

How to grab the Soviet Union by the horns?

The internal debate within the Carter administration on the U.S. involvement in the Horn of Africa, 1977-1981.



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Cover image: ‘Jimmy Carter surrounded by his advisors, including Cyrus Vance and, right Zbigniew Brzezinski, 1979’ *REX*, accessed 10 January 2019, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/obituaries/2017/05/28/zbigniewbrzezinski-jimmy-carters-national-security-adviser/>.

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Glossary of terms and Abbreviations

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DCIA	Director of the Central Intelligence Agency
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
NSA	National Security Advisor
NSC	National Security Council
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PD	Presidential Directive
PRC	Policy Review Committee
PRM	Presidential Review Memorandum
RIAS	Roosevelt Institute for American Studies
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SCC	Special Coordinating Committee
SNA	Somali National Army
SOD	Secretary of Defense
SOS	Secretary of State
SU	Soviet Union
US	United States
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front

Chapter 1: introduction

“SALT lies buried in the sands of the Ogaden”.¹ Those are the infamous words that US President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, uttered about SALT II. SALT II, or the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, refers to the second round of bilateral conferences and agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union on the issue of (nuclear) arms control. These second round of talks would ultimately fail. This failure is usually attributed to the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan, making any agreement over the reduction of weapons meaningless. But the détente did in fact fail earlier, when the Soviet Union got involved in the Horn of Africa.

During the administration of President Jimmy Carter (1977-1981), the United States and the Soviet Union fought a proxy war. A proxy war is an armed conflict or conflict between two states or non-state actors, which has been instigated by or on behalf of other states or non-state actors that are not directly involved in the conflict itself.² This conflict started with the Somali invasion of the Ogaden region (see map 1), which was controlled by Ethiopia at the time, and lasted from July 1977 until March of 1978 (with irregular warfare conducted by pro-Somalia Ogaden rebels continuing for many months after the official end of the war). Tensions had existed between the Muslim Somali tribes and the Ethiopian Christian state since the Middle Ages. These tensions were amplified, however, after the redrawing of African borders by the Europeans in the post-1945 world. Ethiopia was granted a region with a Somali majority, and it was the goal of the new Somali dictator Siad Barre to unite all Somali peoples into a single state (see map 2).³

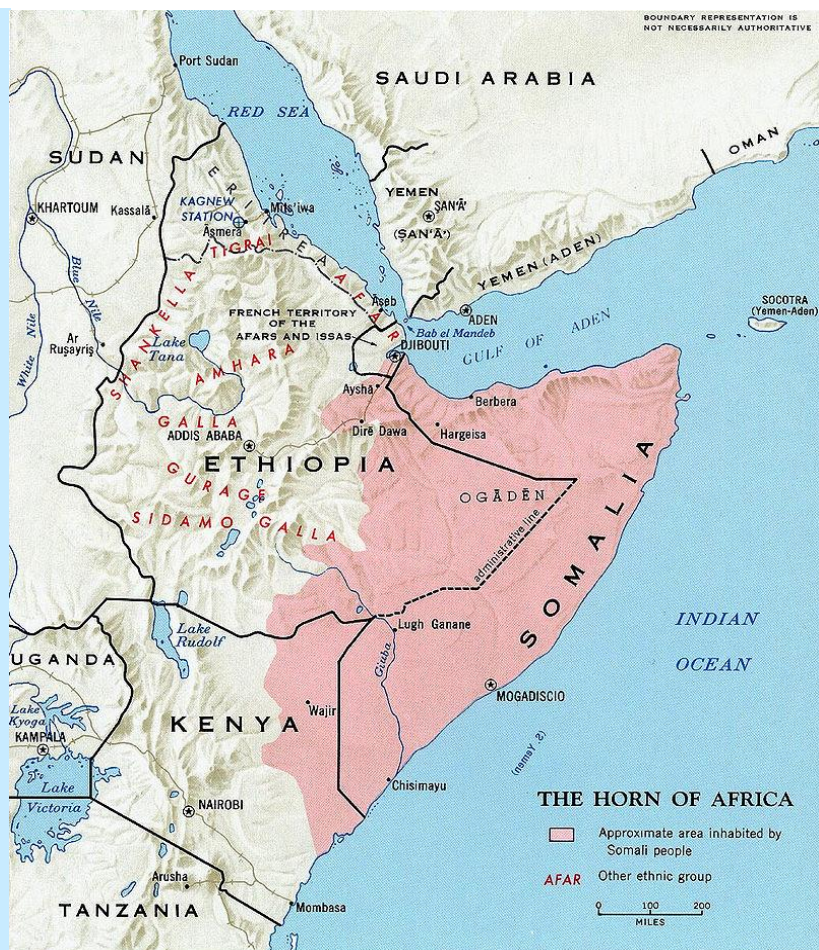
¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1983), 189.

² Geraint Hughes, *My Enemy’s Enemy: Proxy Warfare in International Politics* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2014), 5.

³ Donna R. Jackson, ‘The Ogaden War and the Demise of Détente’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 632 (2010): 27–28.

Map 1: The Horn of Africa in 1977.⁴

Map 2: The Somali peoples of the Horn of Africa.⁵



Why does this obscure and short war between two third rate powers, which is only a footnote in the global Cold War, deserve any attention? The lack of attention for this topic is clear, when one looks at the historiography of the Cold War (other topics get more attention when the Cold War era is discussed by scholars: the Cuban Missile Crisis, SALT II, the Camp David Accords, the Iran hostage crisis). Even within works solely dedicated to the foreign policy of Jimmy Carter, this conflict tends to get overshadowed by events in the Middle East, Iran, China and Afghanistan.⁶

Secondly, and more importantly, the conflict has been largely forgotten since its end in 1978.⁷ Other conflicts that happened in the period of the Cold War get more attention and not for the right reasons. One would think that such a short and local conflict would not have a big

⁴ 'De vergeten Ogaden-oorlog tussen Somalië en Ethiopië', *Jalta* (blog), 13 July 2017, <https://jalta.nl/geen-categorie/vergeten-ogaden-oorlog-somalie-en-ethiopië/>.

⁵ Library Research & Engagement, 'GSU Library Research Guides: African History: Getting Started', accessed 12 May 2019, [//research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115532&p=754454](https://research.library.gsu.edu/c.php?g=115532&p=754454).

⁶ Jackson, 'The Ogaden War and the Demise of Détente', 27.

⁷ Simon Tisdall, 'The Ogaden: A Forgotten War Draining a Forgotten People', *The Guardian*, 24 March 2008, sec. World news, accessed 10 January 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/24/ethiopia.somalia>.

impact on the Cold War, but it did. It was a very impactful event, because this small war in the Horn of Africa highlighted the internal divisions within the Carter government with regard to foreign policy.⁸ The long standing rivalries and debates between the National Security Advisor and Secretary of State on the Ogaden War point this out. It was this conflict in the Horn that also started a reorientation in the foreign policy of Carter, rather than the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (which most of the literature suggests).⁹ It signalled the start of the demise of the détente and a reorientation of Carter's foreign policy from a focus on human rights and regionalism, to a more traditional Cold War approach of globalism and containment.¹⁰

Thirdly, the general societal relevance of this topic lies in the fact that it was about much more than just a conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Ogaden region. It signalled a change in the relations between the two superpowers of the Cold War. The Ogaden was in fact the catalyst of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and in starting the change in relations. Détente did come to an end in the Horn of Africa, as the Soviet Union and the United States tried to establish their hegemony in the region.

