

Government 1521  
Bureaucratic Politics:  
Government, Military,  
Social and Economic Organizations

D. Carpenter

Lecture 11: Cognition, Interest and National Security  
(Cold War, with Cuban Missile Crisis)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Halperin's World

Denote players, interests and stands.

Actors differ not only in their interests but also in  
their perceptions of what constitutes the  
national interest.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

The Players and the Interests

- DOD
- DOD Comptroller
- Army
- USAF
- Navy
- Marines
- CIA
- Secretary of Defense
- State Department [Foreign Service]
- Secretary of State
- President

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Players and the Interests

- DOD: centralized management and planning of military and security policy
- DOD Comptroller: budgetary constraints
- Army: ground combat, esp offensive
- USAF: combat air missions, esp SAC
- Navy: (1) brown shoe, (2) black shoe, (3) submarines
- Marines: elite combat unit, amphibious warfare, ground offensives
- CIA: large-scale covert ops, intelligence gathering capability
- Secretary of Defense:
- State Department [Foreign Service]: report on activities of foreign govts, represent U.S. to those govts.
- Secretary of State: commitments of U.S. & President
- President: legacy, electoral considerations, all of the above

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Lacuna of Air Support

Matthew Ridgway: “There is an understandable opposition in the air Force to the development of those types and the procurement of those number of aircraft for which the Army has so vital a need. The helicopter and the converti-plane do not now fit into the pattern o the Air Force’s primary missions, or the limitations of its budget. Nor does the young airman want to fly the close-support and assault aircraft – the dive bombers, cargo ships, the transport planes that carry the paratroopers. He wants to fly jets, for that is where the glamour and glory lies. And I don’t find it in my heart to blame him.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Lacuna of Air Support

General Maxwell D. Taylor, retired Army chief of Staff [H, 44]:

“Since 1947, the Army has been dependent upon the Air Force for tactical air support, tactical air lift, and for long-range air support. Throughout this period, **the Army has been a dissatisfied customer**, feeling that the AF has not fully discharged its obligations undertaken at the time of unification. The air Force, having something which the Army wanted, has been in a position to put a price upon cooperation and to insist upon acquiescence in Air Force views on such controversial issues as air-ground support procedures, air re-supply, and control of air space over the battlefield.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## The Lacuna of Air Support

“As technical improvements in weapons and equipment offered the Army the possibility of escaping from dependence upon the Air Force, the latter has vigorously resisted these efforts and has succeeded in obtaining the support of the Secretary of Defense in imposing limitations on the size and weight of aircraft procured by the Army, on the ranges of Army missiles, and on the radius of Army activities in advance of the front line of combat.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Halperin on Grooved Thinking

“Participants who exhibit grooved thinking tend to focus on a few key variables and to have a programmed response to those particular variables. They are repeatedly confronted by the need to respond to particular events and do so by **breaking a complex problem into its parts and responding in a programmed way to each part.**”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Halperin on Grooved Thinking

“This pattern of thought is typical of career officials, particularly relatively low-level officials, who **need to act constantly and become accustomed to regularized patterns of behavior.** Many low-ranking Army officials, perhaps even senior officials, responded to the ABM program this way. They monitored Russian activities and typically responded to a Russian deployment by arguing that the United States needed to match that deployment. They also responded to Russia’s increased offensive capability by arguing that the United States needed to add a direct defense specifically to deal with that capability. Grooved thinking tends to produce **routine responses to changes perceived one-by-one, and it ignores larger factors that might render the response inappropriate.**” [23]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Halperin on Grooved Thinking

Can read behavioral theory from this:

1. Breaking a complex problem into its constituent parts – remember Lindblom, Muddling through
2. Respond to each part in a programmed way (SOPs)
3. Narrow range of attention to “local” aspect of the problem.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Reading Organizational Interest

Organizational self-interest must be understood in a nuanced way: autonomy, professionalism matter, too.

