain that maintaining an enduring peacekeeping force bears a high cost, but there is little ground to claim that the military outcome was unfavorable. I code the episode a military "success."

G.37 Afghanistan, 2001

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 roused America to respond, at least for the purpose of preventing another attack. Intelligence agencies quickly determined that Al Qaeda were responsible for the attacks and that their leader, Osama bin Laden, was located in Afghanistan. Civilian authorities considered military action from the start. Military authorities offered no dissent towards action in Afghanistan, though there were discussions and frictions over how to attack and what goals to achieve. I code the episode as an instance of civil-military agreement in favor of using military force.

⁸⁴ Although the codings in this case are close calls, different codings would not substantially change the findings. I changed the military's coding to "shirk," this would add support to the relationship between shirking and successful outcomes. It would complicate my findings in one sense, however, as to determine whether the Pentagon was shirking to avoid the conflict or Clark was shirking to escalate the conflict. If choosing the former, the episode would be similar to Haiti 1994 where the outcome was a success despite military shirking. If choosing the latter, this episode would introduce a new phenomenon to this study where the military shirked to escalate force. Furthermore, it would suggest a successful outcome attributable in shirking to escalate force.

The military operation in Afghanistan was considered to be one campaign in a broader Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) composed of both military and non-military campaigns. In addition to disrupting financial resources, killing and capturing terrorist agents, as well as waging a larger ideological battle against an enemy that opposed liberal Western values and portrayed America as a colonial dominion, a high-profile effort in the GWOT has been to topple regimes that harbor terrorists. Afghanistan was the first regime America decided to attack.

In order to determine success or failure, I measure how well military efforts have achieved the stated political goals. The objectives of the operation in Afghanistan were to “disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operation, attack the military capability of the Taliban regime” (Bush 2001), “demonstrate that the Taliban could no longer harbor terrorists without fearing the risk of war,...demonstrate the will of the United States to eradicate terrorism” (Martel 2007, 230–231), “drive them [the terrorists] out and bring them to justice” (Bush 2001), and “rebuild the government and society of Afghanistan”(Martel 2007, 232). The Obama administration later refined goals in the ongoing war to “disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al-Qa’ida and its violent extremist affiliates in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and around the world” (Obama 2010, 19).

These objectives have largely been achieved, even if many of these objectives were worded in such a way as to make them easily achievable. Afghanistan has certainly been at least disrupted as a terrorist base of operation. The military capability of the

Taliban was more than attacked, the entire regime was removed. This demonstrated to the Taliban, and others, that they risked war if they harbor terrorists who attack the United States. The objective “to demonstrate the will to eradicate terrorism” was squishy. Nonetheless, America has demonstrated a certain level of resolve to this effect. America has driven out many terrorists, often only a very short distance such as across the border into Pakistan, as well as killed or captured many, including bin Laden himself. Perhaps the goal that has been least achieved has been to rebuild Afghan society. Few expect America to build Afghan society much stronger than it was before American invasion. Nonetheless, Afghanistan had a new, democratic government in place. Many liberties that were abolished by the Taliban were restored under democratic rule, and quality of life not substantially different under the succeeding government than during the previous Taliban rule (Martel 2007, 239–241). However, a resurgent Taliban threatens to undo previous American successes. The April 2021 decision to withdraw troops represents a new, related but separate decision to terminate the use of force which can be studied in the future.

The fact that the Taliban has returned to power demonstrates that it may still be too early to render judgment whether the military mission has been a success or failure. So long as turmoil continues, most conceptual successes and failures remain reversible. Some achievements, like the death of terrorist leaders, and costs, like the loss of soldiers, are irreversible, however. A determination of the outcome can only be an interim

judgment, pending conclusion of the conflict or, otherwise, the accumulation of irreversible achievements that clinch a lasting success or failure.

The ICB database codes the invasion of Afghanistan as a “victory.” However, the ICB ends consideration of the episode in December 2001, which does not dispel the question that initial success may not last. Similarly, the MID database codes the invasion as a “victory” but ends consideration in November 2001. The CoW captures the enduring war better, but gives the indeterminate conclusion that the war is still ongoing and cannot be presently determined.

All factors considered, I code the military outcome in Afghanistan as a tentative “success.” Although critical achievements are still reversible and progress not without setbacks, America has achieved the objectives that the military operation intended. Civil-military agreement on the use of military force have achieved their objectives, while a return to terrorist safe haven in the future could potentially reverse this judgment.

