



**IBSU**

**INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES  
AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM**

**THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN THE USE OF FORCE:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RONALD REAGAN AND GEORGE H.W. BUSH  
ADMINISTRATIONS**

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## Introduction

In the United States reality, the ultimate decision on use of force beyond American borders lies with the President who serves as the Commander-in-Chief. Contemporary history shows that in every case such an option was considered the President consulted a closed circle of trusted advisers and asked for their opinion, which varied though in the degree of influence on an eventual decision. Almost inevitably, this group included the Secretary of State and sometimes other leading members of the Department of State.

Five cases of use of force by the United States during the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush Presidencies are considered and analyzed in my research to demonstrate the State Department's leading or supporting role. All the cases belong to the time span between 1982 and 1991. The cases of use of force I have examined are (1) deployment of U.S. Marines as a part of Multinational Force in Lebanon from 1982 to 1984; (2) military intervention to Grenada in 1983; (3) air strikes against Libyan targets in 1986; (4) military intervention to Panama in 1989; and (5) the Gulf War in 1991.

For validation and justification of choosing these particular cases for my study, it will be useful to review what prominent IR/FPA theorists are suggesting. There is considerable body of scholarly texts in IR attempting to define various levels of "use of force" by the state and fine-tune relevant theories. My research does not serve the purpose of contributing to this area of IR or finding correct definitions for different levels of use of force. However, as my research is based on the idea of use of force and case studies I apply with use of force of varying degree, scale and objective, for conceptual clarity it will be useful if definitions of this notion are explored.

Use of force is one of the foreign policy instruments the states resort to, though do so mostly in extreme cases. In providing distinction in the subcategories of use of force, majority of IR and FPA scholars are focused on a *goal* decision-makers try to attain. Alexander George emphasized the difference between the term "deterrence", which is defined as a subcategory involving the use of threat and show of force "to dissuade an opponent from doing something he has not yet started to do" and term "coercive diplomacy", which implies use of threats and limited force to force the adversary "to stop short of his goal . . . or undo his actions" (George, 1971).

George further clarifies that *coercive diplomacy* is not a military strategy at all but rather a political strategy, which involves use of force in a "limited, selective manner . . . to induce the opponent to revise his calculations and agree to a mutually acceptable termination of the conflict." Yet, another distinct

subcategory of use of force George names is a “quick, decisive military strategy”, which “largely dispenses with threats, diplomacy or subtle modes of persuasion.”

Bruce Jentleson (Jentleson, 1991) notes that “the invasions of Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989) are . . . examples more accurately seen as quick, decisive military strategies rather than coercive diplomacy” and lists as the first two of “five principal cases of coercive diplomacy . . . identified during the Reagan years: the 1982-1984 deployment of the U.S. Marines to Lebanon as part of the second Multinational Force; [and] the military and diplomatic pressure against Libya, culminating in the 1986 bombing . . . “ as the cases in which the Reagan strategy was more than deterrence but less than a quick, decisive military strategy. Further extension of this line of theoretical thought, with consideration for the goal and scale of the operation, will lead us to locating the U.S. response to Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990-1991) in the range of a “quick, decisive military strategy”. Thus, of the five case studied in my research two will represent a category of “coercive diplomacy”, three a category of a “quick, military strategy”, and none will belong to a category of “deterrence”.

The first hypothesis examined in my research suggests that the leader’s personality and leadership style are critical for policies chosen or pursued, which is more actualized in the field of foreign policy and particularly use of force. Alex Mintz and Karl DeRouen Jr. (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010) give a comparative analysis of models that are developed by the rational (realist) and cognitive psychology schools in foreign policy decision-making, which are two dominant schools in the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA).

The Rational Actor Model (RAM) is the theory applied in my research to all five cases examined. RAM is primarily based on the IR realist theories. The realist paradigm is based on the assumption that states, as unitary actors in the anarchic international world setting, act to *increase* gains and *decrease* losses. This perspective is often referred to as the ideal type and many consider it the most desirable form of decision-making.

However, RAM is often criticized for the limited applicability in its pure form to real-time situations and proponents of cognitive models and other schools generally argue that the rational actor assumption is rather rarely realized in practice. Even more, opponents of the model claim that the human mind is incapable of accurately processing large sets of diverse and complicated data, especially in time-constraint situations, which is the premise of the Rational Actor Model. The cognitive models, prospect theory, governmental politics and other approaches are not irrational in their essence but are generally grounded on the realistic understanding of how the human mind functions with proper consideration of

“the high cost of information gathering, time pressure, ambiguity, memory problems, misperceptions, organizational structure, and other factors that enter into the most decisions” (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010).

Certain obvious constraints complicate our first-hand or immediate psychological examination of world leaders and make the analysis based on purely cognitive models almost impossible: a rare world leader will be willing to sit with and talk to a psychologist. On the contrary, they often hide their true emotional and inner traits. Different methodologies have been offered by FPDM theorists. Valerie Hudson (Hudson, 2014) suggests two primary “at-a-distance” methodologies for those who wish to study the personality and views of world leaders: **psychobiography** and **content analysis**. James David Barber in his seminal book *The Presidential Character* (Barber J. D., 2008) offers a four-type categorization model placing world leaders within active-positive, passive-positive, active-negative, and passive-negative frames. Following this model Barber placed President Ronald Reagan in a “passive positive” category, while President George H.W. Bush is described as an “active positive” leader type. For Barber, a “passive positive” type leader’s (Ronald Reagan) traits are compliance, low self-esteem overcome by an ingratiating personality, superficial optimism, reaction rather than initiation and seeking agreement from others.