1.2 Research questions

Jimmy Carter was committed to the upholding of human rights (which the Somali regime was trampling on), but he was also restrained in getting directly involved by past American debacles in Vietnam and Angola. Hence, another way had to be found to stop the violation of Ethiopian sovereignty and the influx of Soviet advisors and weapons into the region. The most important and influential participants in the debate on foreign policy of the Carter administration were Zbigniew Brzezinski (NSA) and Cyrus Vance (SOS).¹¹ To a lesser extent, Harold Brown (Secretary of Defence) and the Stansfield Turner (Director of Central Intelligence Agency) were also involved in advising the president on this topic. Thus, the rivalry between the different sides of the Carter administration was a constant factor in determining the foreign policy that

⁸ Louise Woodroffe, *'Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden': The United States, the Horn of Africa, and the Demise of Détente*, New Studies in U.S. Foreign Relations (Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2013), 10; Donna R. Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa: Cold War Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia*, Annotated edition (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland Publishing, 2007), 172–73.

⁹ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 172–73.

¹⁰ Jackson, 172–73.

¹¹ Bernard Gwertzman, 'Vance and Brzezinski: Feuding Chapter by Chapter', *The New York Times*, 26 May 1983, sec. U.S., accessed 10 January 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1983/05/26/us/vance-and-brzezinski-feuding-chapter-by-chapter.html>.

would be adopted on the U.S. involvement in the Horn of Africa. The entire period of Carter's administration is characterized in general by a process of reorientation towards Brzezinski's view of foreign policy. This started with the crisis in the Ogaden, continued with the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and ended with Vance's resignation over the Iranian hostage crisis. Not only does the impact of the internal debate on the foreign policy of the United States show its significance, but this relevance is reinforced by the foreign policy vision Carter had as a president. He encouraged a lively debate within his administration in order to help him make decisions, as his lack of political experience forced him to look for help from his various advisors.¹²

In order to be able to understand how Carter's foreign policy making process evolved and how he ultimately made his decisions, the views of his advisors must be examined and taken into consideration when trying to recreate the process of foreign policy making. In addition to this, other factors are also taken into account that influenced Carter's choices, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The main research question is thus as follows: How did the internal differences within the Carter administration, in the debate concerning the United States' involvement in the Ogaden War, shape Jimmy Carter's foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa?

To answer the main research question, five sub-questions need to be addressed and answered. The first sub-question focuses on the historical context that the foreign policy debate was set in, the Ogaden War. As this war is not well known and is often neglected by other authors or relegated to a few paragraphs, it is necessary to elaborate on this conflict. The emphasis of this chapter is on the general background of the region and Somalia in particular. Furthermore, the most important events before, during and after the war (i.e. its consequences for the region) are also addressed. This first sub-question is: What is the Ogaden War?

The second sub-question deals with the various actors that were active within the foreign policy debate of the Carter administration. There were more than just the two main advisors (Brzezinski and Vance) that most authors deal with. What influence did they end up having on the internal debate? This research looks further than what most publications have done up until this point and also takes into consideration other (possible) influential actors within the foreign policy debate. The second sub-question is thus as follows: Who were Carter's advisors and what were their positions on foreign policy in general and in relation to the Horn of Africa in

¹² Finlay Lewis, *Mondale: Portrait of an American Politician*, 2nd Revised edition edition (New York: Joanna Cotler Books, 1984), 200; Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, 1 edition (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 546.

particular? As the main focus of this thesis is on reconstructing the internal debate within the administration, the various actors and their positions have to be explained first.

The third sub-question deals with the causes of the rivalry between Vance and Brzezinski when it came to the formulation of American foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa and the Ogaden War in particular. The third sub-question is formulated accordingly: What were the causes of the rivalry between Brzezinski and Vance with regard to the foreign policy of the United States?

After dealing with the views of Carter's key advisors and the debate amongst them over American foreign policy, it is necessary to establish what the president himself thought about foreign policy. Only after this has been done, can further research be conducted in examining the various sources to determine in what way Carter was influenced by the internal debate within his own government. The fourth sub-question is: What were Jimmy Carter's opinions with regard to the American foreign policy in general?

The ongoing internal debate on the Ogaden War will be analysed in the last chapter. Points of interest here are the opinions of the key players in regard to US foreign policy in the Horn of Africa and the Ogaden War. What did they want Carter to do about the increasing tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia? What other (external) factors played a role in the debate that could have influenced Carter's policy decisions? The fifth sub-question is thus: How did the internal US debate on the Ogaden War develop between 1977-1981?

1.3 Main theoretical concepts

Graham Allison is an American political scientist and professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. His publications mainly focus on ways to analyse and understand foreign policy decision-making. These works had a strong contribution, to the debate, in the second half of the twentieth century (and during some moments of heightened tension between the United States and the Soviet Union).

Allison developed two models to explain the confrontation (i.e. the Cuban Missile Crisis) between the Soviet Union and the United States in 1962. The first was the organizational process model, the second is the bureaucratic politics model. The latter has been chosen as the approach with which to analyse the primary sources to recreate the internal debate. The bureaucratic politics model emphasizes that foreign policy decisions are the product of political

bargaining between individual leaders (or actors) in government positions, that represent different bureaucracies involved in a bargaining game. The results from these bargaining games are characteristic of a competitive game, where multiple actors holding different policy preferences struggle, bargain and compete over what the (foreign) policy should ultimately be. Thus, the final government decision is not the result of a single rational choice where a unified government of various decision makers pursues a coherent set of national objectives, but politics is the mechanism of choice. Each player employs the power at his discretion for outcomes that will advance his conception of national, organizational, group, and personal interests.¹³ In other words, the core of this model boils down to politics being a game along regularized circuits among players positioned hierarchically within the government. The outcome of this process comes not in the form of organizational outputs, but as result of games, wherein each player tries to achieve his goals.¹⁴ This is similar to a zero-sum game sometimes, where one actor (and thus bureaucracy) wins and another loses. But in reality, the outcomes of a lot of policy debates are not that simple. Even if the outcome of the policy debate is not completely what all of the actors wanted, they could still gain influence during the debate. In other words, if the president makes a certain policy choice this does not mean that he completely disagrees with the other advisors. This has consequences for the use of Allison's approach that will be addressed later in this chapter.

Allison then gives a detailed list of assumptions, organizing concepts and general propositions to try and organize the various different factors that can govern the political interests of groups or individual players. Three that are of interest for this research are:

1. An individual's policy preference can be predicted from his or her governmental position. However, decision makers' policy stances can also be affected by personal factors.
2. An individual's influence on particular policy issues is dictated by (a) bargaining advantages, (b) willingness to use such assets, (c) skill in using such advantages, and (d) other actors' perceptions of the second and third items.

¹³ Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2 edition (New York: Pearson, 1999), 171.

¹⁴ Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 144.

3. Governmental decisions and actions can have unintended political results. That is, political bargaining produces outcomes that do not (always) reflect what any one actor would have selected independently.¹⁵

The first and second points will prove to be relevant in chapter 5.¹⁶ Not only was the rivalry between Brzezinski and Vance (and the other actors) motivated by personal factors, but also by a rivalry between the State Department and the NSC, which was partly increased by Carter's organisational reforms.¹⁷ Brzezinski's willingness to confront the Soviets head on and his skill in increasing his own influence on the decision making process also played an important role in the internal debate. Allison's last point will prove relevant for the last chapter, which deals with the debate itself. As additional literature will also indicate, the role of the president must not be understated in the decision-making process. While the process of bargaining was going on amongst the players, it was Carter who ultimately made the decisions, based on his own set of ideas and policy goals. Thus, the outcomes of the policy debates did not always reflect what any of the individual players had wanted, as Carter made up his own mind in a number of cases.

