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Leadership Analysis: Decision Making in Syria

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Leadership Analysis
Decision Making in Syria

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is intended to identify the distinctive traits of Syrian leadership. Its

purpose is to better serve policy makers as they confront the challenges Syria presents.

The first section identifies major research on decision making and leadership analysis.

The second section is an analysis of Syria's leadership components. The third section

uses several quantitative methods to identify the leadership traits of President Bashar Al-

Assad. A psychological leadership profile of the figurehead creates added complexity to

the structural analysis, but is relevant because it has the capability of allowing actual

policy makers to deal with their Syrian counterpart. Bashar Al-Assad is found to be a

complex dictator by both Middle Eastern and world standards, who is likely to respond to

challenges slowly, and with an eye towards his domestic constituency. His regime will

continue as long as he can find the right balance between reform and conservation.

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Introduction

Syria is a country with a great deal of current relevance. The country is considered an ally of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which has aspirations of becoming a nuclear power. It also has close connections with both Hizbullah and Hamas, considered terrorist groups whose actions have an effect on the state of Israel, a key U.S. ally in the Middle East. Further, Syria is one of two countries to take in the majority of refugees from the Iraq war, many of whom are Sunni, and some of whom are Ba'athists from the former government of Saddam Hussein. The importance of understanding the country cannot be stressed enough. However, this paper will focus on a distinct way of analysis, using a methodology whose primary purpose is not simply academic. Rather, the purpose of this essay is to use the tools of academics to enable foreign policy practitioners to interact in a more comprehensive and positive way with those in the government of Syria, specifically their head of state, Bashar Al-Assad. As a result, this paper will attempt to "bridge the gap."

"Bridging the gap" is a metaphor associated with the influential book by the same title, by Alexander George (1993)...George wrote about the gap between the academic and policy communities, characterizing it as the divide between knowledge and action. He argues that academic knowledge is organized along theoretical and generic lines in order to explain international relations, while policymakers need knowledge about specific actors and problems in foreign policy in order to take action. These organizational differences create a gap that needs to be bridged between the supply of academic knowledge

and the demand for policy-relevant knowledge.[1]

This summation of Alexander George by Jerrold M. Post and Stephen G. Walker identifies a 'gap' between the academy and policymakers. This concept is related to a trust issue, or confidence 'gap,' which practitioners have in academics. Academics tend to couch their ideas in dense theory. Conversely, academics lack confidence in practitioners who follow the outmoded concept of a realism incorporating 'simplistic' notions of power. The relevancy of this paper lies in its ability to give policy makers an insight into the actual human being(s) they must interact with, in addition to the structure.

The gap analogy may be applied to theories of international relations. Many popular theories explain the structures of international relations, but have a weakness in that they generalize broadly about the individual differences in powerful leaders. For structuralists, individual agency is only important insofar as it determines how actors should behave along a single continuum. Post and Walker write: "Depending on the paradigm at hand, realists see leaders as rational calculators of the relationships between national goals and national power; liberals conceptualize them as conformists to rules embodied in international or domestic institutions; and constructivists characterize them as constrained by cultural norms generated within and between societies."[2] Decision-making theorists see agency as a strong factor in the implementation of policy in international relations. Without agency, diplomats and policy makers fly blind when dealing with actual individuals within a state.

The importance of decision making in domestic politics is rarely questioned.

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[1] Post, citing George 1993. p. 400
[2] Post. p. 401-402

Individuals create policy through the intermediaries of powerful leaders or representatives who posit ideas and create laws. This last thought will be expanded upon by the discussion of group dynamics, bureaucratic politics, and bargaining theory discussed later. Decision-making theorists have long been arguing for a change in the way international relations theory is used. Post and Walker state: "These theorists would limit universal structural propositions to contingent generalizations based on intervening causal mechanisms linking structural conditions with foreign policy decision and international outcomes."[3] A decision-making theory of international affairs would posit not only a stronger relationship between the domestic and the international as a broad overarching theory, but also would require a more finely-etched and detailed analysis of the agency-specific content of individual states.

Currently, no single and unified theory encompasses the research on decision-making. However, a number of scholars have created small, finely-chiseled tools by which they have analyzed the decisions of individuals and small groups. Absent a consensus on a unifying theory of decision making, using a number of these tools individually to create a well-crafted picture is the purpose of works like Post's *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders,* as well as Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow's *The Essence of Decision*, a revised version of Graham Allison's classic study.[4]

The purpose of this work is to answer the call of Jerrold M. Post. He wants academics to be able to make valuable contributions to practitioners in the form of leadership analysis. Government practitioners can then utilize the analyses to respond in

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[3]   Snyder, Bruck, and Sapin 1954; C. Hermann 1969; Allison 1971; Tetlock 1998; Hagan 2002, cited in Post. p. 402

[4] Post. *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders* and Allison & Zelikow, Essence of Decision *Revised* Edition

issues of Foreign Affairs. Post began the work with a large undertaking which brings

together a number of different styles of leadership analysis, from the qualitative to the

quantitative, and uses leaders Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton to elucidate the

individual approaches.[5] In order to answer Post's call, this study will use a number of

different strategies and theories in an analysis of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. In an

attempt to demonstrate that the needs of policymakers for strong analytical judgment of

foreign leaders are important, Bashar Al-Assad's history, psychology, and situation will

be discussed. This leader plays a crucial role in the theater of U.S. interests in such

sensitive areas as terrorism, Lebanese strife, the Iranian sphere of influence, Palestinian

rights, Israeli security and the broader and long-standing issue of peace in the Middle

East.

Syria has a semi-monarchical political system with a hereditary element (at least

one handing over of power to a relative so far). Referendums exist, as well as an attempt

at representation, but the only checks and balances which exist are those of the powerful

elite on that of the government. The bureaucracy is very large and unwieldy, and the

President is new and untried. Further, Syria sits in a volatile region which it contributes

to on occasion. All of these elements provide for a necessary analytical methodology

using both old and new techniques.

In order to 'bridge the gap,' I will take a look at decision making theories, broadly

defined, and use them on Syria. The overall structure of this work will begin with a

chapter discussing the strategies and theories which will be used to analyze Al-Assad's

leadership and decision making. This will primarily be a review of the current literature

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[5]   Post. *Psychological Assessment*

along with some helpful organizing principles. This section will begin with an exploration of the triple-lensed model employed by Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow to explain the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Allison and Zelikow present three models. Model I is about rational actors. Model II will be discussed for its institutional significance. Model III will be discussed with reference to governmental politics. The model ends with a look at groups, but we will also look at more in-depth group dynamics of decision making regarding the advisory system's structure as it is laid out by the characteristics of individual leadership. Bargaining, an aspect of Model III, will also be included. The structure of theory inherent in Richard Neustadt's work on U.S. Presidential Leadership is important for decision making analysis. However, it will be explored primarily for its relevance to foreign political leadership analysis and decision making.   Institutions are important in Syria, and so a discussion of Max Weber will follow. Finally, we will delve into psychobiography and other important methods. It will discuss Jerrold M. Post's usage of quantitative measures to unify a number of different theories from the leading academics in psychological profiling. Finally, it will conclude with a discussion of the relevancy of the particular methods discussed.

The second chapter will begin the leadership analysis of Bashar Al-Assad by focusing on the institutions surrounding Hafiz Al-Assad's rise to power and continuing on to Bashar's tenure, with a look at some of the situations and players surrounding Syria. This will primarily use structural methods in order to compliment the psychological component in the third chapter.

The second chapter is important to lay a base of comparison for several reasons: Hafiz Al-Assad's regime is far more tested, more has been written about it, and many of his problems have now been passed on to the son. As a result, the social, political, religious and military aspects of Syrian society provide a starting point, and a look at the institutions and some of the more important moves regarding individuals will help shape this analysis. A situational overview will help to place the profile of Bashar in context which will come in the final chapter.

The third chapter will seek to explore the man's psyche. I decided that it was necessary to compliment the application of existing models with some original research using cutting edge speech analysis methodologies. This analysis will focus on the psychological dimension. It will begin with an overview of three useful quantitative measures. The analysis will not confine itself to just one event, but will apply the theories and strategies discussed in the quantitative section to dissect interviews and speeches as a way of projecting possible actions. In doing this research, I brought together statements from every major period of Bashar's decade long tenure, and analyzed the way he thinks using several well-known psychological scales. This quantitative analysis of Bashar will use the most up-to-date methods of computerized and objective methodologies. It will include conclusions about the Syrian President and will discuss Bashar's world view, creating inferences about how to deal with the man.

Chapter I

Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow set out to explain the Cuban Missile Crisis in

their revised edition to Allison's seminal work *Essence of Decision*.[6] However, the true

grace of their work lies in the method they chose to use to understand the event in

question. Their argument was three-fold: First, that all types of analysts "think about

problems of foreign and military policy in terms of largely implicit conceptual models,"

using description, explanation, prediction, evaluation and recommendation to understand

a particular event. Second, few models simplify complex events as well as Rational

Actor Model (RAM). Third, and this is the true genius of their work, two additional

models known as Organizational Behavior model and Governmental Politics model are

used to explain the same events.[7] In essence, the other two models provide sufficient

complexity to a simplifying archetype. By using each model individually to explain a

large event, the authors hope to add far more depth than could be attained by any one of

the models alone.

Model I

Analysts often refer to major actors making decisions rather simplistically by

saying that 'OPEC has decided to increase the amount of oil it produces daily' or 'Israel

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[6] Allison & Zelikow, *Revised* Edition
[7] Allison & Zelikow, 3-5

has decided to invade Lebanon.'[8] This type of speech implies a unitary actor, a power with all-encompassing authority which carries through with a decision. They are "monoliths [which] perform large actions for large reasons."[9] RAM identifies the problem, and an optimal "action is chosen in response to the strategic situation the actor faces."[10] A simplified viewpoint of state as agent is the analytical structure, with a single set of preferences, perceived choices, and consequences which follow from each alternative – all to deal with the problem. Several additional concepts to the unitary actor principle are balance of power, value maximization, and rationality. Each of these concepts helps to make up RAM.

Allison and Zelikow identify Thomas Schelling and Hans Morgenthau as the principal writers on balance of power. Morgenthau attempted to explain World War I by discussing the relative powers arrayed against one another in the form of the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance. The authors further show that "one of the major propositions [of Thomas Schelling's work] concerns the stability of the balance of terror: in a situation of mutual deterrence, the probability of nuclear war is reduced not by the balance (numbers of forces of the two sides) but rather by the *stability* of the balance."[11] Described as an anarchic system like that proposed by Thomas Hobbes, states will attempt to balance against one another since there is no overarching figure or institution to control them.[12] States are thus always looking for ways to create (or destroy) levels of power relative to an adversary.

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[8] Allison & Zelikow, 16
[9] Allison & Zelikow, 5
[10] Allison & Zelikow, 24
[11] Allison & Zelikow, 14
[12] Hobbes, Thomas *Leviathan*. 1651 Edwin Curley (Ed.) 1994. Hackett Publishing

Value maximization refers to the need of the rational actor to choose the best possible decision amongst all options. Alternatives exist, as choice is infinite. However, these alternatives all have consequences, and it is the purpose of the rational actor to follow through on the choice of "selecting that alternative whose consequences rank highest in the decision maker's payoff function" or desirability.[13] The authors point to an argument by Lawrence Freedman and Efraim Karsh to describe the decision of Saddam Hussein to invade Kuwait as a choice amongst economic and geopolitical realities. Due to the consequences of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq was in dire financial straits, and Saddam Hussein also needed a boost to his credibility as leader of the Iraqi people. Thus, they argue, invading Kuwait would give him an easily winnable war and all the oil money he would need.[14]

Rationality, our final concept explaining the definition of the Rational Actor Model, refers to the need for human beings, as well as states, to follow through with decisions that are at least believed, if not in actuality, to be a "purposive, goal-directed activity."[15] This concept simply follows through on the notion in human psychology that human beings are generally rational and their behavior can thus be predicted with the right sorts of information. If a forecaster or theorist understands that "rationality refers to consistent, value-maximizing choice within specified constraints" then the authors believe that this analyst will be able to make solid judgments about an actor's given course of action.[16]

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[13]   Allison & Zelikow, 18
[14]   Allison & Zelikow, 14
[15]   Allison & Zelikow, 17
[16]   Allison & Zelikow, 19

However, one must carefully consider comprehensive rationality.[17] This refers to the ability of the decision maker to implicitly understand all verifiable alternatives and rank them in hierarchical order. It has been severely criticized by many scholars for the impracticality of its use in attempting to understand others. Bounded rationality, however, allows for limits upon the ability of a human being to compute all, or even the best, value-maximizing alternatives. It is crucial for leadership analysts because it allows for the possibility that the leader may be labeled as rational while he or she still follows through with what may not necessarily be his or her best choice. From this concept, it is possible to understand why mirror imaging, or the habit of analysts to suggest that a foreign decision maker should think as they do, is so pervasive. Choosing bounded rationality requires that "the model accepts the values, beliefs, and stereotypes of the decisionmaker, irrespective of the accuracy of his views."[18] This is the realm in which an analyst *must* concentrate all of his or her energies upon an individual leader and the decision making structures involved. This is referred to as a "personified state," as differentiated hierarchically from the "identified state" which comes next, "generic state" third, and finally the "notional state" in the simplest, or most general, state.[19]

However, because RAM leaves room for the possibility of close individual analysis, this does not mean that it will always be followed. Indeed, one of the problems with RAM is that analysts have a tendency to 'typecast' with it, by sorting individuals into groups which can be explained in a generalized way. This system does not easily take into account "idiosyncratic" values and calculations.[20] This weakness has roots in the

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[17] Allison & Zelikow, 20
[18] Ibid.
[19] Allison & Zelikow, 21
[20] Allison & Zelikow, 51 - 52

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aforementioned mirror-imaging which stems from pure logical inference and a limited understanding of a particular leader's bounded rationality.

Model II

Model II for Allison and Zelikow is referred to as "organizational behavior." Simplistically speaking, since RAM deals with one large, individual actor where decision-making is formed rationally and clearly, Model II identifies decisions as a product emanating from an unspecified number of diffuse groups. Continuing with the 'monolith' analogy first discussed at the beginning of the RAM section, the authors write that Rational Actor Model "must be balanced by the appreciation that (1) monoliths are black boxes covering various gears and levers in a highly differentiated decisionmaking structure."[21] Model II is defined less by the choices of individuals than it is by the choices of an organization within a bureaucracy. An individual within an organization would act as a free-thinking entity, but together with other individuals and manipulated by an organizational ethos, they act as a collective with their own specified norms and values. As a result, a model which leaves individualism out of the equation would simplify the decision-making process in the key area of understanding the intensely large federal bureaucracy, and all manner of smaller organizations which act in the same way.

Allison and Zelikow would like their readers to understand five additional points. First, organizations are brought together to create a unified action where previously individuals existed under disparate realities and separate circumstance. Second, the efficiency and capability of producing a specific type of united product can only be

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[21]   Allison & Zelikow, 5

created under the auspices of organization. Third, organizations constrain behavior along

a specific path. Fourth, the values and norms of the organization must be followed

through the creation of an organizational ethos or culture. Thus, the authors wish to

express how much alike an organization is to a "bundle of technologies" used for a

purpose that wouldn't be possible without those technologies: Flying without an airplane,

driving without a car, etc.

 These organizations act in a proscribed way, and are efficient in the manner that

their sole purpose is to create the product they were designed for. The authors write,

> The drive toward efficiency, toward the optimal accomplishment of the mission, also
>
> obliges organizations to develop the special capacities of what James Q. Wilson has
>
> called their 'critical task,' a task that forces the organization to formulate distinctive
>
> operational objectives.[22]

Perhaps the most influential person who has written on aspects of organizations is Max

Weber. Philip and Zelikow write that Weber "viewed organizations as more effective,

sometimes even dangerously effective, instruments of rational choice."[23] Weber had a

keen fascination for the specific qualities of organization, qualities which made it so

effective and consuming in its purpose: "Its specific nature...develops more perfectly the

more the bureaucracy is 'dehumanized,' the more completely it succeeds in eliminating

from official business love, hatred and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional

elements which escape calculation."[24] In other words, the more bureaucracy effectively

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[22] Allison & Zelikow, 150
[23] Allison & Zelikow, 147
[24] Weber, 215-216

eliminates from itself individually-oriented means of interacting with society, and creates

the means for a cohesive, collective decision-making, the more it will become a powerful

way of approaching the implementation of societal laws or norms. For our purposes, this

becomes an effective explanatory tool.

To use this tool, we must see organizations as the most basic unit and foreign

policy as an output of the organization. For Allison and Zelikow, this comes in three

areas: occurrences, effective choice, and organizational structure. The first occurs when

a command is given, as in an organization must carry out the duty. "The decisions of

government leaders trigger organizational routines."[25] Secondly, organizations are the

only way for a government to deal effectively with a problem, and as such they represent

the physical choices possible. This refers to the type of assets which may be called upon.

Third, organizations represent the decisional choices possible for a leader. A leader is not

only constrained by what is possible within an organization, but to a certain extent the

choice has already been made. In a crisis situation, a leader has prepackaged choices like

sanctions, diplomacy or military action. These are choices which have a tendency

towards results considered optimal by an organization.

Allison and Zelikow also use model II to organize concepts, like actors, missions,

objectives and actions from an organizational perspective. This model helps explain the

need for decentralization of control, constraining the decision making potential of

government leaders. It requires that the actions of organizations have already been

established through norms and procedures carried out previously in order that they be

used again. As a result, there is difficulty in creating new behavior without an increase in

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[25] Allison & Zelikow, 164

time and energy. The priorities of the organizations are thus determined by past experience. The prior need for a specific routine will thus shape the action. As a result, any leader who has no understanding of, or ignores, the inherent restrictions and routines of organization will likely not like the established outcome mainly due to the difficulty of changing organizations. Finally, change which does occur will be due to accomplished actions based (of course) on past routines, whereby the organization will attempt to grow to take over newly created or required patterns. As a result, most change will occur from within, rather than from without.

Model III

Concluding their metaphor of the great free standing monolith embodied in RAM, Allison and Zelikow write that, "large acts result from innumerable and often conflicting smaller actions by individuals at various levels of organizations in the service of a variety of only partially compatible conceptions of national goals, organizational goals, and political objectives."[26] This is an apt characterization of the third and final model for Allison and Zelikow: Governmental Politics.

Model III's centerpiece is that of bargaining. "The name of the game is politics: bargaining along regular circuits among players positioned hierarchically within the government.... Outcomes are formed, and deformed, by the interaction of competing preferences."[27] The mind frame of this model, as in Model II, is one in which some degree of decision-making power, influence, or the ability to at least attempt control of a

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[26]   Allison & Zelikow, 5
[27]   Allison & Zelikow, 255

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foreign policy decisional outcome is relegated to others besides that of an individual

actor with one preference at the top. Power is diffused because of their different

conceptions of prudent policy. Preferences, beliefs and responsibilities to different

constituencies call for the game of political bargaining.

This model has an inherent limitation primarily because of its complexity and

'chaotic' element, which frustrates the ability of analysts to understand participants,

situations and agendas. Allison and Zelikow comment; "Few experts have the time to

invest in mastering the players and operational details that shape the latest bargains."[28]

This is one reason why the rational actor model is so widespread. Cognition in human

beings readily avails itself of pattern recognition. As a result, many analysts find a

pattern that may or may not have everything to do with the leader at the top. However, it

is easily attributed to the leader because of a strong desire to generalize or an insufficient

ability/knowledge to quantify and explain the situation surrounding the immense amount

of actors, institutions, values and norms that exist at the pinnacle of power. To clarify, it

is easier to place the blame on an individual than on a complex interplay of groups and

individuals. This is where model III earns its place in explanation.

The authors primarily refer to Richard E. Neustadt's work on *Presidential Power*

to define Model III.[29] A more in-depth analysis of Neustadt's work will be provided

later, but for Allison and Zelikow, five main principles illustrate their conception of

Neustadt's model. The first is the concept of the separation of institutions sharing

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[28]   Allison & Zelikow, 257

[29]   An important note here, which shall be touched on later, is that Neustadt was primarily a scholar of US
        leadership. As a result, much of his analysis centers on the institutions, laws, ideas and individuals of
        the United States. However, it is not difficult to extract a purely theoretical framework which can be
        used to generalize about foreign states. Where possible, I will attempt to highlight US-centric points
        and those which can be used for analysis of foreign governments.

powers.[30] There is more than just one institution which must be called upon to create a

decision, and their responsibilities do not necessarily align with the authoritative leader.