An “active positive” type leader (George H.W. Bush), in Barber’s words, is not driven by dark motives, and is willing to work hard to effect improvements. This type of a leader is open to change the course when things do not work, as he/she is not constrained by rigid ideological dogmas, but is rather willing to search for policies that actually produce the desired results (Barber J. D., 2008).

Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin (Richard C. Snyder, 2002) give a different set of six decision-making types with specific characterization for each of the categories, noting though that this is a very crude and incomplete set. These six types of decision-making personalities are *the communicator*, *the innovator*, *the traditionalist*, *the literalist*, *the power-seeker* and *the career servant*.

It is fairly easy to assign a type for President Reagan’s personality following this typology model, since Reagan’s most famous political nickname was the Great Communicator and in that the clarification given by Snyder, Bruck and Sapin for this decision-making type is of great help. A leader type who has definite skills in translating specialists to each other, in identifying common properties of otherwise conflicting approaches to problems, and in providing bases on which the different perspectives of decision-makers may be integrated, a coordinator on the intellectual level, who is consciously self-styled go-between and mediator.

As for President Bush, it would not be easy to locate him within one specific type and he may share the traits of two types: the traditionalist and the literalist which are described respectively as a repository of precedent and the embodiment of organizational memory; a value-saver with respect to long-standing habits of procedure and thought and a self-styled “realist” who perceives (or thinks he perceives) only the major essentials of the situation or problem.

A different theoretical approach is offered by Jerrold Post (Post, 2005), who devoted his professional life to analyzing foreign leaders first as government official and then as prominent professor, and calls his methodology *anamnesis*. He offers a systematic approach to leader’s psychological analysis. After the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, Post developed a political psychology profile of Saddam Hussein and provided his analysis of Saddam's personality and political behavior in testimony at the hearings before the two relevant House Committees. According to Post, several components shall be examined to produce a good piece of leader’s psychological analysis.

The first one is psychobiography of the leader, which includes comparison of the time line of the leader’s life to the time line of the events occurring in the nation and the world, relationships with parents and siblings, presence of the patriarch figure in the family, family’s wealth and social status, traumatic deaths in the family, and role models in early childhood. The second component is leader’s personality features, including health, habits (alcohol or drug/medication abuse), intellectual capabilities, knowledge and judgment, emotional stability, reaction to criticism, attack, or failure. The third part deals with actual substantive beliefs of the leaders, i.e. about the security of the nation or the nature of power. Any belief held by the leader including his or her ideology or political philosophy is probed. And the last fourth component studies the leader’s style, including the leader’s negotiating style, oratorical skills, ability to communicate with the public, chosen strategies and tactics in specific situations.

Prospect theory is yet another very handy multi-disciplinary tool that I apply to analyze the cases examined in this research. It can be beneficially applied to analysis of virtually any situation where the actor deals with choices involving a high degree of risk and associated with his/her presumption (mostly grounded on actor’s bias) on their position held with regard to losses and gains. A key component here is actor’s view on the status quo. What is the reference point deviating from which the actor find himself/herself either in the area of losses or gains. The more the actor deems his/her status to be in the domain of losses, the more he/she will be inclined to take risky steps, sometimes unjustified and even reckless to an outside observer.

Application of some cognitive analysis approach is useful for my research, but as the key focus is on the participation of the State Department and Secretary of State in the decision-making process, Governmental politics is a model helping very often explain critical decisions made by the governments. The influence of this model was particularly vivid in the decision made by the Reagan Administration on the matters of use of force as the confrontation between Secretary of State Shultz and Secretary of Defense Weinberger was not a secret at its time and was extensively examined in later years. One of the premises of the governmental politics model is bargaining, as well as pulling and hauling by various senior government officials, I have thoroughly examined and tested the cases of use of force for both Reagan and Bush Administrations.

In conjunction, three theories/models - RAM, Prospect theory and Governmental politics - coupled with some cognitive analysis of the Presidents' traits and leadership style provide a good frame for testing the five cases and solid ground to come up with conclusions.

### **Problem Statement**

The decision on use of force by the state remains by the intensity of its consequences (usually these are the cases when state borders change) and almost inevitable human casualties is the most extreme form in the foreign policy instruments arsenal for states to choose from. Although history books we were taught in school were primarily devoted to choices pertaining to war and peace, legality of such decisions has often been disputed in modern times and decision-makers, primarily in democracies, have resorted to the process of collective decision-making on such matters when a limited circle of key government officials have their say.

As the United States entered the 1980s in probably the worst shape since WWII shaken by the political, social and international events, the decisions on the use of force by the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administrations were of utmost significance for a whole series of reasons as they helped form the world scene for the next decades. Analysis of the entire process of decision-making on the use of force during the two Republican Administrations and a specific role played in this by the Department of State could have shed light on the presumed usefulness of such decisions when a state struggles to get rid of the burden of the past and find new paradigms to ground its political future on.

### **Goal Statement**

The goal of this explanatory research is to theoretically explore the core process of foreign policy decision-making and the role of the U.S. State Department and its leadership in five cases of major use

of force during the period of the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations from January 1981 to January 1993.

The study explores how the role of the State Department in decision-making on use of force abroad had been constantly shifting since WWII from traditional diplomacy and policy formulation to direct involvement in decision-making on use of force by the U.S. abroad. The primary focus of this research is on the changing role of the State Department in the matters of war and peace during the consecutive Republican Administrations of President Ronald Reagan and President George H.W. Bush.

### **Research Questions**

- (1) What role did the State Department and its leadership play in three distinct stages of decision-making (the process of actual decision-making; the implementation of the decision, i.e. conduct of the military operation itself; and the immediate aftermath of use of force) on use of force overseas by the U.S. during the Reagan and Bush administrations?
- (2) What had been the State Department's involvement in use of force prior to the 1980s?
- (3) Was the role of the State Department leaders in the decision-making processes on use of force uniform for the Reagan and Bush administrations?