Allison and Zelikow go on to dedicate two chapters to explain the Bureaucratic Politics model as an approach to analyse a foreign policy case.¹⁸ The object of analysis of the Bureaucratic Politics model is, according to them: who said and did what, how and why, and what factors enabled him or her to be more (or less impactful). They go on to explain that the model or approach can be applied by answering four interrelated questions: Who plays? What factors shape a player's perceptions, preferences and stance on the issue? What determines each player's impact on the results? How does the game combine a player's stands, influence, and moves to yield governmental decisions and actions?¹⁹

The first question deals with the players or actors of the game, their positions and background. In other words; who are the actual actors that were of importance in the creation of the foreign policy? In the case of this research, the players are Brzezinski (NSA), Vance (SOS), Brown (SOD) and Turner (DCI) (and Paul Henze).²⁰

The second question delves deeper into the background of the players by analysing their

¹⁵ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 164–81

¹⁶ The fifth chapter deals in detail with organisational, personal and ideological factors that caused the rivalry between Brzezinski and Vance (and thus also the SD and NSC).

¹⁷ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 9.

¹⁸ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 325–66.

¹⁹ Allison and Zelikow, 269.

²⁰ Allison and Zelikow, 332–36.

personal characteristics, operating styles, domestic influences and the context in which an actor makes a certain action or choice with regards to foreign policy.²¹ Without considering the context, decisions or results of player interactions cannot be explained. For example, in this case, one has to take into consideration, that Vance was very much inclined to work with all of his colleagues, even those that had opposite policy goals, while Brezniski was very much convinced (especially early on in the administration) that the Soviets should be confronted more directly, even at the cost of the SALT II negotiations. Brown and Turner were somewhere in the middle, varying between Vance and Brezniski on different foreign policy issues, as their influence on the formulation of policy was less than that of Brzezinski and Vance.

When it comes to context, someone looking at the debate within the Carter administration has to keep in mind the increasing pressure from American newspapers that was putting pressure on Carter to act, as Soviet weapons were arriving in Somalia in increasingly large numbers.²² Congress (Democrats and Republicans) was also exerting pressure on Carter to intervene in the conflict and start arming the Somali regime against the Soviet backed Ethiopians (the Soviets had switched their support).²³ Even if Carter had wanted to intervene directly, the presence of Somali troops in the Ogaden prohibited public US support for Siad. As the international situation (or context) changed with the Iranian Revolution and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Carter (stimulated by Brzezinski) slowly changed his policies of regionalism.

The third question deals with determining the power that each policy maker has in the debate. Allison claims that power (i.e. the effective influence a player has on government decisions and actions) is the determining factor to measure the impact the player has in the debate and thus the eventual actions or decisions taken by the government.²⁴ Power consists of bargaining advantages, skills and willpower, personal ties with other players, expertise and the ability to convince other players of their own goals, proposals and ultimately desired option. The power of the most important actors within the debate on the Ogaden War can be determined by assessing the various primary sources, such as cables, committee meetings and memoirs. In that way their expertise, personal ties and ability to persuade other players can be revealed.

The fourth and last question focuses on the unit of analysis (i.e. the process of the game which the players are playing in order to achieve their goals).²⁵ In answering the fourth question,

²¹ Allison and Zelikow, 298.

²² Donna Rose Jackson, *US Foreign Policy in The Horn of Africa: From Colonialism to Terrorism* (London ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 138.

²³ Jackson, *US Foreign Policy in The Horn of Africa*, 141.

²⁴ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 300.

²⁵ Allison and Zelikow, 325–27.

one must look at the ongoing process of the game, in which the players are pushing, being pushed, pulling and being pulled by the other actors.

Why is Allison's work regarded as a classic landmark work in the field of political science (and international relations) in its way of analysing foreign policy making? In other words, what is its significance for this thesis? Before his two publications in 1969 and 1971, most of the literature and works that were concerned with bureaucracy and foreign policy were largely descriptive and unfocused theoretically. These works would often not offer any analytical perspective of the fundamentals of bureaucratic (foreign) policy making.²⁶ Thus, no alternative explanations for important (historical) events and decisions were given. However, generally speaking, what Allison tried to do, which was to create a model or an approach to analyse a decision making process, is certainly not unique (anymore). There is one important element of his approach that sets him apart from others and that is the outcome of the bureaucratic model. This model treats (foreign policy) decision making process as a game and because it is a game, it has a winner and losers. It does this by trying to measure the amount of influence an actor has and if this actor ends up wielding the most influence and thus getting what he or she wants (and what factors helped the actor in doing this).²⁷

Allison's work showed that a more theoretical approach to the analysis of foreign policy making was feasible and desirable. By creating the three models: rational actor, organizational process and governmental politics (or bureaucratic) models, he showed how to give explicit and direct explanations of events that had not been done in that manner before. His major contribution to the study and analysis of foreign policy making and bureaucracy, was giving it a stronger scientific foundation and justification. As a consequence, his impact has been strong and his three models have been widely applied and adapted by other foreign policy and political science scholars to this day.²⁸

Nonetheless, his work has also attracted significant criticism since it was published. In particular his third model, the governmental or bureaucratic model, has been scrutinized by other scholars.²⁹ The first point states that too many different assumptions, variables and relationships exist within the theory. This makes the approach too complex, but at the same

²⁶ Jonathan Bendor and Thomas H. Hammond, 'Rethinking Allison's Models', *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 2 (1992): 301, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1964222>.

²⁷ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 386–87.

²⁸ Bendor and Hammond, 'Rethinking Allison's Models', 301.

²⁹ See Bendor, Hammond and Dorani.

time to ad hoc or vague.³⁰ It would work better if “closer theoretical attention” was given to a smaller number of variables as a model that includes everything explains nothing. If it does not simplify, it cannot explain.³¹ Therefore, it would be almost impossible to determine the role and impact of any of them.³²

A second point has to do with the claim that executive branch policy making takes place within a hierarchy. Allison overlooks the impact that this hierarchy can have on policy making. In other words, he does not take into account the impact of lesser actors on a policy debate. No distinction is made between players that are higher up in the chain of command and the less important ones.

The third point of critique is Allison’s view of the game of foreign policy making as a zero-sum game. This would mean that although some compromises are made during the game of pulling and pushing, the ultimate outcome of this game is a complete loss or win for the actors involved (and bureaucracies they represent).³³ In reality this is not the case obviously as presidents make certain policy choices based on all matter of factors. A certain choice does not mean the automatic loss of power or influence of a certain ‘losing’ advisor or actor. Even though Carter chose Vance’s point of view in the Ogaden War, Brzezinski was still very much appreciated by Carter.

Fourthly, Allison’s approach places too much emphasis on the role of the players in influencing the policy making. By doing that, he also treats the president as only just above the other actors (this ties into the second point, which relates to the lack of hierarchy or distinction between the individual actors that Allison makes). The bureaucratic politics model thus underestimates the influence and power that the President has in the policy making process.³⁴ A last point of critique is concerned with the impact of other nations’ actions in the policy making process. According to critics, Allison does not take sufficiently into account the role other states can have on internal policy making processes.³⁵

The first point of critique can be dealt with as some of Allison’s critics have already indicated, by simply reducing the number of assumptions he makes. As many of them are self-explanatory (such as that it’s the actors that make the policy decisions), the list can be brought down to

³⁰ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 164–81.

³¹ Bendor and Hammond, ‘The Bureaucratic Politics Approach’, 318.

³² Ibid, 314.

³³ Sharifullah Dorani, ‘The Bureaucratic Politics Approach: Its Application, Its Limitations, and Its Strengths’, *Political Reflection Magazine* 4, no. 5 (2018), 37.