Though the separation of powers is a very liberal, Montesquieuan conception relegated to

western democracies, the separation of institutions that share power is not. Call it

redundant, bureaucratic, or a prudent division of labor, it is still an important issue for a

leader to confront. The second principle refers to the main ability of the President: the

power to persuade, an informal power. One contention here is that all governments

require some level of persuasion, even the most authoritarian. The third principle

highlights the fact that bargaining isn't random, but occurs along specific lines of

communication. The fourth refers to the fact that it is not the bargaining itself, but the

effect upon the bargaining and its product by the leader which show his capabilities. The

final principle highlights the effect of two-level games. These games bridge the gap

between nations in a way that allows an outside power to have some say over policy

affecting the nation, by discussing that policy and having an effect upon that policy.[31]

Though the prior examples are largely informal powers, it is unlikely that they

can account for all authority. Formal powers, like the control of the military and

bureaucracy, are just as important. These powers describe the tangible assets which the

leader can bring to bear in order to exercise sovereignty in the case of foreign affairs, and

order in the case of domestic.

Groups

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[30]   Allison & Zelikow, 259
[31]   Allison & Zelikow, 259 - 262

Groups are a key component of model III analysis. They bring a multi-causal function to the study of decision making, which is one step closer in an attempt to establish a clearer picture of a complex process. Allison and Zelikow highlight seven causal factors which can be used to explain the output of group processing. The authors first assume that if one were to bet, using a group would (most of the time) produce a better decision than an individual.[32] A more detailed analysis of why groups produce good and bad decisions will be discussed later. However, I should note one caveat here: namely that group decision making is susceptible to its own unique problems. Absent a healthy respect for those problems, group decision making could very well lead to bad decisions.

The second causal factor refers to the 'agency' problem, which is unique to moments when additional figures are brought in for consultation. Though it has been posited that group decision making is a positive, individuals will bring their own inherent biases. They will bring "additional, autonomous interests. As the economist Kenneth Arrow demonstrated in his 'Impossibility Theorem,' with even as few as three participants, each with different preferences among three options it becomes impossible to reach a decision that meets the minimum transitivity requirements for rational choice."[33] That being said, however, the purpose of the additional group members is in some degree to bring in their individual biases, since those biases have been shaped by their individual experiences. It is their objectives and interests which are called to account.

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[32] Allison & Zelikow, 265
[33] Allison & Zelikow, 271

The third causal factor revolves around the players. The characteristic make-up of an individual will help decide how a group is going to make a decision. One can not understand how a group will make a decision simply based on an analysis of the group as a whole. The group must be dissected into individuals. The individuals must be analyzed for their preferences, objectives and experiences.

Understanding the rules of the game is the fourth causal factor. There may be two separate types of rules, formal rules and informal rules. There may also be two separate types of institutions with authority over the same issue, and both must be followed in order to create policy, due to the sharing of powers.[34]

The fifth factor revolves around the actions taken to move a problem into the view of policy makers in order for them to create a solution for it. The authors find John Kingdon's work on policy entrepreneurs to be valuable.[35] These policy entrepreneurs have a variety of tactics at their disposal to attempt to catch the interest of policy making groups with regards to specific issues. They can either attempt to set the agenda of a decisionmaking group, or else they can frame an issue in a certain way to make it more interesting to those with power to affect it. These are people who would not otherwise find it on their plate of issues to begin with, or at the very least would have it allocated to a lower level of interest, requiring fewer resources. This is one area in particular where the divergence of RAM and Model III is emphasized. The authors write,

> Social psychologists have observed that people regularly make decisions in ways that
> violate the tenets of rational choice. People are, for example, less willing to risk

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[34] Allison & Zelikow, 279
[35] Allison & Zelikow, 280

losses than they are to take risks for proportionate gains. Thus, decision makers are

still powerfully influenced by the terms in which the problem is framed for them, i.e.,

whether they are choosing to avoid losses or seek gains.[36]

Being able to figure out the psychology behind risk and what targeted groups are likely to

place on their agenda is a very powerful skill for the analyst. The skill of policy

entrepreneurs is seen (and under emphasized) every day by the example of one

congressman pushing weapons sales to another country, while another intervenes

personally to attempt to save the life of a single family. What goes into the action

channels is extremely complicated, but understanding these crucial parts of government

is essential.

Groupthink is the sixth causal factor, and will be touched on to a greater degree

further along in this section. Groupthink, quite simply, is the idea that individuals within

small groups have a powerful drive to agree with one another. Actions or discussions that

disagree with the consensus are suppressed.[37]

The final causal factor in explaining groups and their output is the complexity of

joint action, which is attributed to Aaron Wildavsky and Jeffrey Pressman.[38] This

concept refers to the difficulty of coordination when additional groups or actors are

added to the decisionmaking process. This could refer to additional domestic groups, as

with regards to a legislative body needing to coordinate action with the executive. It

could also refer to the incredibly complicated environment which occurs when the

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[36]   Allison & Zelikow, 282
[37]   Allison & Zelikow, 283
[38]   Allison & Zelikow, 287

decisionmaking processes of two (or more) separate countries attempt to coordinate decisionmaking policy.

Allison and Zelikow organize this model by defining who the actors are, how their preferences come to be, the determining factors in having power over decisions, and how players come together to make decisions. First to the actors. It is not the rational actor, nor is it large organizations that bring about policy decision. Rather, it is small groups made up of diverse individuals acting on their own preferences to promote their own agenda. "Individuals become players in the national security policy game" write the authors, "by occupying a position in the major channels for producing action on national security issues."[39] Thus, who he/she is matters as does the office he/she occupies. Where a person stands figuratively, or sits literally, as in at an office, influences their priorities, preferences, interests, and goals. So do influential writers, speeches, and those that can bend to reach a powerful ear. As does the level of risk or reward behind the problem, or the speed at which it must be dealt with.[40] Their model further identifies three elements of power which can be a determining factor: "bargaining advantages, skill, and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients."[41] The political game is played by way of the previously described action channels, using specific rule sets that order the game, and by taking action in an environment where no one individual or interest group functions in a vacuum.[42]

To use this tool, a model III analyst must understand the rules of the game being played, the psychological profile, traits or characteristics which result in specific

[39]   Allison & Zelikow, 296
[40]   Allison & Zelikow, 298-299
[41]   Allison & Zelikow, 300
[42]   Allison & Zelikow, 301-303

preference ordering for individuals in specific positions, what they are likely to do and why, and the figurative setting of the problem.[43] The analyst must always assume that specific results were never intentioned by one individual. No mastermind is 100% effective in creating the circumstances which gave him or her total control over a policy decision's enactment and execution. Further, it is important to look at how issues brought in by subordinates are supplied to the action channels leading to decision makers.[44] The intentions and national interests of other countries must also be taken into account, as the ability to change policy within the target country is a possibility. How an issue appears to one group, may be different than how it appears to another group, and details may be equally sparse about their strategies as well.[45] If one group doesn't understand the face of an issue for another group, then their ability to compete with an alien response would be limited due to a lack of information or understanding. Many subordinates, because of their inability to multi-task efficiently, will likely choose inaction on an issue rather than allow it to affect an issue of greater importance to them. Finally, the authors identify bureaucratic careerists, lateral-entry types, and political appointees as having differences in their behavior which "are a function of longer range expectations. The bureaucrat must adopt a code of conformity if he is to survive...whereas the lateral-entry type and the political appointee are... interested in policy or some other measure of shorter term personal achievement."[46]

Groups Continued

[43] Allison & Zelikow, 305
[44] Allison & Zelikow, 308
[45] Allison & Zelikow, 310
[46] Allison & Zelikow, 310-311

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An important part of how foreign policy is shaped is often "well-known to insiders but often overlooked by observers and scholars: many important decisions and developments in foreign policy are shaped in relatively small groups and informal face-to-face interaction."[47] The authors, Paul 't Hart, Eric K. Stern, and Bengt Sundelius, wish to show the effects of group politics, how groups are shaped, and most importantly: why the above mentioned models cannot be counted upon to give a full picture with regards to groups.[48] The authors, as a result, wish to analyze the composition of groups, the interpersonal dynamics within those groups, and the leadership involved. Understanding these key variables will give a clearer understanding of a process in foreign policy which is often left to the pinnacle of power, a concept that is both at the top and very small (in quantity of individuals rather than the quality of power or authority). Within this process a number of things happen which have already been partially described by Allison and Zelikow. This includes conflict between members of small groups, each of whom is powerful in his or her own right, because of their place at the top of an organization, or their proximity to the leader, or some other less tangible means of controlling the game of politics.

To understand how groups work, 't Hart, Stern, and Sundelius describe a typology of groups to explain their possible purpose and ways of handling situations. Some of these types describe the ability of the group to deal with its own processes. This is more of an internal level of analysis. Others show more of an external level of analysis by describing how issues outside of the group are dealt with.[49] The first type is that of the

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[47] Ch. 1 of Beyond Groupthink. Paul 't Hart, Eric K, Stern, and Bengt Sundelius. 4-5
[48] 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius. 5
[49] 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius. 25

think tank, which is really about information processing and the ability of a group to analyze the situation. The second is the command center, which illuminates what was previously said about the group being at the top of the food chain. The authors define the role of this form of group as a response to international crisis by issuance of order and use of power. The third type is that of sanctuary. This group system revolves around the leader's need for emotional or rhetorical support, a set of mini-leaders who take some of the burden off the main leader. The fourth type is the arena. "Political divisions... and bureaucratic politics provide two powerful centrifugal forces that beset collegial decision making." The fifth type is that of sorter. This type is characterized by the action channels which carry issues from obscurity to perspicuity. The sixth type is that of ideologue, whose purpose "is to articulate and embody the core values and norms advocated by the chief executive, the organization as a whole, or the prevailing policy paradigm." The seventh type is slightly complex, and is that of the smokescreen. It refers to the need of formal institutions to act as a legitimating mechanism for government while the informal institution (or group) enacts the real policy.[50]

Two additional perspectives will be helpful in understanding the authors' intent to describe group analysis. This format is structured, to some degree, much like Allison and Zelikow's levels of analysis, but with groups. An attempt is made to define and identify all the causal factors which act upon groups and, in turn, where groups act upon others. First is the agency-structure perspective which identifies two sides to the whole. To begin with, small groups have their own individual structures which must be understood from an "individual component" level of analysis. Next, small groups must be seen as a

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[50]   't Hart, Stern and Sundelius. 13-24

whole unit, which is acted upon by outside forces and the "structural parameters" it is a part of and which may in turn be acted upon by the group.[51] As a result, 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius argue that these small groups are heavily constrained, acted upon and defined by their institutional environment. This institutionalization of the small (highly-placed) group occurs at three levels.[52] At the macro-level, the small group is affected by the national-level political context which utilizes the sorts of elements making up a society's institutional mores. At the meso-level, the group must act within (and upon) the context of its immediate institutional surroundings. At the micro level, the elements of the group structure act upon the group itself, defining it in a unique way based on the sum of its parts.

Much like how analyzing the institutional impact upon small groups occurs, it is also important to identify the way in which the leader affects the small group. This impact is felt in an important way with regards to the advisory system process. Thomas Preston devised an elaborate format to identify how interactions between various levels of the government occur. First, citing Stern and Sundelius, the impact is felt at both the foundational and interactional levels. For the foundational level, Preston writes "leader characteristics impact upon the nature of the organization matrix (i.e., through the reaction of initial group structures, selection of members, establishment of formal and informal influence channels for advice." With regards to the interactional level, Preston writes that "leader characteristics impact upon the internal dynamics of groups (i.e., through the establishment of group decision rules, the types of advice encouraged,

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[51] 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius. 26
[52] 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius. 27 - 28

tolerance of group conflict, establishment of general norms regarding leader-advisor relationships)."[53] Preston further argues that this impact takes place within the "policy context," involving relations with all other pertinent actors, and the "problem context," which refers to the particular problem of the day as defined by whatever is at the forefront of the action channel. How, or even whether, a President sees the policy and/or problem contexts "is often dependent upon (1) the cognitive sensitivity, or attentiveness, of leaders to the external environment, (2) the effectiveness of their advisory systems in gathering information from the operational policy environment to inform policy deliberations."[54] Perception, for Preston and a number of the individuals he analyzes, is the key variable here, not actual reality. Due to the way information is presented, which can come at an opportune moment, in a specific order, by a particularly (un)trusted source, or even in a type of speech or manner that is pleasing or unpleasing to the leader, the perception of the context can make for both good and bad decisions. This is also sometimes referred to as 'framing.'

A key purpose for Preston of the impact described above, also known as the 'Leader-Group Nexus,' is to identify the individual characteristics which decide important decision-making realities within the group, such as the way information moves through advisory channels (information management) before getting to the leader, or the ability of the leader to have his or her preferences carried out (authority structure).[55] These styles, along with the type of information a leader requires during decision-making (information processing), the quality of interaction amongst a President and his or her staff

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[53] Preston, 192-193
[54] Preston, 196
[55] Preston, 205

(interpersonal orientation), and the need or shunning of conflict within the advisory group during decision-making (conflictual orientation), are important tools for analysts to discover the type of effect upon the structure of the advisory group system.[56] All of these indicators of style point to different elements of control. By analyzing "individual characteristics of leaders, such as the need for power, prior managerial background, self confidence, and locus of control" the type of style(s) a leader uses can be identified. By combining the requisite styles with appropriate historical or theoretical comparisons, an approximation can be acquired of how a leader will respond to a crisis.[57] This format is particularly useful because of its strong ties to trait analysis. As a result, trait analysis may be used to gauge not just a leader's cognitive dimensions, but also their advisory system and process.

One particular element which must be highlighted in a discussion of group dynamics is the how, why, and degree to which political manipulation occurs. The process of decision-making focuses on the actions of a number of individuals who have their own agenda. Paul D. Hoyt and Jean A. Garrison write,

> Within a group populated by policy advisers, often acting as policy advocates,
> questions of access to the decision-making group, status and influence within the
> group (especially vis-a-vis the president), and influence over the decision-making
> process are central to moving the group towards a favored position. Policy actors,
> aware of the necessity of access and influence, make efforts to manipulate the
> composition of the group during the group construction stage and to manipulate the

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[56] Preston, 198-201
[57] Preston, 206

interpersonal relations and processes of the group during the deliberative stage.[58]

The question of why the actor manipulates, or why there is manipulation within agency in general, has an answer with roots in the rational actor model above; namely preference seeking. Each actor is somewhat akin to the leader in that agency is considered to matter. They are not simply seeking to follow the views or preferences of their leader, they have their own. Though a leader may decree objectives for the administration, or an overall strategy for policy focus, the fact remains that the advisors are made up of individuals who themselves head other agencies (in many cases), or at the very least have their own particular backgrounds, views, and cognitive development.

These advisers can accomplish their own objectives through a number of different strategies. The first strategy for manipulation entails the guest list. Actors can strategically maneuver to halt members from gaining access to the group, both at the initial stages and while the issue is still salient. This is called exclusion.[59] The opposite point, widening the group, called inclusion, serves to pull more potential advisers into the policy making process to enhance the power of a particular faction.[60]

During the time at which the issue is being discussed, a savvy political adviser can attempt to "control the process or procedures and efforts to gain compliance through the manipulations of interpersonal relationships."[61] It is during this phase that agents seek to use bargaining tactics, coercion, persuasion, manipulation of process and other devices to pursue their preference. In the second strategy, procedural manipulation,

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[58] Hoyt and Garrison, 251-252
[59] Hoyt and Garrison, 255-256
[60] Hoyt and Garrison, 256-257
[61] Hoyt and Garrison, 258

attempts to set the agenda, and occurrences of framing may be used.[62] If an individual

can manipulate the setting in which a particular piece of advice is aired, then that piece of

advice might have more or less impact based solely on who backs it, how many back it,

and the circumstances in which it was brought out. Similarly, framing refers to the ability

to present the issue in a positive or negative context, outside of the style or light that a

leader would normally expect in making the best possible decision.

The third strategy identifies manipulation and is differentiated from the second in

that it has to do more with the relationships between individuals. One individual,

cognitively complex and with his or her own idea for policy, must seek to influence

another individual, or set of individuals. This is done by taking advantage of one's

position of power to coerce or pressure.[63] Under this strategy, coalition building can also

be a strong method of control.[64] The struggles between major players on the same foreign

policy team could have far reaching consequences. It could be played out in front of the

media. Collateral damage could fall on others, both individuals and organizations.

Bargaining: Understanding Political Change

An important aspect of Model III discussed earlier is bargaining theory.

Bargaining theory has an important component called Political time, developed by

Stephen Skowronek. The best way to describe this concept is to use the example of U.S.

Presidential leadership. An incoming president must deal with the policies of his

predecessor, the events occurring which cause certain legislative and political initiatives

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[62] Hoyt and Garrison, 260
[63] Hoyt and Garrison, 266
[64] Hoyt and Garrison, 267

to be addressed, and how to wield authority for constructive change. Skowronek "sees political time as a function of increasing and decreasing opportunities to lead."[65] The political bargaining model is thus aptly suited to analyze the situational context as it relates to the personal.

No scholar has done more to create a model which analyzes political change in a leadership context than Richard E. Neustadt. He has developed a template for measuring the power of individual presidencies, as they run up against the federal government. This model's strongest aspect is its ability to identify change from one administration to the next, and to use this change to analyze the context of the targeted leader accordingly. Under this rubric, he identifies six points: questions of legitimacy, changes in institutional detail, changes in policy environment, human qualities of presidential leadership, power calculations leading to bad policy, institutionalized and the institutionalized presidency.[66]

Neustadt's model sets the context by which an in-depth at-a-distance analysis using psychological mapping of a leader and his or her decision-making apparatus may be developed. Though Neustadt's own analysis of the psychological dimensions of leadership are not particularly extensive, he is amongst the best of Presidential scholars, and his model is stratified to a degree which allows the formula to be used in an efficient manner to describe leadership and decision-making. Further, any aspect is capable of upgrade without affecting the whole in a negative way. The analysis of Bashar uses many of the concepts, headings and sub-headings, albeit in no particular order, in an attempt to create an understanding of the stresses of bargaining in Syria.

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[65] Aberbach and Rockman, 758
[66] Neustadt, 184

Neustadt's Bargaining Model
 I. Legitimacy Questions and Sentiments of Loyalty
     A. Popular Legitimacy (general prestige)
         i. Handling of perceptions of the major issues
             a) Combating and Using Media
             b) Public perception of leadership decisions*
     B. Government Legitimacy (professional reputation)
         i. Pressure on Colleagues (others with power)**
             a) Legislative body
             b) Judicial body
         ii. Use of executive underlings
             a) Military
             b) Cabinet
             c) Organizations under Leader
     C. Formal Legitimacy
         i. Official Vested Powers
             a) Real and perceived
             b) Established routine powers by predecessor
 II. Changing Institutional Detail
         i. The necessities of bargaining
         ii. Representative changes***
             a) The lessening of restrictions on a leader
                 • Examples:
                     • Appointments, Press relationships, Cabinet Contacts, Congressional relations, Bipartisan consultations
             b) The procedural constraints on a leader
                 • Examples:
                     • War-making, Impoundments, Renominations
 III.   Changes in Policy Environment
     A. Dealing with Sub-issues and Actors
 IV. Human Qualities of Presidential leadership
     A. Temperamental fitness
         i. intellectual and emotional intelligence
         ii. Past history
 V. Power calculations leading to bad policy
     A. Difficulties of power as a source of clues to policy
 VI.   The Institutionalized Presidency
 A.   Agencies, institutions, etc.

* The extent of the ability of the media to operate freely must be taken into account, as well as

the degree to which the public perception matters as compared to a democracy where the public

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must be listened to. Constituencies, however, will exist in most cases.

** Very few regimes operate under a strictly authoritarian style, and as such there will invariably be other powerful members within a government where 'bargaining' amidst reputational dynamics will be important.

*** Neustadt notes 8 representative changes within the architecture of US leadership. Representative changes in a comparative political context will need to be discovered by the individual analyst.

**** The degree to which information is available about the inner workings of a more closed society is a difficult barrier for the analyst.[67]

Weber and Authority

Max Weber was instrumental in the initial work done on institutions characterized in Model II analysis. Though the analysis of Bashar Al-Assad will not be divided based on the Three Model paradigm, the institutions of Syria warrant a separate section unto themselves, and as a result, a deeper look into Weber is also warranted.