G.38 Iraq, 2003

Immediately in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, senior civilian Pentagon officials, particularly Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, suggested that America should target Iraq as part of its response (Woodward 2002, 60). Most civilian advisors disagreed about attacking Iraq so soon (Rice 2011, 86–87; Bush 2010, 189–190) and the senior military authority at the time, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Henry Shelton, rejected the notion

(Woodward 2002, 61; Shelton 2010, 444). President George W. Bush decided to table notions of attacking Iraq unless evidence tied Hussein to the 9/11 attacks (Bush 2010, 191).

“The issue had continued to percolate in the war cabinet,” however, and, after Vice President Cheney became more interested in the idea of preventive war to forestall a WMD attack, by April 2002 President Bush began making public statements suggesting America would no longer tolerate Hussein’s regime (Woodward 2002, 329–330). The theater commander, General Tommy Franks, initially held reservations against a military operation because his staff was stretched thin due to the war in Afghanistan (Woodward 2004, 8) but agreed with the idea to invade (Franks 2004, 356). He later disagreed with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld over *how* to proceed with an invasion (Gordon and Trainor 2006), but I found no record of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs nor the theater commander expressed misgivings against desires to invade Iraq. I code the episode as civil-military agreement.

President Bush announced that the purpose of the military operation was to “disarm Iraq, to free its people, and to defend the world from grave danger” (Bush 2003). Adding more detail, President Bush signed a National Security Presidential Directive that stated the objective of the military campaign was to (Woodward 2004, 154–155 and 228),

free Iraq in order to eliminate Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and associated programs, to prevent Iraq from breaking out of

containment and becoming a more dangerous threat to the region and beyond. End Iraqi threats to its neighbors, to stop the Iraqi government's tyrannizing of its own population, to cut Iraqi links to and sponsorship of international terrorism, to maintain Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. And liberate the Iraqi people from tyranny, and assist them in creating a society based on moderation, pluralism and democracy.

Operation Iraqi Freedom unambiguously achieved some of these stipulated conditions, while other conditions have not been decisively achieved. Whether or not Iraq possessed WMD at the start of the war, Iraqi WMD have not been a factor since. The Hussein regime has been removed and Iraq no longer threatens its neighbors with conventional violence, though stability in Iraq periodically devolved to an extent that the nation became a threat to spread instability. The Iraqi government no longer terrorizes its own people, though civil war and sectarian violence that did not previously exist has terrorized Iraq's population since. Iraq has become less of a sponsor of international terrorism, which is a successful outcome, but has also become more of a target. Finally, Iraq has made important strides to establishing a more moderate, pluralistic, and democratic society, certainly more than existed under the Hussein regime. However, instability and uncertainty has replaced the oppression that was removed with Hussein's ouster.

The ICB database codes the invasion of Iraq as a "victory," but this coding only addresses the crisis of regime change, not the subsequent counterinsurgency war that America waged. The MID database similarly codes the invasion as a "victory" but does not assess the irregular warfare that followed. The CoW database renders the

indeterminate verdict of “war changed” to one which is still “ongoing” and cannot yet be assessed.

There is little doubt that the military operation successfully removed the Hussein regime from Iraq, but there remain questions as to whether America has successfully achieved the end state it sought or whether the costs have been worth the price. Some argue that the new Iraqi regime is anti-American, the war improved Iran’s strategic position, and distracted America from more worthwhile pursuits in Afghanistan (Walt 2012). More Americans think that the Iraq War has made America more unsafe than safe, and have consistently thought so since July 2005 (Gallup 2021b). Political opposition benefited from unpopularity of the Iraq War during congressional elections of 2006 as well as the presidential election of 2008. In both cases, the Democratic position to end the Iraq War polled more favorably than the Republican position to continue waging it (Gallup 2021b). The Democratic Party won both elections, suggesting the public thought the costs of the war were not worth its benefits. Since then, the public has approved of the Obama administration’s decision to withdraw combat troops and continue to view the Iraq War as a mistake (Gallup 2021b).

Although victory and defeat may, indeed, only be a psychological interpretation that exists in one’s mind, a measured comparison between objectives sought and achievements made demonstrate that the military operation has successfully achieved its goals, in aggregate. Popular opinion does not necessarily determine success or

failure, though it can inform it, and plays a larger role in measuring the balance of costs and benefits. A claim of military success does not necessarily suggest that the costs paid have been worth its benefits, however. Determining these costs and benefits of each of any of the cases considered is beyond the scope of this paper, and making such an assessment of the Iraq War would have to consider intangible benefits such as the potential value of terrorist attacks prevented on the United States as a result, as well as future costs that are difficult to forecast such as the three trillion dollar expense some suggest (Stiglitz and Bilmes 2008).

