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# An Analysis of the Predictive Ability of Political Psychological Theory: A Case Study of President Clinton's Behavior in Bosnia

by Madeline Ary

## Introduction

Why does the U.S. sometimes choose to intervene in international conflicts? Can the political decisions of a leader be profiled? In order to address these questions, this study analyzes the case study of the Bosnian civil war and the decisions President Bill Clinton made to escalate intervention measures in the region until the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995. To accomplish this analysis, the psychological theory of international relations, specifically operational code theory, will be applied. Overall, this analysis concludes that the psychological and instrumental beliefs held by President Clinton had an impact on U.S. foreign policy pertaining to Bosnia.

Psychological theorists Brian Ripley and R.C. Snyder theorize that we cannot assume states have "well-defined interests" as presupposed in realist theory. Rather, we must look to the "beliefs, values, and goals of decision-making elites, who act as the state in foreign policy" (Ripley 1993: 466). They believe understanding this ethical "psychological theory" is crucial to comprehending U.S. foreign policy. Political psychology theory is driven by Kenneth Waltz's "first level of analysis," meaning the individual person. This level of analysis does not take into account national and international factors, with the exception of assessing how broader factors might have an effect directly on the psychology of the individual (Waltz 1959: 19).

Waltz's political psychology theory encompasses a number of smaller theories, which include cognitive process, decision making, and political cognition theory. In the middle of the twentieth century, many academics focused primarily on discovering particular personality traits of political leaders in order to predict their foreign policy decisions. Later, the focus of studies shifted to "perception, cognition, and information processing" (Shapiro 1973: 124). Similarly, this analysis will follow the guidelines of

process, tracing President Clinton's decisions concerning U.S. interference in Bosnia using a synthesis of political psychology theories.

The operational code analysis theory is an outgrowth of perception, cognition, and information processing from contemporary psychological theory (Schafer and Walker 2006). This theory will be emphasized to explain foreign policy choices by analyzing the "operational code" of the president. An operational code is an approach to studying political leaders' sets of political beliefs embedded in their personalities that then shape their notions for correct strategy and tactics (George 1980: 486; Post 2003: 216). Alexander George, a renowned scholar, developed an operational code for political psychology in 1969. This code is composed of a set of ten research questions divided into two categories: instrumental belief and philosophical belief (Walker 1990: 409). The philosophical beliefs refer to "those [beliefs] that provide information about the subject's beliefs regarding the nature of politics and other actors in the political universe" (Schafer, Walker, and Young 2003: 33). Instrumental beliefs are those beliefs that describe how the leader believes one should act to achieve political goals (Schafer, Walker, and Young 2003: 4). President Clinton's decisions regarding Bosnia will be analyzed using these questions, which is similar to the format employed by Walker, Schafer, and Young in their book *Beliefs and Leadership in World Politics: Methods and Applications of Operational Code Analysis*.

George's operational code includes the following research questions:

#### *Philosophical Beliefs*

1. What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or of conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?
2. What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic, or must one be pessimistic on this score and in what respects to the one and/or the other?
3. Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?
4. How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development? What is one's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction?
5. What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development?

#### *Instrumental Beliefs*

1. What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?
2. How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?
3. How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?
4. What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?
5. What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?

Schafer, Walker, and Young's operational code analysis used data derived from sixteen speeches given by Clinton during his presidency (quoted in Post 2003: 324). However, because these authors used the president's speeches to derive the operational

code, they could not necessarily control for rhetorical devices like exaggeration, intentionally obscure language, etc. More importantly, it is almost impossible for anyone to accurately ascertain what motivates someone else, as they cannot literally read minds. However, even with these limitations, their operational code is thorough, and it draws some conclusions that seem to fit with this analysis of the data on the Bosnian crisis.

According to this theory, it should be possible to draw a straight line, or correlation, between the operational code of President Clinton and U.S. foreign policy during the Bosnian conflict and the consequent Dayton Peace Accords. In other words, the personal beliefs of the president should have a direct effect on the choices the administration makes and the ultimate outcome. Assuming this is the case, these hypotheses should be true:

Hypothesis 1: U.S. foreign policy undertaken during this period reflect Clinton's philosophical beliefs.

Hypothesis 2: Clinton's instrumental beliefs are demonstrated by the way the administration enacted these policies.