Weber's work on bureaucracy came during a time when he was witness to the breakdown of what he called 'traditional' authority, which is an authority adhered to because of its honored place in time and society. As traditional authority collapses, organizations and the state would employ mediating institutions of social behavior which would step into a fundamentally needed role as Weber's second form of authority; 'rational-legal' authority.[68] This type of authority forms the basis for a legitimate form of government, especially in the modern era. The third and final type of authority, charismatic authority, is short-lived, may interrupt either bureaucratic or traditional

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[67] Several strategies may be used to deal with this shortcoming: 1) greater emphasis should be placed on the other aspects of the model, and 2) the 'at-a-distance' perspective can attempt to be bridged by a closer working relationship with the leader as emphasized by David W. Lesch with his extensive interviews of President Bashar Al-Assad of Syria. The analyst must, of course, always be aware of the trade-off of increased information (potentially flawed, most likely biased) for objective scrutiny.

[68] Kalberg, 173

authority, and is based in the abilities of an accomplished leader.[69]

Rational-legal authority may also be characterized as bureaucratic authority, since it is institutions rather than traditions or individuals which allow for the efficiency in large government. Rational-legal authority can lead to "the subsumption of diverse social action on a regular basis under stable prescriptions, regulations, and rules" and "accounts for its *comparative* technical superiority *vis-a-vis* traditional and charismatic rulership."[70] Rational-legal authority is based on laws, not people, and thus may be seen as non-arbitrary, as a form of unchanging legitimacy which has its origins in reason (rational) and logic (law). It is for this reason that Weber elevated the role of bureaucracy to the status of having control over society, and it is for this reason that Model II holds such keen potential for analysis. The bureaucracy may be used in the singular sense, but it is not always effective to characterize it as a unitary actor. Care should be given to identify the institutions and organizations within the bureaucratic framework.

Institutions are endowed with authority through their codification into existing law, but they are obeyed for another reason. Anthony Giddens, in his book *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, writes that the obeyer does not necessarily obey because of "personal dependence on him, but because of their acceptance of the impersonal norms which define that authority."[71] These norms have been:

> …consciously established within a context of either purposive or value rationality...
> 'thus, the typical person holding legal authority, the "superior", is himself subject to

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[69] Weber, in Kalberg, 217
[70] Kalberg, 175
[71] Giddens, 157

an impersonal order, and orients his actions to it in his own dispositions and commands'. Those subject to legal authority owe no personal allegiance to a superordinate, and follow his commands only within the restricted sphere in which his jurisdiction is clearly specified.[72]

The framework of authority's existence is really a function of legitimacy, and legitimacy has the ability to change and shift.

Weber's understanding of society and history was really a belief in the changing form of analysis. He understood the world through norms, seeing traditional norms as being usurped by legal norms. Weber saw the power of individuals, but only for a limited time and under specific circumstances. The tendency of his analysis was towards an institutional context, a critique that has heavily influenced the shape of modern bureaucratic and authoritative analysis.

In order to understand decision making in Syria, it is necessary to consider the context in which decisions take place. As a result, the concepts of legitimacy and authority which Weber helped to elucidate are very important.

Psychological Assessment

The importance of psychological assessment should not be understated, and a number of individuals have created models with which to create tangible results. Jerrold M. Post, Stephen G. Walker, and David G. Winter identify three types of personality assessments developed by the major pioneers in the field of leadership personality

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[72]   Ibid.

profiling. These three are "cognitive, personality traits, and comprehensive qualitative case studies integrating psychobiographic analysis with a psychodynamic analysis of character."[73] All three types have valid methodological input for a number of different models. The purpose of these models is to find the "causal mechanisms" which affect the decision-making process of individuals. The structural environment is not overlooked, but does provide context and a certain impact on the aforementioned causal mechanisms.[74] Though elements of overlap exist amongst the described methods, an understanding of each is essential for a strong model of psychological profiling. The quantitative aspects of trait analysis, operational coding and integrative complexity will be discussed later. As an introduction to qualitative analysis, this section will begin with a look at some past methodological designs; continue with a discussion of the cognitive dynamics of risk taking; and finish with recent qualitative theory.

1. Past Methodological Designs

Richard C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck and Burton Sapin's methodology begins with a frame of reference, rather than a generalizable theory. Snyder was interested in shifting the decision-making analytical construct from the 'state' to human decision making. Broadly speaking, he had the decision-makers of state 'X,' represented as being within an 'internal setting,' as being able to take an action which not only affects the decision makers and the internal setting of the state, but also the decision makers of an alternative state.[75] More precisely, Snyder looked at a scientific way of exploring the decision making

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[73]   Post, Walker, Winter, 5
[74]   Post, Walker, 63
[75] Snyder et al., 57

process by analyzing a diverse set of elements. These included the internal setting made up of sub-elements like society and culture, to Social Structure and Behavior, made up of values, institutions and groups, to the External Setting made up of other cultures and societies.

The decision makers cause an action, which affects themselves as well as the External Setting and the Social Structure, which affects the Social Structure and in turn affects and is affected by the Internal Setting.[76] Snyder was widely regarded as the original thinker in pulling together various elements of the social sciences as well as the scientific method. However, as Charles F. Hermann and Gregory Peacock would later write about the methodology, "to apply it empirically required detailed data on numerous variables that the social sciences in the late 1950s had only begun to develop. It is little wonder that the major direct application of the Snyder framework used the case study technique (i.e., Paige, 1968)."[77]

Michael Brecher did enormous amounts of field work to understand his subjects. His methodology should be added as one of the better ones in pioneering decision making theory.   His methodology is case study combined with a complex research design.   "Contrary to conventional wisdom or myth, a decision is made by identifiable persons authorized by a state's political system to act within a prescribed sphere of external behaviour."[78]

There are two elements to the framework used by Brecher: Systemic and Dynamic. The systemic element attempts to identify the foreign policy system, which is

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[76] Ibid. 64
[77] C. Hermann and Peacock, 23
[78] Brecher, 2

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made up of inputs, processes and outputs. The inputs have operational (factors which affect a state's behavior beyond its own borders) and psychological (a view of decision-making elites as identified by ideology, tradition and history) components.[79] Brecher further identifies four different issue areas, namely Military, political, economic and cultural. He then identifies the processes, whereby decisions are 'formulated' and then 'implemented.' Then there is feedback, which determines the consequences of the foreign policy decision. The concept of feedback is then transferred into the idea of the dynamic interaction: Brecher's thought is that systems are highly complex, and have continuous movement of inputs, processes and outputs. This involves "the amassing of empirical data on a foreign policy issue and their integration into a structured analytic framework."[80]

The process goes something like this: First, one must seek out the correct components for the right issue. Next, figure out who the decision-makers are. Third, utilize the input, process and output phase methodology in order to analyze decisional processes. Once these are analyzed, then a decision can occur. Decision process data is put together to construct the 'decision flow through time,' which involves a linear graphic to display the pre-decision processes as well as the implementation. Finally, feedback is analyzed - an attempt to understand the consequences of the decision. Brecher would then utilize very carefully constructed case study to make his point. He was tireless and exhaustive in his research and methodology, and ended up contributing phenomenal integrations of theory and reality.

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[79] Ibid., 3
[80] Ibid., 4

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In determining how actors create foreign policy, Margaret Hermann, Charles Hermann, and Joe Hagan identified an early typology for the determination of the 'ultimate' decision making unit in a given country.[81] The authors maintain that decision-making units fall into one of three types: a predominant leader, a single group or multiple autonomous groups. That there are typologies within this last methodology is obvious, and the first Hermann, Margaret, will come up again later when she continues her work into more identifiable trait analysis and typological categorizing.

Whether or not the category being looked at is the ultimate decision-maker depends upon one of two conditions, based on a control variable. For a predominant leader, the contextual sensitivity is all important. If the leader is insensitive, then he follows his own background and views, and if sensitive, then there is some amount of 'penetration' of the decision making process by other elements in the regime.[82]   For a single group, the variable is concurrence, if there is agreement, then the single group's views are primary, and if there is disagreement, then elements outside the group begin to have a say in decision making.[83]   For multiple autonomous groups, the relationship amongst groups is the control. If there is a zero-sum relationship, then 'deadlock' occurs, and when there is no zero-sum relationship, then each group recognizes at least some legitimacy within the other, and is more likely to reach agreement.[84]

2. Risk Taking

The propensity for risk in international relations is a key variable required for a

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[81] Hermann, Hermann and Hagan, 312
[82] Ibid., 314
[83] Ibid., 315
[84] Ibid., 331

thorough analysis of leaders and decision making. The need, or lack thereof, for risky

behavior, is a function of the process which breeds these decisions. Risky behavior can

occur with regards to conflict, but can span the gamut of action. It really refers to the

points discussed above about political and international bargaining. There is both an

individual and a small group context to this process which should be taken into account.

Another divide is that of the situational and the character of the people involved. All four

elements should be interwoven in order to penetrate the dynamics of risk taking.

Margaret G. Hermann and Paul A. Kowert sought first to understand the general

theories regarding risk taking, and then to explore the high level of variance which the

theories did little to describe.[85] Theories have been used to explain risk broadly from a

systemic viewpoint, and Herman and Kowert describe a number of such theories. In

doing so, they illuminate a need for individual leadership analysis of cognitive traits and

dispositions. One theory the two question assumes that all leaders engage in risk to

roughly the same degree. Still another theory allows for difference, but equates that

difference with the need to develop alliances where more alliances mean less interest in

risk. Deterrence theory and rational choice theory explain risk and allow for individual

difference but do not attempt to examine the difference individually.[86] According to the

authors, prospect theory has had a wide following and seeks to explain risky behavior

from a situational point of view. Hermann and Kowert write, "Its central insight- that

people's willingness to take risks depends on how problems are framed and on the

reference point that decision makers use to assess utility – assumes that the situation, and

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[85]   M. Hermann and Kowert, *Who Takes Risks?*
[86]   Hermann and Kowert, 612-613

not the character of the people involved, shapes behavior." This theory has merit because of its experimental success rate of roughly two out of three successful results.[87] Two out of three may be high, but the fact that a third of cases can't be explained by prospect theory points to a glaring gap. The goal for Hermann and Kowert is to find the motivations and characteristics which explain the failure percentage in prospect theory.

Prospect theory relies upon the proposition that leaders are willing to take risks in order to avoid losses, but are unwilling to take risks for commensurate gains. Using the NEO PI-R to measure the groups of traits found in the Five-Factor model, and using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator scale, Hermann and Kowert are able to "identify strong personality predictors of generalized risk taking."[88] The results of the work found characteristics associated positively with risk taking like openness in thinking and openness in deed; these are correlated with mischievousness, humor, adventurousness and versatility. Another positive correlation is the penchant to simply ignore risks. Though excitement seeking is correlated with risk, extroversion, which was thought to be, isn't necessarily.[89]

Hermann and Kowert are also interested in the collusion of the framing effect with personality. As a result, they come up with conclusions regarding these two factors which serve to create a model. This is a three stage model, which employs awareness, framing and decision stages, and takes account of personal style. In the awareness stage, those with anxiety and sensitivity characteristics will be characterized by their personal

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87   Hermann and Kowert, 613
88   Hermann and Kowert, The Five-Factor model identifies five major groups of traits: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. The MBTI scale was used because it was more developed than the five-factor model, and is used to "assess learning styles, occupational choices, and organizational structure."
89   Hermann and Kowert, 617-619

style as agreeable altruists or sensation seekers. The altruist, as loss becomes greater in the framing stage, will conclude with risk aversion in the decision stage.   This leader is among those who are "more agreeable, altruistic, feeling individuals [who] prefer to avoid risks, but especially when facing a loss (and presumably when even greater harm would come to someone because of the risk."[90] Those with a high openness and intuitiveness are called sensation seekers. When they frame an increase in the prospect for gain, even with less surety of that gain, they will decide on risk acceptance. Further, some who are anxious and sensitive will follow the tenets as outlined in prospect theory; for a gain there is risk aversion, for a loss there is risk acceptance. The final group is correlated with low anxiety and is insensitive, staying constant with regard to risk and framing issues, and is thus risk insensitive.[91]

Another theory where the situational category is married eloquently to the personality of individuals was the brainchild of Michael Colaresi in his *When Doves Cry: International Rivalry, Unreciprocated Cooperation, and Leadership Turnover.*[92] The situation is a rivalry context. The two personality types are those who collude with a rival (dove) and those who take a harder stance towards a rival (hawk). Colaresi's conclusion is that in this particular situation, a dove is more likely to be removed from power than a hawk. In Colaresi's multilevel model of rivalry maintenance and leadership tenure, the outcome, if not the purpose, is to sustain the rivalry.[93] Whether or not the hawk or the dove acts, competition is maintained. This occurs for several reasons. First, it is possible that "external conflict and threats affect the domestic political alignments

[90]   Hermann and Kowert, 624-625
[91]   Hermann and Kowert, 626
[92]   Colaresi,
[93]   Colaresi, 555-557

within a state."[94] This refers to the ability of a leader to keep power through the

bargaining process with targeted powerful players or organizations at the domestic level.

The second reason a rivalry will maintain itself is when a dove chooses to become a hawk

in order to stay in power.[95] This is a theory where the situational context comes into play

as a match-up between the international and the domestic, with a leader's particular

characteristic as a defining factor. Further, this may explain the prevalence of secret

negotiations, due to the fact that a leader in a rivalry maintenance situation will likely not

be willing to be seen as engaging in over-cooperation.[96]

The attributes of group risk behavior are somewhat different than those for a

single individual. Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger argues that there are four causal explanations

for groups participating in risky behavior.[97] The first is familiarization, which argues that

diverse individuals brought together, exposed to increasing amounts of new information,

will be more and more likely to consider bold behavior. The second, cultural values,

refers to the theory that the two core cultural values are risk-acceptance and caution. The

predominant value comes to the forefront, and a multitude of factors serve to strengthen

that value with regard to the situation. Persuasion is the third explanation, and refers to

social factors within the group. This tends to lean towards riskier behavior, as those

champions of risk tend to commitment towards their policy with greater confidence. The

final explanation is responsibility diffusion. This point emphasizes the possibility that

group members will believe themselves insulated by numbers in their promotion of risky

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[94]   Colaresi, 557
[95]   Colaresi, 558-559
[96]   Colaresi, 567
[97]   Vertzberger

tendencies.[98] Groups will take risks depending on perception and acceptability of risk.

Vertzberger writes, "First, risk will be taken when it is perceived to be below a

predetermined nonacceptability threshold. Second, risk-taking preferences will change in

response to increases and decreases in the acceptability levels."[99] Certain explanations

will have processes which will be more likely to have changes in either risk perception or

risk acceptability, depending on the group and the situation. For example, the

explanation of persuasion will be more likely to have a "group-induced change in risk

acceptability," but not its perception.[100] This only means that the underlying perception

of the risky behavior does not change, only the will to go through with it. Lastly, there

are four overall group attributes, as differentiated from the group dynamics discussed

above, which affect risk-taking: Group composition, decision-making procedures and

norms, the distribution of power, and members beliefs and aspirations. All of these have

been discussed in other areas, but it is important to remember that they also have a role in

the probability that a group will tend towards risk.

3. Qualitative Designs

The qualitative case studies approach attempts to draw together two elements for

analysis. This approach has been described as follows: "In the psychobiographic

analysis, they delineate important events in shaping the leader's psychology and then

assess the dimensions of political personality, attempting to identify the basic

personality/character structure."[101] They attempt to understand the psyche by taking a

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[98] Vertzberger, 284
[99] Vertzberger, 295
[100] Vertzberger, 295
[101] Post, Walker, Winter, 5

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look at the causal factors in one's youth, adolescence, or general development past these two periods which affect the subject with regards to political acumen. They also wish to understand one very important factor, which is context. Therefore analysts "attempt to discern which public actions are driven by private motives and to detect recurrent patterns of political behavior."[102]

As mentioned above, the context and structure of the situation shapes the outcome to a certain extent, but it is the leader's personality which shapes how they respond with regards to management, negotiation, strategic decision making, crisis decision making, rhetoric, cognitive style and leadership in general.[103] Post uses what he calls 'anamnesis,' to form his model. The purpose of anamnesis is to construct a psychobiography of key life transitions, goals, mentors, heroes, issues and experiences, and also to construct a map of "the subject's cognition, affect, and interpersonal relationships."[104] Further, Post provides the critical context by arguing that other factors like politics, culture, and history all play a crucial role in developing the psyche. This being said, one important aspect to take into consideration is the degree to which restraint is imposed upon the subject.[105] An understanding of the subject's cognitive functions is worthless if an equal understanding of the setting which the subject must play in is not understood. More will be discussed on this subject in the bargaining section, or Model III.

Post draws a connection between the narcissistic, obsessive-compulsive, and paranoid personality types, their belief systems, and leadership styles. Each of the personality types will display certain ego defenses (the paranoid uses denial, distortion

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Post, 69
[104] Post, 70-77
[105] Post, 71

and others, the compulsive becomes unable to make decisions, and the neurotic uses dissociation, displacement, isolation, etc.). These ego defenses affect the individual's belief systems, and as a result can help the analyst, academic or political leader understand how an individual is likely to make decisions.[106] These types have a host of generalizable factors which may be used to understand the basic projection of a leader afflicted with one of these defenses. Post's final model follows five parts: the psychobiographic discussion, the personality description, the subject's world view, their leadership style, and their generalizable outlook.[107] Under each of these is an entire rubric consisting of helpful questions and subsets for the analyst to consider, from the health and intelligence of the subject in the personality section, to their identification with their country in the world view section. This model is comprehensive in the sense that it attempts to answer all the pertinent questions required for a complete cognitive map.

Stanley A. Renshon also writes on psychobiography and cognition. He gives a number of helpful strategies as well as mechanisms to avoid during the course of one's analysis, arguing that the analyst of the subject must operate at three levels: historical fact, interpretation and meaning, and theory.[108] He takes into account what is commonly known, or understood to be true, how the leader's past has influenced them in the light of the analyst interpreting the subject's understanding of his or her own past, and the sorts of generalizable ideas or theories we use to explain our interpretations of the subject's thought process and behavior. On cognition, Renshon draws up a framework to analyze based on three specific aspects of character: ambition, character integrity and

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[106] Post, 78-82
[107] Post, 102-104
[108] Renshon, 115

relatedness.[109] According to Renshon, these are not simply individual traits like

achievement, power and affiliation. However, they do share some relation since there is

also some overlap regarding motivation. Ambition is the goal of life, and the ability to

achieve that goal. Integrity refers to the "moral, ethical and motivational principles that

provide a true-to-self compass through choices."[110] Relatedness refers to the emotion of

the subject as defined by the interpersonal relationships he or she keeps. These three

aspects of character help Renshon to codify the psychobiographic content's impact on

personality.[111]

Conclusion; the Integration of Theory and Reality

The theory discussed in the previous chapter is a good start to understanding

decision making. However, theory must be tested in order to become anything more than

a hypothesis. In order to move from the tools of chapter 1 to the reality of chapter 2, a

decision must be made as to which tools are feasible, and which fall short in this

particular instance. These decisions are not made lightly. Some are only made after

countless hours of research has already been undertaken. Nonetheless, certain tools are

not right for every task. Decision making theory has gone through many changes, and in

some respects has similar characteristics to early realist analytical methods used by Greek

writers like Thucydides. Much of it would begin to shift with the introduction of Snyder,

and then later Brecher. Others contributed to this shift, but the groundwork needed to be

laid for foreign policy decision-making analysis. These early works are important to the

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[109] Renshon, 110
[110] Renshon, 110
[111] Post, Walker, 64

following analysis only in so much as later decision making theorists built off the early methodologies already described. They stood on giants, so to speak.

Rational Actor Model is important for Bashar primarily because it has been used successfully to describe his father. Hafiz Al-Assad was a paragon of this model, a rational actor who could be understood if one decoded the complex field he gamed on.[112] Model II analysis, which has to do with organizations within a bureaucracy, is also very important. The Ba'ath, military and Allawi are all more or less organized constituencies who dealt within a large country-wide framework, itself ironically a product of the 'trifecta' which made the state so dependent upon itself. As will be explained in greater detail later, these three started off as individual organizing forces, later created the power structure of the state, and then became themselves the institutions they themselves helped to prop up. Model III is important because it takes into account 'bargaining.' Questions must be asked, like what makes a leader legitimate, and how does he handle the loyalty of his subordinates and people? What kind of pressure does he bring to bear, and how does he use the organizations under his command. What are his perceived powers vs. his real powers? What kind of mind does he have, and how does he use it to deal with problems, issues and actors?