“Career officials, including those who come to head organizations such as the Joint Chiefs of Staff, often develop their position largely by **calculating the national interest in terms of the organizations that bring them into government.** It is necessary to understand the details of those interests if one is avoid the erroneous notion that organizations simply seek to grow in size.”  
[Halperin, 61]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Halperin: Individual Reputation and the Effectiveness Trap

“the effectiveness trap is the trap that keeps men from speaking out, as clearly or as often as they might, within the government. And it is the trap that keeps men from resigning in protest and airing their dissent outside the government. The most important asset that a man brings to bureaucratic life is his “effectiveness,” **a mysterious combination of training, style and connections.** The most ominous complaint that can be whispered of a bureaucrat is: ‘I’m afraid Charlie’s beginning to lose his effectiveness.’ To preserve your effectiveness you must decide where and when to fight the mainstream of policy. ...the inclination to remain silent or to acquiesce in the presence of great men – to live to fight another day, to give on this issue so that you can be ‘effective’ on later issues – is overwhelming.”  
[90-91]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**PRESIDENT WARNS  
OF FUTILE STEP-UP  
IN NUCLEAR RACE**

But He Voices 'High' Hopes  
on Past to Ban Spread  
of Atomic Weapons

**MISSILE DEFENSES KEY**

He Fears Deployment by the  
Soviet Would Produce an  
Arms 'Escalation'

Pointing to the recent Soviet buildup of strategic forces and deployment of a missile defense system around Moscow, the President said "we are reminded that our hard-won accomplishments can be swept away overnight by still another costly and futile escalation of the arms race."

"The paradox," the President said, "is that this should be happening at a time when there is abundant evidence that our mutual antagonism is beginning to ease."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Allison: Three Propositions**

I. Analysts think about problems of foreign and military policy in terms of largely implicit conceptual models that have significant consequences for the content of their thought.

"Conceptual models both fix the mesh of the nets that the analyst drags through the material in order to explain a particular action or decision and direct him to cast his net in select ponds, at certain depths, in order to catch the fish he is after." [690]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Allison: Three Propositions**

II. Most analysts explain (and predict) the behavior of national governments in terms of various forms of one basic conceptual model, here entitled the Rational Policy Model (Model I).

III. Two "alternative" conceptual models, here labeled an Organizational Process Model (Model II) and a Bureaucratic Politics Model (Model III) provide a base for improved explanation and prediction.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Rational Model

- I. Basic Unit of Analysis: Policy as National Choice
- II. Organizing concepts
  - A. National Actor
  - B. The Problem
  - C. Static Selection
  - D. Action as Rational Choice
    - 1. Goals and Objectives
    - 2. Options
    - 3. Consequences
    - 4. Choice
- III. Dominant Inference Pattern: infer motives to unitary actors)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Organizational Process Model

Model II: "According to this model, what Model I categorizes as "acts" and "choices" are instead outputs of large organizations functioning according to certain regular patterns of behavior. Faced with the problem of Soviet missiles in Cuba, a Model II analyst identified the relevant organizations and displays the patterns of organizational behavior from which this action emerged."

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Organizational Process Model

- I. Basic Unit of Analysis: Policy as Organizational Output
- II. Organizing concepts.
  - A. Organizational Actors – choices are in fact SOPs.
  - B. Factored Problems and Fractionated Power
  - C. Parochial Priorities, Perceptions and Issues
  - D. Action as Organizational Output
    - 1. Goals: constraints Defining Acceptable Performance [Simon-seque "satisficing"]
    - 2. Sequential Attention to Goals
    - 3. SOPs
    - 4. Programs and Repertoires
    - 5. Uncertainty Avoidance
    - 6. Problem-directed Search
    - 7. Organizational Learning and Change

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Organizational Process Model

### III. Dominant Inference Pattern: Look for SOPs

“If a nation performs an action of this type today, its organizational components must yesterday have been performing (or have had established routines for performing) an action only marginally different from this action.... The best explanation of an organization’s behavior at  $t$  is [its behavior at]  $t-1$ ; the prediction of  $t+1$  is  $t$ . Model II’s explanatory power is achieved by uncovering the organizational routines and repertoires that produced the outputs that comprise the puzzling occurrence.”