### **Research Objectives**

In my research I will first establish how the role of the U.S. State Department in the decision-making process on matters of war and peace shifted and/or expanded in comparison to the reality prior to 1981. I will also identify if the Secretary of State and other State Department officials were equally involved in all three stages of decision-making in the Reagan and Bush Administrations. For these purposes, I will examine the role of the State Department and Secretary of State between the end of the WWII, when the U.S. became a global actor, and the beginning of the Reagan administration, and then compare it with the role the State Department and Secretary of State played during the Bush Administration.

### **Hypothesis**

**H1.** The personality, decision-making and leadership style of a state leader plays a crucial role in the decision on use of force by the state: president's personality, psychology and leadership style is critical in foreign policy decision-making in general, and in use of force in particular.



**H2.** Secretary of State's and State Department's active interventionist role directly depends on the leadership style of the given president: delegating style of leadership leads to the active role of the State Department and the controlling style of presidential leadership to a more passive role of the State Department.

### **Novelty and Actuality**

There are substantial advances of theoretical nature in the area of International Relations/Foreign Policy Analysis in Georgia and extensive analysis of Professor Vasil Kacharava on the United States foreign policy and particularly the Ronald Reagan's Presidency published in a number of books are especially useful in this regard. However, the studies of decision-making on use of force by state in general or by the United States in specific cases remain essentially rare. My approach of choosing the cases of use of force by the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administrations was grounded on the following prerequisites.

First, by today these cases of use of force are considered to be a part of history and plethora of formerly top secret documents and details of actual decision-making on individual cases are declassified and made public through primary and secondary sources. This is a great asset for a researcher who would otherwise have to seek ways of bypassing officially available routes in search of mostly unreliable (or not fully credible) alternatives to explore the subject matter. Second, a number of theoretical research and analysis papers have been published in the United States and other countries on specific individual cases of use of force examined in this dissertation but in none of the cases researchers attempted to unify the cases into a makeshift cluster for presenting them in the form of subsequent steps starting from the tragic catastrophe in Lebanon or modest military success in Grenada in 1983 to the military triumph in the Gulf War in 1991.

Presenting the cases of use of force in this form allows the reader to follow the first humble attempts of the Reagan Administration to assert the U.S. might globally again and stepping on a fragile path leading to future decisive military victories at the time of the Bush Administration, which managed to apply sophisticated approaches to problems of global scale based on the analysis of the successes and failures of the previous decade.

### **Significance of the Problem**

In the beginning of the 1980s, the State Department became more active/interventionist in use of force (for varying purposes) abroad by the United States because it was the strongest foreign policy agency

in the executive branch, compared to the CIA, the Department of Defense, NSC, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Why? The Vietnam syndrome, as we call it today, of the military agencies weakened institutionally the military and made them reluctant to engage in military operations abroad; confrontation of Congress with the CIA in the second half of 1970s when Congress limited the powers of the CIA in conducting clandestine military operations, and War Powers Resolution adopted in 1973 which limited the President's power to commit the U.S. to an armed conflict abroad. All of these restricted the Department of Defense and intelligence community to play an active, assertive role in foreign policy and in military interventions in the 1980s.

### **Practical and Theoretical Value**

Studying the decision-making process of use of force by the state in a specific period of time when the state is attempting to relieve itself of the predicaments of the past and exploring for that end concrete roles of the president, diplomatic, military and intelligence institutions provides an opportunity to draw some meaningful parallels and establish connections to other cases of similar instances.

Also, this study aims to contribute to the body of research on the subject of use of force in the area of foreign policy analysis. Despite an extensive body of existing theoretical research, not all the cases examined for this study have been analyzed individually and moreover no research has been undertaken to view these instances in conjunction.

### **Research Methods**

Qualitative research methods applied for the analysis of five cases of use of force split across two U.S. Administrations include three well-established and -tested theories/models of foreign policy analysis with varying degree and value of explanatory power for each individual case: Rational Actor Model, heavily relied on in the International Relations realist studies; Prospect theory, which is cross-disciplinary by its nature and can be applied to almost any situation involving risk-taking by an actor; and Governmental politics (or Governmental Politics Model), which is strongly based on the analysis of power struggle within a particular administration. Also, for the purposes of general usefulness, is given a brief description of the Presidents' leadership style and their characterization, as well as briefly considered are leadership styles of the Secretaries of State who served in the Reagan and Bush Administrations.

## **Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation includes the following segments: Introduction; four chapters; conclusion and recommendations; and three diagrams.

## **Limitations of the Dissertation**

The objective of this research is to explore the role of the State Department and its Secretaries in the decision-making process on use of force in five specific instances in the period of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administrations with a particular focus on their willingness or reluctance for such action.

This research is not aimed at providing a broad explanation of the concept of use force by the state, legality or validity of such decisions, unless these are considered to facilitate the objectives of the process described above in the first paragraph.

## **Chapter 1. Literature Review and Overview of the State Department in 1945-1981**

### **1.1 Literature Review**

In my research, I have extensively used both primary and secondary source documents. For the purposes of theoretical clarity, it is important to make a distinction what to consider as a primary source and secondary source document. There are differences of view among theorists in which category to assign to a particular piece of data used. I followed a presumably very sound definition given by Christopher Lamont (Lamont, 2015) which suggests for the purposes of researching an IR topic that “*primary source documents* are the original documents, authored by individuals who had direct access to the information that they are describing, or directly experienced a particular event . . . [and] *secondary source documents* are those documents, which make reference to and analyze primary source documents.”