If enough evidence in favor of these hypotheses can be determined, such that we fail to reject these hypotheses, then it can be concluded that President Clinton's operational code did in fact predict much of the outcomes of his foreign policy.

The objective of this analysis is to explain the U.S. reaction to the Bosnian civil war through the lens of operational code analysis theory. If the answers to George's research questions are reflective to the reality seen in the Bosnian crisis, then we can conclude that Clinton's administration behaved according to the predictions of psychological theory in spite of pressures from the domestic and international levels of analysis.

To analyze Clinton's operational code, his code must be defined. Clinton demonstrates a positive perspective about policy-making and its environment, a sense of optimism about achieving political goals, and a desire to work cooperatively in accomplishing goals and problem solving. He also has a tendency to emphasize rewards rather than punishment, and he has a general reluctance to engage in risky behavior (Hook 2012: 92). This operational code of conduct will now be addressed in the scope of the two previously stated hypotheses. In the first, Clinton's philosophical beliefs—as demarcated by Walker, Schafer, and Young—will be analyzed to determine whether these beliefs fit with the political psychology theory in reference to the action taken with U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia. In the second, Clinton's instrumental beliefs will be analyzed in a similar manner.

### **Hypothesis 1: U.S. foreign policy measures undertaken during the Bosnian crisis reflect Clinton's philosophical beliefs until the Dayton Peace Accords.**

Clinton's philosophical beliefs include the following ideas: the nature of the political universe is exceptionally friendly, there are extremely optimistic prospects for realization of political values, and the ability of the U.S. to predict the political future is very low. Additionally, Clinton's own ability to control historical development is high,

others' abilities to control historical development is very low, and chance has an average role in the determination of future events (Walker, Schafer, and Young 2003: 325). Each of the listed philosophical beliefs need to be analyzed individually to determine whether the events leading up to the Dayton Accords reflect Clinton's philosophical beliefs.

*Philosophical Belief 1: The nature of the political universe is extremely friendly.*

If the political universe is extremely friendly, we should expect to see the Clinton administration often engaged with, relied on, and trusted the international community to help accomplish its political goals. This was the case during the Bosnian crisis. The administration's first moves regarding Bosnia were conducted through the United Nations ("The War in Bosnia"). As the UN attempted to broker peace, it did so through coalition intervention and international agreements. U.S. actions reflected a real sense of optimism in spite of the carnage found within the region. In 1995, the war in former Yugoslavia, which had been raging for more than two years, had escalated from infighting to genocide. There did not seem to be an imminent end to the violence Clinton openly recognized as "ethnic genocide" (Clinton 2004: 424). The administration never acted unilaterally in Bosnia; rather, the administration always ensured that when it took action, it did so with the help of the other nations in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

In 1995, when the administration first succeeded in enacting Clinton's professed desire to "oppose the ethnic cleansing more vigorously" (Clinton 2004: 424), it composed the "Endgame Strategy," which was designed to find a way to permanently end the war in Yugoslavia. This strategy included pushing for a "realistic diplomatic settlement this year" (Berger 1995). It was accomplished through combining diplomatic efforts with a sustained NATO-controlled airstrike on Serbia. The Clinton administration chose to trust NATO with this venture, despite the fact that the alliance had not been tested before in a war scenario. NATO's ability to predominate was by no means certain. NATO's ability to conduct such an attack was called into question by its supreme military commander, despite its obvious technological and numerical superiority. General Wesley Clark's account of the war in Serbia and Kosovo suggests that NATO's success was not due to effective strategy or superior fire power but luck (Betts 2001). The administration demonstrated considerable trust in the ability of international efforts when it chose to act with the other NATO states (predominantly the UK and France) rather than acting unilaterally. It did this regardless of the clear debacle of international peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, which is most vividly illustrated by the failure of the Dutch peacekeeping troops in Srebrenica to protect the local population against incoming Serbian troops (Daalder 1998). Clinton described his decision to act in a coalition as a strategy to avoid repeating the mistakes in Vietnam (Baer 1995).

Although the U.S. consistently took a leadership position in these efforts (particularly in regards to the creation and implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords), the U.S. used international coalitions such as the International Implementation Force

(IFOR) when troops were needed to maintain peace in Bosnia. Americans made up only one quarter of the troops in IFOR (Chollet 2005: 180–81). These examples of international collaborations demonstrate that the Clinton administration relied heavily on international efforts.