The Iraq War may continue against remnants of the Islamic State as well as Iranian proxy. This, like Afghanistan, makes my conclusion still tentative, but the stated goals and current results indicates that the outcome of the Iraq War has been a military “success” (Martel 2007, 263). Civil-military agreement, persistent resolve, and sinuous progress has tentatively been followed with the attainment of desired objectives.

G.39 Pakistan, 2004–2012

American national security experts have recognized Al Qaeda safe haven in Pakistan as a considerable threat since the war in Afghanistan began. The issues of Afghanistan and Pakistan go hand in hand. The enduring question has been what to do about it. The problem is that the safe haven is focused in the isolated, rugged area of Waziristan where the Pakistani government lacks influence, yet Pakistan fiercely guards its sovereignty, rejects American offers to directly address the problem, and is a nuclear-

armed state with a large army. Spanning the Bush and Obama administrations, the preponderance of American strategy has been to use non-military means, such as diplomacy, economic assistance, and intelligence sharing to remedy the threat. Although America has used force in Pakistan, these operations have been led by the CIA with selected military assets in support, employing drone strikes and targeted raids.

Military authorities have held interest in conducting a broader military operation to resolve the problem, sometimes expressing these interests to civilian authorities, but may often mute these requests out of an appreciation of the political realities which make approval unlikely. Civilian authorities are unlikely to approve because military action could provoke war with Pakistan, and there is insufficient domestic support for such an undertaking. The civil-military dispute has not been intense because both sides appreciate the difficulty of the problem and implications of a military solution. Nonetheless, there is evidence of a rift over the issue.

Two examples of the rift took place during the Bush administration. First, in 2006, the president attributes an unnamed navy SEAL for requesting authority to conduct operations in Pakistan (Bush 2010, 217). Bush went so far to ask Pakistan's President Musharraf for his permission (213). Musharraf refused, but Bush replied that America would use force unilaterally if sufficient information to act were gathered (Rice 2011, 444). The SEAL was not a high-ranking commander, but Bush felt his military advice represented military interests well enough to consider. Second, in 2008, Director

of Central Intelligence General Michael Hayden and special operations commander Lieutenant General Stanley McChrystal, along with a coterie of military and intelligence officials, recommended more aggressive ground attacks into Waziristan in order to reduce the threat of terrorist attacks (Coll 2018, 310). The Bush administration declined out of fear of general war with Pakistan (319).

Another example of the rift occurred during the 2009 Obama administration strategy review on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Director of National Intelligence and former navy Admiral Dennis Blair favored an air and special operations campaign to attack extremists inside Pakistan (Woodward 2010, 288). Civilian authorities were uninterested in hearing the idea.

In my research, I found no examples of the Joint Chiefs of Staff nor theater commanders advocating a military campaign in Pakistan, possibly partly because they hoped Pakistani forces would deny the sanctuary themselves (Rumsfeld 2011, 688; McChrystal 2013, 328), partly out of their own reluctance,⁸⁵ and possibly because many records are classified since the issue is so recent. However, military and civilian authorities have repeatedly sought solutions to Pakistan's safe haven problem where military authorities tend to seek military-like solutions, such as Pakistani military action as well as covert use of American force, while civilians tend to favor diplomatic and

⁸⁵ For example, there was a notable opportunity during the Obama administration's Afghanistan-Pakistan review, but all parties demurred (Woodward 2010, 208).

non-military options. This issue is far from cleanly split, however. At one moment, President Bush expressed interest in attacking Pakistan when it appeared its government might have been complicit in the Mumbai terror attacks of 2008 (Woodward 2010, 46). During the Obama administration's Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy review, Vice President Biden suggested American resources should be focused on Pakistan instead of Afghanistan (166–167). Altogether, I code the episode as civil-military disagreement, albeit soft disagreement, where civilian preferences prevailed. There was no military use of force in Pakistan as defined by my criteria.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the military has “worked.” There have been no apparent end-runs seeking to overturn civilian preferences to avoid using force.

America decided not to use military force in Pakistan. This induces my methodological rules to determine the military outcome. The ICB database does not consider the episode since there has been no specific crisis. The MID database codes the episode as an “unclear” outcome for American participation. The CoW database, however, codes the episode as a “defeat” for failure to deny a safe haven. As there has been no American military intervention to date, however, my rule implies that American interests have been served well enough without intervention. Indeed, Obama's national security advisor, former marine general Jim Jones, indicated that the nation would be

⁸⁶ However journalists claim that there have been CIA-led operations, America continued a use of force policy beneath the threshold defined in this paper (Woodward 2010, 303).

galvanized to attack Pakistan only if terrorists from Pakistan struck the United States first (Woodward 2010, 364). Therefore, the decision not to attack Pakistan has resulted in “success.” Civilian reluctance to attack has, so far, led to a favorable outcome by avoiding an unwanted quagmire. On the other hand, it is possible that a military campaign in Pakistan could have also successfully concluded the war in Afghanistan. This is unknowable, and does not provide sufficient reason to make an exception to my methodological rules.