### **1.2 The State Department as a foreign policy actor (1945-1981)**

In this sub-chapter is explored the role the U.S. Department of State played in the formation of nation’s foreign policy from 1945 to 1981. The major focus is particularly on whether the State Department was active in the three stages of decision making concerning use of force by the U.S. abroad. For that reason, several major military operations by the U.S. in third world countries would be analyzed to establish the role of the State Department and other foreign policy agencies in them.

### **1.3 The State Department and Use of Force by the U.S. from 1945 to 1981**

In this subchapter reviewed are three major cases of the use of force by the United States in the period from 1945 to 1981 – the Korean War, invasion into the Dominican Republic, and the Vietnam War. As the United States was the only power capable of confronting the Soviet Union’s expansion in the international arena, the American involvement in the world affairs was naturally increasing and was not limited to these three cases. However, these cases are major instances of use of force by the United States in the period from 1945 to 1981. Other cases of carrying out military operations with limited scope, facilitating the regime change in other countries (whether successfully or unsuccessfully) or supporting the parties to the internal conflict whether with arms or otherwise are not reviewed in this subchapter.

## **Chapter 2. President Ronald Reagan’s Foreign Policy**

### **2.1 The Reagan Administration and its Personalities**

In this chapter I discuss the Reagan Administration and key figures in foreign policy decision-making, including their personality and management style, interaction with each other, and impact on the overall foreign policy making. For the purpose of this research, considered are those administration officials, which traditionally played a key role in foreign policy formulation and implementation in the executive branch. Among them Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, National Security Advisor, and Director of the Central Intelligence Agency are most notable.

### **2.2 The State Department and the U.S. Forces in Lebanon, 1982-1984**

The role the U.S. State Department and its leadership played in the process of decision-making and actual brokering of a cease-fire deal in 1982 between the PLO and Israel that led to the Israeli troops withdrawal, PLO departure and, most importantly, deployment and re-deployment of the U.S. marines in Lebanon after their initial pullout as a part of the Multinational Force (MNF).

### **2.3 The State Department and U.S. Invasion into Grenada, 1983**

This case study is exploring the role of American diplomacy during the Grenada crisis in October 1983. The American diplomats spearheaded the response effort at all levels during this major foreign policy operation. Secretary of State Shultz believed and claimed that the entire Grenada operation was driven by the State Department.

## **2.4 The State Department and Air Strikes against Libya, 1986**

In April 1986, the U.S. forces bombed targets linked to terrorist activity in Libya. The operation El Dorado Canyon was ordered by President Reagan in response to terrorist attacks in Western Europe with some of them being backed by Libya's leader Gaddafi. This operation, military by its essence, is viewed by foreign policy experts and international relations researchers as a case from the category of "coercive diplomacy" with limited use of force and leading to forcible *policy* change rather than *regime* change.

## **Chapter 3. President George H.W. Bush's Foreign Policy**

### **3.1 The Bush Leadership and Administration**

Researchers characterize the spirit and mechanics of the Bush Administration's structure almost always invariably in superlative terms. They use words "cohesion", "camaraderie", and "friendship." Very rarely one can find an analogue in any U.S. Administration when there were so few leaks and key members did not have to stand their ground facing competitive fellow colleague-opponents, the conflicts originating from either personal mismatch or turf battles.

### **3.2 U.S. Invasion to Panama**

From the days of Panama's fight for independence, the United States had its vital interests vested in this small Central American nation mainly because of the Canal completed in 1914 and later operated by the U.S. In the mid-1980s, dictator Noriega turned from an asset on U.S. intelligence agencies' retainer into a liability routine involved in human rights violation and drug trafficking which culminated in his indictment by the federal court of South Florida. President Reagan sought for diplomatic ways to remove the Panamanian dictator. The situation changed with George H.W. Bush elected as the President whose one of the first decisions was to fund covert operations in Panama and support financially Noriega's political opposition for the May 1989 elections. Facing the harsh reality of failure of alternative options, in December 1989 President Bush made a decision on full-scale intervention into Panama resulting in Noriega's arrest.

### **3.3 The Gulf War**

When Iraqi forces moved unexpectedly into Kuwait and captured its capital city on August 2, 1990, the Bush Administration considered a wide range of potential actions at a full NSC meeting the day after the invasion, which Colin Powell assessed as "disjointed and unfocused" with no specific decisions made on how to deal with the crises. However the Bush Administration came up with a three-step

solution, which included diplomatic pressure followed by economic pressure through UN mechanisms, and finally increased U.S. military presence in the Gulf. With sanctions not producing a desired outcome, the Bush Administration resorted to a multilateral approach and Secretary Baker engaged in a laborious task of building an international coalition to ensure the widest possible support for the U.S. actions. The military action commenced in January 1991 ended in triumphant success of the U.S. led coalition forces and liberation of Kuwait.

## **Chapter 4. Methodology**

### **The Choice of the Theoretical Toolbox**

Some researchers define Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) as an essential sub-discipline in the structure of the studies of International Relations (IR). Even those scholars, who view FPA a structural component of IR, agree that FPA has its unique place in the overall structure of IR as it deals with a set of distinct phenomena. Beach, a proponent of this vision, argues that “what sets FPA apart from the broader study of IR is the *scope* of what is to be explained “ (Beach, 2012, p. 3). For these scholars, although IR covers specific actions of states, the range and scale of events studied by IR is broader and its focus mostly is on the arrangement of the international system. Further, these scholars do not exclude the use of IR theoretical tools for analyzing “specific aspects of foreign policy” (Beach, 2012, p. 5).