*Philosophical Belief 2: The opportunity for Clinton's political values to be realized in the world is extremely optimistic.*

If the Clinton administration enacted foreign policy during the Bosnian crisis which reflected this belief, we should see that the administration undertook major efforts to promote western values like democracy, self-determination, and international peace. When we take into account the enormous effort the administration eventually put into ensuring peace in Bosnia and the rest of former Yugoslavia, this seems to be the case. However, the U.S. took three years to take any significant action. This suggests that optimism for the ability of the U.S. to realize its political values was actually not that high.

In 1992, Clinton campaigned on the platform that he would take more action in Bosnia than the Bush administration had ("The War in Bosnia"). However, as soon as Clinton took office, the administration moved at a "glacial pace" to do anything to stop the fighting (Schulzinger 1959: 330). The first U.S. action attempted to engage the United Nations in doing more. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright ultimately failed to secure the Security Council's approval of making certain cities in former Yugoslavia "safe zones." When the Clinton administration failed to initially secure NATO's support for Clinton's "Lift and Strike" policy—a policy that called for the end of the weapons sanction against the Yugoslav states and the deployment of an air strike—efforts stalled for two years. The administration was clearly unwilling to act unilaterally. This delay demonstrates a sense of U.S.-wide negativity in regard to Bosnia, which does not reflect Clinton's philosophical belief about the ability to realize political values. After the world witnessed the horrors of the massacre at Srebrenica—an atrocity where over four thousand men and boys were shot and thousands of women and girls were brutally raped and some killed—the Clinton administration finally secured approval from congress and NATO to act in Bosnia. It was this fateful action that eventually brought Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic to the table at the Dayton Peace Accords (Clark 2001: 67–68). In this case, it seems evident that Clinton's philosophical belief was not the primary driving force for U.S. foreign policy.

*Philosophical Belief 3: The ability of the U.S. to predict the political future is very low.*

If U.S. foreign policy from this period reflects this belief, we should see the U.S. emphasizing tactics that protect it from the repercussions of backfire from its intervention efforts. This is only sometimes the case. The consistent U.S. attempts to engage the international communities in its efforts in Bosnia can be seen as a form of self-protection. For instance, with the U.S. backed by a variety of nations, blame for

failed policies would be defused among these states rather than shouldered by the U.S. alone.

It makes considerable sense that the Clinton administration first chose to involve the UN rather than take immediate unilateral action. Beyond simply believing that multilateral engagement was a better choice than unilateral engagement, Clinton also demonstrated a streak of true pragmatism. The decision to wait for international approval before action demonstrates that the administration was more gun-shy of potential failure than it was gung-ho about its professed desire to stop the genocide. President Clinton began to fear that “ethnic hatreds between Serbs and Muslims ran so deep that outside intervention would not solve the problem” (Schulzinger 1959: 330). This fear contributed to what was ultimately termed the “muddle through” approach, meaning the series of indecisive and “half-hearted” actions undertaken by the U.S. prior to Srebrenica (Daalder).

In this case, psychology was not the only determinant of what the U.S. ultimately did. Domestic politics played a major role. The administration had a contrarian congress and a reluctant Department of Defense to deal with (Schultz 2003). The Department of Defense was concerned about “protracted occupation or guerrilla warfare.” These two factors, combined with popular sentiment against intervention, made the administration reluctant to act decisively (“The War in Bosnia”).

When the Srebrenica massacre occurred, U.S. policy regarding Bosnia changed almost overnight. Professed beliefs of the U.S. and international community about the intolerability of genocide seemed to overpower the fear of protracted conflict. Within a few days of the massacre, NATO met and concluded that it would ramp up its “dual key” policy where the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and NATO shared responsibility to conduct airstrikes against key Serbian military points. It was this effort in combination with a joint Croatian–Bosnian ground operation and the diplomatic endeavors of Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke that eventually brought about a ceasefire and the realization of Clinton’s dream—the Dayton Peace Accords (“The War in Bosnia”). Through this timeline, we see Clinton’s belief that the U.S. cannot predict future events predominated in the behavior of the U.S. regarding foreign policy until other circumstances compelled this cautionary tendency to be subsumed.