G.40 Iraq, 2006–2007⁸⁷

After 3 years of occupation in Iraq, progress was limited and the outcome uncertain. Military authorities advocated a plan to continually drawdown troop strengths and eventually terminate American combat operations in Iraq. They reasoned that American forces were exacerbating problems more than resolving them. By planning a steady drawdown of troops, the operational commander, General George Casey, essentially proposed that the US should follow a path to cease using military force (Woodward 2008, 109). The theater commander, General John Abizaid, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Peter Pace, supported this approach. Civilian advisors on the national security council staff such as Stephen Hadley and Meaghan O’Sullivan prodded the defense department on the optimistic reports they produced

⁸⁷ This case, along with Lebanon/Beirut Barracks 1983 and Iraq 2011, are slightly different than the other cases in that they consider terminating use of military force, rather than initiating use of force. This is still a question whether or not to use force, though. Afghanistan 2009 is not considered in this study because the Obama administration explicitly ruled out consideration of terminating the mission (Woodward 2010, 186).

and conducted a strategy review which proposed increasing troops, adjusting counterinsurgency tactics, refocusing on intelligence capabilities, and attempting sectarian reconciliation (Woodward 2008, 61). By proposing a surge of troops, the civilian advisors advocated America continue to use military force.

Similar to the examination of Lebanon 1983, civilians and military disagreed over the question on whether to use force. Military authorities recommended terminating military force. To the contrary, civilian advisors not only recommended continuing to use force, but escalating it. The president decided in favor of a surge and military authorities acceded to this alternative approach. Key military authorities were replaced and the new leaders, General David Petraeus, Admiral William Fallon, and Admiral Michael Mullin implemented the new strategy. Civilian preferences prevailed, and the military “worked.”

As part of the strategic review, President Bush revised the objectives for continued military force in Iraq. He announced America’s new goal in Iraq would be (Bush 2006a),

“for Iraq to be a democracy that can sustain itself and govern itself and defend itself, a country which will be an ally in the war on terror, a country which will deny safe haven to the Al Qaida, and a country which will serve as a powerful example of liberty and freedom in a part of the world that is desperate for liberty and freedom.”

This reoriented America’s approach by removing objectives already achieved in dismantling the Hussein regime, and added new goals focused on combatting the insurgency, terrorism, and bringing stability to the beleaguered nation.

Stability in Iraq improved soon after this policy change, but an accounting of President Bush's goals returns mixed results. Since 2007, Iraq has demonstrated the potential to sustain, govern, and defend itself, but not a consistent ability. The Iraqi government managed national affairs after the surge ended and after American combat forces left in 2011. However, territorial losses to the Islamic State in 2014 and the increased influence of Iran demonstrate shortcomings in Iraq's independent ability preserving its sovereignty. Iraq has been an ally in the "war on terror," but a needy one that takes more than it gives. After a war with the Islamic State, Iraq has denied safe haven to Al Qaeda, though dependent on American support to do so. Iraq has demonstrated progress in extending liberty and freedom to its citizens compared to its former regime as well as neighboring autocratic states such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. In fact, it is possible that liberal progress in Iraq to extend voting rights to its citizens at least partly inspired the Arab Spring of 2011. Although the Islamic State's influence has largely diminished, conflict continues. A determination on military outcomes in Iraq can only remain tentative, but this accounting suggests that America at least partially achieved its goals, but not all of them and not completely. In aggregate, America achieved more objectives and to a greater extent than it did not achieve. However, healthy skepticism obliges further analysis to more conclusively ascertain the military outcome.

The ICB, MID, and CoW databases yield the same judgments described in the 2003 Iraq case, which add no further value in considering the outcome that resulted from the 2006–2007 decision. Also similar with the 2003 case, though the Iraq War remains an unpopular issue with Americans, popularity does not necessarily determine military success. Furthermore, since the US decided to use force rather than abstaining, my counterfactual methodology does not apply. Instead, as an exception, I provide my own counterfactual reasoning which concludes that the military outcome was a “success.”