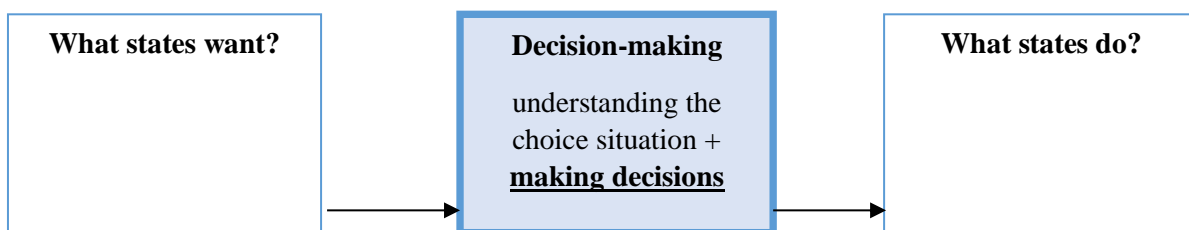
A contrary view is held by another group of scholars, who consider FPA a stand-alone academic discipline and argue for its more autonomous role within IR. Extending the views presented in the seminal work *Foreign Policy Decision-Making* by Richard C. Snyder (Snyder, 2002) which fundamentally laid the ground for FPA sub-discipline within the field of IR, Hudson sees the main distinction of FPA theories in their *actor-oriented* approach versus *actor-neutral* approaches employed by IR theories. She contends that FPA to a greater extent than IR theories is characterized by two hallmarks: *multi-factorial* and *multi-level* approaches, whereas the application of “insights from many intellectual disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, organizational behavior, anthropology, economics, and so forth, will be useful for the foreign policy analyst in efforts to explain foreign policy decision-making, making *multi-/inter-disciplinarity* a third hallmark of FPA” (Hudson, 2014, p. 7).

The choice of the theoretical toolbox for my research considering its nature was also based on the level of analysis offered by different IR/FPA theories. Distinctively IR theories Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism and their off-springs mainly concentrate on *systems level* and to a less degree on the *state level*, whereas the FPA theories focus primarily on the *state level* and *individual level* of analysis.

In essence, **FPA theories** are the only ones concerned with *decision making* matters, thus my choice of the theoretical basis.

IR/FPA scholars differentiate two varying families of theories in the field: *explanatory theories* and *analytical models*. Explanatory theories employ theoretical tools to study generalizable phenomena and are generally *theory-centric*, while analytical models attempt to understand cases and are *case-centric*. Ontologically, explanatory theories are grounded in *neopositivism* and *critical realism*, while analytical models are stemming from *analyticism* and *interpretive traditions* (Beach, 2012, p. 9). As my research is strongly based on the case studies, it is an understandable choice to apply **analytical models** used in a pragmatic form as **tools** to better understand the cases considered and produce a logical falsifiable conclusion.

Beach contends that in IR/FPA research the “theoretical toolbox is structured around three distinct analytical questions relating to analyzing foreign policy: (1) What states want? (2) How do states make decisions in foreign policy (i.e. decision-making)? and (3) What states do? (Beach, 2012, p. 12).



**Figure 1: The essence of foreign policy decision-making.**

A key task in my research is to address the second phase of the second component, though I have attempted to describe the realities from the first and third analytical questions, as well as describe the first phase of the second component, which in my thesis are not tested through application of theoretical tools but considered in order to demonstrate (a) the actual setting in which the decision-makers had to operate, and (b) the actual consequences of the decision-making process.

Mintz and DeRouen outline the following four factors as affecting the foreign policy decision-making (FPDM) process: (1) decision environment, (2) psychological factors, (3) international factors, and (4) domestic factors and suggest that the FPDM process consists of four following components, i.e. steps of action: (1) identifying the decision problem; (2) searching for alternatives; (3) choosing an alternative; and (4) executing the alternative (DeRouen & Mintz, 2010, p. 4). Again, in my research I

have explored and taken into account all four factors affecting the decision-making process and presented first, second and fourth components but remained focused on what is described by the third component: *choosing an alternative* in the context of the State Department and its leadership involvement.

To analyze specific details of each of the case studied I convey in narrative form the processes leading to critical FPDM based on the *primary and secondary sources*, describe the decision-making process to the extent allowed by the available sources, depict the outcome of the decision in the aftermath of the decisions made, and at the end apply competing FPDM theories which can be handy to explain the decisions and consequent actions. In order to stay on the course of exploring the role played by the State Department in the process and avoid going beyond the limits set I have selected the Rational Actor Model, Prospect theory and Governmental politics model as tools for theoretical analysis and explanation of the given cases. Below are described each of the theories/models and discussed their comparative advantages and disadvantages, as well as usefulness for the individual cases analyzed in this research. I will briefly describe each of the above theories and defend my choice of their instruments as approaches in my thesis.

#### **4.1 Rational Actor Model**

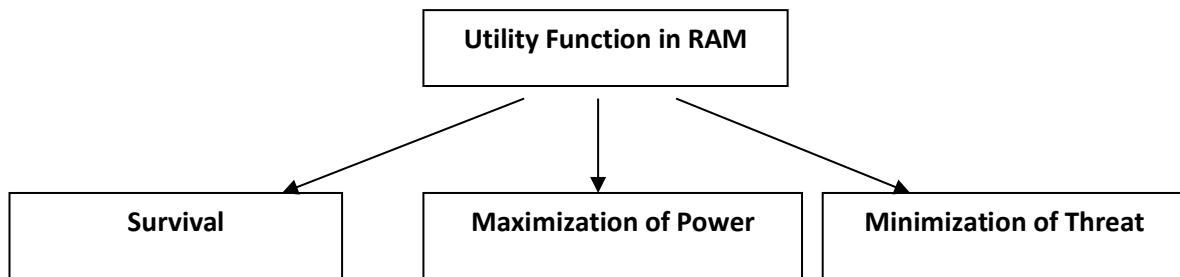
**Rational Actor Model (RAM)** is one of the pillars of FPDM which “depicts states as unitary actors negotiating in an anarchic international system and constantly taking stock of their security status vis-à-vis rivals and other threats while maximizing their goals” (Mintz & DeRouen, 2010, p. 60).