Model III is both the most powerful, and the most reliant upon a crumbling fourth leg. Namely, it says that it can understand the complexity of what a leader will do, so long as it can understand the issues and processes which surround him. Syria is a shadowy state with information issues, but in attempting to understand the invisible undercurrent of Syrian society, Model III can be useful. There are specific examples

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[112] Hinnebusch, Seale, 43

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when taking into account the five major principles of Model III; institutions which share power, power to persuade, communication channels, the leaders capabilities, and the effect on the inside by outside powers. All of these principles have examples, and the analysis will be interwoven within the next chapter. Lastly, Neustadt's methodology has been loosely ascribed too, but not followed in any coherent form. Issues like legitimacy, pressure on colleagues and underlings, bargaining amongst institutions, the media, different institutions, formal and informal powers, and the representative changes in government are all discussed at one point or another.

Groups are also an important aspect of the US government, and a key conceptual concept in Model III analysis. Few people have any idea what goes on behind the closed doors of the highest office in the United States, but it is widely understood that the President's inner group has a powerful voice. If it is difficult to get information about high-levels groups in the United States, it is next to impossible to get the information about Bashar's advisors. However, Syria's very authoritarian bent also makes it less of a problem. A dictator is more likely to keep his own council than a democratic one. Still, who Bashar chooses to keep around him is important, but any group analysis of Syria's presidency would be woefully inadequate.

A psychological profile of leadership is also very important. A fully articulated psychobiography should have a very in-depth history to work from. It should also take into account what Bashar has to work from in terms of his mental faculties. Of course there is some overlap with other theories, like Neustadt's bargaining, which look to a President's temperamental fitness to gauge his actions. Using the history of Syria, the

father as a guiding light, and Bashar's own temperament will help to gauge his actions, but so will the objective use of trait analysis and operational coding. Unfortunately, integrative complexity, which may or may not be a great help to a profile of Bashar, is beyond the scope of this paper in time and energy, and will have to be left to a future project. The research on how integrative complexity can be used to forecast is taking great strides, but is still nascent. It deserves increasing attention.

Chapter II

Bashar Al-Assad has been characterized as one of the most interesting men in power today. He has been called the Michael Corleone of the Middle East, because of the prevailing wisdom of his reformist attitude. Mixed with the corrupting influence of a crime family, and there is the tendency towards prevarication in whether or not the man has been corrupted himself.

He is young, enigmatic and intelligent. Consider mixing that with his required relations with the 'old guard' and his regime seems particularly thrilling. His father's path to power is fairy tale-like given his humble origins, and in defiance of all odds Hafiz Al-Assad was able to stay in power through a consolidation of his base of support, cunning, chicanery, power moves and the situational factors. Bashar appears to have the same intellectual faculties as his father, perhaps more, and his situation is both similar and different. For these reasons, it is impossible to understand the decision-making potential of a rationally-guided Syria simply by the situation. The situation will influence the man, and the man will use both his father's legacy and his own intuition to respond to the situation.

The leadership of Syria has revolved around the President for some time. Bashar, however, is not the only player. He does not necessarily speak for the entire country, but he is the dominant authority in Syria's politics. While Syria's policy does revolve around

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him, there are elements of control which make the leadership role in Syria disjointed. It is important to pull the various aspects of Syrian policy-making structures together, and where it is difficult to do so, due to lack of information, it is important to assert how the elements difficult to understand affect those which may be understood. This, of course, refers to the 'old guard' or 'invisible layer' and is not meant to be vague, so much as it is meant to give some direction to the insufficiencies inherent in this analysis.

In the theory section of this paper, an attempt has been made to give an adequate understanding of the analysis of decision-making, in order to better understand the moves which have an affect upon the interests of other countries. Though decision-making analysis can be (roughly) divided into three parts (structural, institutional, and group), in this particular case it may not be the best structure to attempt individual sections based on these levels of analysis. This is for two reasons: First, it will undoubtedly lead to different understandings (of course), and, as a result, call for different answers to the questions posed. Second, each of the structures is interrelated. A clear picture won't be had by only establishing how an institution, group or actor works.

That being said, however, all three models are used to explain key points in the following analysis, including (though to a small extent) the tools acquired from group decision making. RAM is seen most heavily in the section on situations. Model II can be best seen in the sections on institutions as well as on the Allawi, Ba'ath and the Military. As for Model III and bargaining theory, it is probably the most heavily used though unsung hero of the following analysis. Any analysis which does not start with the assumption that Bashar is a monolithic dictator must give credence to the forces in

opposition to Bashar. How he chooses to affect the decision making process which isn't directly under his control is a key component of bargaining, and many factors go into it; most obviously the human component.

The leader gets his advice from somewhere, which implies a group decision-making process. The group gets its beliefs and motives from somewhere, which implies that there are other larger factors working behind the collection of individuals, as there are other factors working behind each individual in perpetuity, changing but constant. For example, in the United States it has long been held that the State Department is more 'dovish' than the Defense Department, which is more 'hawkish.' The institutional culture affects the heads of these units, which have an affect on the group. Within the group, as has been explained, political wrangling is had at all levels. Thus, a comprehensive look at decision-making processes will first attempt to understand the institutions at work within the different modes of society. Second, it will clarify the character of the individual(s) who those institutions affect and how they are affected. Third, it will clarify the psyche of the main decision maker and how he will be affected, and conversely, what sorts of initiatives will be started by him/her as a result. Motivation amongst all these levels is key. Understanding how multiple levels of action occur and interrelate will provide a basis for understanding how decision works in Syria, more importantly as it relates to Bashar.

<u>Ethnicity, Society and War</u>

Three key institutions of the Syrian political system are the Allawi, the Ba'ath, and

the Military. This trifecta brings into focus the various interests at play in policy creation, individual and group motivation, as well as the institutions themselves. Furthermore, these three aspects of Syrian Society are integral to answering the question: *Who is the Old Guard?* It is necessary to analyze all three in order to bring the answer into focus.

The Allawi are a minority group from northern Syria who are generally regarded as being in the shi'a context of Islam. In 1946, the Allawi were a relatively autonomous group. Syrian leaders at the time wanted a united country and attempted to integrate them.[113] Backlashes against integration lead to the Allawi being put down forcefully, which included the execution of Allawi leadership.[114] This laid the foundation for the communal identity and solidarity we associate with the Allawi today, and set the context for their later pull into Syrian politics. Due to their minority and repressed statuses, many could only find jobs working as laborers for Sunni upper-class. Daniel Pipes' provocative work sees the Allawi as being the core, or fundamental, aspect of the Syrian regime's character. He alludes to the mysticism and secretive nature of their culture and writes about a concept known as Taqiya, meaning religious dissimulation. This refers to the chameleon-like nature of the Allawi sect, in that they will say or do anything in order to blend in.[115] Pipes also documents the longtime discrimination of the Allawi, where even the Sunni used the term 'Nusayri,' another word for Allawi, meaning pariah.[116] Indeed, since the Allawi considered themselves Muslims, mainstream Islam considered them more blasphemous than other religions of the book, since they theoretically could attempt to change Islam from within. For these reasons, Pipes sees the Allawi character as being

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[113] Faksh, 139
[114] Ibid, 146
[115] Pipes, 433
[116] Pipes, 434

the dominant aspect for the Syrian regime because of the years of repression and minority solidarity. This would draw into question whether the Syrian leadership really cares about other Arabs or other Muslims.

The Allawi luck began to change with the introduction of some of their members into the Syrian officer corps, which was associated with the French. Due to the close-knit, tribal status of Syria's Allawi, preferential treatment became the norm in the institutions discussed next; the Ba'ath and the military.

The Allawi became associated with both the Ba'ath and the Military when a perfect storm created an opening within Syria for the ability of a minority to eventually take, consolidate, and hold onto power. The storm developed when Allawi ties with Syrian officers in the French Special Forces and the need of the French to focus on recruitment from the more rural areas due to the perceived nationalism of the Sunni caused more Allawi to get ahead in the military.[117] The Ba'ath, an up and coming political force, began appealing to rural areas also due to the non-sectarian pan-Arabism it decreed. Its ideology had an undefined interest in social reform, anti-communism, and a role in aiding rural denizens to gain status in the military.

Avraham Ben-Tzur describes the Ba'ath as a nationalist pan-Arab radicalism blended with a moderate social program.[118] There were most assuredly differences within the Ba'ath party, which will be discussed later, but they were relatively small and based on 'pace,' rather than ideology. A major pillar for the Ba'ath leading to this important cohesive aspect was this: Equality was promised on the basis of being Arab, not on a

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[117] Galvani, 5-6
[118] Ben-Tzur, 161

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sectarian identity associated with a major religious sect, like the Sunni.[119] The trifecta

began to knit together strongly when Akram Hourani joined forces with the Ba'ath and

was instrumental in pulling the officers to their side of the national struggle.[120] Michael

Aflaq, a founder of Ba'athism, later saw the increasing strength of the military within the

Ba'athist party as abhorrent. He found himself in opposition to Syrian Ba'athists when he

remarked that they had corrupted its original intent due to the infusion of the military into

its decision making structure.[121]

The growing weight of the military in the Ba'ath structure helped keep it alive

during a crucial part of Syrian history: the UAR period. The United Arab Republic was

an alliance of Syria and Egypt which had a major impact on socialist policy. Land reform

during this period struck a major blow against the old bourgeoisie; the ruling elite from

1946 to the late 50's.[122] In fact, before 1958, there was more or less a system of free

enterprise in which agriculture was semi-feudal and obviously exploitative but the

industrial sector was basically free.[123] The UAR period changed this system, with

redistribution of land and the nationalization of banks, insurance companies and full, as

well as partial, nationalization of industrial firms.[124] One policy actually mandated that

the majority of political parties shut down. This forced the Ba'ath underground, and a

number of Syrian officers, specifically Salah Jadid, Hafiz Al-Assad, Muhammad Umran

and Hamad Ubayd were transferred to Egypt. They stayed remarkably organized, and as

a result were able to come back to Syria with a large advantage compared to other parties

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[119] Galvani, 5
[120] Galvani, 6
[121] Seymour, 39
[122] Perthes, 32
[123] Ahsan, 301
[124] Ahsan, 303-304

at the close of the UAR period.[125]   The end of the UAR period was heralded by the flight

of capital, loss of jobs, and the declining as well as high cost of production.[126]

The phase of civilian rule only lasted for a few years after the UAR, and could not

reverse the socialist decrees. What is referred to as the traditional Ba'ath period came

about as a result of a coup in March 1963.[127] The Ba'ath were interested in a socialist

system heavily embedded within an Arab framework. This system was harsh and

involved ceilings on landownership and a peasant's union. Credit dried up, there were

consequences for industry, re-nationalization occurred in the banks and the state exerted

heavy control in general. Hafiz Al-Assad was associated with membership of the original

leadership, such as President Amin Al-Hafiz, during its struggle with Salah Jadid and the

new Ba'ath. This struggle was mainly drawn along ideological lines: Should Arab unity

come before (traditionalists) or after (radical) economic development? The radical

Ba'ath chose more nationalizations and economic reforms, and the traditionalists

attempted to stop it.[128] A bloody coup occurred on February 23rd, 1966.

The new government's policies were meant to weaken the hold of the traditional

elites and end heavy handed western influence in the country, though not necessarily to

break ties with them.[129] There began to be some leeway for private enterprise at the end

of 1965, though this mainly halted in 1966 with the beginning of the radical Ba'ath

phase.[130] The specifics of economic nationalization include the following: diligence in

upholding agrarian reform laws; nationalization of the oil industry, including export

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[125] Galvani, 6
[126] Ahsan, 305
[127] Ahsan, 306
[128] Galvani, 8
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ahsan, 307

mechanisms; and the expropriation of firms, both small and large. Nationalization

became the word of the day.[131] A new strata of industrialists emerged as a result of the

reforms. Crucial to the new industrialists were their small numbers and, specifically,

their unwillingness or inability to get involved in Syrian politics like the traditional

elite.[132] Due to this unwillingness, the state bourgeoisie began to grow as the public

sector grew ever bigger, fostering the market for the new industrialists who controlled the

surplus of publicly-owned production.[133]

   A new phase characterized by a more liberal Ba'ath party sought a middle ground

with the peasants, helped the Allawi move up in the world by granting land to them in the

plain of al-Ghab, and allowed some limited consolidation of land – something not

normally allowed in the more heavy socialist atmospheres. Aziz-al Ahsan argues that Al-

Assad only changed a small part of agriculture in order to broaden his base of support.[134]

The industrial and commercial sectors, however, changed to a large degree. Three-

fourths of the investment in industry was in the public sector after 1970.[135] Private

manufacturing had shown little growth, and what growth there has been was in

"economically less-productive activities." Further, the private sector was little more than

a third of the economy in imports and 40% of exports.[136] Import controls relaxed slightly,

and to a small extent a new open-door policy was pursued regarding foreign investment.

Ahsan wrote in 1984 that Syria was socialist but with some opportunities for investment.

Specifically, he wrote that there has been a failure in Syrian policy to "utilize domestic

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[131] Galvani, 8
[132] Perthes, 33
[133] Perthes, 34
[134] Ahsan, 308
[135] Ahsan, 308-309
[136] Ahsan, 309-311

private and foreign capital for more productive purposes" because of "instability...a lack of trust among both foreign and local entrepreneurs over long-term investments...[a] lack of firm guarantees from the government...[and] criticism and protest from the left and lower-middle salaried classes whose incomes did not rise in proportion to inflation."[137]

After 1973, the newest strata or 'commercial class' began the slow, inevitable slide towards corruption. This class used their connections to make big deals. Small in number, this class revolved around its relation to the state and the pursuit of large profit (sometimes by illegal means or exemptions to the rules given the state), and monopolies.[138] This class became the model for private-state cooperation. Decree #10, an attempt to deal with the phenomenon, gave more of a stake to the state, but also ended up exempting the companies from many rules and taxes.[139] In many respects, this class still exists as a function of state-enterprise cooperation, monopolization, and exploitation.

The Ba'ath, Allawi and Military exist in the bargaining construct as institutions which share power. This is the first principle of bargaining. In the Ba'ath we have an informal power with heavy influence in the formal structures of government. The Allawi are again informal, with heavy influence in the formal structures of the military. The military has held its relation to both since the days of the United Arab Republic, and members of all three cross and interweave to form the shadowy base layer that obfuscates the powerful analysis of even the most veteran Syria watchers. All three groups form an alliance based on need, interest and history.

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[137] Ahsan, 312
[138] Perthes, 36
[139] Perthes, 37

Some Historical Perspective

Analysts of Syria commonly refer to an 'old guard,' conjuring up images of a hobbled veteran standing in the wings ready to defend an outmoded method of thinking. Because the old guard still exists, a brief look at the politics and social movements affecting the coup which brought Hafiz Al-Assad to power will lay the foundation for an understanding of the motivation of this influential anachronism. They are in some ways a group, but there is less cohesive authority and structure than one would find in typical groups. They exist as a set of individuals with a common history and shared principles, interests, and terrors. This section will be offset by a later delineation of the more difficult features which the 'new guard' (for lack of a better term) has to approach.

Civilian members of the Ba'athist leadership were, for all intents and purposes, subordinated to the military leadership. Indeed, as mentioned earlier one of Aflaq's major criticisms was the military's dominance in the halls of Ba'athist leadership. The Ba'athist civilian leadership, after the original founders had been thrown into exile, was forced to subordinate behind the officer caste.[140] Salah Jadid was the dominant name in military/party politics. By way of his different positions over a long period of time, he was "admirably placed to orchestrate the cross postings, nepotisms and dismissals of army officers by means of which (as he already knew from his own bitter experience) opposition could be hamstrung."[141] Martin Seymour further contends that it was for the murder of a favorite that Jadid held a grudge against the old leaders of the Ba'ath and the Syrian Communist Party, as well as 'all things Unionist,' an allusion to an earlier Syrian

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[140] Seymour, 38
[141] Seymour, 39

leadership. This led to Seymour's belief that "the power struggle in Syria [was] inspired by *revanchisme* on the part of the sectarian minorities, resentful of the millennial domination of the country by the Sunni majority and nostalgic for the periods of virtual autonomy they have occasionally enjoyed...."[142] Seymour also understands the contention that there was a social basis to the Alawite rise.[143] A social explanation would have taken into account the poor upbringing of most Alawites; the oppression by the notables, which in this case would have made it happenstance that they were Sunni, and the utilization of an economic/class conflict style of reasoning. Further complicating things, is the possibility that there was an ideological basis for the rise of Alawite coup politics.[144] Seymour isn't sure of this, since he believes the Ba'ath split during the coup years was one of pace and timing, as mentioned earlier, and this may be true.[145] However, ideology definitely played a role as a factor within the highly complicated structure of class status and sectarianism.

According to Hafiz Al-Assad's own history, he became a student leader at a very young age. At 16, Al-Assad joined the Ba'ath party under Dr. Wahib Al-Ghanim – the prime mover of Ba'athism in Latakia – and quickly rose to become a student leader.[146] At such an early age, it is undoubted that his time in the Ba'ath party must have created a strong resonance with Al-Assad of the pillars of the party; namely political secularism and economic socialism. Indeed, the main rivals in the town he went to school in, Latakia, were the Muslim Brotherhood with which he got into a number of altercations.[147]

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[142] Seymour, 39-40
[143] Seymour, 40
[144] See the earlier discussion of Pipes for an example.
[145] Seymour, 41
[146] Patterson, 29
[147] Patterson, 31

Even here, however, the trichotomy of ideology, sectarianhood, and class standing rears its ugly head. The Muslim Brotherhood's ideology was obviously strictly Islamic, which clashed with the secularism of the Ba'ath. Further, "In Latakia the Muslim Brothers were allied to the wealthy conservative Muslim families who ran the town and sent their sons to the school that Asad attended."[148] This indicates both an influence of class structure at an early age, as well as sectarianism, since the Muslim Brotherhood was (and remains) Sunni. Other examples in Hafiz Al-Assad's young life also hint at this relationship. For instance, it is likely that he wanted to become a doctor, however, for a man of his social background, which had links to his religion, this was unlikely to occur. As a result, he did what a number of other Alawites in the same boat did: they attempted to fill the void left in the wake of the departing French by joining the military. We can understand the link when we see what Patterson saw: "Since wealthy families steered their sons away from military careers, poor boys from minority backgrounds were able to rise to positions of authority in the army."[149]

The Alawites are a group only recently made privileged and many still remember the fight which it took to create that status. They did not become privileged until they took advantage of a string of good luck and situational factors which placed them into the institutions capable of creating their privileged status. The Ba'ath and the military were places for young minorities to get ahead in the world. This is evidenced by the ideology of the Ba'ath which allowed minority Alawites of poor backgrounds to gain an established place in the world. That this was garnered through a commitment to ideology

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[148] Patterson, 31
[149] Patterson, 35

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rather than failed uprisings is simply a byproduct of their new legitimacy. It is also evidenced by the case of the military and the departing French. The Ba'ath members made some very solid maneuvers, such as keeping themselves strong during the UAR period, and the Alawites were in a fantastic position to put other religious minorities into positions of power through the use of the military, which they accomplished with finesse, something they wouldn't have been able to do without the general disregard for the military which the majority held.

Pipes' concern that the Syrian leadership is for the most part Alawite is a neat way of explaining why Pipes believes that they are primarily about retaining power as a minority status.   Raymond Hinnebusch remarks with some disdain that this analysis is colored by Pipes' own goals with regard to foreign policy. Hinnebusch himself writes that "most experienced Syria-watchers would view this interpretation of Asad's objectives as an untenable oversimplification; certainly stronger cases have been made that policy-making is driven by other factors, such as Asad's nationalist reaction to the Israeli threat (Patrick Seale), class interests (Volker Perthes), or state interests (Hinnebusch)."[150] The truth is ardently subject to each of these analyses, and a more nuanced approach. As Mahmud A. Faksh writes about the social/cultural movement of some mountain and lowland Alawis into an achievement-oriented focus (i.e. the army and party): "The transition, however, does not necessarily entail a complete dissociation from traditional values and primordial feelings about the family, tribe or religious group, but rather a lessening in level of commitment."[151] Unless an individual is extremely disciplined, the

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[150] Hinnebusch Fallacies, 106
[151] Faksh, 137

advent of different structures on one's conscience will undoubtedly create new sets of interests and loyalties.

While many individuals have had access to Hafiz Al-Assad, few have written as much about him as Patrick Seale. As noted above, Seale's understanding of Al-Assad's motivations and policy decisions is placed firmly in the light of the conflict with Israel. There is certainly ample evidence to support this conclusion, most notably the idea that Al-Assad took personal responsibility for the loss of the Golan Heights. Seale was an active participant in the peace process, which gives him a unique, but perhaps slightly biased view. Nevertheless, Syrian-Israeli relations are heavily important to Syrian decision-making.