There are many nuanced policy options in 2006–2007 which America could have decided towards Iraq. In this paper, however, I focus on a binary choice of whether to use military force or not, as defined by a threshold of forces deployed or casualties expected. Considering the binary choice that confronted the nation in 2006–2007 of whether to continue using force or whether to terminate the mission in Iraq, I use the option selected by the Bush administration for “the Surge” as one choice, compared with the alternative choice contemporaneously proposed by military authorities that advocated gradually withdrawing forces until terminating the combat mission roughly at the end of 2007 (Woodward 2008, 109). One could imagine further choices, either more dramatic escalations of force or more moderate compromises between the two selected here. One could also suppose that, although slowly drawing down troops in Iraq, that the mission military authorities proposed could perpetuate indefinitely and

include a different mixture of non-military efforts to address problems posed by Iraq. This would blur the line as to whether the mission would ever actually end. Despite these shades of gray, the black-and-white choice remains the more useful contrast. Even if nuances might reveal an optimum choice, that choice would likely remain consistent with the broad direction it most closely conformed with. Therefore, limiting counterfactual exploration to two choices should not risk predicting too wrong of an outcome to prove to be an unproductive exercise.

Regarding the first choice, the path actually taken, the events that have since transpired actually show us what would have happened. The more interesting case is the second choice. What would have happened had America implemented the plan military authorities proposed? The events in 2006 trended in the direction of increased sectarian violence, and potentially Iraqi civil war. This violence would likely have continued to increase in 2007 though American casualties would likely have lessened since there were fewer available to risk. There are basically three outcomes that could have resulted. After American combat troops departed, 1) the Iraqi government, with American advisors supporting, may have improved its effectiveness in controlling security whether through force or diplomacy, 2) violence may have spiraled into civil

war for an indeterminate length of time,⁸⁸ or 3) an outside power, such as Iran, could have intervened and successfully stabilized the nation.⁸⁹

Only the first possible consequence could have potentially achieved the objectives that the Bush administration outlined in either 2003 or 2006. The 2006 trend yields little plausible reason to suggest this outcome, and there is little to suggest that the trend would have reversed. The latter two consequences would have resulted in failure to achieve Bush administration objectives. Both options would have led to further threats towards Iraqi regional neighbors through instability, would have failed to maintain Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, as well as increased the risk that the Iraqi people could suffer from tyranny, nor create a society based on moderation, pluralism and democracy. Furthermore, a destabilized Iraq would unlikely become an ally, deny safe haven to Al Qaeda and, even if successful at one, would almost certainly not achieve both. Each of these consequences would have been a worse result than the path America actually followed.

The first consequence would have, comparatively, been better than what actually transpired, but the latter two consequences each would have been comparatively worse. In order to reward the better decision between the choices to continue versus discontinue use of military force, I compare the expected values of the two choices. We

⁸⁸ This includes the possibility that AQI could have "won."

⁸⁹ If an outside power unsuccessfully intervened, this would have yielded a similar outcome as possibility #2, making a separate evaluation irrelevant.

know the value of the history that actually transpired for the decision to continue using force. We merely need to determine the expected value for the counterfactual decision to discontinue using force. Within the counterfactual decision, the first consequence of Iraqi self-reconciliation was unlikely to occur and, although would have yielded a better outcome, the expected value can be considered nearly zero due to its improbability. Either of the latter two consequences, civil war and foreign intervention, were both more likely to occur and likely to have resulted in worse outcomes than the history that actually transpired. Therefore, the expected value for the counterfactual decision to discontinue military force would have resulted in a worse outcome than what actually happened.

We must reward the better decision. The surge in troops and tactical adjustment to protect the population played a critical role in stabilizing Iraq (Biddle et al. 2012). Combined with my account of objectives sought and achievements made which reveal aggregate overall more positive results than negative, I conclude that the 2006–2007 use of force decision resulted in a military “success.”

G.41 Libya, 2011

The Arab Spring movement rapidly spread across northern Africa and the Middle East in 2011, and the movement manifested itself differently in different countries. In Libya, Qaddafi’s reactionary moves against the opposition began civil war. In the war’s early stages, the Arab League and, subsequently, the UN Security Council,

called for military intervention to protect civilians against air attacks with a no-fly zone.⁹⁰ The Obama administration helped organize the international diplomatic, military, and economic responses, but Obama pledged that American support would be limited. He wanted Allies and partners to carry the load (Clinton 2014, 371; Rice 2019, 283) and he would not deploy ground troops (Obama 2011).