*Philosophical Belief 4: Clinton’s own ability to control the path of history (historical development) is very high while the ability of others to do so is very low.*

Clinton perceived his ability to affect change in the world considerably larger than the ability of other people in power. If this belief is reflected in U.S. foreign policy during the Bosnia civil war, then we should see the U.S. being more willing to act as a leader or to act unilaterally. We should expect to see this, because the U.S. would believe that it could succeed where others failed. While we certainly saw the U.S. taking a leadership role, we rarely saw it acting in any unilateral sense during the crises. Therefore, the results of this philosophical belief’s bearing on U.S. foreign policy are mixed.



The U.S. consistently acted as the leader of foreign efforts during the Bosnian crisis. For example, Clinton was the first to propose the “Lift and Strike” policy to NATO (Schulzinger 1959: 330). The U.S. also composed the “Endgame Strategy,” which was enacted to great effect after the Srebrenica massacre (Berger). In particular, the U.S. led the creation of a “contact group,” which outlined the parameters for the future of Bosnia and eventually served as a foundation for the negotiations undertaken at the Dayton Accords (“The War in Bosnia”). Of course, the peace accords themselves are the best example of U.S. leadership in the conflict, but even the accords had international backing; the UN circulated the final document in the General Assembly and the Security Council (Bosnia and Herzegovina—UNMIBH).

U.S. actions were not undertaken unilaterally. Even when the U.S. acted more decisively, it did so only with the approval of NATO. Therefore, though Clinton believed in the ability of the U.S. to accomplish more change than other states, the administration still insisted on working as a leader in the international community rather than as an independent actor.

*Philosophical Belief 5: Chance has an average role in the determination of future events.*

If the administration acted according to this particular philosophical belief of President Clinton, then it would have taken a middle-road approach. It would not refrain from international affairs, such as a rational actor would, if it believed there was a chance for absolute control. Neither would it commit all possible efforts, such as a rational actor would, if it believed chance had no role in determining future events. As previously demonstrated, the U.S. did in fact take this middle path for the first three years of the Clinton administration.

This path proved largely ineffective and contributed to some intensely bitter feelings from those left in the wake of violence. One embittered reporter wrote, “Western attempts to end the war have gone around in circles, drifting from threats to new peace proposals as the killing has continued,” (Chollet 2005: 60). Another biting criticism leveled at the U.S. during this period came from the newly elected French President Jacques Chirac, who said decisive U.S. military intervention was the only way Western credibility could be restored in Bosnia (Whitney). It seems likely that for the first half of U.S. policy regarding Bosnia (the pre-Srebrenica period), the U.S. was acting as though chance had an average role in determining future events. The U.S. did take decisive action, but it is difficult to tell whether this meant the position on chance changed or simply that the stakes were high enough now that the risk was worth it.

## **Hypothesis 2: Clinton’s instrumental beliefs are demonstrated by the way the administration enacted its policies.**

Clinton’s instrumental beliefs, as identified by Walker, Schafer, and Young, include the following: goals should be determined through cooperation with other powerful entities and goals should be pursued cooperatively. Also, because Clinton faced an average amount of risk in the world, actions should almost always be pursued coop-



eratively rather than confrontationally. Clinton's propensity to shift between action and rhetoric is at an average level, and he is much more likely to employ rewards, make promises, and appeal for help than resist helping, threatening, or punishing. The following is a step-by-step analysis of how well U.S. foreign policy during the Bosnian crisis reflects these instrumental beliefs. Instrumental beliefs are implicitly expressed in the above descriptions of U.S. actions during the Bosnian period and will have a briefer analysis in the following section to avoid redundancy.

*Instrumental Belief 1: Goals should be determined through cooperation with other powerful entities.*

If U.S. foreign policy during this period operated under this instrumental belief, then we would expect to see the U.S. addressing other powerful international and domestic entities whenever a decision was to be made. The U.S. could also be observed adjusting its position on what actions should be taken to reflect the opinion of the group rather than just its own perspective. Evidence indicates this was both true and not true for the Clinton administration's actions regarding Bosnia.

This belief was true in the sense that the U.S. did not engage in anything more than the few interventions, which NATO and the UN both approved prior to engagement. These included sanctions, a strategy to protect UN safe zones, and the deployment of peacekeeping troops ("The War in Bosnia"). However, it was not true because the official rhetoric of the Clinton administration continued to push for more intervention than the international community was initially willing to give. For example, Albright often spoke in the UN about the need to use more force against the Serbs (Schulzinger 1959: 330). However, she had "little influence on the overall administration policy" ("The War in Bosnia"). From all of these ideas, it seems likely that the decisions the administration made were shaped largely by forces outside of the instrumental beliefs of Bill Clinton.