As the name of the model implies, it is expected that foreign policy actors are *rational*, have clearly formulated sets of goals, process *available* information, weigh all the choice options in a *calculated* manner and choose the one that will eventually lead to a *desired* result (i.e. goal achievement). Hence, to follow the RAM assumptions, the objective of the foreign policy actor is to *maximize the gain by minimizing the cost*. Allison extending the concept of rational action application to FPDM underlines that its origin is in economics where “rationality refers to consistent, value-maximizing choice with specified constraints” enabling a theorist with power to predict the actions to be taken by a decision-maker who, in order to achieve the ends, “(1) calculates the most reasonable way for the decision-maker to reach his goals, and (2) assumes this way will actually be chosen because the decision-maker is rational” (Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 1971, p. 30).

In the RAM a core concept is the *utility function*, i.e. what the foreign policy actor is trying to achieve. Based on Allison’s fundamental work, Beach offers some examples of the utility function: *survival*,



*maximization of power, and minimization of threat.* He argues that “the RAM does not mean that just because a decision-making *process* is “rational” *optimal* outcomes are reached in relation to goals” and adds that “foreign policy actions taken with the best intentions often have results far from what was intended” (Beach, 2012, p. 101).



**Figure 2: Utility Function in RAM**

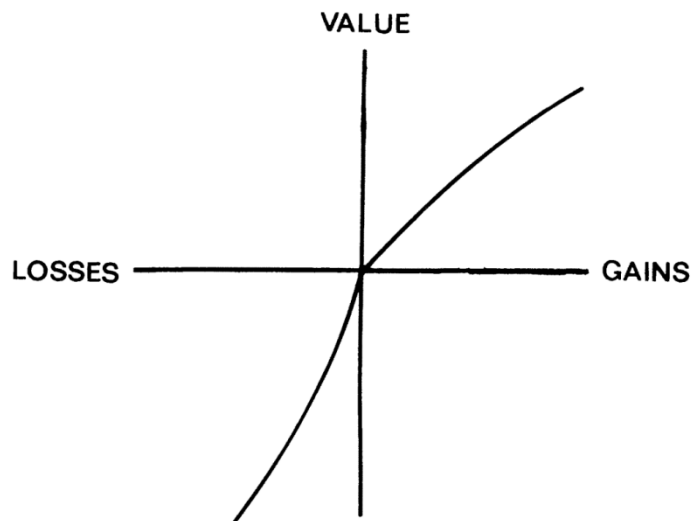
For the foreign policy decision making analysis, the RAM is a “faceless model, one that black boxes what occurs inside states, and treats states as *unitary actors* that make decisions in terms of rational choice” (Yetiv, *Explaining Foreign Policy: U.S. Decision-Making and the Persian Gulf War*, 2004, p. 30). The apparent limitation of the RAM for this research is that it does not allow to identify and explore the choices and actions of individuals or institutions within the unitary state, i.e. the Secretary of State and State Department. It will not provide a framework to present all the differences in views of parties participating in the decision making process. This is an obvious disadvantage which compels a researcher to examine the process only through the prism of a unified actor speaking with one voice. Thus, for this research the RAM will only partially address the questions raised and test the proposed hypothesis.

## **4.2 Prospect Theory**

The second concept employed in my research to explain the events analyzed is **Prospect theory**. Kahneman and Tversky, presenting Prospect theory based on economic models in 1979, introduced it as “an alternative account of choice under risk” to the *expected utility* model, which they believed, did not provide an “adequate descriptive model” (Kahneman, 1979, p. 263). As the essence of Prospect theory was extended in later years by other researchers, its fundamental premise remained unchanged – the human mind does not operate in a total *rationality* domain but rather perceives gains and losses with reference to a *reference point*, viewed as the status quo, which by definition cannot be static and will be subjective transforming as a result of preceding actions by actors.

One of the major deviations of Prospect theory from the RAM is in “decision weights ... attached to particular events rather than to stated probabilities” (Kahneman, 1979, p. 288). A good example vividly demonstrating Prospect theory in action with a case from gambler’s life is given by Beach, who states that a gambler would take large risks to win back his losses but would become cautious having a large pile of winnings. According to Beach, “in connection with evaluating gains and losses differently, actors tend to be more risk-averse with respect to gains, whereas they are more risk-acceptant with respect to losses. Loss aversion can result in risky behavior that is often counter-productive, making a bad situation even worse” (Beach, 2012, pp. 121-122).

Kahneman and Tversky proposed that the value function is (i) defined on deviations from the reference point; (ii) generally concave for gains and commonly convex for losses; (iii) steeper for losses than for gains. They presented a value function which satisfies these properties in a form of a diagram where the proposed S-shaped value function is steepest at the reference point (Kahneman, 1979, p. 279).



**Figure 3: A hypothetical value function for Prospect theory proposed by Kahneman and Tversky**

When analyzing or even predicting the foreign policy decisions made by states through the prism of Prospect theory, we should find whether the particular state views itself in the domain of losses or gains in relation to a perceived status quo. The Prospect theory structure helps explain failing policies of the nations often pursued for years if not decades with probably the most vivid example being the war in Vietnam when the different U.S. Administrations would refuse to accept the new status quo in the region but rather engage in a more risky behavior putting in more forces and material resources in the

vain attempt to recover losses. This is entirely contradictory to and could not be explained by application of the Rational Actor Model.