The military opposed intervention, as well as about half of the civilian advisors in the discussion with the president. Defense secretary Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Michael Mullen represented the military views against, and they were joined by Vice President Biden, national security advisor Tom Donilon, chief of staff Dennis McDonough, and homeland security advisor John Brennan (Obama 2020, 657; Gates 2014, 511). They offered the rationale that war sprung from a Pandora's Box. It was hard to put back in once unleashed. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, UN ambassador Susan Rice, and national security staff officials Ben Rhodes and Samantha Power, as well as the vice president's national security advisor, Tony Blinken, favored intervention (Rice 2019, 282). They argued that the potential humanitarian disaster morally compelled America to respond. The president decided to intervene. The president decided the civilian position, consequently, making this is a case of civil-military disagreement.

⁹⁰ See UN Security Council Resolution 1973 dated March 17, 2011.

The president intended to protect civilians from attack (Obama 2011) and, in more practical terms, to prevent a civilian massacre (Clinton 2014, 370; Rice 2019, 281–282). President Obama ordered military action to provide capabilities that America was best suited to provide, which involved initial air strikes to destroy Libyan air defenses as well as providing electronic warfare and logistical support for Allied forces. The decisive portion of America’s military participation lasted a few weeks. Some accounts of military reluctance reached the press but not enough to cause a civil-military controversy. Civilian preferences prevailed over the military’s objection, and the military “worked.”

The ICB database codes the episode as a “victory.” The MID and CoW databases do not consider the episode since it is so recent. The evidence demonstrates that the result of the military operation was a “success” because the military achieved its limited goals in a short time span. Although the military tasks were completed successfully, events in Libya later transpired in a way that validated the concerns of the authorities who opposed intervention. Libya descended into a second civil war after Qaddafi was ousted which led to ISIS gaining a foothold in the nation, and America subsequently used military force to slow ISIS’s advance in the country. Nonetheless, the later consequences do not change the fact that America decided to use military force and achieved the military outcome it desired. Though the costs of unfavorable consequences may have played a role in subsequent Republican electoral victories, it is unlikely that

Libya 2011 played a decisive role in the electorate's decision. In this case, the civilian authority overruled military advice and led to a militarily successful outcome.

G.42 Iraq, 2011

The Obama administration considered a decision whether to use military force in Iraq for the third time in the post-9/11 era, this time contemplating termination of the mission conceptually similar to the proposal military authorities had made to the Bush administration in 2006. The Bush administration had negotiated an agreement to terminate military force by the end of 2011,⁹¹ but there remained an expectation that force would be necessary in some capacity afterwards (Gates 2014, 552–555). The issue remained unresolved. The Obama administration took the mantle when the new president acceded to office, assuming final responsibility to decide when to terminate the military mission.

President Obama “had been elected to office in large part because of his opposition to the war in Iraq and his promise to bring the troops home” (Clinton 2014, 464). The president personally expressed conviction to end the war, and loyal to his constituents, intended to honor the people's will they invested in him by ending it.

Civilian advisors to the president, such as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and

⁹¹ See the “Strategic Framework Agreement for a Relationship of Friendship and Cooperation between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq” available online at photos.state.gov/libraries/iraq/216651/US-IRAQ/us-iraq-sfa-en.pdf, and the “Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during their Temporary Presence in Iraq” available online at peaceagreements.org/masterdocument/1577.

Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice, favored “responsible” withdrawal (Rice 2019, 242), but were vague in defining what responsible withdrawal entailed. The commander of US forces in Iraq, General Lloyd Austin, “argued for a residual force of more than ten thousand [troops]” but needed a legal agreement to protect residual forces while performing their mission (Panetta 2014, 356). The theater commander, General Jim Mattis, agreed with Austin and became dismayed that the administration was unwilling to finish the war as he thought it should (Mattis 2019, 209). Despite opportunities to accommodate the military preference, the Obama administration had little desire to continue the Iraq War, balked, and concluded no lasting legal agreement (Panetta 2014, 393).

There were a few press reports and leaks about military misgivings towards the decision, but there is scant evidence to suggest military authorities made a concerted effort to force the Obama administration to reverse it. The military operation in Iraq ended at the end of 2011 with little shirking. I code the episode as civil-military disagreement where civilian preferences prevailed and the military “worked.”

As this is an instance where the decision made was *not* to apply military force, my methodological rules apply again. Indeed, American forces intervened in Iraq three years later to help Iraq combat the Islamic State, a group closely related to Al Qaeda in Iraq. The outcome for this campaign has not yet been determined in the ICB, MID, and CoW databases. Although tentative because war continues, like the previous judgment

on Iraq, the military campaign against the Islamic State appears successful. Much of the Islamic State's territory has been recovered by military force. Their leader has been killed, along with many of their fighters.