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

There has been considerable debate over alleged American “intelligence failures” in the Cuban missile crisis.<sup>49</sup> But what both critics and defenders have neglected is the fact that the discovery took place on October 14, rather than three weeks earlier or a week later, as a consequence of the established routines and procedures of the organizations which constitute the U.S. intelligence community. These organizations were neither more nor less successful than they had been the previous month or were to be in the months to follow.<sup>50</sup>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

On the information available, the intelligence chiefs who predicted that the Soviet Union would not introduce offensive missiles into Cuba made a reasonable and defensible judgment.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, in the light of the fact that these organizations were gathering intelligence not only about Cuba but about potential occurrences in all parts of the world, the informational base available to the estimators involved nothing out of the ordinary. Nor, from an organizational perspective, is there anything startling about the gradual accumulation of evidence that led to the formulation of the hypothesis that the Soviets were installing missiles in Cuba and the decision on October 4 to direct a special flight over western Cuba.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

This ten-day delay constitutes some form of "failure." In the face of well-founded suspicions concerning offensive Soviet missiles in Cuba that posed a critical threat to the United States' most vital interest, squabbling between organizations whose job it is to produce this information seems entirely inappropriate. But for each of these organizations, the question involved the issue: "Whose job was it to be?" Moreover, the issue was not simply, which organization would control U-2 flights over Cuba, but rather the broader issue of ownership of U-2 intelligence activities—a very long standing territorial dispute. Thus though this delay was in one sense a "failure," it was also a nearly inevitable consequence of two facts: many jobs do not fall neatly into precisely defined organizational jurisdictions; and vigorous organizations are imperialistic.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

How the U.S. Acted: Organizational Process

This attempt to smash the Navy's blockade had a price. On Wednesday morning, October 24, what the President had been awaiting occurred. The 18 dry cargo ships heading towards the quarantine stopped dead in the water. This was the occasion of Dean Rusk's remark, "We are eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked."<sup>14</sup> But the Navy had another interpretation. The ships had simply stopped to pick up Soviet submarine escorts. The President became quite concerned but the Navy—already riled because of Presidential meddling in its affairs—blundered into an incident.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Sensing the President's fears, McNamara became suspicious of the Navy's procedures and routines for making the first interception. Calling on the Chief of Naval Operations in the Navy's inner sanctum, the Navy Flag Plot, McNamara put his questions harshly.<sup>15</sup> Who would make the first interception? Were Russian-speaking officers on board? How would submarines be dealt with? At one point McNamara asked Anderson what he would do if a Soviet ship's captain refused to answer questions about his cargo. Picking up the Manual of Navy Regulations the Navy man waved it in McNamara's face and shouted, "It's all in there." To which McNamara replied, "I don't give a damn what John Paul Jones would have done; I want to know what you are going to do, now."<sup>16</sup> The encounter ended on Anderson's remark: "Now, Mr. Secretary, if you and your Deputy will go back to your office the Navy will run the blockade."<sup>17</sup>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Bureaucratic Politics Model

Model III: "Happenings in foreign affairs are understood, according to the bureaucratic politics model, neither as choices nor as outputs. Instead, what happens is categorized as outcomes of various overlapping bargaining games among players arranged hierarchically in the national government. In confronting the problem posed by Soviet missiles in Cuba, a Model III analyst displays the perceptions, motivations, positions, power, and maneuvers of principal players from which the outcome emerged." [690]

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Bureaucratic Politics Model

- I. Basic Unit of Analysis: Policy as Political Outcome
- II. Organizing Concepts
  - A. Players in Positions
  - B. Parochial Priorities, Perceptions and Issues
  - C. Interest, Stakes and Power
  - D. Multiplicity of Problems
  - E. Action-Channels [major players pre-selected]
  - F. Action as Politics
- III. Dominant Inference Pattern
- IV. Propositions
  - A. Action and Intention
  - B. **Where You Stand Depends on Where You Sit**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

To the Joint Chiefs of Staff the issue was clear. *Now was the time to do the job for which they had prepared contingency plans. Cuba I had been badly done; Cuba II would not be.* The missiles provided the *occasion to deal* with the issue: cleansing the Western Hemisphere of Castro's Communism. As the President recalled on the day the crisis ended, "An invasion would have been a mistake—a wrong use of our power. But the military are mad. They wanted to do this. It's lucky for us that we have McNamara over there."<sup>143</sup>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

End Result: Coalitional Politics

A coalition, including the President, thus emerged from the President's initial decision that something had to be done; McNamara, Robert Kennedy, and Sorensen's resistance to the air strike; incompatibility between the President and the air strike advocates; and an inaccurate piece of information.<sup>121</sup>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

First Papers

On the whole, good effort, ways to go.

Average Grade: [B-minus](#).

Major problems:

- (1) Specificity of evidence supporting argument.
- (2) Lack of attention/citation to Coffman
- (3) Writing issues

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---