³⁴ Dorani, ‘The Bureaucratic Politics Approach’, 42.

³⁵ Ibid, 42–43.

three, as has been done in this chapter. This would simplify the long list that the author gives. This same point would also indicate that Allison's approach is not applicable to policy debates, but as has also been explained, Allison actually devotes two chapters to this. The four interrelated questions provide this practical approach to analyse the debate.

The second point that is mentioned is quite important, as it claims that Allison only pays attention to the most important and high up players in the game (as he did when analysing the Cuba Crisis). Although this is an important point as this research attempts to look further than just the main actors, any alteration of the bureaucratic politics model is not needed. The first of the four interrelated questions deals with who the actors in the policy debate are. It is up to the researcher to choose these (chapter three).

To a certain extent, Allison's approach turns the result of policy debates into a zero-sum game. This would mean that every debate had a winner and a loser (or several of these). The debate itself is not that black and white, because it entails pushing and pulling. The players use any means (if they are willing!) to win the debate and influence the president, who makes the final decisions. The reality is different of course and this needs to be taken into account in order to be able to use Allison's approach. This can be done by looking at the motivation (if this is possible) that Carter gave for the decisions he took. Did he actually agree with any one of the other players and take on their recommendations? If so, then one could possibly say that they influenced Carter and thus won the policy debate. But, as we shall see, Carter also had other concerns, such as criticism from within the US and other states. These factors would also have an effect on the policy making process.³⁶

The fourth point needs to be addressed by explicitly emphasising the role of the president in the policy making process. Although the role of the president is touched on, Allison treats him as just one of many actors. By doing this, he underestimates the fact that presidents make their own decisions based on their personality, leadership style, and preferences.³⁷

The last three points of critique are related to an important point; if the result of a policy game is not a case of just winners and losers, how does one determine the amount of influence? This is in part a logical problem to have, as the model focuses mostly on the players to recreate a policy debate. Other factors like the influence of the President, domestic issues or the impact of others on the decision making process of players are handled by the second question to a

³⁶ Carter's VP, Walter Mondale was mostly concerned with Carter's popularity back home and mostly argued from the viewpoint of domestic affairs.

³⁷ Margaret G. Hermann and Thomas Preston, 'Presidents, Advisers, and Foreign Policy: The Effect of Leadership Style on Executive Arrangements', *Political Psychology* 15, no. 1 (1994): 78, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791440>.

certain degree, but need to be emphasised more. This needs to be done, because although the influence of the players on the president is important, it remains an intangible data that cannot be quantified exactly. The context, the presidents personality, leadership style, preferences and the fact that decision-makers tend to pay attention to the ramification of their choices and are therefore very cautious when assessing their adviser's suggestions, need to be taken into account. Other approaches and literature that analyse foreign policy making decisions need to be considered to add to the bureaucratic politics model.

One of the major disadvantages of the bureaucratic politics model is that it overemphasizes the role of the president's advisors' influence on the policy debate. A policy debate cannot be analysed properly (or fully) if all of the involved players are treated as equals in the debate who have the same amount of influence (as is suggested by Allison's approach). The president is not the equal of the other actors, in the sense that he is the one that recruits the members of the White House staff and he sets into place the norms and rules that determine the organizational culture of his administration. This also means that what people the president surrounds himself with, influences what kind of decisions he makes and ultimately how his administration handles foreign policy issues.³⁸ The influence of the president as a player in the debate should not be underestimated.

In 'Presidents, Advisors, and Foreign Policy: The Effect of Leadership Style on Executive Arrangements', Ohio State University professors Margaret G. Hermann and Thomas Preston try to create a typology of leadership styles to indicate how presidents in general prefer to coordinate their advisors and the amount of control they need over the policy making process.³⁹ This is based on five variables: "involvement in the policy-making process, willingness to tolerate conflict, a president's motivation or reason for leading, preferred strategies for managing information, and preferred strategies of resolving conflict".⁴⁰ According to the authors, Carter's leadership style fitted in the collegial category. This emphasized a less hierarchical organization that also focused on "working as a team, sharing responsibility, and consensus-building with an interest in generating options, openness to information, and reaching a doable as well as the best decision."⁴¹ While the collegial style is based on collaboration amongst the actors to formulate policies and make decisions, the

³⁸ Hermann and Preston, 'Presidents, Advisers, and Foreign Policy', 76 and 94.

³⁹ Margaret G. Hermann is an American political psyhchologist who is Professor of Global Affairs at Syracuse University. Thomas Preston is a professor of Political Science at Washington State University.

⁴⁰ Hermann and Preston, 'Presidents, Advisers, and Foreign Policy', 81.

⁴¹ Hermann and Preston, 78.

presidents who organise this type of system very much wanted to be at the centre of the decision making process.

Carter's personal preference led him to run the White House in an informal manner. This meant that the pattern of authority was less defined in a certain sense. The central concern of a president like him was to build consensus amongst his advisors in order to reach policy goals (as opposed to a more confrontational or formal preference).⁴² This was the case with Carter, as he looked for people he already knew to become his advisors, like Brzezinski, Vance and Mondale, who he had known since his days in the Trilateral Commission and later on when they helped him run for president.⁴³ A president like Carter (with these kinds of preferences) wanted to be at the centre of a communication network (between the players), where he could collect and disperse information. He wanted to be up to date on what was being discussed in order to maintain power, while feeling most comfortable exercising that power (or leadership) in a cooperative and non-confrontational way.

It is clear that because of Carter's preference, personality, and leadership style, debates were encouraged and very much welcomed by a relatively inexperienced politician like Carter. At the same time, his personal preference led to the empowerment of Brzezinski as the most dominant and high-ranking of the advisors he had. This would in a sense counteract the cooperative emphasis of his leadership style and would also pose a threat to the participation of the other advisors and players.

However, presidents are still very much at the centre of the decision making process (no matter how powerful their advisors become in an informal setting like Carter's administration). Quantitative research done by Steven B. Redd at the Department of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee strongly indicates that presidents carefully consider the advice from their advisors. This is based on the key premise that "decision makers measure costs and benefits, risks and rewards, gains and losses, and success and failure in terms of political ramifications above all else".⁴⁴ They are thus highly sensitive to and aware of the political ramifications of their decisions. This premise was proven correct, particularly in cases of political crisis, where the use of military force was considered by the decision maker.⁴⁵ The advisors acted as a non-compensatory mechanism in affecting choice. This could work both

⁴² Hermann and Preston, 89.

⁴³ Erwin C. Hargrove, *Jimmy Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of the Public Good* (Miller Center Series on the American Presidency) (Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 112.

⁴⁴ Steven B. Redd, 'The Influence of Advisers on Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Experimental Study', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 3 (2002), 337.

⁴⁵ Redd, 'The Influence of Advisers on Foreign Policy Decision Making', 352.

ways as shown in two cases. President Bush's decision to proceed with an attack on Saddam Hussein, was based on his rejection of the "do nothing" option. This was because of the political costs of doing the latter. In another case, President Eisenhower chose the option given by his advisors not to intervene in Indochina, because he was aware of the unwillingness of the American public to get involved in Asia.⁴⁶ Again, the political costs (or capital) were too high to risk for the decision maker.