Since this subsequent intervention appears successful, the decision not to apply military force in 2011 is, consequently, a "failure." Previous use of force may have disposed of the threat more quickly. Indeed, some civilian authorities regret the course the Obama administration followed (Panetta 2014, 393–394 and 415). This coding is further bolstered by analyses that conclude an extension of the Iraq mission would have, at a minimum, inhibited the progress of the Islamic State and improved the effectiveness and speed of American response (Brands and Feaver 2017, 41–42 and 18–30). Given evidence available at this time, the civilian decision to override the military recommendation in Iraq during 2011 led to an unfavorable outcome.

G.43 Syria, 2013

Like Libya, the Arab Spring movement spread to Syria in 2011 and resulted in civil war. The civil war brought humanitarian crises, concerns over atrocities and instability, and eventually developed into the rise of the Islamic State. As the crisis in Syria developed, the Obama administration weighed a decision about what to do. The administration attempted diplomacy, sanctions, and considered arming resistance to the Assad regime.

One of the options was to use military force. At first, the theater commander, General Jim Mattis, discouraged intervention by predicating discussion on use of military force with regime change even though less drastic measures were practical (Ackerman 2012). In 2013, Senator John McCain publicly suggested implementing a no-fly zone similar to what had been done in Libya and Senator Lindsey Graham favored deploying ground troops to seize Syria's chemical weapons. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Martin Dempsey opposed using military force, though not overtly, even though it was clear through his repeated accentuations of risks and costs that he discouraged the idea.⁹² General Dempsey claimed that such military operations would require as many as 90,000 personnel (Panetta 2014, 448) and could cost one billion dollars per month (Dempsey 2013). Mark Mazetti from the New York Times reported (Smith 2015),

So Dempsey gives a presentation, and everyone's jaws drop. He basically says that it's going to take roughly 70,000 U.S. personnel— not boots on the ground, but total U.S. personnel involved in this effort that would, you know, knock down Syrian air defenses, and that be able to provide air cover for the rebels. And some began to suspect that he had inflated the figure because he didn't want to do it.

Defense secretary Leon Panetta's recounts the meeting (Panetta 2014, 448),

⁹² For evidence of Dempsey's opposition, see Gaskell's article in Politico online at politico.com/story/2013/04/martin-dempsey-cautious-on-syria-090792, Baron's article in Defense One online at defenseone.com/policy/2013/07/want-syria-convince-dempsey/67298/, Ackerman's article in The Guardian online at theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/29/general-martin-dempsey-obama-syria, and Summer's article in Politico online at politico.com/story/2013/07/martin-dempsey-syria-options-costly-risky-094588.

We presented a set of options to the National Security Council-ranging from more aggressive possibilities such as the use of limited air attacks on military targets to more modest engagement including protecting refugee camps and supporting regional allies. It was clear from those discussions that there was no strong support among the president's top advisers for direct military action.

I found no evidence that presidential advisors recommended use of military force through the middle of 2013.

Responding to a congressional inquiry, General Dempsey delivered an unclassified memo outlining the range of possible military options (Dempsey 2013). The memo addressed the potential uses of force but, in addition to stressing the disadvantages of action, Dempsey failed to consider the risks of inaction, the benefits of joining Allies in a multilateral response (Cordesman 2013), or attempts to politically coerce Syria into acquiescing to American desires. Together with Mattis's input, there is evidence that the military shirked in order to secure its preference not to intervene.

Consideration intensified in August 2013. After a year of suspected chemical weapons use against the rebel opposition, firm evidence became available that the Assad regime attacked with chemical weapons in Ghouta, causing thousands of casualties. This triggered the well-known "red-line" controversy, where President Obama had previously warned that Syrian use of chemical weapons could provoke a US military response. Key advisors almost unanimously favored military action (Rice 2019, 362) and, according to their later testimony in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, so did General Dempsey and Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. In an unusual turn of events,

President Obama declared that he supported striking Syria but deferred to Congress for authority to attack. Although unable to obtain approval from Congress, Russia mediated an agreement whereby Syria promised to dispose of its chemical weapons.

The developments in August 2013 make coding civil-military relations problematic. Both the military authorities and president opposed use of force against Syria until the confirmed chemical attack, then both switched positions to favor striking. Congressional authorities seemed to advocate striking before the chemical attack but did not provide authorization afterwards. Ultimately, America did not strike Syria in 2013. The civilian preferences were determined by Congress which did not decide to strike, and the military favored striking. This would indicate civil-military disagreement. Since this introduces the only case in this paper where congressional authorities determined the civilian preferences, I forgo including the August chain of events because they represent an aberration from the usual dynamics. Instead, I categorize the episode based on the events prior to August where there appeared to be civil-military accord between the president's staff and military authorities not to strike.⁹³ Therefore, I code the episode as civil-military agreement, obviating the need to code whether the military "worked" or "shirked."