In 1973, when Al-Assad attempted to retake the Golan Heights, the Egyptians did not help matters much by refusing to push harder on their border with Israel. Al-Assad felt betrayed. It is widely understood now that Sadat's intention had never been to win by war, but rather to place himself in a more advantageous position diplomatically. The Israelis were able to focus on the Syrian front, eventually driving the Syrians to within miles of Damascus. In much the same way, Al-Assad was pulled into the peace process in the 90's with a firm commitment on Golan Heights withdrawal from Prime Minister Rabin, albeit with stipulated conditions of a severe nature. The president of Syria did not reject them, however. He responded back with what Secretary Warren Christopher of the United States, the intermediary, regarded as a positive response.[152] Rabin, however, would not hear anything of it. The offer was a ruse while the Israelis moved forward

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[152] Seale, 67

with Oslo without interference from Syria.[153] These instances highlight a number of issues: First, the importance of the Golan Heights to Hafiz Al-Assad. Second, they show the mentality towards trust in others that Al-Assad developed over time. The Palestinians were moving on their own, as were the Jordanians in 1994. His world must have looked very bleak towards the end of the late 90's as "it looked very much as if Syria was facing a new and threatening axis made up of Israel, Turkey, Jordan, *and* the United States."[154] Arab/Muslim solidarity was no longer a real option.

Seale's view of Al-Assad's foreign policy is one of containment.[155] Hafiz Al-Assad's deepening distrust for the international environment has led him towards Iran and towards sponsorship of what the international community views as terrorism. His use of Palestinian rejectionist groups and proxies in Lebanon has been to keep Israel from normalizing relations with all of its neighbors. Just like Vietnam in itself wasn't necessarily the goal when the USSR and the United States squared off; so Lebanon in itself isn't necessarily the goal in the proxy war between Israel and Syria. Certainly, control of Lebanon was important, both from the viewpoint that control gives to two rival powers looking to one-up one another, and also from the viewpoint that the Lebanese economy actually matters to Syria, or acts as a buffer state for Israel. To Al-Assad, the taking of the Golan, Sheba Farms, and vast tracts of the Sinai must have looked very much like expansion; the settlements in the territories were expansionary; and the rhetoric was expansionary. To Al-Assad, Operation Peace in Galilee in 1982 was "to give Israel a free hand to absorb the West Bank...kicking Syria out of Lebanon, and drawing that

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153 Seale, 68
154 Seale and Butler, 28
155 Seale and Butler, 27

country into its own sphere of influence under a Maronite vassal.[156] Operation Grapes of

Wrath in 1996 was similar: "destroy Hizballah (or pressure Syria into disarming it), wrest

Lebanon out of Syria's orbit, and deprive Syria of its regional influence."[157] In Seale's

view, containment is the obvious choice for Al-Assad, where first he tried strategic parity,

and when that didn't work due to factors like Israeli luck/skill in wars and the USSR

folding, he tried to push for a comprehensive peace.   The Madrid Peace Conference, the

Rabin offer, and even the Gulf war can be taken as signs of this.

  The impression that Hafiz Al-Assad has moved enthusiastically towards peace is

nonetheless a false one. He has been cautious in power ever since he refused to send his

air force into Jordan, precipitating a conflict between himself and Salah Jadid. Whether

his true motivation was containment of Israel or a return of the Golan, he nonetheless

passed on a series of policy decisions to his son that look very close to the tenets of a

realist. This is not to say that Syria's intentions or motivations are easily understood:

Syria is one of the more secretive regimes on the planet. However, it does mean that with

some amount of solid information we can make reasonable guesswork should we

eliminate or clarify some of the variables. These variables are important and consist of

the context of past decisions, which is discussed in this section, bureaucratic decision-

making and institutional relevance, discussed in the sections on the Ba'ath, Allawi and

Military. Bargaining amongst power players and a look at group politics are discussed

later, and leadership psyche is discussed in the final section. We can understand these

through examples ranging from the beginning of Hafiz's tenure to the current period.

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[156] Seale and Butler, 29
[157] Ibid.

Seale's containment theory is a good start to begin understanding Hafiz from a realist perspective. Bashar Al-Assad did not start from a clean slate. He inherited his father's country and his father's policies, which were derived from a certain perspective. According to Raymond Hinnebusch, the father may be described as the quintessential rational actor as defined by realist tenets.[158] As a result, he does what he believes is within the best interests of the nation. He has been uniquely situated to take unpopular positions in foreign policy due mainly to two reasons. First, his cult of personality status stems from the general public being largely obsessed with him. They held him up, not as public servant, but as a monarch or king. He was popularly loved. Second, his concentration of power within the figurehead of the presidency.[159] "He concentrated power in a virtually monarchical presidency through a strategy of balancing rival regime pillars and social forces."[160] Hinnebusch argues Al-Assad's strategy in domestic politics has allowed himself to run as uninhibited a foreign policy as there may exist. The Ba'ath party broke the power of the dominant classes, but imposed its own set of values; eventually broken by Al-Assad's control of the army. The bourgeoisie was pacified by liberalization, while dissident groups who challenged the regime were violently repressed.[161] As a result, his hold on foreign policy "is not subject to bureaucratic politics where hawkish or dovish factions must be consulted and can veto Asad's decisions...There are certain domestic constraints on the president but they are indirect: Political wisdom dictates that Asad take account of the *domestic* consequences of his

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[158] Hinnebusch, 43
[159] Hinnebusch, 47
[160] Hinnebusch, 44
[161] Hinnebusch, 44

foreign policy decisions."[162] Decisions like his hold on Lebanon, continued intransigence towards Israeli peace, and Palestinian rights.

At first glance, one might conclude that since Bashar inherited his father's regime, he too would fall into the same circumstances. The father, however, had a greater lock on the institutions and power mechanisms of government and society. Many of the same problems still face Syria, but Bashar's personal situation is much changed. The domestic couch he sits on is of a different color and fabric. He has to take into account the more powerful elements in Syria associated with the old guard, which, despite the peaceful transition from father to son, nevertheless took some of the power. And yet a part of Bashar's requirements for legitimacy impel him towards the policies of his father. He is thus caught between his tendency towards some degree of reform, and the needs required to stay in power, combined with a prominent position in the Middle East. This sets the stage for a difficult and intriguing dynamic.

"Qa'idna, Mithalna, Amalna"

Bashar's origins are in some cases highly transparent and a matter of public record, and in other cases a virtual morass of opinion and dark corners. He was born the middle child of five, with an older brother and sister, Basil and Bushra, and two younger brothers, Majid and Mahir. He grew up more in the academic model than in the heir apparent model, went to Medical school at Damascus University in 1982, served out his military service as an army doctor after graduating in 1988, and moved to the United Kingdom in 1992 for postgraduate work in ophthalmology at Western Eye Hospital. In

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[162] Hinnebusch, 44

1994, Bashar's older brother Basil died in a car crash outside Damascus International Airport. Bashar returned to Syria, was integrated into the army, and began an upwards track of promotion. He went through a course for tank battalion commanders, was promoted to major in early 1995, enrolled at the Higher Military Academy in 1996 and graduated with honors in mid-1997. Bashar was then promoted to lieutenant colonel and put in the same position as his brother had been in; commander of an elite Republican Guard brigade. In 1999, Bashar was promoted to staff colonel.[163]

Hafiz Al-Assad died on June 10th, 2000, and Bashar's transition to the Presidency was practically seamless. Though the moves the government took behind the scenes are largely opaque, the show of support by key individuals is indicative of continued loyalty, as is the replacement of key individuals throughout the government just prior to the elder Assad's death. For example, Bashar began "appearing at military ceremonies and events with Defense Minister Mustafa Tlas."[164] Lieutenant General 'Ali Aslan, deputy chief of staff, was supportive of Bashar as he carried out military maneuvers alongside the top brass of the Syrian Military.[165] Major General 'Ali Haydar, chief of the special forces, was replaced in 1994 after coming out in opposition to any hereditary succession, and Major General 'Adnan Makhluf resigned after a falling out with Bashar.[166] In 1998, Rifa't Al-Assad was dismissed as second vice-president. Flynt Leverett sees a similar restructuring to make way for Bashar in the intelligence and security agencies: Major General Bashir Najjar, head of the General Intelligence Directorate (GID) was replaced by General 'Ali Khuri in mid 1998, two officers close to Bashar in the military "were

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[163] Leverett, 61
[164] Ibid.
[165] Leverett, 61-62
[166] Leverett, 62

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placed in charge of the directorate's internal and external branches," and supposedly came

to eventually overcome in influence their superior; Major General Muhammad Nassif.[167]

Loyal members of the family, like Bushra's husband, were elevated quickly.

The way Syrians view the succession versus how the outside world views it was

highlighted by David W. Lesch. Though Leverett hits greater depths to Syrian society,

power politics, and arguably even Bashar himself, Lesch nonetheless garnered a close

insight to the character of the Syrian president through multiple interviews. He was able

to speak with Bashar, and his wife Asma, as well as do interviews with a number of

individuals close to the family. Though there isn't a strong denunciation of the thought

that there may be succession of father to son, it just doesn't seem to have been discussed.

The death of his brother appeared to be a wake up call whereby, according to Bashar, he

experienced the possibility that he could help individuals, and that he could fight

corruption, as more and more of Syria's people looked to him for guidance. However, a

most telling example for the argument that Bashar was being groomed came a year after

Basil's death, when pictures of the martyred son began to be replaced with a targeted

campaign involving Hafiz', Basil's, and Bashar's pictures that read: Qa'idna, Mithalna,

Amalna, or "our leader, our ideal, and our hope."[168] Flynt Leverett's analysis of

performance and speech in the early period of Bashar's grooming is an example of an

evolving acceptance of his role following the return to Syria. Leverett asserts that his

performance was "frequently lackluster and uncommitted" but changed to become

"increasingly interested in his duties and committed to the tasks ahead" by the late

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[167] Leverett, 62-63
[168] Leverett, 63

1990s.[169]

Two key interests for Bashar before his assuming the presidency were his work on corruption and his having been handed the vaunted 'Lebanon File.' The corruption campaign was an overt attempt to enable the institutions of the government to work in a more ideal manner, eliminating government fraud and waste. It is likely, however, that it was also a smokescreen to rid the government of those not amenable to a succession, such as the aforementioned head of he GID who was imprisoned on corruption charges, and Mahmud Al-Zu'bi, a man Bashar was able to get replaced during his father's rule with his future first prime minister: Mustafa Miru.[170] It also allowed Bashar to be viewed positively by the public in a campaign for an issue that was important to them. With respect to his other major duty, Lebanon has been widely heralded as economically crucial to Syria, as well as being the all important proxy arena in Syria's status as spoiler and the greater battle with Israel. That Bashar was entrusted with the operations and policies for Lebanon is a testament to his continuing moves up the governmental ladder.

A Discussion of Syria's Institutions

Hafiz Al-Assad kept to his pragmatic ways in his decision to cater to the masses by implementing what Volker Perthes refers to as a 'consultative, quasi-corporatist' strategy of combining a response to the need for openness and participation in government with the requirement that the state function as a means of addressing needs for people.[171] As a result, in the 1990's there was a small push for more independents in

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[169] Leverett, 65
[170] Leverett, 62-65
[171] Perthes 'Remodeling,' 18

parliament; an institution with little legislative power but which serves its purpose to the regime to identify the needs of their local constituencies, and to build connections amongst themselves and others in the vast bureaucracy. They are an attempt by the government to form action channels for its citizens by taking advantage of policy entrepreneurs with a strong desire to make local change. However, they have little actual legislative power due to a variety of reasons. The most important of these reasons is the implementation of Article 113, which gives the President broad, overarching and absolute powers in the case of national emergency. This article has been invoked since 1960.[172] The People's Assembly is an institution which lends credence to the critique that Al-Assad placates with a thin veneer of legitimacy, since the people have a very limited check on the Presidency regarding legislation. Regarding legitimacy, the People's Assembly would have little determining factor in a bargaining model that pitted the legislative and executive branches against one another. As a result, the first principle has very little weight here. However, that does not mean it lacks legitimacy elsewhere.

Bureaucracy is a necessary institution in any modern society, but in Syria it represents an arduous and cumbersome creature, morass-like in its speed and ridiculous in its utilization of red tape. Individuals at the lowest levels of society, for entrepreneurial activities or even traveling, must get permission from the highest levels of the bureaucracy. Indeed, Volker Perthes argues that even the lower level employees of the bureaucracy, rather than making decisions themselves, will often punt the decision to superiors rather than take the risk of doing something wrong.[173] This has led to a culture

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[172] Found Online at http://countrystudies.us/syria/49.htm
[173] Perthes 'Limits of Change,' 23

of indecisive decision-makers. There is, however, an indirect connection here between the bureaucratic framework and the invisible layer of decision manipulators. The corruption caused by the latter often creates and/or takes advantage of the corruption within the former. As a result, Bashar's central role in corruption fighting prior to his Presidency was meant to get rid of his competition/detractors, and stabilize his base of support. Later, during his Presidency, the need to reform the bureaucracy through the use of both training and advisors became a two-pronged assault designed to give him more latitude in decision-making. The fourth principle of bargaining would indicate that Bashar utilized this method to secure his own goals, even if it is a blunt description of 'bargaining.' This is also an example in usurpation of the rational-legal authority in favor of a short-lived charismatic authority in the form of the leader. Power will eventually transfer back to the former authority, but when, at what cost and with what amount of legitimacy will be correlated directly with Bashar's ability to work the Syrian system.

Perthes identifies a disconnect after Hafiz Al-Assad's presidency; a break in which the son required more power to be put directly into his hands due to his own peculiar traits. Despite the oft-heard analysis of Bashar that he maintains his father's legacy, he is not his father. Hafiz himself took power away from the party by way of his charisma and personal leadership. According to Perthes, Bashar is doing it by building up the state institutions and requiring that the Ba'ath party take a backseat.[174] This is an example of Bashar attempting to regulate the complexity of joint action seen on two of the three spokes on the Syrian wheel of power. In other words, he uses his own authoritative legitimacy to push lawful institutions at the expense of traditional powers.

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[174] Perthes 'Limits of Change,' 26

Perthes identification of the Syrian regime's modus operandi is a credit to his writing: the role of the state institution is to foster development in a cause which the President has deemed doable, namely updating and modernizing the economic practices of Syria. All manner of critics in the regime want him to reform the authoritarian practices of his government, but this is not in his cards.[175] The regime has highlighted change in one area, in the context of staying the same in another. The effect is the underwriting of stability given the unique circumstances of an invisible layer, in a move that pushes slowly towards the dissolution of their power. For Bashar, as it was for Hafiz, it is a game of gradual and measured steps.

The men really affecting Bashar's ability to govern, either positively or negatively, do so primarily in the context of the reform vs. conservative movement. There are, as mentioned, a number of other variables including the sectarian and ideological ones. These lines follow the traditional Allawi need for safety and security, and the Ba'athist requirement of socialism within an Arab nationalist context. However, because of the perceived status of Bashar as a reformer, sides have hardened along the aforementioned old guard vs. new guard (Bashar appointees) lines: what some business profiles refer to as the visible vs. invisible layer. As a result, we see moves like at the Ba'athist regional conference where it was publicly stated that the Ba'ath party would take a smaller role in public governance, and we see elements of what has been popularly referred to as the merchant-military nexus; a coalition of Sunni businessmen and Allawi military who keep one another wealthy and strong.

The Ba'ath and merchant-military nexus are still institutions which must be dealt

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[175] Ibid

with. The Ba'ath party appoints Ministers of Parliament rather than electing them. In addition, the Ba'ath as an institution represents "an assembly of party dignitaries: the heads of all important mass organizations; additional members of the Trade Union Federation and the Peasant Union executives; the prime minister; other members of the party's regional and national commands; some provincial governors; and some artists and journalists," as well as the occasional professor.[176] This has been a solid tool for the Assads to control what Perthes refers to as the active elements of civil society.[177] The Ba'ath has always been the major party in Syria, as the figurative head of the National Progressive Front, a group of left leaning parties with officially approved status. They are an institution with some formal power, and a great deal of informal power. Reflecting the second principle of bargaining having to do with informal power, Bashar's ability to handle (or not handle) the Ba'ath will have a direct affect upon his ability to make gains for his agenda in Syria.

More informally strong, the merchant-military nexus was cultivated by Hafiz Al-Assad in an attempt not to weaken the power of the Allawi, but rather to strengthen the base of his support to include the traditional Sunni merchant class. This institution is one which is heavily tied into that of the military, with each keeping the other strong, wealthy and with a comfortable modicum of power. It doesn't have ties to the old guard in so much as it is intermeshed with the old guard. This layer is the network of power nobles with influence, the base of support first for the father, and now for the son. It is an obfuscated layer, a hazy layer which simultaneously backs the new President and opposes

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[176] Perthes 'Remodeling,' 17
[177] Perthes 'Limits of Change,' 12

him. It is a charged energy combining the domestic push-and-pull with the conglomerated interests of position, power, wealth and authority. These interests often conflict on multiple levels. For example, it is in the interest of the Sunni merchants to support Bashar because he represents continuity, but it is also in their interest to oppose what are often viewed as his more reform-minded acts or appointments.

The institutions will not always be there, or necessarily continue to put up with their perception of a reform-minded President. Faiza R. Rais states:

> The paradox being that a fundamental change in Syria produced by economic and political reforms will undermine the very elements of power in Syria (the army, security services, Ba'ath party and the political and economic elites) that sustain the regime. At the same time stability-ensuring mechanisms that [Hafiz] Assad put in place are fast running out of steam in the face of the fast-paced developments affecting the region as a whole and impacting on Syria as well.[178]

Rais maintained that it was actually Hafiz Al-Assad's personality that kept things in place, rather than "'deep-rooted political traditions.'"[179] Rais didn't deny the existence of power structures, however, and instead attempted to figure out whether or not Bashar has indeed been able to maneuver within those same institutions which his father had been able to control so well. Rais' conclusion is that in the case of Bashar, the system rather than the man seems to be more dominant. It is more the case of a man working through the system, rather than the man controlling the system outright. The application of a

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[178] Rais, 1
[179] Ibid

bargaining model would have strong significance in this regard, if it weren't for a major lack of transparency and openness in Syria. Rais mentions this dichotomy in somewhat the same way one would speak about a two-party system. There are the formal structures of the "presidency, cabinet, the People's assembly, the Baath party, and the informal state structures in the background that in effect are the main decision-making centres i.e. the security services, the Republican Guard and individuals who serve as advisors to Bashar."[180] The Alawites head all four security services. The Republican Guard has traditionally been the protector of the dominant regime; and the 'Inner Circle' is made up of those surrounding Bashar Al-Assad. It is these structures which Bashar must deal with in order to wield the same level of power as his father.

There are issues with defining the elements of bargaining in the Syrian political-power system. The invisible layer is one of those, and is thus called because of Syria's heavy authoritarian status. Though there has been a loosening to some degree recently in the ability of journalists to get and spread information, the regime is highly circumspect in its transparency and release of information: "An outsider looking in would find Syria to be one of the most inscrutable countries in the world."[181] However, we can attempt to identify some of these players, and in addition can define the strategies Bashar uses (and likely uses behind the scenes) to bargain, as well as establish control and effective power. This primarily revolves around his dealings with actual people who make up the aforementioned institutions.

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[180] Rais, 6
[181] Gale Group, Cengage Learning.
      Found at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6512/is_3_45/ai_n28992083/?tag=content;col1

<u>Lesser Players and What They Mean for Syria</u>

Bargaining takes form in many ways and for many reasons. Regarding the second principle of bargaining, we may look upon Bashar's abilities to place individuals in key positions of power as a test of his political ability. Individual regime loyalists and foes are a strong part of the Syrian system. Prime Minister Mustafa Miro was appointed in early 2000 and was considered somewhat conservative in orientation, but was nonetheless close to Bashar. There is some evidence that Bashar wanted to make him a Vice-President, but the job ended up falling to Khaddam after the old guard exerted their influence. Miro and his technocrats apparently did the job that the President had little understanding of: reforming institutions of government. All the while his was a job of attempting to please both President and those of the 'invisible layer.'[182] Ultimately, his government was criticized for the slow pace of reform, though this may have had quite a deal to do with Dr. Muhammad Al-Hussain, a conservative loyalist who opposed a number of reforms wanted by the IMF and World Bank.[183] Miro was replaced by Muhammad Naji Al-Utri, a former speaker of parliament and a Ba'ath party fixture. While Al-Utri is considered to be a firm advocate for reform, the pace is still measured. He is viewed as a compromise "between old guard party loyalists and the supporters of political and economic modernization."[184] This compromise exemplifies the continued back and forth struggle for control in the governmental politics process.