1.4 Innovative aspects

The main argument of this thesis is that the internal debate concerning the foreign policy of the Carter administration on the Ogaden War has not received the attention it deserves. Even the narrow segment of the historians who bother to analyse the Ogaden War, tend to focus on the actual choices Carter made and judge him either in a positive, negative or somewhere-in-between manner. A lot of authors actually do focus on this debate, but they only focus on the two main actors that dominated the debate. However, only a minority of publications (at best about three recent ones) look further and more in-depth at the internal debate. They note that there were more important actors than Brzezinski and Vance. However, other important factors and players, such as Brown (secretary of Defence and head of the Pentagon) and Stansfield Turner (director of the CIA) and the input of the NSC in general, are mostly ignored in the historiography.

Two possible reasons could be the cause for this gap in the literature. Firstly, these authors follow the dominant narrative that has been put forward by other historians, i.e. that the entire debate was between Brzezinski and Vance and that Carter did not (or barely) have any other major influences on his foreign policy formulation. A second factor could be the availability of primary sources (or the lack thereof). More could be done with new and barely touched primary (declassified) sources to tie together all of the important and less important actors in this political debate analysis. There are large numbers of primary sources that deal with a variety of aspects of the process of Carter's foreign policy making. Paul B. Henze, who was on the NSC (and deputy of Brzezinski), gives valuable insights into the inner workings of the administration.

By consulting these and more recently declassified primary sources, a relevant and

⁴⁶ Redd, 356.

useful contribution can be made by this thesis, by uncovering hidden dynamics that reveal the true complexity of the internal debate within the Carter administration's involvement in the Horn of Africa and its attempts to grab the Soviet Union by the horns.

1.5 Nature of the sources and challenges

This thesis uses various primary sources to create a deeper understanding of the foreign policy debate within the Carter administration. These sources were collected from the Roosevelt Institute for American Studies in Middelburg. In recent years, large numbers of (previously) classified documents have been made public. This archive of American governmental documents contains various different sources, such as memo's, cables, minutes of meetings and reports. This archival material gives an insight into the meetings between the important actors of the Carter administration such as Vance, Brzezinski, Mondale, Brown and Turner. Furthermore, a selection of the most important documents from this archive can be found online in the 'Foreign Relations of the United States' series. This series represents the official documented record of major US foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity.⁴⁷ This source has compiled the other archival material in a chronological order and according to its significance to the foreign policy of the Jimmy Carter administration in the Horn of Africa. It is complementary to the RIAS archival material, as it has the minutes of all the NSC meetings (some of which are missing in the other archive). Another important source is the CIA Reading Room, which focuses specifically on the role of Turner within the Carter administration and is also complementary to the previously mentioned archives.

One of the major strengths of these primary sources is that they provide information on the who, where, and what of the ongoing actions and thoughts of key figures within the administration. These documents show the inner workings of secret meetings and where not meant to be read by everyone. In that sense, they convey the true nature of some of the actors and organisations (to the extent that it is possible to uncover their true intentions and thoughts).

Furthermore, the FRUS series has been compiled and made available online from any computer connected to the internet. Not only that, but a major advantage of the FRUS series is

⁴⁷ 'Historical Documents - Office of the Historian', accessed 26 November 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>.

the fact that one can search for keywords within the document. This is less so the case with the archival material, which needs to be downloaded individually first. Therefore, they are less accessible than the sources in the archive (which are only available at that location). At the same time, this could prove to be a weakness to the reliability of the sources, because they are not always thoroughly objective. They only give the view of one person or organisation on a single case of a certain development with regards to the Ogaden War.

Moreover, some of the language used in the sources could prove to be unfamiliar outside the context of the source or foreign policy making in general. This could prove a hindrance at first. A practical point which could be considered a weakness of these sources, is the fact that some parts of the pages have been coloured in black (“page denied” is also a term that is used). Some information is seemingly still not made available to the public in certain cases. More recently, some microfilm (reels) from the Carter library have arrived at the RIAS. However, a quick glance has proven that only two actual reels are somewhat relevant, as they are concerned with foreign relations and aid to the Horn of Africa. Further research will have to prove if these primary sources give further insight into the foreign policy debate.

Some further challenges can be expected when using the above mentioned primary sources. The first point relates to the fact that while the minutes of the various meetings are quite detailed, in some cases the key actors do not always say what they are thinking. At some meetings, some of Carter’s advisors did not speak out at all. In the case of Turner, the CIA Reading Room also contains primary sources specifically focused on Turner’s role in the Ogaden War.⁴⁸ Literature will have to be used to fill in the gaps in the primary sources (in order to find out what each actor thought). Memoirs can also be useful in adding to this, but these must be handled with some scrutiny of course.

Another important point has to do with the way in which Carter ran and (re)organised his administration.⁴⁹ Far fewer NSA meetings were held and its number of committees was brought back to only two. This makes it somewhat easier to track what was happening, but on the other hand Carter also held a lot of informal meetings, which were not recorded. In that sense, one must make the most out of the primary sources that are available and some inferring has to be done, because not everything that was discussed was recorded. Memoirs could be of use in that regard, even though one must be careful when basing something on these sources, as the authors (sometimes) tend to portray themselves in a favourable way.

⁴⁸ ‘FOIA | CIA FOIA (Foia.Cia.Gov)’, accessed 2 June 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/search/site/Stansfield%20Turner%20Ogaden%20War>.

⁴⁹ Chapter 1.4 deals with this in more depth.

The third challenge relates partially to the methodology (or approach) used in this research. In order to recreate the debate in an accurate way, the primary sources of the meetings must be analysed in a chronological order. This must be done in order to paint a picture of the development of the internal debate. In order to do this, the sources must be organised in such a manner so this can be done. This is particularly important, as Allison's approach treats foreign policy making as a zero-sum game.⁵⁰ This would mean that the entire debate had one winner and one loser. In a sense this is the case, as Carter did not end up getting directly involved in the Ogaden War (as Vance wanted), but throughout this administration the debate about the Horn and the war continued. This meant that there were several ongoing games with winners and losers. Winners and losers must be interpreted in relative terms, because even though Vance won the debate on the Ogaden War, Brzezinski still had an increasing amount of influence over Carter. The president still valued the ideas of his other advisors.

Even if Allison simplifies the way to approach a foreign policy debate, his approach is still useful. He provides a set of simple questions to ask in order to determine who is gaining (winning the game) more influence and who is losing it (losing the game) on an ongoing basis. The primary sources must be approached, organised and analysed from that perspective.

1.6 Methodology

After the primary sources from the RIAS are organised and labelled in Zotero, they were selected according to different keywords that the author has used to search within the archives, such as "Ogaden War", "Horn of Africa", "Department of Defence", "National Security Advisor", "Cyrus Vance", etc. All of these terms have been searched for within the timeline of the Carter administration (this being between 1977 and 1981). The primary sources are then highlighted and extracted based on their relevance in accordance with the ongoing scholarly debate on the American foreign policy concerning the Ogaden War. In that sense, it is important to determine to what extent these primary sources in conjunction with the secondary sources explain how the foreign policy of the U.S. was formed (the actors, branch rivalry, ideology, image of the U.S. etc).

The first remark that must be made is to accept the fact that in attempting to recreate a policy debate a certain amount of inferring must be done based on assumptions, as one can

⁵⁰ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 300.

never know for sure how much influence Carter's advisors had on him. As has been mentioned before, Carter held numerous informal meetings. No records were kept of these, so the complete picture of who influenced who and to what extent, will never be attained.