Levy proposed a set of questions to be applied in order to explain a choice, i.e. a decision made, in terms of Prospect theory, where the analyst needs to identify how the actor (1) defines the reference point, (2) identifies the available options, and assesses the (3) value and (4) probability of each outcome. This initial phase (**editing phase with a framing effect**) is crucial for the Prospect theory application as it helps us clearly see the differentiation by the actor of the gains and losses domains with regard to the status quo as perceived by the actor. After this the analyst will have to (5) modify these subjective probabilities by an appropriate probability weighting function, and, eventually, (6) show that the resulting value of the preferred prospect or option exceeds the value of alternative prospects (**the evaluation phase**). Reflecting the complexity of the concept, Levy notes that “needless to say, these are very demanding tasks because utilities, expected probabilities, and these other variables are extremely difficult to measure empirically”, and also states, adding to the ambiguity of theory tested repeatedly in the conditions of a laboratory controlled environment, that “the probabilities for each of these outcomes are not given, but must be estimated by the decision-maker. Technically, most choices in international relations are made under conditions of uncertainty rather than risk” (Levy, 1992, pp. 293, 296).

Nevertheless if an analyst devotes time and energy to identifying correctly a specific reference point as perceived by the decision-maker when facing a choice situation, the application of prospect theory to analyze or predict specific events with regard to gains and losses is a doable task even with all concomitant complexities.

### **4.3 Governmental Politics**

The third model applied in my research is **governmental politics** originally proposed by Allison as **governmental (bureaucratic) politics** in 1971 and later reformulated by Allison and Zelikow in 1999 (Allison, 1971), (Allison & Zelikow, 1999). The government politics model has held a special place in the FPDM by studying and attaching a great deal of importance to the bureaucratic battles of key decision-makers being based on the presumption of “pulling and hauling” in governmental decision-making as a critical factor. An analyst applying the government politics model essentially attempts to decompose the unified actor (government of a sovereign state) into multiple internal actors (high-level government members) drifting away from the traditional concepts of realist theories.

The difference between the two models is in the levels of government officials being analyzed. The focus of **governmental politics** is on the conflict of the minister/secretary level decision-makers (referred to as “Chiefs” by Allison) and in this case decisive factors are the individual actors’ personal interests and understanding of the national interest with “a governmental action as political resultant” (Allison, 1971, p. 162). **Bureaucratic politics**, on the other hand, deals with lower-level bureaucratic fights within ministries/departments (referred to as “Indians” by Allison). As mid-level bureaucracy plays a greater role in technical matters related to routine operations of a particular ministry/department and its influence is minimized for high-level decision-making pertaining to matters of war and peace, the choice of the government politics model for my research is both understandable and logical.

In his initial work Allison and later Alison and Zelikow argued that decision-making preferences of the individual actors are driven by the interests of the organization they represent (as Allison’s famous quote goes, “where you stand depends on where you sit” (Allison, 1971, p. 176)). In other words, according to the paradigm of Allison and Zelikow, by default a Minister of Environment in any government will naturally tend to advocate the strategies favoring clean and renewable energy and demand reduction of fossil fuel consumption. However, Beach opposes this simplified vision putting forward the logical question, “why should ministers who are politically appointed and who have upwardly career ambitions bind themselves to represent the bureaucratic self-interest of the department or ministry that they are in charge of?” And making clearer the question, he grounds his argument on the U.S. political reality, “the preferences of central decision-makers such as the Secretary of Defense and Secretary of State are usually not linked with the organizational self-interest of the Department that they are in charge of; instead they reflect factors such as partisan orientation, individual ideology or career motivation” (Beach, 2012, p. 136). Based on this assumption, we can presume that influential and politically ambitious Ministers or Secretaries would rather balance the interests of the organization they are leading with their own interests and visions in an attempt to advance their personal, ideological or partisan agenda.

One of the key aspects of critique by various researchers of governmental and bureaucratic politics is that these are *not theories* per se but rather *descriptive models* of decision-making processes. Bendor and Hammond deemed Alison’s initial bureaucratic politics model too complex and “simply too thick” and termed the model “analytical kitchen sink” for incorporating numerous variables. They noted that in Allison’s *Essence of Decision*, “Nothing of possible relevance appears to be excluded” (Bendor & Hammond, 1992). The ground for such criticism was laid by Allison’s postulation that “a Secretary of State’s resolution of the conflicts depends not only upon the position, but also upon the player who

occupies it. For players are also people; men's metabolisms differ. The hard core of the bureaucratic politics mix is personality. How each man manages to stand the heat in *his* kitchen, each player's basic operating style, and the complementarity or contradiction among personalities and styles in the inner circles are irreducible pieces of the policy blend” (Allison, 1971, p. 166).

Beach, however, compares the analytical utility of the model to the usefulness of a map, stating that “a good map reduces the level of detail by focusing on the key features of the terrain, giving us an overview that allows us to navigate effectively while being manageable to use” (Beach, 2012, p. 135). Based on Allison and Zelikow’s work, Beach sums up the factors to be investigated to explain why a given policy resulted from a particular political game some of which are given below.