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[182] Gale, Cengage Learning.
   Found at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6512/is_3_45/ai_n28992085/?tag=content;col1
[183] Gale Group
   Found at http://www.thefreelibrary.com/SYRIA+-+Profile+-+Dr.+Mohammed+Al+Hussain.-a084966819
[184] Jane's Intelligence Review
      Found at http://www.janes.com/extracts/extract/emedsu/syris020.html

Indicating the third principle in bargaining, the final pieces in Bashar's transition to President occurred when Defense Minister Tlas and Vice President Khaddam "called the generals and key figures in the *mukhabarat [*intelligence organization] to make sure everything was secure before announcing Bashar's 'candidacy.'"[185] In this case, the key for communication here is the intelligence and defense apparatus, and the carriers are those powerful individuals who were on Bashar's side; namely members of the old guard looking to protect their entrenched position.

This line of communication has been perpetuated through the path of lineage. The Defense Minister's son, Manaf Tlas, along with Bashar's brother, Mahir Al-Assad, are both now leaders of the Republican Guard, the most elite fighting unit in Syria.[186] Khaddam's son is close to Bashar. However, his father only a few years ago left his post and his command in the Ba'ath party, then broke with his former government and implicated it in the murder of Rafik Hariri.[187] The replacing of Khaddam was part of a general shake-up of the old guard. Asef Shawkat, the husband of Bushra Al-Assad, now Bashar's brother-in-law, was confirmed in 2005 as the head of military intelligence. Bassam Haddad believes that the heads of General Security, Military Security and the Republican Guard are the most powerful positions in the country, and thus changes indicate the level at which both the reformers and conservatives wax and wane, with a major purge since 2000 of men considered anti-Bashar.[188] This is an example of Bashar utilizing the means he has available to influence his personal group's 'guest list;' placing individuals of trust into positions of power over institutions, giving them the enhanced

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[185] Lesch, 79
[186] Haddad, 4-5
[187] Armanazi, 3
[188] Haddad, 4-5

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legitimacy that is required of a marriage between charismatic and rational-legal authority, or the power of personality over laws and bureaucracy. This is an example of the supreme faith that institutions matter, but that people can be united with those same institutions to create a country's changing apparatus. This was Bashar's attempt to gain greater control over institutions through the use of individuals at the group level.

Haddad's nuanced conclusion is that the old guard is making way for the new guard. While we may treat this as prudent analytical speculation, the nomenclature is deceptive. Those surrounding Bashar should probably not be described as a reform-minded group first and foremost, so much as one based around preservation of the dominant Ba'ath/Allawi/merchant-military complex legacies. Some individuals more than likely are truly reform minded, and shake-ups continue to occur regularly. The power involved with shake-ups is an example of Bashar's formal power in the context of bargaining's fourth principle. Namely that Bashar is intending to have an effect upon the general discourse by exercising his ability to make changes; at the head of figurehead institutions, in the leadership positions of groups, or in major organizations.

A recent shake-up was made notable in April of 2009 by the placement of a woman, Kawkab al-Sabah Dayeh, at the head of the new Environmental Ministry. Other major changes include Saeed Sammur's (a former intelligence officer) taking over of the position of Interior Minister – notable because the man who was replaced was Bassam Abdel Majeed, a major General who graduated from the Air Force Academy. Judge Ahmad Yunis took over as Minister of Justice.[189] Yunis headed the controversial

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[189] Syria Today News
Found at http://www.syria-today.com/index.php/may-2009/298-news/1424-syrian-cabinet-reshuffle-new-environment-ministry-established

Economic Security Courts, which fell under the emergency executive powers law and heard cases of financial crime but did not safeguard victim's rights.[190] These are examples of the push-pull in politicking that consistently searches for a meld of institutions with particular personalities.

Situations, Causal Attributes/Abilities, and Rationality

The situational perspective deserves discussion for three reasons. First, a look at how situations have been handled in the past can give insight into the thinking of the Syrian decision-making process. Second, the saliency of many of these past situations is still high. They have yet to be fully resolved, have changed in what may be described as a small manner, or have direct implications for current issues. Third and most important, situations are the best avenue to view rational actor model, since they hint at why countries balance, their value is seen in their decisions, and conclusions can be made about rationality.

When Bashar took office, the situational climate did not reset or change overnight simply because of the new personality. Indeed, the political climate was made even more conservative by the fact that the foreign policy advisorship did not change much. The domestic system, on the other hand, was Bashar's first attempt at reform. Both the domestic and the foreign have implications for an analysis of Bashar Al-Assad; these may be seen in how the President affects policy, and why, and how the President is acted upon by external stimuli, permitting a glimpse of his leadership style in how he chooses to

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[190] Jurist Legal Intelligence
    Found at http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/world/syria.htm

react, frame and set the agenda.

Since Hafiz Al-Assad has already been discussed to some respect as a valid model for rational acting, let us now consider the case of the son in a more comprehensive light. First, the situational characteristics have changed in the decade since his death, but only in certain circumstances. The first test of the RAM method is an understanding of its relevance from a balance of power perspective. Syria's needs in this type of system have not been greatly altered. It is true that Iraq is not the powerful player it once was, and Saudi Arabia's power as a heavy weight is continuing to rise, but Syria's balancing remains in opposition to Israel. Syria holds onto alliances with Iran, and through Iran, Hizbullah, for just such a purpose. Lebanon remains a traditional battleground in the war between the two. As a result, a more in-depth review of the tenuous balance Syria attempts to maintain in the region is warranted.

Eyal Zisser wrote in 2001 about the Lebanon-Syria-Israel Triangle, where he believed the most "important developments in the last year have occurred."[191] The inherited situation saw the Geneva summit fail to make good on Syrian-Israeli peace. An Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon escalated anti-Syrian rhetoric, as did Hafiz' death.[192] This was due largely to the backlash against a power vacuum which never really came to fruition, but was expected nonetheless. Zisser explains that the negotiations in the 1990's were able to at least allow the possibility of peace to be ushered in. Given these developments, along with Bashar's honeymoon period outside Syria as a potential reform leader, the climate in 2001 was one of possible change and heightened (though not

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[191] Zisser, 1
[192] Zisser, 1-2

in all cases) expectation.

Syria and Lebanon, as two points on the triangle the Israelis desperately want to keep apart, have had a long and contorted history together. Brought into Syria at the request of the Lebanese leadership during the Lebanese civil war in the 1970's, they stayed, rhetorically to keep the peace, but also for nationalistic, economic and sphere-of-influence reasons. These include a sentiment of brotherly partnership in maintaining the idea of a 'Greater Syria,' economic integration between the two countries, and the need to continue its proxy battle with Israel over Palestine, the Golan Heights and the Sheba Farms. Syrian presence was felt for a long time throughout the country, but after a series of limited withdrawals, their military was relegated primarily to the Beka'a Valley. Syrian presence nevertheless remains elsewhere, in the form of the intelligence services, Lebanese allies, and Hizbullah.

The assassination of Rafik Hariri is understandably the major developmental point in Syrian-Lebanese relations during Bashar's presidency. Hariri was the primary opposition to Emile Lahoud's extra-constitutional extension as President, which Syria was pushing for. As a result, Syria was the prime suspect when Hariri was killed in a massive explosion on February 14th, 2005. Denials were extensive on the part of both Syria and Syria's Lebanese allies. David Lesch believes that Bashar did not have a hand in the assassination. He writes, "I suspect that elements within the Syrian and Lebanese military-security apparatus independently ordered and arranged it."[193] Lesch uses as evidence to support his assertion that "throughout the fall of 2004 and into early 2005, Bashar became more cooperative with the United States, clearly signaled his readiness to

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[193] Lesch, 129

reenter peace negotiations with Israel, and stepped up efforts to prevent insurgents from entering Iraq." Bashar had apparently handed the 'Lebanon file' over to Walid Mouallim in January of 2005, a Syrian viewed as a moderate and a positive move towards Syrian-Lebanese relations.[194] The implication is that Mouallim was handed 'official' policy in Lebanon just before the assassination, making it unlikely that the assassination had official sanction given his views.

Prior to the assassination, Syria had been the target of UN resolution 1559, which sought the removal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. Syria had also been targeted by the United States' Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Restoration Act, an attempt at containing Syria's economic interests as well as being a sharp denunciation of its policies. As a direct result, Bashar ended up being more conciliatory regarding Iraq. As a result of the assassination, Bashar ended up being conciliatory regarding the withdrawal of troops in Lebanon. It would not be difficult to come to the conclusion that Bashar can be moved easily by external assertions of power. However, certain evidence should be weighed and tested for a different conclusion. Bashar had already begun withdrawing troops on a number of occasions before the final pull-out.[195] It is likely that the moves by outside powers simply ushered in a faster withdrawal. Keeping Syrian troops within Lebanon was not viewed as particularly vital to Syria. If this is true, then it is likely that, rather than being a regime known for its 'spoiler' modus operandi, Bashar actually seeks to push towards a more stable equilibrium as it relates to international norms and his own domestic constituency, all with an eye towards pursuing goals on a gradualist time-table.

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[194] Lesch, 129-130
[195] Leverett, 107

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This may be understood in terms of value maximization. The leader of Syria is interested in making the best choice for his country, which may be viewed from a dispassionate perspective. The previous equilibrium idea can be illustrated by a further discussion of the regional Lebanon-Syria-Israel triangle.

The question then, of why these interests and choices rank so high in Syria's payoff function is of crucial importance. Syria views the Israelis as naturally, and by virtue of historical factors, having the upper hand in the region. Consequently, Perthes' vision of Syrian motivation adds weight to the international and domestic norm equilibrium argument: "Lebanon, in particular, must preserve its pro-Syrian stability, lest it fall under Israeli influence. Generally, Syria's approach to Arab-Israeli issues is driven by a zero-sum logic which holds that Israeli gains in terms of security, economic resources or political relations constitute a relative loss for the Arab side."[196] This is a solid example of the type of value that Syria places on Lebanon, and why Bashar, from the RAM perspective, chooses to place Lebanon and intransigence against Israel at such a high level of value. Syrian motives have been referred to as that of spoiler. The regime has been classed with those being rogue. Bashar himself has been referred to as 'the evil-eye doctor.'[197] In reality, Perthes' argument illuminates Bashar's understanding of the realities of his situation: that Bashar needs aid from other Arab countries who view Syria as the front line to Israeli resistance; that his own constituency is primarily made up of powerful 'invisible' or 'old guard' elements who seek to maintain the Allawi/Ba'ath/merchant-military complex; that a popular mandate exists through a

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[196] Perthes, 43
[197] Lesch, xi

nationalistic creed. All of these views highlight the pragmatic heirloom in Hafiz's personality that was passed onto his son. All of these views further point to a picture of Bashar as rational actor.

Bashar's choices also extend into the economic field. Lebanon and Syria are tied together by several thick strands, some of which elaborate on the pragmatic association of Syria with its sister country. Christopher Hemmer writes, "Lebanon remains economically vital to the Asad regime. Its relatively freer economic climate offers an outlet for the Syrian business class, it provides an important source of income for the military commanders stationed in Lebanon, and thousands of Syrians travel to Lebanon to find work."[198] Smuggling in the case of the military officers, liberal Lebanese banks and financial institutions for Syria's business elite, and the labor industry for over half a million Syrian laborers as of 2001.[199] This number was estimated to be around a million between 2003 and 2005, when growing violence against Syrian laborers began to pick up after the Hariri Assassination, due to an increase in the level of anxiety about Syrian encroachment. About 15% of Syria's labor force is working in Lebanon, mostly as construction workers.[200] This economic tie limits the suggestion that Lebanon is only an arena for a proxy battle with Israel. Israel undoubtedly knows what Lebanon is to Syria economically, and the Syrian elite can certainly fathom the economic difficulties of a world in which Lebanon has moved away from Syria towards Israel. This is not to say that Lebanon ever will move away from Syria, or even has the capability. It suggests that it is a fear held by the Syrian old guard, perhaps seemingly misplaced. However, the

[198] Hemmer, 232
[199] Ghadbian, 3
[200] UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Found at
http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=83900

region without a paranoid Syrian elite could eventually change the face of the region. This suggests, again, value maximization.

The Syrian economy has been hurting for some time. Bashar's father attempted to liberalize certain aspects of the economy by making the climate for foreign investment more advantageous. Bashar has continued some amount of liberalization by unifying the exchange rate, bringing the information age to Syria through the use of the internet and new laws to allow private banks.[201] The State Planning Commission announced in 2004 that Syria will take on the foundations of a market economy by 2010, though at the Ba'ath Regional Conference the words were slightly different: social market economy.[202] However, Bashar's major motivation has been job creation. With 45% of Syria's population being under age 15, the labor force growing at twice the speed of job creation, and many jobs being in the inefficient public sector, there is a distinct need for job creation policies.[203]

The global financial crisis has not affected Syria to a strong degree. However, Syrian growth is still expected to slow from around 5% in 2008 to around 2% in 2009 due to "the global and regional economic slowdown" due to "reducing workers' remittances, tourism, FDI and exports."[204] Syria will also post a 3% current account deficit of GDP after a small surplus, and a fiscal deficit which is set to decline to 5.5% of GDP. Inflation is also set to fall to 8.5%, down from 15.6% in 2008.[205] The above accumulated does not represent a rosy picture for the Syrian economy, but it is far from

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[201] Hemmer, 226
[202] Haddad, 7
[203] Hemmer 226
[204] Oxford Economic Country Briefings, Mar 16, 2009. 1
[205] Ibid.

dire.

More recently, Bashar has shifted tactics. Perthes writes, "The need to put Syria's foreign relations to the service of economic recovery and modernization has meant cultivating relations with the EU and its member states, and making the best use of regional opportunities for trade and cooperation."[206] He has begun creating closer relations with Turkey, where a joint bank is being considered, with Jordan, where the Joint Jordanian-Syrian Higher Committee may sign agreements for grain exports, industrial cooperation and technical cooperation on energy and power, and with the EU, where the Syrian-EU Association Agreement is being hammered out. Saudi Arabia's king Abdullah recently visited Syria in a move that signals warming relations between the two countries. Qatar helped to quiet anger at Syria over Lebanon at the Doha Agreement in 2008.[207] This all comes on the heels of beneficial trade with Iraq prior to the 2003 invasion, which Bashar also pushed. However, since some members associated with the Syrian government were implicated in a string of bombings in Iraq during 2009, and since the difficulties with the Iraqi-Syrian border, relations have cooled.

These decisions to engage a number of countries reflect consistent value maximizing choice, which changed from father to son. Relations with a number of these countries were previously stormy, but the indications point towards a desire to see more trade in the region between Syria and its neighbors, given that most non-oil related exports and imports are with other Arab countries. This marks a shift in the relations between countries as they existed under Hafiz. For example, Hafiz and Jordan's King

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[206] Perthes *Modernization*, 44
[207] Phillips, Christopher. *A Non-Negotiable Friendship.*
  Found at http://www.majalla.com/en/geopolitics/article4204.ece

Hussein often clashed over political issues, which caused an economic rift. However, Bashar, and Hussein's successor Abdullah, are now working on such joint projects as electricity grids, dam projects and even water delivery.[208] When Syria and Turkey almost went to war in 1998 over Syrian support for Kurdish insurgents, relations between the countries were at an all time low. However, after the Adana agreement, relations improved under Hafiz and then under Bashar, despite Turkey's military cooperation with Israel.[209] Recently, though the regime denies any politicization behind the move, Turkey postponed a military exercise with Israel.[210] Syria, on the other hand, held joint military exercises with Turkey in April of 2009, and according to Defense Minister Ali Habbib, plans to hold 'more comprehensive' ones at a later date.[211]

Iran is a special case for Syria. Having signed a mutual defense pact in 2004 (largely wished for by the Syrians after the 2003 Iraq invasion), they then signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2006 which called for mutual defense against threats emanating from the US and Israel.[212] The two were brought close based on a number of factors; a shi'a leadership, a falling out between Syria and Iranian rival Iraq over Ba'athist ideology, support for Iran during the Iran-Iraq war, and proxy use of Hizbullah within Lebanon. The major problem with getting closer to Iran, as Bashar has come to find out, is the fifth principle in bargaining, namely that it is possible for country A to affect the domestic politics of country B. Iran's tacit alliance with Syria, recently made more concrete, is a powerful example of a two-level game. Iran and Syria both have levels of

[208] Perthes *Modernisation,* 46
[209] Ibid.
[210] Stratfor, October 12, 2009
[211] Stratfor, October 13, 2009
[212] Jane's Intelligence Review
        Found at http://www.janes.com/defence/news/jdw/jdw060627_1_n.shtml

control over Hizbullah, and Hizbullah has an effect upon Israel. Iran's use of Hizbullah means they have a bargaining chip in domestic politics which can force Syria to play ball in both its domestic choices for policy and reform, and its foreign policy choices related to Lebanon.

There have been times, however, where Syria's relationship with its Arab benefactors, like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, meant it has opposed some Iranian policies. Emile el-Hokayem writes that "They have diverging interests when things are good in the region...but when things deteriorate, they have obvious reasons to come together."[213]

The consistent ability to be able to understand Bashar in terms of his desire to maximize value in his preferences, in addition to the choices made regarding balance of power in the region, all point to a rational perspective. Of course Bashar must be understood from the perspective of a bounded rational utility whereby we cannot be certain that he sees choice from this perspective. It is difficult enough to decide in an analysis using RAM methods whether or not he is right. The analysis above seems clear enough to assert that a Rational Actor Model can help to explain choices, and thus was frequently used by many of the writers above to analyze Syria's choices.

Attempting to understand Syrian interest, however, without taking into account the mindset of Bashar Al-Assad, is counterproductive – particularly because of bounded rationality. Christopher Phillips writes, "Bashar al-Asad repeatedly has spoken of his desire to form a bridge between the Islamic Republic and the West whether peace with Israel is secured or not. In short, the Iran connection gives Syria a regional role, allowing

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[213] Esther Pan, *Syria, Iran, and the Mideast Conflict*
Found at http://www.cfr.org/publication/11122/

it to play the moderate younger brother to temper Tehran's tantrums."[214] Phillips critique

asserts that Syria does not have a client-state relationship with Iran, because Syria is not

dependent upon Iran in either the political, military or economic sphere. They may not be

dependent upon Iran in those regards, but Bashar is dependent upon the old guard, who

consider it within their interest to maintain ties to Iran. These ties, difficult to see, can

nonetheless cause the Syrian President to move in ways that may be against a 'Syrian

national interest.'

In terms of Rational Actor Model, it is difficult to fully come to grips with how

Syria has changed since the time of Hafiz. Situational factors have changed, making the

balance different and the choices associated with that balance different. Further, value

preferences have changed as a result of a new power structure and new international

norm requirements like the war on terror.

Conclusion

An in-depth analysis of Bashar Al-Assad must take into account all three methods

described by Allison and Zelikow. This does not mean that all of their methods can be

used, as indeed, group discussion has been minimal at best in the preceding chapter.

However, with the use of the theories in chapter I as a primer, Chapter II has had a

number of solid methodologies from which to set its base.

Using Rational Actor Model, we were able to see Bashar much as his father had

been described by writers before him; as a rational leader who can be dissected using

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[214] Phillips
        Found at http://www.majalla.com/en/geopolitics/article4204.ece

concepts like value maximization and balancing. Without really understanding Bashar's mind, the model was helpful in determining, through the situational perspective, the extent to which Bashar will make specific strategic decisions and his ability to calculate from a 'rational' perspective.

Model II was helpful in understanding the institutions at work in Syrian society. From a Model II perspective, it was essential to understand the history and progress of state institutions like the Ba'ath, Military and the Allawi. These three longstanding institutions in Syrian society have cultural, bureaucratic and political connotations which cannot be ignored. However, rather than use this piece as a stand-alone, it was very helpful to take the institutional qualities of Syria and match them up against the bargaining aspects of Model III.

Model III bargaining sets the scene by which the actors in Syria penetrate the decision making process. As described initially by a discussion of older decision-making theories like those of Snyder and Brecher, it is apparent that decision-making causes action, which in turn causes reaction at different levels of Syrian society. It has become possible to see which actions cause reaction within the state, by players within the invisible layer, and even some which cause reaction outside of the state, such as in the regional battle with Israel.

However, in order to understand to a more intricate degree how Bashar may be influenced, what sorts of initiatives he will propose, and how he will act as Syria's president, a more in-depth analysis of quantifiable speech analysis is essential. This

speech analysis will help to create a psychological profile whereby preference ordering

and value maximization are understood in the context of Syria's leader.