In order to be able to say anything relevant about the influence the players had, one must first look at the positions they took in relation to the Ogaden War. After a Presidential Review Memorandum had been issued by Carter, the players would discuss the issues or cases he addressed in it.⁵¹ The primary sources reveal what positions they took (in PRC, SCC or NSC sessions) on the issues that Carter had deemed important. Were they in favour of intervening in the Horn directly or not, for example? The eventual outcome of those sessions would result in a recommendation for Carter, on which he would base his eventual decision. His decisions can also be analysed by looking at the various Presidential Directives that he issued based on these discussions.⁵²

But by looking at who said what and what decision was ultimately made based on those opinions and discussions, does not give full insight into the extent of each players' influence. One must look at the foreign policy goals (or world view) that each player had formulated and the goals that Carter ultimately set for the administration. The decisions he made have to be compared to those two sets of goals. This is of importance, because it is always possible that certain players advise certain actions, because they think it is necessary for example, but it does not match up with their policy goals.⁵³ So it is important to see if the recommendations they made, which could be translated into actual policy, were a part of their own goals or if they were influenced by other actors. In other words, did they actually advance their own foreign policy goals by the points they put forwards in the sources?

But, because influence remains an intangible data that cannot be quantified exactly, the methodology needs to be broadened somewhat. Not only must one look at the influence of the advisors on the debate, but the president as the final decision maker must be analysed. The president bases his decisions not only on advice, but also on his personality, leadership style, preferences, attention to possible ramifications of his choices and the context (domestic factors, role of other nations) need to be taken into account.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Edward C. Keefer, *Harold Brown: Offsetting the Soviet Military Challenge 1977-1981*, Secretaries of Defense Historical Series, volume 9 (Washington, DC: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2017), 24–25.

⁵² Brzezinski describes in more detail the reforms that Carter had made to the decision making process at the start of his administration in: Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 61.

⁵³ This is part of the game of pulling, pushing, being pulled and being pushed. Actors can influence each others decisions and opinions.

⁵⁴ Chapter 1.3 deals with this in more detail.

Allison's approach has attracted some points of criticism such as: that it cannot measure exactly the influence of all the players, and that it does not take into account the context, personal beliefs, and external factors (other countries or Congress) in the policy debate. It also does not take into account the influence of lesser actors in the policy debate, treats a policy debate as a zero sum game, underestimates the influence of the president in comparison to the other players, and is too complex and simple at the same time.⁵⁵ Despite these points of criticism, Allison's approach is still relevant and useful to this research.

Why would one still use Allison's approach to analyse the Ogaden War despite the above mentioned points of critique? In other words what are its advantages that could deal with these points? The first of the four interrelated questions is a very useful one to start the analysis of Carter's administration. Allison focuses on identifying the most important and influential top figures in the hierarchy of the various organisations of the administration, by asking who plays?⁵⁶ By focusing on a small group of players, he makes it possible to make sense of complex situation. At the same time the historiographical debate on this topic has been dominated by the focus on the two most important players in Carter's administration. The analysis of the debate needs to be broadened to take into account three other major players besides the NSA and the SOS, the other ones being the Director of the CIA, the VP and the SOD.

The point of Allison not taking into account the context, personal beliefs and external factors (other countries or Congress) is also only partially fair. The second interrelated question that Allison asks to analyse the debate actually does actually take into account the context wherein the player resides and has to make his decisions. These questions were what factors shape a player's perceptions, preferences and stance on the issue?⁵⁷ Various players are influenced by the presence of the SU in the Horn or public opinion back in the US regarding their policy choices during the debate.⁵⁸

So too are the personal characteristics and the operating style of the president taken into account. In the case of Carter this will be his informal and non-hierarchical style of running the administration. This style gave room for strong players like Brzezinski to dominate the administration more as time went on.⁵⁹ While Allison intended to include the context wherein the player has to make his decision, it would seem that he did not mean the influence of other nations or an external domestic force like congress into the analysis. The reasoning for this was

⁵⁵ These points of critique are addressed and analysed in more detail in chapter 1.3.

⁵⁶ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 269.

⁵⁷ Allison and Zelikow, 269.

⁵⁸ As we will see when the debate itself will be described in chapter 7.

⁵⁹ More on this in chapter 1.3

that actors act the way they do because they represent the interests of the bureaucracy they represent. Although Allison later implied that this premise was not always the determining factor in explaining the choices players made and that it could be ignored if it did not seem relevant.⁶⁰ This leaves room in the current application of Allison's approach to include the possibility of the other nations (the Soviet Union, Somalia or Ethiopia) in influencing Carter's policy making process. And we will see later on that this was certainly the case during the Ogaden War.

Some of these points have already been addressed by Allison in a revision of the Bureaucratic Politics Model, published in 1999.⁶¹ Allison acknowledged that the President is a very important player in the game and that the thoughts and personal characteristics of him are crucial in forming foreign policy.⁶² At the same time he maintained the argument that although the President is the most important player he is influenced by his advisors. This ties in with another point of critique, the inability of Allison's approach to determine the exact influence of each player. Allison's third interrelated question: what determines each player's impact on the results, attempts to deal with this. This critique is not completely fair as there is no possible way to exactly determine influence in a foreign policy debate. In order to negate the two points of critique (lack of ability to determine influence and the underestimation of the president) other literature has been brought in to amend this. This means that the role and importance of the president in the policy debate must be emphasised (more) when analysing the Ogaden War. Although it is hard to determine how the players influenced the President, it is clear who eventually did make the decisions to support Somalia in place of Ethiopia and get involved in the Horn of Africa. This is because quantitative research indicates that Presidents carefully weighed the advice from their advisers and are very much at the centre of the decision making process. This is based on the key premise that "decision makers measure costs and benefits, risks and rewards, gains and losses, and success and failure in terms of political ramifications above all else".⁶³

The last question of Allison's approach deals with the policy debate (or game) itself, by asking the following question: how does the game combine a player's stands, influence, and moves to yield governmental decisions and actions?⁶⁴ So after establishing who the key players are, what their personal and external motivating factors, are and how influential these players

⁶⁰ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 307.

⁶¹ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 296, 297-298, 328 and 386.

⁶² Allison and Zelikow, 340 and 383.

⁶³ Redd, 'The Influence of Advisers on Foreign Policy Decision Making', 337.

⁶⁴ Allison and Zelikow, *Essence of Decision*, 269.

are (and more importantly how the president was influenced), the last question focuses on the game of pulling and pushing between Vance, Brzezinski, Mondale, Turner and Brown. The critics stated that Allison treats the game of pulling and pushing between these players and Carter as a zero sum game. While Allison did not really address this point, his vision of politics is a bargaining game between the different bureaucracies and their leaders (i.e. the players).⁶⁵ While it will be hard to determine how much influence the players and how Carter came to his decisions, considering it as a purely zero-sum bargaining game (where each players win is the other's loss) will not help in understanding the game that was played. This is because even though Vance was winning the debate early on in Carter's administration, this did not mean that Brzezinski was constantly losing influence. On the contrary he was still very important and eventually came to dominate the administration (resulting in Vance leaving the administration in 1980, because he did not agree with the confrontational approach Carter was increasingly choosing in dealing with Iran and the Soviet Union).

The game should then be considered as a series of ongoing games of pushing and pulling, where the actors try to gain influence over Carter. All the while keeping in mind the fact that it was Carter who eventually still made the decisions (in a cautious manner and aware of possible consequences), but at the same time encouraged a culture of debate amongst his advisors as was becoming to his political style (and his lack of political experience upon entering the presidency). The main advantage of this approach is that it (despite the critics stating it is too complex and simple to explain anything) focuses on the leading advisors, that are highest up in the hierarchy. It does this by asking four clear interrelated questions that offer a step by step approach to analyse a complex policy debate.

⁶⁵ Allison and Zelikow, 255–313.

Chapter 2: historiography

2.1 On foreign policy in general

This historiography discusses the general theories on American foreign policy and foreign policy in general. As the views and judgements on Carter's foreign policies are grounded in these approaches and theories, it is necessary to discuss these first, before looking more precisely on the historiography of Carter.