*Instrumental Belief 2: Goals should be pursued cooperatively.*

If this instrumental belief is pertinent, then we would expect to see the U.S. take actions with the cooperation of international and domestic entities and shun unilateral behavior. This is definitely the case, as demonstrated in detail from the previous analysis of philosophical beliefs. As discussed earlier, the U.S. had international approval and help from international forces for all significant actions taken in the region.

*Instrumental Belief 3: The role of risk in the outcomes of world politics is at average levels.*

Average levels of risk means that Clinton thought risk did not play a major role in the outcomes of his policies. Instead, he believed the world was risky but only to the degree reported by the average person. He was neither flippant nor paranoid about risk. If the U.S. acted according to the assumption that risk is at average levels, then we should expect to see the U.S. take a middle-of-the-road policy toward risk minimization—it would not be so risk averse that it would refuse to take action, neither would it be so risk prone as to jump into full-scale involvement without taking time to consider all options and conduct precautionary measures.

This is, in fact, the case. The U.S. did not sit entirely out of the proceedings by reverting to the isolationism that characterized the Great Depression, nor did it jump in full force. The muddle-through policy is the best example of the U.S. position of not taking enormous risks. When President Clinton spoke in front of the UN General Assembly in 1994 during the heat of the conflict yet before full NATO engagement, his words were cautionary. He said, "If the parties of that conflict take the hard steps needed to make a real peace, the international community including the United States must be ready to help in its effective implementation." Here, he is willing to take action but only if certain conditions are met. This corroborates the cautionary nature of U.S. policy regarding Bosnia before and after Srebrenica (the U.S. still did not commit more than twenty thousand troops, requiring that the others were supplied by the member nations of NATO).

*Instrumental Belief 4: Clinton's propensity to shift between action and rhetoric is at average levels.*

President Clinton was willing to use rhetoric as a tool of affecting change to the same degree as he was willing to act to affect change. If this instrumental belief had overall bearing on U.S. foreign policy, we should expect to see action taken to stop the fighting during the Bosnian crisis. Speeches given frequently in a variety of venues around the world also catalyze change. Evidence supports this belief that Clinton's rhetoric and action shifted at average levels. A variety of U.S. actions undertaken during the crisis are well catalogued throughout this paper. Additionally, President Clinton and Madeleine Albright both gave a number of speeches and wrote several documents with references to what should happen in Bosnia. Albright's efforts were of particular note and were previously mentioned. While Clinton's rhetoric tended to breeze over Bosnia, Albright emphasized it ("The War in Bosnia"). Thus, there existed a fair mix between action and rhetoric, just as our prediction suggests there should be if this instrumental belief were reflected in the actions of the administration.

*Instrumental Belief 5: Clinton highly prefers rewards, promises and appeals to resisting appeals, threats, and punishment.*

If this is the case, then we should see the U.S. tried a variety of "pulling" measures before reverting to coercion. However, the Clinton administration did resort to a good deal of coercive measures regarding the situation in Bosnia. This may have resulted because by the time Clinton took office, a policy of coercive measures (sanctions in this case) was already in place; or, it may simply be because this particular instrumental belief did not translate into U.S. foreign policy. All of the major U.S. actions taken up until the Dayton Accords were fairly coercive. First, the U.S. imposed weapons sanctions. Then, the U.S. began to undermine Milosevic's efforts to starve whatever Bosnians could not be reached by other forms of attack by enacting a night airdrop policy. Soon the UN proclaimed a no-fly zone over Serbia and Bosnia, enforced by the U.S. Air Force in Operation Deny Flight. When the U.S. efforts to enact the "Lift and Strike"

policy initially failed, the UN and NATO initiated the “dual key” strategy to protect UN proclaimed safe zones. Finally, with the formation of Contact Group (a UN endeavor headed by the U.S.), plans were drafted for peace and airstrikes were increased. Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic said, “It was your [NATO’s] bombs and your missiles, your high technology that defeated us. . . . We Serbs never had a chance against you” (Clark 2001: 67–68). All of these actions were ultimately designed to be coercive.