Chapter III

<u>Quantitative Designs in Psychological Profiling</u>

   The main quantitative form for the analysis of individual leaders comes through

speech evaluation. Speech evaluation is the closest method in at-a-distance analysis to

being able to place a leader 'on the couch,' so to speak. These quantitative methods have

the ability to take the written or spoken word, break it down into component parts, set it

up against a control group, and come up with a method whose results are repeatable.

This section will describe three different methods of quantitative analysis for use, two of

which it will be possible to use on Bashar Al-Assad. Specifically, we will identify the

methods of integrative complexity scoring, trait coding from text, and a process known as

operational code analysis.

   The collection of speech writing samples is not as simple as it first seems. The

selectivity of speeches is important and each method has roughly similar patterns. Walter

Weintraub writes that "To obtain spontaneous speech samples, transcribed news

conferences and personal interviews are used. Their use is based upon the assumption

that the stress generated by such encounters is roughly comparable to what subjects

experience when speaking without interruption for ten minutes."[215] This is done to

simulate the process that is required for spontaneity to be established, which calls upon

the subject's use of set cognitive patterns and held beliefs. On the other hand, there has

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[215] Weintraub, 140

been a study which shows that prepared statements, even those prepared by a speech

writer, are roughly analogous to spontaneous remarks, at least in the field of integrative

complexity. This finding, however, remains "tentative."[216] As a result, each of these

quantitative designs will follow as closely as possible the original intention of each

method. Where some comparative value is lost, an attempt will nonetheless be made to

bridge the outcomes into a cohesive analysis of leadership potential.

Integrative Complexity[217]

Understanding the level of complexity is a key point in quantitative text analysis

and is divided into two parts: integrative and conceptual complexity. Integrative

complexity is the "concern with structure as opposed to content, structure referring to the

conceptual rules (i.e., differentiation and integration) utilized in thinking, deciding, and

interrelating."[218] Differentiation and integration are situation specific and, put simply,

refer to the degree to which the subject takes into account alternatives to his or her own

views (differentiation) and whether or not there is a link between those views

(integration). The method for grading integrative complexity requires an expert coder

trained in an objective (with some elements of subjective) style of structural analysis.

Integrative complexity is "focused on the internal and external factors that govern

the level of complexity at which a person is functioning at a specific time and in a

specific situation."[219] This highlights the importance of context yet again since implicit

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[216] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 265

[217] At this time, the author has not yet become an 'expert integrative complexity analyst' and would not feel comfortable using this particular tool. Further analysis using this method is still needed and would be helpful for practitioners.

[218] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 248

[219] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 247

here is that complexity for an individual can and will change based on the environment and situation. Integrative complexity, also known as state complexity, will have a number of different factors including intrapsychic factors and situational characteristics which include the task environment and social factors.[220] The intrapsychic factor has a connective component between state and trait (integrative and conceptual) complexities, where much research has been done on the level of perceived conflict and its ability to increase or decrease motivation.

The task environment, as a situational characteristic, derives its relevance from the myriad stimuli affecting an individual while in pursuit of a task. This could include physical factors like fatigue, mental factors such as uncertainty, or group factors with regard to conflict amongst players.[221] In these cases, high complexity is associated with a negotiated settlement, and low complexity is associated with war. This has obvious ramifications; if a leader's speeches are increasingly less complex, the nation could be gearing for a major conflict. An increase in complexity could mean the end of a conflict or the beginning of negotiated settlement.

The first social factor is impression management. This is a key factor in determining the actual importance of the subject's focus. If one assumption of the intrapsychic process is that leaders think and believe as they write and speak, then impression management attempts to understand how "an issue may be discussed not at the level of complexity at which the source actually thinks about it but rather at the level that the source believes will create the desired impression on the target audience."[222] The

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[220] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 251-258
[221] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 254
[222] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 258

authors maintain that this factor is difficult to isolate from the intrapsychic factor, since testing for impression management is not possible. They see some hope in the possibility that private records can be analyzed next to public ones, but there is an obvious requirement for private data issue here.

The second social factor is source position and status. Basically, this factor asserts that those not in power, i.e. in the opposition, attack a position using less complex statements than those defending or proposing a position who are in power.[223] The need of the underdog may have something to do with rhetorical weight or an interest in wooing the populace through catchy and un-complex slogans, or perhaps it is the requirement of those in power to more carefully consider the position and argument. It is often easier to criticize original work than come up with original work oneself.

Other social factors include individual differences within groups (discussed within the group section), the effects of groupthink (discussed in the biases section), and the perception of the audience. One example of the perception dynamic is the higher level of complexity for the subject when the audience is known to agree.[224]

Trait Analysis

The other side to integrative complexity is conceptual complexity, or trait analysis. "Conceptual complexity theory traces consistent levels of complexity that characterize a given individual's functioning...."[225] According to these authors, the difference between the previous model and this one is that trait theory is relatively

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[223] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 261
[224] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 263
[225] Suedfield, Guttieri, Tetlock, 249

stagnant, more prevalent amongst leadership analysts, and is similar with regards to its

structural emphasis. This second model, which will be used in the analysis, is a

conceptual complexity model, emphasizing trait analysis developed by Margaret G.

Hermann. Not only has she written prolifically on theory, but she has also done a great

deal of work putting the theory to practical usage through her prolific writing on actual

leaders. In addition, she has developed models for comparative studies and developed

programs like Profiler+, which will be used later on Bashar Al-Assad.[226]

Like many other quantitative analysts, Hermann likes to use spontaneous material,

preferring interviews without pre-known questions. She does, however, find it

worthwhile to do analyses of spontaneous versus more rehearsed material, in an effort to

"[gain] some insight between a leader's public and private self."[227]

Hermann assesses leaders through a complex system of leadership style variables

and motivation variables. This term "means the ways in which leaders relate to those

around them – whether constituents, advisers, or other leaders – and how they structure

interactions and the norms, rules, and principles they use to guide such interactions."[228]

She uses seven traits to analyze leadership style – belief in the ability to control events,

need for power and influence, conceptual complexity, self-confidence, an internal versus

external focus, general distrust of others, and the amount of in-group bias.[229] These traits

further clarify the responsiveness to constraints and the ability to take in new information,

along with how leaders are motivated to interact with the political realm. In order to find

a politician's motivation, be it either from a problem focus or a relationship focus,

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[226] Hermann, 178-212
[227] Hermann, 180
[228] Hermann, 181
[229] Hermann, 184

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Hermann uses a task focus criterion. The attempt is to identify the motivation of the leader for the group. The motivation towards the world, which consists of in-group bias and distrust of others, focuses on whether or not leaders identify threats or opportunities, and their desire to build relationships.[230]

Hermann's methodology allows her to place individuals into typological categories. Using the factors that make up leadership style, she identifies how motivation is reflected in the different responses to constraint, and the ability to take in information. For example, if a leader challenges his or her constraints, is open to information, and is motivated from an external relationship-driven focus, then their typological leadership style will be classified as *Directive,* a style placing a strong emphasis on status control and reputational need.[231] There are eight typologies, each of which can be used to classify a type of leader. The crusader challenges constraints, is closed to information, and can be either E*xpansionistic* (problem) or Evangelistic (relationship). The strategist challenges constraints as well, but is open to information and can be either *Actively Independent* (problem) or *Directive* (relationship). The pragmatic respects constraints and is closed to information, and can be either *Incremental* (problem) or *Influential* (relationship). The opportunist also respects constraints, but is open to information and can be either reactively *Opportunistic* (problem) or *Collegial* (relationship).*[232]* Profiler+ will be used to assess the traits of Bashar Al-Assad. The data will then be run up against a comparison group, constructing a profile, and contextualizing the profile based on Hermann's rules for the nature of topics and audience, and the focus of attention.[233]

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[230] Hermann, 197-200
[231] Hermann, 185
[232] Hermann, 185. Hermann, *The Effects of Powerful Individuals*, pg. 95
[233] Hermann, 206

Operational Coding[234]

"…the leader's beliefs about the nature and source of conflict in the political universe [are] the basis for other philosophical beliefs about the prospects for realizing fundamental goals, the predictability of the political future, the leader's control over historical development, and the role of chance."[235] Ole R. Holsti in 1977 developed operational coding in order to find answers about a leader's philosophical beliefs which will "…influence the instrumental beliefs of the leader regarding the most effective strategy and tactics, the optimum approach to the calculation and management of risks, and the utility and timing of employing different means to protect or achieve political objectives."[236]

This is a particularly important objective method for analyzing a leader like Bashar Al-Assad due to its self/other methodology. Essentially, "it defines politics as the exercise of power between actors, in which the beliefs of each actor about the nature of the political universe and the most effective strategies and tactics in this universe influence the choices of means, tactics, and strategies and the ensuing outcomes of interaction episodes between them."[237] This means that in a country where it is so difficult to analyze the 'invisible layer,' we can instead use operational coding to view Bashar's perspective on this gray layer of Syrian society.

The texts for operational coding may be statements made in speeches or interviews. The purpose of operational coding is to identify the instrumental and

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[234] Thanks go to Social Science Automation, Inc. for use of their Operational Coding materials.
[235] Walker, Schafer and Young, 217
[236] Ibid.
[237] Walker, Schafer and Young, 231

philosophical beliefs that a leader has in order to nail down the particular way in which he views the world. For example, this method will use Holsti's typologies described below to define how Bashar views the nature of the universe.

Holsti's six typologies help to place the subject in context. For example, Type A leaders believe that conflict is temporary and caused by misunderstanding. This in turn causes conflict to escalate. The future can be foreseen, and control over it is possible. This type likes cooperating. Type B also believes conflict is temporary, is more methodical in the handling of issues, and believes that rivals can be made to stop by using different strategies. Type C is the last to believe in temporary conflict. This type believes that the overarching system of states can be formulated to promote the interests of all. However, until the system is changed, there exists a negative attitude towards the possibility of harmony. The last three types all believe that conflict is permanent. Type D believes it is caused by human nature, type E by nationalism, and type F by international anarchy. The future is unknowable, and control fleeting at best. This type doesn't like war, if only because it changes the dynamics of power.[238]

In addition, there are subtypes. These take the form of move, counter, and counter-counter. They are represented as escalation and de-escalation.[239] For example, type EDE would look as follows: the self escalates, followed by de-escalation by the other. The self then responds to the de-escalation with further escalation. We can use these subtypes to determine how a leader will react to rivals.

Important questions will follow, such as the degree of control the leader has, his

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[238] Ibid, 221
[239] Ibid, 233

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views of his own ability to change things, and the views of others. It will also define how he views certain types of speech strategies. For instance, does he prefer using reward statements or appeal statements? How about statements of punishment or statements of threat? Bashar will be classified by using a set of standardized statements identified with particular scores as defined by the authors of the method.

Trait Analysis of Bashar Al-Assad

Understanding Bashar Al-Assad through his life and world is fundamentally different than taking an in-depth look at the words he uses through the quantitative and objective data that computer programs can give us. Weintraub goes over three assumptions when using grammar to identify components of a leader's personality. "(1) patterns of thinking and behaving are reflected in styles of speaking; (2) under stress, a speaker's choice of grammatical structures will mirror characteristic coping mechanisms; and (3) personality traits are revealed by grammatical structures having a slow rate of change."[240]

Using Hermann's method of trait analysis and her corresponding device for its exploration, Profiler Plus, the previous, more subjective study can be augmented by objective criteria to explore Bashar's personality, reasoning and, more importantly, the way he will think in future situations.[241] Data analysis will allow the reader to get over the common *mirror imaging* bias prevalent in analysis, which asserts that the analyst will often place his or her own personality and reasoning onto the reasoning of a foreign

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[240] Weintraub, 139
[241] Thanks go to Social Science Automation, Inc. for the use of their trait analysis program.

subject.

To reiterate quickly what was said before, an analysis of Bashar's personality in the realm of the following seven traits will be attempted:

(1) the belief that one can influence or control what happens, (2) the need for power and influence, (3) conceptual complexity (the ability to differentiate things and people in one's environment), (4) self-confidence, (5) the tendency to focus on problem solving and accomplishing something versus maintenance of the group and dealing with others' ideas and sensitivities, (6) general distrust or suspiciousness of others, and (7) the intensity with which a person holds an in-group bias.[242]

These seven traits will be used to answer three questions: How leaders respond to the obstacles or chains that hold them back, how their mind uses information to assess issues, and what motivation causes them to pursue a given end.

This researcher took over 80 different statements from six interviews spanning Bashar's decade long tenure. The statements include different foreign topics including Palestine, Iraq, Lebanon, Iran, Israel, the US SALSA agreement, and the Golan Heights. Domestic topics like democracy, internal reform, civil society, freedom of expression, economic reform and corruption were also used. These statements came from interviews with Al-Bab in 2001, Al-Hayat in 2003, Christian Amanpour in 2005, Democracy Now in 2006, Mother Jones in 2007 and Alix Van Buren in 2009.

Ironically, even though Bashar Al-Assad is a Middle Eastern leader, more of his personality scores are closer to President Bill Clinton (close scores on conceptual

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[242] Hermann, 184

complexity, task focus, distrust of others and in-group bias) than to Saddam Hussein (close scores on task focus and the belief one can control events).[243] What this tells us is that two Middle Eastern dictators are not necessarily closer in personality than a democratically elected president in a free country and a young dictator/president in a closed country. It tells us that not all men or women in charge of repressive countries are alike. It explains that if there are two closed countries, and both have different heads of state from a psychological context, then there must be other factors involved. However, these simple assertions tell us very little. What will tell us more is how the traits interact to give us answers to the three main questions described two paragraphs above.

The first two traits are the belief in one's ability to control events and the need for power. Bashar scored moderately (slightly lower) on the former and low on the latter when compared to the 87 heads of state. Hermann tells us that those who score high on the belief that they can control events are "generally more interested and active in the policy-making process" while those who score low "tend to be more reactive to situations, waiting to see how the situation is likely to play out before acting."[244] Scoring low in the need for power, however, indicates that a leader is comfortable delegating authority to others, indicating a level of trust and a desire to see the group benefit over the individual. This group may be defined as broadly as the Allawi/Ba'ath/Military or as narrowly as Bashar's personal advisors. This naturally causes the group to have a higher level of morale and sense of accountability with regards to actions which they collectively take.

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[243] Hermann, scores on Clinton are on page 315 of Post. Scores on Hussein are on page 377 of Post.
[244] Hermann, 189

Table 1   Bashar Al-Assad's Scores on Seven Traits

Personality Trait	Bashar Al-Assad	Bill Clinton vs. Saddam Hussein	Middle East Leaders	87 Heads of State
Belief Can Control Events	.41	.47 / .49	M =.44 L < .31 H > .57	M =.44 L < .30 H > .58
Need for Power	.29	.52 / .57	M =.54 L < .42 H > .64	M =.50 L < .37 H > .62
Self-Confidence	.42	.72 / .83	M =.71 L < .52 H > .88	M =.62 L < .44 H < .81
Conceptual Complexity	.64	.62 / .49	M =.49 L < .48 H > .50	M =.44 L < .32 H > .56
Task Focus	.63	.61 / .56	M =.54 L < .49 H > .59	M =.59 L < .46 H > .71
In-group Bias or Nationalism	.12	.32 / .66	M =.49 L < .47 H > .50	M =.42 L < .32 H > .53
Distrust of Others	.18	.27 / .53	M =.44 L < .43 H > .45	M =.41 L < .25 H > .56

M = Mean, L = Low, H = High[245]

This is someone who straddles the line between respecting constraints and challenging constraints. When Bashar respects constraints, he will try to affect policy decisions within the structure of the constraints, while utilizing compromise and consensus building. When he challenges constraints, he is not as successful because he

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[245] Hermann, 377

does not understand as well what it means to influence people within a negotiating or bargaining framework. In Bashar's case specifically, the "invisible layer" is likely so powerful a component that Bashar is naturally pushed towards the respect aspect because of a lack of success in his challenges. The Damascus winter comes to mind, a period reflecting the time shortly after Bashar's initial attempt at reform which ended in a repression, or winter. Further, the challenges and constraints he must consistently face cause a type of group utilization format to be a desirable choice, regardless of whether or not it is his 'natural' inclination. This at least points towards an indication of how to deal with the regime, be it at the state or otherwise.

The self-confidence trait is determined, verbally, by pronouns, but more generally by the question of just how important the leader views himself in relation to the context. Conceptual complexity refers to an individual's ability to see the gray area, so to speak, and the ability to react with this information in mind. Scores for self-confidence and conceptual complexity will determine how the leader processes and responds to information. Hermann writes that "Ziller and his colleagues (1977) observed that these two traits interrelate to form a leader's self-other orientation. The self-other orientation indicates how open the leader will be to input from others in the decision-making process and from the political environment."[246] Since Bashar's conceptual complexity is higher than his self-confidence, his orientation towards the other is strong and domineering.[247] As a result, he can see the needs and requirements of others and work towards them while keeping an open mind, with the understanding that the path being followed is beneficial.

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[246] Hermann, 192
[247] Ibid.

Leaders like this see a 'wider array of stimuli from their environment' and "remain highly attuned to contextual information since they do not necessarily trust their initial response to an event."[248] As a result, these leaders may occasionally be viewed as 'fence sitters' due to the fact that they decide slower than others. This is often due to a desire for increasing amounts of information from differentiated sources. Because Bashar seems genuinely interested in what others have to say, they flock to him. It is for this reason that the cult of personality which formed around his father Hafiz was able to transpose itself so well onto Bashar. Tales abound regarding Bashar's generosity and his ability to listen and respond to individuals at the common level. The shift in the cult of personality from father to son, and Bashar's own personal traits, may be the proximate cause of Bashar holding power as a 'charismatic dictator' with the requisite legitimacy.

Leaders are motivated, in general, in one of two ways: either they have an internal focus, such as a problem, or a need for a wanted response from others; be it acceptance, power, support or acclaim. As a result, Hermann writes, "we are interested in both why the leader sought office *and* their need to preserve and secure the group they are leading (and, in turn, their position)."[249] Pulling together three traits will give us the answer sought: task focus, in-group bias and distrust of others. The first, task focus, will show why the leader sought office, be it for problem (self) or relation (other) focus. Bashar's scores for Task focus are interesting in that they are moderate when compared to the 87 heads of state, suggesting both a relationship (external) and problem focus (internal), but high when compared to other leaders in the Middle East, suggesting a problem (internal)

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[248] Hermann, 318
[249] Hermann, 196-197

focus.

Hermann writes that the moderate scoring leader will often be a charismatic, and this certainly allies itself to the notion of the charismatic dictator, to which many Middle Eastern nations ascribe (think Col. Ghaddafi in Libya, King Abdullah of Jordan, Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran and, of course, Bashar's own father). This duality can be explained by what a moderate relationship means when compared to the rest of the world, and what a high relationship means when compared to the Middle East. Bashar emphasizes the problem greater than the Middle Eastern group, identifying what he feels to be major issues and then working towards a solution. In being moderate with regards to other world leaders, Bashar has identified that he has to be like other Middle Eastern leaders in attempting to maintain relationships as best as possible. "They can concentrate on solving problems when called for by the situation, but they can also switch to an interest in others' ideas and feelings when the context in which they find themselves changes."[250]

The final two traits, in-group bias and the distrust for others, are important ones in determining the President's outlook on the world. In-group bias has the ability to be very important to Bashar because it refers to the level that a leader is biased towards his or her group, however defined. Earlier we discussed the ideas that the Ba'ath, Allawi and military groups were very important in the development of modern Syria. Bashar's low score on in-group bias does not necessarily disprove the notion that he is occasionally influenced by the old guard, but does indicate that he does not want them to have a prominent position. This score is indicative of the actions he will take. The groups' mentioned are important to his development and his ability to make decisions, and it may

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[250] Hermann, 379

also be important that he accommodate them to some regard. Bashar is motivated by something else besides a desperate, fearful need to keep the Ba'ath, Allawi and/or Military in power. This is certainly drawn out by the facts with regards to the weakening of the Ba'ath regional power structure. Bashar likely has no illusions about the Allawi always being a prominent fixture in Syrian politics. While he may attempt to maintain their position in order to further his own influence, this is a means, not an ends. The same is likely true of Bashar's conception of the military. This does not mean, however, that other elements within the regime, the invisible layer or old guard, are not or will not hesitate to use harmful strategies in the pursuit of group maintenance, just that Bashar is less likely to do so.