2.1.1 Realism

One of the most frequently used approaches or theories to explain international relations, is Realism. This approach can subsequently be divided into several other genres: classical, neoclassical, offensive, defensive and structural. What all these forms of Realism have in common, is that the main actors in international relations are states and that states are mainly concerned with their own national interests (above all security), because the international arena is full of threats. This is further compounded by the fact that there is no higher authority above states that can protect any individual one or enforce any agreements.⁶⁶

The first sub-school of Realism is Classical Realism, which could be found in the works of Thucydides, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, Morgenthau. Classical Realism states (like most Realists) that the international stage is inherently dangerous for the security of nation states. One of the most important causes for this was the nature of humans. As humans had created these states and the world in which these states operated, humans had to change in order to achieve more security for these states.

Neo-classical Realism emerged from this after the Second World War and it differed from classical Realism, in that it aimed to be more rigorous analytical in trying to be a fully-fledged theory of international relations. The later offensive and defensive Realism offered more clearly defined explanations though. Defensive Realists argued that despite the dangers, international politics is often benign. States do have to protect themselves from rivals. But as

⁶⁶ Frank Costigliola, ed., *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 3 edition (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 10.

the intentions of other states can never fully be uncovered, arming themselves could potentially (unnecessarily) trigger a response from other benign states, which would worsen the position for the actor's state. Security has to be maximised, not power. Offensive Realists believe that because so much is uncertain in the international arena, other hostile states always plan for the worst case scenario (as they also don't know the other's intentions). Accordingly, a state might try to achieve regional dominance, even in spite of other possible benign states in order to maximise power.

Neorealism or Structural Realism was developed by Kenneth Waltz in *Theory of International Politics*. Rather than focusing on the essence human nature, it only analyses the international system. He equates the international system to markets in the economy. World politics exists, because rival states will join together to stop one from dominating the rest. Deducting from that, he states that bipolar systems are more peaceful than multipolar worlds. He reasons that in a multipolar world states rely more on allies to achieve security. As a result, smaller wars can quickly escalate into larger ones (citing the Great War as a good example of this). In a bipolar world the two superpowers can and must rely on their own power and don't need the help of other states for their security. This could possibly mean avoiding large scale wars, according to Waltz.⁶⁷

2.1.2 Liberalism

A different approach to the root of the national interest comes from Liberalism. It claims that national interest doesn't either come from the state nor the international system (as is the case in Realism), but from the domestic interests and how these are aggregated by institutions. Consequently, conflicts between states occur when leaders put the interests of the state before those of the people. Peace can usually be guaranteed, however, if the economic benefits from trade and other economic activities between states can be maintained (as war is a very expensive endeavour, it will usually be avoided if possible). The general argument that this approach makes is "that who gains and who loses within a country by greater or lesser exposure to international trade and investment influences domestic alignments and institutions and, through them, foreign policy."⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 1 edition (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 2010), 12.

⁶⁸ Costigliola, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 12–13.

This more general point of Liberalism that the foreign policy of a state reflects domestic interests, comes to the forefront in the Democratic Peace Theory, which was invented by Woodrow Wilson. He claimed that Democracies were inherently more peaceful than other states (such as dictatorships like the Soviet Union). This was because the citizens of a democracy always suffer the most in case of wars and in such a state this group has a big influence over leaders. As a consequence, leaders of democracies are more willing to compromise to avoid wars in order to secure their political futures. Liberalism also comes to the forefront when it comes to international institutions, which is known as Neoliberal Institutionalism.

In *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, Robert Keohane stated the institutions that came to be in the open economic system in the post-war era in the West, would not have been possible without American power. However, the institutions and interests that grew up around that same system maintained themselves when American power began to fade.⁶⁹

So in contrast to Realists, this approach considered that “institutions can facilitate cooperation (between states) by establishing regularized channels for communication and problem-solving (lowering the “transactional costs“ of establishing and maintaining agreements, to use the language of economists), facilitating trade-offs among different issues, and increasing transparency and the salience of states’ reputations by making clear whether they had lived up to their commitments.”⁷⁰ Institutions could eventually become so powerful, because states delegated more power and autonomy to them that they could become independent actors within the international system of states.

2.1.3 Social Conservatism

Liberalism argues that as economies develop, important interest would automatically push for the lowering of trade barriers (i.e. the replacement of mercantilism, which saw international trade as fundamentally zero-sum) in order to promote free trade, which emphasizes the mutual gain that can be gained from it. Social Constructivism argues that international politics is not created by the imperatives of the international system of states (Realism) or the economic

⁶⁹ Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, With a New preface by the author edition (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005), 29.

⁷⁰ Costigliola, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 14.

interests within a state (Liberalism), but is socially constructed through the subjective understandings that develop and are shared through interactions. So agents, institutions and structures do not exist independently from one another, but change each other.⁷¹ The focus within this approach is that the processes described above are set in motion and driven by ideas. They form the basis on which individuals and states see their interests. The Cold War can be seen as an example of this, in that it was a conflict driven (in part) by differences of ideologies or ideas.

2.2 The orthodox views of Carter by Shoup, Thornton and Kaufman

The orthodox interpretation of American foreign policy making (and behaviour) and Jimmy Carter's actions in relation to the Ogaden War can, generally speaking, be seen as quite one-sided (or critical) on Carter's administration and its policy choices.

One of the most critical authors (and one of the first) to comment on Carter's administration was Laurence Shoup's *The Carter Presidency and Beyond: Power and Politics in the 1980's*. Laurence Shoup is a historian who received his Ph.D in History from Northwestern University in 1974 and later taught US history at the University of Illinois, San Francisco State University and Sonoma State University.⁷² According to, Shoup Carter lacked any leadership skills and his (foreign) policy was basically dictated by his advisors. He noted that Carter was dominated by the Trilateral Commission (Carter and some of his closest advisors were members), that ultimately controlled the country. He even went so far as to claim that "Carter's entire foreign policy, much his election strategy, and at least some of his domestic policy has come directly from the Commission and its leading members." Furthermore, Carter's foreign policy decisions were not motivated by his own ideals of human rights and global stability, but by crude strategic interest for its oil and American interest.⁷³

A second author that evaluates Carter's success and competence as president is Richard Thornton in his work *The Carter Years: Toward a Global World Order*. Thornton is professor

⁷¹ Costigliola, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 15.

⁷² 'Biography Laurence Shoup', accessed 8 July 2019, http://laurenceshoup.com/?page_id=24.

⁷³ Laurence H. Shoup, *The Carter Presidency and Beyond: Power and Politics in the 1980's*, First Printing edition (Palo Alto: Ramparts Press, 1980), 14, 51 and 117.

of history and international affairs at George Washington University.⁷⁴ He argues that Carter did not end up implementing his own ideals (but not because of a conspiracy by the American elites or his own advisors), but could not do so because of a new Soviet breakthrough in military technology. The advantage that the Soviets had would hinder the possibility of US intervention or military support in other countries. This would split and ultimately drive the Carter administration's goals. In dealing with this Soviet threat, he concludes that "failure of leadership, indecision, a lack of imagination, and...tentative adoption of half measures, characterized the Carter presidency". Like the previous author, he blames Carter for the failed foreign policy.⁷⁵ Carter was not decisive enough (in dealing with the Soviets) to advance or protect American interest abroad.

Burton Kaufman is a professor at Virginia Tech and was the first historian to publish a complete book that deals with the Carter administration, based on sources that became available from the Carter Presidential Library. Originally published in 1993, Kaufman's work, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter*, is very critical of Carter's administration and of Carter himself in particular.⁷⁶ He focuses on the internal problems between Brzezinski and Vance. It fits into the early historiography concerning the Carter administration that emerged at the end of the 1980s.