It was only with the organization of the Dayton Accords that the promises/reward aspect of Clinton’s instrumental belief came into play. With the successful completion of the Dayton Accords, the U.S. promised to supply troops, to secure the region, and to ensure a definitive end to the fighting. The conclusion can be reached that in the case of the Bosnian civil war, Clinton employed measures based more on punishment and coercion than reward and promises.

**Operational Code Assessment**

The operational code analysis predicts that Clinton’s operational code will largely correspond with U.S. foreign policy during the Bosnian crisis. Table 1 illustrates a dichotomous decision based on this analysis of how well the philosophical and instrumental beliefs predicted Clinton’s actions and U.S. foreign policy decisions leading up to the Dayton Peace Accords. The operational code is divided by the specified beliefs that have been analyzed with a total tally at the end of the table. In accordance with the previous analysis, “Yes” means this portion of the operation code accurately predicted U.S. foreign policy behavior in Bosnia. “Mixed” means it predicted some aspects but not others. “No” means it did not predict any of the outcomes.

According to the table, the operational code theory accurately predicted the majority of U.S. foreign policy decisions made during this period. However, it was imperfect. In two cases, it failed to predict what occurred, and in two other cases it only predicted a portion of the outcomes.

**Table 1**

Operational Code	Yes	Mixed	No
Philosophical Belief 1	X		
Philosophical Belief 2			X
Philosophical Belief 3	X		
Philosophical Belief 4		X	
Philosophical Belief 5	X		
Instrumental Belief 1		X	
Instrumental Belief 2	X		
Instrumental Belief 3	X		
Instrumental Belief 4	X		
Instrumental Belief 5			X
Operational Code Match	6	2	2

It is crucial to remember that this is only one model of operational code analysis. Other schools of thought contend that operational codes are comprised more of principled and causal beliefs rather than philosophical and instrumental beliefs. Instrumental and causal beliefs are arguably the same. They are both beliefs about what is the best method for an individual to achieve a particular political end (Hook 2012: 93; Schafer, Walker, and Young 2003: 4). However, principled and philosophical beliefs are not the same. Principled beliefs are beliefs about “the virtues and limitations of human nature, the proper roles of governments, and the national and global problems that are of greatest concern” (Hook 2012: 93). They are normative beliefs about the way the world should be. Philosophical beliefs are about the way the world is, not the way it should be (Schafer, Walker, and Young 2003: 33). Therefore, Schafer, Walker, and Young’s model has the disadvantage of not clarifying the political goals of the leader in the way the model that uses principled (normative) beliefs does. Under this first model, all we know about the leader is what that leader believes the world is like and how the leader tries to achieve political ends. Schafer, Walker, and Young’s model despite its disadvantages synthesizes the operation code theory with political psychology theory and is best applied to this particular case study, although other methods could have been used.

## Conclusion

The discrepancy between theory and reality is likely due to a number of factors. Here we have only looked at the individual level of analysis. This almost entirely ignores the impact of national and international pressures on decision making, the second and third levels of analysis, respectively. Yet, because psychological theory failed to explain everything, a deeper analysis including variability in the level of analyses may provide a more extensive and complete explanation.

Domestic pressures were mentioned on several occasions as having a direct impact on policy making. For example, at times, Congress was opposed to military interventions and the Department of Defense was reluctant to engage in Bosnia because they feared entering into another protracted conflict like Vietnam. Opinion polls also indicated that U.S. citizens were not keen on the idea of intervening in Bosnia (“The War in Bosnia”).

International factors also played a major role in the outcomes. NATO initially refused to act in the way Clinton had hoped, causing a two-year delay in implementing his “Lift and Strike” policy (Schlesinger 1959: 330). Although compromise measures were eventually reached, they ultimately did little to mitigate the rising conflict. Perhaps if the president had taken totalitarian control over the country and full reign in the international realm, the operational code could have predicted every decision he made, but that would be impractical and overly idealistic. As it is, however, these pressures prevent that from being the case. Waltz reminds us that a “single factor” cannot account for the outcome when multiple factors are always at play (Waltz 1959).

Despite the limitations of this qualitative analysis, the operational code analysis used explains a large portion of Clinton’s behavior during the Bosnian crisis. This

indicates that the president's upbringing, life experiences, and other factors—used to formulate the operational code—can have an enormous impact on U.S. foreign policy (Post 2003: 216).

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