⁹³ If President Obama's true preference was not to strike and military authorities maintained a preference to strike, then this would reverse the coding to civil-military disagreement. Since the final coding of this case is a "failure," changing this coding would affect the results by diminishing the rate of success for civilian preferences and increasing the rate of success for military preferences. The potential error over difficult judgments in this case's twists and turns, however, are not enough to significantly alter my findings.

The ICB database codes the episode as a “compromise” due to the diplomatic agreement. The MID and CoW databases do not consider the episode because it is too recent. Since America did not strike, however, my methodological rules apply. As discussed in the Iraq 2011 case, America later intervened in Syria against the Islamic State. The Islamic State rose out of the power vacuum caused by the Syrian Civil War, which America chose not to intervene. This intervention against the Islamic State was successful, consequently implying that the military outcome of avoiding intervention was a “failure.” This suggests that, had America intervened in the Syrian Civil War earlier it could have prevented the rise of the Islamic State, obviating the need to intervene later. This is plausible, though unknowable, and begs a question how the outcome of such an intervention would have resulted. Would Russia have intervened sooner had America not demurred, or would Russia have been able to avoid participation? These questions are beyond the scope of this paper and also do not challenge the notion that failing to intervene led to rise of the Islamic State. Consequently, despite the unusual turns in this case, I rest with the coding that it was an unfavorable outcome.

G.44 Islamic State in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, 2014–2016

Partly a result of the wars in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, the Islamic State emerged as a successor to Al Qaeda. The organization seized rapid territorial gains in Syria and Iraq, and captured noncontiguous territory across Africa and Asia as far west

as Cameroon and as far east as the Philippines. Both civilian and military authorities recognized the organization's malicious intent, propensity for violence, and threat to the United States. There was quick civil-military agreement in deciding to authorize military force against the Islamic State. Secretary of State John Kerry asserted that the Islamic State "must be destroyed," and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Dempsey stated that the Islamic State "will have to eventually be defeated." There were subsequent civil-military disagreements over whether to use ground troops in combat roles, which resistance movements to support in Syria, and other issues, but these are outside the scope of this paper.⁹⁴

The ICB, MID, and CoW databases do not address the wars against the Islamic State since they are too recent. Determining the military outcome for America's effort against the Islamic State runs the risk of premature judgment at this point because the

⁹⁴ The use of military force against the Islamic State could conceivably be considered separately for each of the nation-states in which American forces engaged this enemy. However, in my research, I found the character of discussions around the three main countries engaged, Iraq, Syria, and Libya, similar enough to obviate individual deliberation. True, each country had some unique characteristics. Iraq was the most benign environment for American forces to engage of the three since America had a preexisting military relationship with the regime. Syria was the least benign environment due to the adversarial relationship with the Assad regime. In fact, in the course of military operations, American forces occasionally struck Syrian government forces. The Russian intervention in 2015 added additional complexity to Syria, but mutual understanding and coordination between American and Russian efforts have resulted in separate *de facto* geographical spheres of interest in the country. Though complicated, the focus and objectives remain very similar to efforts in Iraq and Libya. Libya was in a disorganized state, suffering disorder during the chaos of its civil war. Iran contributed efforts in both Iraq and Syria. All three nations held a strong common theme that the Islamic State was the target of military force, the unified organization of the enemy, and the operations shared a common framework in the use of airpower, special operations forces, and combat advisory efforts. Despite three different countries, there have been only two named American operations: Operations Inherent Resolve involves forces in Iraq and Syria, while Operation Odyssey Lightning was a 2016 campaign in Libya. The distinction between uses of force in each were *how* to use force. For instance, there was greater potential to use ground troops in a combat role in Iraq. There was little question about supporting anti-government forces in Syria, but much debate over which particular sect.

wars continue. The results remain reversible. However, at the time of writing, the outcome seems well in hand and it is difficult to conceive such a dramatic reversal that would void judgment. The risk of premature judgment is small.

President Obama articulated the objective of the military operation to be, “degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy” (Obama 2014). Although there are surviving personnel, the consensus is that the Islamic State has lost sufficient territory, resources, and leadership that their organization is no longer an effective threat in Iraq or Syria. They possess no territory. In Libya, the Islamic State has suffered significant losses that render them a simple terrorist organization that is unable to maintain control of territory. I code the military outcome as a “victory.”

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