The final trait, distrust of others, is a telling one about how Bashar chooses to perceive the motivations of others. He has certainly done a number of high profile interviews, suggesting a need to improve the image of Syria, or at least not to hide it. Bashar's low score on this trait does not mean he is open and trusting, but rather that he "tend[s] to put it into perspective. Trust and distrust are more likely to be based on past experience with the people involved and on the nature of the current situation."[251] Bashar certainly has had his share of cabinet reshuffles, which can be viewed as distrust in the status quo. However, this appears to be more of a long-term strategy of weeding out the old guard, coupled with the difficult task of maintaining his relationship with them. It is possible Bashar believes the old guard can be trusted, if only to maintain the status quo.

The in-group bias and distrust of others traits will combine to help us show the motivation of the leader towards the world; i.e. whether they perceive the world as

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[251] Hermann, 202

threatening or not, and how they will deal with the world based on this viewpoint. Bashar

scores very low on both traits, and as a result, he falls into Hermann's 'opportunities and

relationships' category. He does not view the world as particularly threatening, and

instead tries to work within the boundaries of his position by taking advantage of those

'opportunities and relationships' which can be useful given the task required.[252]

Cooperation, at least with those in the Syrian power structure, is thus seen as part and

parcel to his motivational ethos. Paranoia about the threat level of others would directly

contradict the cooperation required for his problem focus. There are however, varying

levels of cooperation, and some types of cooperation must be eschewed in order to garner

other types of cooperation. That the cooperative desire is more powerful than the view of

other actors as threatening is probable. One need only look as far as his newfound desire

to cooperate with the European Union, Turkey, Jordan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, etc. However,

his need to cooperate internally may leave him little room, even if desired, to cooperate

with Israel.

Bashar's scores for these last two are low, which makes him similar in some

respects to President Bill Clinton. Hermann writes that "Clinton views the political

process as a large game board, where all players must sacrifice some things so that they

can advance toward the general goal…. Compared to leaders with an adversarial or zero-

sum view of politics, where there should always be a clear winner and loser, such tactics

make Clinton seem as if he has no principles or, at the least, is wishy-washy and weak."[253]

This last phrase has been used on a number of occasions to describe Bashar, given his

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[252] Hermann, 200
[253] Hermann, 319

political acumen and situation. However, like Clinton, Bashar seems to view politics as a push-and-pull game where he is constantly testing to see which of his policies he can implement and to what extent based on an accurate reading of Syria's domestic constituencies and the world's foreign ones.

The final verdict using Hermann's method of trait analysis is helpful, but just like the high conceptual complexity score of the subject, somewhat gray. The analysis should help us fit Bashar into one of the eight categories described by Hermann in her attempt to classify leaders based on the three questions. However, we immediately run into problems because of Bashar's scores on responsiveness to constraints. He seems to both respect and challenge constraints, which is certainly in keeping with the more subjective analysis above and in the historical record. We can, however, narrow down the possibilities when realizing that Bashar's scores for openness to information is most certainly open based on the fact that his conceptual complexity is far higher than his self-confidence. This leaves the question of motivation. If Bashar has a problem focus, which he certainly seems to have against other Middle Eastern leaders, then we may classify him as an Active Independent if he challenges constraints and as Opportunistic if he respects constraints. Our problem is that he also has a relationship focus because of his moderate score on task focus versus the 87 heads of state. This would entitle him to be both in the Directive category if he challenges constraints and in the Collegial category when he respects them.

Bashar's father, ironically, was also among these types. Hafiz Al-Assad would have been grouped into the Active Independent style, based on his high belief in his own

ability to control events and in the need for power, suggesting a constraint challenger.

Like Bashar, Hafiz had a conceptual complexity that was higher than his self-confidence,

giving him an open mind to new information. Further, Hafiz was problem focused.

Finally, though he had a high in-group bias, he didn't distrust people. Hermann's analysis

continues:

> He will be highly interested in maintaining his own and Syria's maneuverability and
> independence in a world that he perceives continually tries to limit both. Although Assad
> perceives that the world is conflict prone, he also views all countries as being somewhat
> constrained by international norms, affording him some flexibility in what he can do.
> However, he must vigilantly monitor developments in the international arena and prudently
> prepare to contain an adversary while still pursuing Syria's interests.[254]

Bashar, however, has his own unique mind. While he may take some maneuvers

from his father's playbook, the truth is that he is not high in the need for power or in-

group bias, nor is he just problem focused. Based on these differences, it would be

prudent to say that while Bashar is interested in maintaining government, it does not

necessarily need to be in the same form. He is likely to focus on what may be possible in

the situation and context, suggesting the Opportunistic bent while also attempting to

build consensus amongst disparate power bases, suggesting a Collegial manner. These

types assume that Bashar respects constraints, which he likely does for most domestic

(Invisible layer/Old Guard) and foreign (Iran, International arena with power oriented

towards Israel) difficulties.

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[254] Hermann, 205-206

Operational Coding of Bashar Al-Assad

Table 2.1   Bashar's Instrumental Belief Scores

I1	I2	I3	I4a	I4b
.24	.07	.20	.76	.50

Table 2.2   Bashar's Instrumental Belief Scores (I5)

Punish	Threaten	Oppose	Appeal	Promise	Reward
.13	0	.25	.48	.01	.12

Table 3.1   Bashar's Philosophical Belief Scores

P1	P2	P3	P4a	P4b	P5
.35	.19	.11	.22	.78	.97

Table 3.2   Bashar's Philosophical Belief Scores

Punish	Threaten	Oppose	Appeal	Promise	Reward
.16	.02	.14	.38	.04	.25

Table 4.1   Bashar's Self Scores

+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3
8	1	33	17	0	9

Table 4.2   Bashar's Other Scores

+3	+2	+1	-1	-2	-3
62	9	93	35	5	39

Using the tables, we use the Verbs in Context System (VICS) indices to process

the information. The first of Bashar's scores lead to the balance indices for the nature of the political universe and strategic direction, which is taken from the P1 score for the former in Table 3.1 and from the I1 score for the latter in Table 2.1. While using these indices, a specific standardized format will be used per Walker, Schafer and Young's directions. *Bashar believes that the political universe is somewhat friendly and he also believes that a somewhat cooperation-oriented direction is the best strategy in this universe.* There should be emphasis in the above statement placed on 'somewhat.'

Central tendency indices determine the leader's beliefs about the prospects for realizing political values (P2) and the belief about the intensity of tactics (I2). As a result, *Bashar believes that the prospects for realizing fundamental political goals are somewhat optimistic, and he also believes that mixed cooperative tactics are best under this condition.* By mixed, it is meant that Bashar will choose an intensity somewhere between conflictual and cooperative.

Proportion indices show the leader's belief in his or her control over historical development (P4a) vs. others' control (P4b) and the relative utility of different ways of exercising political power (I5). *Bashar believes that he has a low degree of control over historical development while also attributing a high level of control to others in the political universe.* This may be true for both domestic and foreign matters. Further, we will make inferences from the descriptors associated with the utility of means: *Bashar believes that the comparative utility of appeal/support statements is very high, the comparative utility of opposition/resistance is high, the comparative utility of punishments and rewards is medium to low, and the comparative utility of promises and*

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threats is very low.

The dispersion indices, of which there are four, take into account the exercise of political power. The first are predictability of the political future and risk orientation. These take into account predictability for both self (P3) and others (I3). *Bashar's beliefs have scores of .11 for P3 and .20 for I3 attributes very low predictability to himself and low predictability to others.* The next part of the dispersion indices take into account "timing: flexibility in shifting between different kinds of tactics as a risk management technique."[255] *Bashar's beliefs with scores of .76 (I4a) and .50 (I4b) for shifts between cooperation/conflict and words/deeds, respectively, manage the very low predictability of the political future by attributing a risk orientation of high flexibility in cooperation/conflict and medium flexibility in words/deeds to himself.* This gives further credence to his scores in the trait analysis section which suggested the ability to shift from cooperation to conflict. Lastly with regards to dispersion indices, there is the role of chance (P4), which is a confluence of the predictability of the political future and the degree of control over historical development. *Bashar with an index of .97 attributes a very high role to chance.*

Locating Bashar in Holsti's six types of belief systems requires using the I1 and P4a scores to determine what type of leader he is, making inferences about his general disposition. Accordingly, because of his .24 and .22 instrumental scores, respectively, he is placed in the A quadrant for FOLLOW/COOPERATE STRATEGIES, most closely under the EED Bluff subtype, or Escalate, Escalate, De-Escalate. What this means is that Bashar, when facing the 'other,' will often escalate, at which point the other will escalate.

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[255] Walker, Schafer and Young, 230

Bashar will respond to this escalation by de-escalating, meaning he will violate the norm of reciprocation. Bashar, under quadrant A guidelines, will likely use methods of bluffing within a general strategy of cooperation. Unfortunately, because the tactical intensity index does not move too much towards cooperation, and in fact straddles the image between cooperation and conflict, there is not a particularly high confidence level in the assertion that Bashar will absolutely violate the norm of reciprocation, meaning there is the possibility he will go with further escalation.

With Holsti there existed an assumption that the instrumental followed the philosophical. However, Walker, Schafer and Young leave room for the two to differ. In fact, Bashar differs in the 'other' code, or philosophical, placing him in Quadrant C under subtype EDD Compel. This means that Bashar will expect escalation, followed by a de-escalation. Reciprocation will commence with a counter de-escalation. Again, however, tactic intensity is low and as a result does not yield a high confidence level for this prediction as a deviation from the reciprocity norm.

The self and other add together to form "important features of the context for decision to reach a definition of the 'self-in-situation.' This definition of the situation reflects the choice and shift propensities attributed to Self and expected of Other…."[256] Bashar may be classified under the A(Instrumental) with C(Philosophical) hybrid. He is ambitious in that he will tend to test his limits, but will pull back when faced with the possibility of too much escalation. Of others, Bashar believes that they will threaten, but in the end, because of Bashar's handling of the situation in a non-threatening way, a climate of reciprocation will have been created that causes conflict to cease and harmony

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[256] Walker, Schafer and Young, 242

to increase.

Conclusion

Bashar's self-confidence is not particularly high compared to other leaders. He has little need for power and very little in-group bias. This could account for his desire to challenge constraints. It could also account for his frequent desire to engage much of the regional, and even international community. Further, his distrust of others is also low, which is strange considering the relative secrecy of the country. It would seem reasonable that a country with a high need for secrecy and repression would also be a country with a leader who is distrustful. However, as has been made clear, the country has had some limited opening up. That Bashar hasn't opened up entirely is a testament to his respect for the constraints around him.

Bashar's middle of the road score on the belief that he can control events is complimented by a high conceptual complexity and task-focus, traits normally associated with intelligence, acceptance of other views, and a desire to get the job done. These are also not typical traits of Middle Eastern Leaders, showing him as being very outside the norm in this regard. He is high where they are low, and low where they are high. This could mean any number of things, but more than likely points to a Catch-22: Bashar desires change, but also desires fitting in.

Bashar's scores on trait analysis place him similar in mindset to Hafiz Al-Assad, but not to the extent that they are the same person. It is impossible to tell for certain whether the two would make like decisions in all circumstances, as the dynamic nature of

the domestic and foreign environment make this impossible. However, their similarity

means an in-depth case study of the father, complimented by a psychological profile of

the son, will make for an intriguing ability to forecast.

Using Operational Coding, we have created a number of very penetrating

statements regarding Bashar's psyche. Bashar believes in a somewhat friendly universe,

is slightly cooperative in terms of his strategies for dealing with others, and is somewhat

optimistic about realizing his own goals. A few of these scores obviously compliment the

trait analysis. Others show his subconscious ability during speech, such as his belief that

utility in appeal and support statements is high, while others show his subconscious

ability during action, namely a high flexibility regarding cooperation and conflict.

Bashar's psyche using this particular tool is important because it helps to

penetrate the way Bashar views himself vs. the way he views the 'other.' The other can

be described as an opponent or another country in the foreign arena, or even rivals in the

invisible layer in the domestic arena. Understanding Bashar's view towards others has

helped us determine the range of latitude he will give himself in making action, and the

notion of reciprocity has helped further narrow down his decision-making ability in crisis

situations.

Conclusion

Bashar is a complex figure, enigmatic and interesting, and with a mind that is not particularly close to the traits of other Middle Eastern leaders. We have learned over the course of this research that the status of Syria as a pariah to the world has as much to do with an overall situation as it does with an ideological core. Syria's president has no particular overarching ideological fervor, except perhaps towards computers. This has more to do with modernization, however, than a particular fondness for inanimate objects.

In coming to understand Bashar, we have gone over the situation, the rivals, the past, the society, the economy and a whole host of lesser variables. We also went over his mind, taking as much as we could learn from a detailed quantitative methodological analysis, putting Bashar's psychology center-stage. The two can now be joined together to make certain hypotheses regarding forecasting. For instance, we know that Bashar is moving towards more economic development for Syria. We also know that he is not necessarily untrusting. If this analysis had been around a few years ago, the constant engagement of regional neighbors would seem perfectly understandable, even during the isolating time of the Bush Administration.

The purpose of 'bridging the gap' in order to help policy makers, as described in the introduction, means that this analysis is primarily for policy makers. Policy makers

must use scholarly works not just to understand what is going on, since intelligence agencies do a fine job of keeping policy makers up to date on current events. What is needed is a different way of viewing the information, and different methodologies in order to get at information not normally viewable.

What is implied here is that this is not necessarily a 'new' way of organizing data. It is a conglomeration of another way of organizing data, using the best methodological and analytical tools for this particular case. Many methodologies require some component that is difficult to get, or take the analysis in a direction it doesn't necessarily need to go. In this case, the analysis pointed towards the leader, and as a result, a strong component of this analysis remains the psychological analysis. Any psychological profile however, would be unfinished without an expert in the field, usually an expert who views the world using the more common structural methods. Leadership analysts should either know the material themselves, or as a number of them have done in the past, seek collaboration in order to pull the methods together.

Allison and Zelikow's models were useful, but not wholly adequate in and of themselves. They needed to be added to with a rich infusion of other methods like history and psychological profiling, and augmented by a more in-depth discussion of their methods, like Neustadt for Model III, or Weber for Model II. All three models turned out to be useful, but they also turned out to lack the rich profile needed for a truly in-depth review of decision making in Syria.

The original purpose of this paper was to help policy makers understand the mind of the key decision-maker in Syria, and in understanding his world view and decisional

outlooks, I believe this purpose has been accomplished. Using both structural and

psychological profiling methods has added the depth I believe the policy community

deserves. It is up to the policy makers and diplomats to study the information in order to

come up with prudent policy decisions. The psychological analysis showed that Bashar's

actions *may* be predictable, but they are more useful in dealing with him on a one-to-one

basis.

In this scholar's humble opinion, there are two key regrets of the analysis. The

first was not being able to utilize integrative complexity, a highly complex method of

scoring statements that would allow us to track Bashar's own psychological change. The

second was an inability to truly understand the inner dynamics of Bashar's group

processes. Even with years of studying Syria from inside the country, however, it is

unlikely that such a treasure trove of information would be revealed in such a poorly lit

country. This brings us to the final regret, namely that a more in-depth case study

analysis could not be performed. That will be the subject of a future project, using this

analysis as the primer.

The preceding analysis has added complexity to methodologies, each of which are

intended to simplify. However, the complexity is a good thing as long as both structural

and agency specific methodologies are treated in kind. The following is a (probably too

long) policy primer for what to expect from Syria, and how to deal with Bashar more

specifically.

Policy towards Syria during the Bush II administration was one of semi-isolation

with some joint work on terrorism and securing the Iraqi border. Policy during the Obama administration appears to be one of attempting to pull Syria away from Iran in an attempt to isolate the latter. Throughout both administrations (more so during the former), there has been a steady call for regime change.

Bashar Al-Assad will stay on as President for the foreseeable future. Free elections, which Bashar talked about the possibility of, as well as a coup, are unlikely. The former will not be allowed by those interested in keeping the status quo. A coup is unlikely for much the same reason. Bashar's personality suggests he will not make the large waves needed to induce the old guard to provide for his ouster. Further, the power and political moves he has made give him enough of a base in the important positions of the country that he has at least enough of a consolidated base of support. Regime change will likely be a long time coming, and any strategy of dealing with Syria that waits for this outcome will collect dust.

Peace without the Golan Heights is possible, but unlikely. This precious Syrian area was Hafiz' need, but Bashar has only two reasons for wanting to get it back: his father's legacy, and a need to maintain his power. Given that Bashar's need for power is as small as it is, the capacity for Bashar to seek peace without this all important area will depend upon two factors: whether or not enough carrots are provided to make it worth his while, or enough sticks are presented that de-escalation becomes cooperation. As long as Bashar has enough reasons to stay in power, i.e. the belief that he can move towards his goals, then peace without the Golan Heights will be pushed farther down the line.

Peace with the Golan Heights is still more possible, but only slightly less unlikely

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given the current climate. This is due to a feeling of strength Syria can attain by Bashar's engagement of others. Bashar's father waited years to recover the Golan Heights on good terms, and it never came to fruition. Bashar's current strategy of engaging close U.S. allies in the region like Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia means that the young President is moving in a direction which puts more emphasis on allies and economic normalization in the region, and less emphasis on 'peace.' However, look down the road far enough and this may have the affect of placing more pressure to move in a conciliatory direction on the region in general, including Israel specifically – if only because an integrated network of countries may cause conflict to subside. Integration occurs and makes bedfellows, some strange and others not so strange: Saudi Arabia and Israel with a common ally in the United States, and a common foe in Iran. Turkey and Israel, again with a common ally, but with the occasional spat have an interest in normalization in the region, and also a common ally. Bashar's choice to engage all except Israel may cause an excess of normalization in the region, leading in one direction. However, this is a systemic approach to the situation and unlikely to occur simply because of 'normalization.' Likely, it will take a perfect storm of leaders with enough political legitimacy, a willing public, pressure from outsiders, and perhaps a major catalyst of some sort. Normalization may or may not be a concentrated strategy on Bashar's part, but it is certainly a consequence of a desire to move his own country out of pariah status and into increasing economic development.

Countries dealing with Syria should only work towards greater integration of economic development if they realize that Bashar's ability to move in that direction is

dependent upon a complex interplay of bargaining, Bashar's own psychological faculties, and the position that domestic Syria sits as a result of its recent history. Bashar needs to maintain a certain legitimated position. This legitimacy is dependent upon the ability of Bashar to be able to continue the same merchant-military complex and aggregation of Ba'athist societal goals that was expected of him when he came into power. If other country's foreign policies are geared towards giving Bashar the needed power to pursue his goals, we might very well see the reformer that so many hoped they would see almost a decade ago.

When dealing with Bashar the man, and not Syria the country, one must keep the operational coding and trait analysis above in mind in order to work around his perspective. He is going to be very open to new possibilities, and his complexity will ensure that he'll see the both the upside and the downside to any proposal. He will likely see both the cooperative and competitive methods of dealing with proposed policies, so it will be very important for a policy maker to frame the problem around several solutions, and let Bashar know that we have considered many angles, and why the one we want is important. He prides himself on his ability to communicate with the world. As a result, it is even more important than with more closed dictators to engage the man on a one-to-one basis.

Bashar's low belief in his own control goes hand in hand with his low self confidence. However, he also likely knows his conceivable options very well. This will require an experienced diplomat who has no qualms about speaking to a dictator as if he were a close confidant. Bashar's inability (or belief in his inability) to influence much

won't help the United States change things much at the tactical level, but will lay the base work for the strategic changes down the road. If Bashar is given the right element of carrots (or sticks) to show his constituency, his belief in the importance of modernization may change from giving simple lip service to real proposals. He will always run up against the old guard, but with enough gifts to bring back to them, he can cause change. These gifts will likely have to be economic gifts in the mid-term, in order to get real change later on issues more important to the US.

Bashar can switch quickly between possible outcomes like conflict and cooperation, or words and deeds. He just needs the right impetus. He has the formal power needed to make the changes, but the informal power is where he runs into his biggest weakness. If Bashar can switch quickly, it means he likely is never locked into one course of action. His mind can be swayed, and since there can be no peace without Syria, a concentrated effort at winning over Bashar Al-Assad is too good a possibility to pass up. Waiting for regime change may mean a corrupt and slow to change Yasser Arafat, or a violent and difficult Saddam Hussein.

Bashar's ability to focus on problems is high, his distrust of others is low, and his bias towards his own group is also low, meaning he can be approached, reasoned with, and will be a very determining *partner*. His biggest walls will be his high perception of chance, low regard for his ability to change things, and his use of opposition and resistance statements in the media and to the public. These weaknesses, and his structural situation of holding less power than his father, do not allow us to call this the perfect storm the world may be waiting for regarding change in the Middle East. Waiting

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for one, however, would be looking a gift horse in the mouth.

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