**Core Propositions of Alison and Zelikow’s governmental politics model:**

1. Policies are the result of political battles instead of a coordinated governmental strategy;
  2. Actors perceive issues differently;
  3. Preferences matter, with where you stand depending on where you sit, although there are also differences between “Chiefs” and “Indians”;
  4. The relative power of actors and who participates depends on which action-channel is being used
- Source:* (Beach, 2012)

**Figure 4: Key assumptions of government politics**

One of the key concepts in governmental politics is the *action channels*. Hudson gives a plain language explanation of the term, “those of us who work in large bureaucracies know that the only way to be an effective player is to know the action channels – whom to see and where to go and what to do to make something happen” (Hudson, 2014, p. 102). In a democratic system of governance, the action channels concept is a two-way road as it relates to both the government heads, who have to at least consult their government members and secure their support before making a significant decision in their area of expertise, and “Chiefs”, who must be aware of what steps need to be taken for a desired outcome, i.e. *resultant*, to be achieved.

A good overall characterization of this model is Beach’s statement that, “the governmental politics model can be better thought of as a *framework* for descriptive case studies, offering a set of questions that can be asked of a given case” (Beach, 2012, p. 138). The descriptive nature of this theoretical

model is particularly useful to explain cases resulting from apparent confrontation of the key government members.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The major goal of this explanatory research was to theoretically explore the core processes of foreign policy decision-making and the role of the U.S. State Department and its leadership in five cases of major use of force during the period of the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations from January 1981 to January 1993. To achieve this, I explored how the role of the State Department in decision-making on use of force abroad had been constantly shifting since WWII ranging from traditional diplomacy and policy formulation to direct involvement in decision-making on use of force by the U.S. abroad.

As a result of thorough analysis, I suggest that in the beginning of the 1980s, the State Department became more active and even interventionist in use of force (for varying purposes and to a varying degree) abroad by the United States because it was the strongest foreign policy agency in the executive branch, compared to the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, National Security Council, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Why? The Vietnam syndrome, as we call it today, heavily affected and weakened institutionally the military, diminished their popularity in public and made them reluctant to engage in virtually any type of military operation abroad; confrontation of Congress with the CIA in the second half of 1970s led to Congressional limitations imposed on the powers of the CIA in conducting clandestine military operations; while War Powers Resolution adopted in 1973 limited the President's power to commit the United States to an armed conflict abroad. All of these limited the ability of the Defense Department and intelligence community to play an active and assertive role in foreign policy formulation and in decisions related to use of force in the early to mid-1980s.

In my research, I have considered and analyzed five cases of use of force by the United States during the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush Presidencies to demonstrate the State Department's leading or supporting role. All the cases belong to the time span between 1982 and 1991. The cases of use of force I have examined are (1) deployment of U.S. Marines as a part of Multinational Force (MNF) in Lebanon from 1982 to 1984, with a special focus on the second MNF deployment; (2) military intervention to Grenada in 1983; (3) air strikes against Libyan targets in 1986; (4) military intervention to Panama in 1989; and (5) the Gulf War in 1991.

For the analysis of these five cases of use of force by the two consecutive U.S. Administrations, I have applied qualitative research methods, in particular three well-established and -tested theories/models of foreign policy analysis with varying degree and value of explanatory power for each individual case: Rational Actor Model, which heavily relies on the International Relations realist school of thought; Prospect theory, which is cross-disciplinary by its nature and can be applied to almost any situation involving a decision-making process with critical risk-taking implications; and Governmental politics (or Governmental Politics Model), which is deemed intrinsic to FPA and is strongly based on the analysis of power struggle within a particular administration. Also, for the purposes of general usefulness, I provided some description of the Presidents' leadership style and their characterization, as well as considered to an extent the leadership styles of the Secretaries of State who served in the Reagan and Bush Administrations.

Out of the three theories/models applied in my research only *Prospect theory* helps explain all five cases, which is quite natural as this theory deals best with the choices from the category of risky, if not the riskiest ones, when an actor has to make a decision on and react to the events mostly pushing him into the domain of loss with an actor attempting to find the path that will bring him back at least to the status quo situation or - even better – to the domain of gains. *Rational Actor Model* helps explain at least partially or under certain assumptions four of the cases of decision-making, while *Government politics* is useful to explain three cases – all of them related to the decision-making process in the Reagan Administration notorious for confrontation, sometimes open and undisguised, of the two of its strongest members, Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger.

As a recommendation for IR/FPA researchers dealing with a real-time situation, I would offer to first explore the leader's past, his way of thinking, belief system (if any) by employing a team of professionals and only after that get down to the analysis which should desirably be multi-faceted and multi-dimensional, e.g. RAM and Prospect theory or one of the cognitive models and Government politics. Even in the best case scenario of the analysis, there will remain a degree of *unknown*, for instance, a result of the intentionally applied fog of war as the foreign policy decision on use of force are and have always been the most secretly kept aspects for any state.

### **The List of Publications on the Presented Research**

1. Tsiklauri G. (2016). Operation Urgent Fury: The Role of American Diplomacy in the U.S. Invasion of Grenada, *Journal in Humanities*, Vol 5, No 1, pp. 59-62

2. Tsiklauri G. (2017). Reagan's Coercive Diplomacy: A Case of U.S. Air Strikes against Libya, *Journal in Humanities*, Vol 6, No 1, 63-67
3. Tsiklauri G. (2018). The State Department as a Foreign Policy Actor in 1945-1980. *11th Annual International Conference on American Studies, Tbilisi*, pp.106-112
4. Tsiklauri G. (2018). A Brief Overview of the Foreign Policy Decision Making Team in the Reagan Administration, *Journal in Humanities*, Vol 7, No 2, pp. 55-57
5. Tsiklauri G. (2019). Applying Foreign Policy Decision-Making Theories/Models to the Decision on the Use of Force by the U.S. in Panama in 1989. *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*, IJRSR-12646/2019, Vol. 10, Issue 02 (B), pp.30302-30306