This work, and others like it from that period, tended to be condemnatory of the American presidency and its foreign policy goals in general, largely influenced by post-Vietnam cynicism.⁷⁷ The Carter administration had to operate in the 'shadow' of the Vietnam War, as some authors claim. It was clear that the defeat in that war made the American public reluctant to project military power.⁷⁸ This was further enforced by setbacks in the Horn of Africa, Iran, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and El Salvador.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ 'Richard C. Thornton | Department of History | The George Washington University', accessed 8 July 2019, <https://history.columbian.gwu.edu/richard-c-thornton>.

⁷⁵ Richard C. Thornton, *The Carter Years: Toward a New Global Order* (Washington: Washington Institute Press, 1991), 7, 8 and 542.

⁷⁶ Burton I. Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.*, 2 Revised edition (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 3.

⁷⁷ Jackson goes into this and even describes it as "Vietnam Syndrome": Donna R. Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa: Cold War Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia*, Annotated edition (Jefferson, N.C: McFarland Publishing, 2007), 5.

⁷⁸ Nancy Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume III*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, Reprint edition, vol. 3, Cambridge History of the Cold War Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 87–88.

⁷⁹ Similar comments like the ones Mitchell made: Gaddis Smith, *Morality, Reason and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1986), 247; M. Glenn Abernathy, Dilys M. Hill, and

Kaufman is so direct with his assessment of Carter's presidency, that he deems it as an outright failure.⁸⁰ Even though other authors at the time began to espouse revisionist views (that assessed Carter in a more balanced and ultimately positive light) on Carter's foreign policy, Kaufman dissents from this emerging trend. He states that the president lacked in leadership, was ineffective in dealing with a hostile Congress, unable to defend America's honour globally, but most importantly uncertain about prioritising foreign policy goals. He does, however, note some of the successes Carter achieved, such as the Panama Canal Treaty and the Camp David Accords. However, for the most part, Carter either overreacted or mishandled major foreign affairs cases such as the Iranian Revolution and the exaggerated threat of the Soviets after their invasion of Afghanistan.

While a lot can be said about the lack of the historical context that Kaufman should take into consideration when assessing some of these less successful endeavours of Carter, Kaufman does base his statements on a vast array of sources, such as memoirs, interviews and oral histories, on top of the primary sources from the Carter Library. Naturally, new sources from that very same library did emerge after Kaufman published this work (such as the President's Handwriting File), which could have provided him with more insight into the issues that faced Carter's presidency. In that sense, Kaufman's constant devaluation of Carter's inconsistent human rights policy, dealings with China, Iran and Soviet aggression fail to be put in the correct historical context and the times Carter had to operate in. Kaufman implies that his administration could and should have controlled popular support for his own leadership and foreign policy choices. Again, this shows the lack of understanding for the difficulties Carter faced, such as operating in a time of increased tension with the S.U. and other challenges in Iran and the Middle East.

This is not to say that Kaufman's work is completely without relevance for this work. It characterises and shows the nature and tone of the scholarly debate regarding the Carter administration as it came to be at the end of the Cold War⁸¹. Like many commentators at the time of Carter's presidency and those of his successors, are a product of their time. Later publications that had access to more declassified documents had a more nuanced view of Carter

Phil Williams, eds., *The Carter Years: The president and Policy Making* (London: Francis Pinter Publishers, 1984), 75.

⁸⁰ Burton I. Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.*, 2 Revised edition (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 3.

⁸¹ Tim Weiner, 'President Moves to Release Classified U.S. Documents', *The New York Times*, 5 May 1993, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/05/us/president-moves-to-release-classified-us-documents.html>.

and his administration. In order to clearly show and represent a broad overview the historiography on Carter (and his administration), Kaufman is insightful for this research.

2.3 Revisionist view of Carter

Later publications that dealt with Carter's foreign policy formulation could make use of more primary sources that became available (President's Handwriting File for example), as confidential documents started to become declassified from the end of the Cold War onwards.⁸² At the beginning of the 21st century, even more primary sources became available that could give historians a better understanding of the internal workings of Carter's administration.⁸³ These publications tended to give a more favourable judgement of Carter's foreign policy, looking beyond the assumption that he was naive and did not understand the true intentions of the Soviet Union. While these publications are different in the sense that they judge Carter in a more positive light, they remain within the framework that Carter was either a dove or a realist.

John Dumbrell's *The Carter Presidency: A Re-Evaluation* (1995) judges Carter (and his achievements) in a favourably light. He judged Carter as a success overall within the limits of the time and context Carter had to govern in. He analysed various topics of the Carter administration, such as domestic policies on the emancipation of minorities and the foreign policy relations with the SU and Iran. In the end, he concluded that the president "within the ambit of the age of limits...it can be concluded that Carter kept faith."⁸⁴

In his essay titled 'Placing Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy', professor William Stueck tries to determine where the Carter administration fits in the history of American foreign relations, especially since the era of U.S. globalism since the end of the Second World War up until the present. By examining Carter's responses to several key issues during his presidential campaign and his years in office, he argues that Carter became president with the intention to significantly alter the previous foreign policies of Nixon and Ford, but that he could eventually

⁸² Scott Shane, 'U.S. to Declassify Secrets at Age 25', *The New York Times*, 21 December 2006, sec. Washington, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/21/washington/21declassify.html>; Woodroffe, *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden*, 19.

⁸³ John Dumbrell, *The Carter Presidency: A Re-Evaluation*, Subsequent edition (Manchester, UK ; New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 214.

not change as much as he had planned or hoped for.⁸⁵ In this case, the author does what the previous source lacked, i.e. planning Carter's foreign policy choices and priorities in the correct historical context by comparing them to those of Nixon, Ford and Reagan. According to Stueck, Carter was mostly continuing policies that his predecessors had already started. Furthermore, Reagan continued the increase defence spending that was started by Carter after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

The way that Stueck positions Carter's foreign policy within the wider context of American foreign policy since the end of the Second World War up until Ronald Reagan, is by distinguishing between what Carter intended to do and what he ultimately ended up doing. The main emphasis for Carter was to set himself apart from previous presidents by de-emphasizing the anti-Soviet element in American foreign policy. In the early part of his administration, he succeeded in doing this by putting a focus on other foreign policy issues, such as the Panama Canal treaties, the SALT II Accord and to not get directly involved in a power struggle with the Soviets in the Ogaden War by sending in American troops.⁸⁶ However, as other authors have noted, in the later phase of the Carter administration (from the early 1980 onwards), he began adopting more traditional foreign policy goals of containment in the face of increased Soviet aggression and the Iranian Revolution. This came in the form of increases in the defence budget from 1980 onwards.⁸⁷

In his final assessment of Carter, Stueck concludes that Carter ultimately failed to re-orient American foreign policy away from a strong and traditional anti-Soviet and anti-communist doctrine. He eventually abandoned Détente in favour of combatting the Soviets strategically and rhetorically by attacking the Soviet Union on its human rights policies. This is not to say that Carter's foreign policy choices should be seen as a complete failure, as Kaufman did. The success that Carter enjoyed in making long lasting foreign policy choices that served the interests of the United States can be seen from their continuation under Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

Interestingly, the author places Carter's human rights policy at the centre of the compromise Carter had to make in regard to his original foreign policy goals. He had to compromise the Détente, and by putting a strong emphasis on human rights early in his term, he not only strained relations with Moscow, but put on self-imposed restraints created by concerns for human rights in South America and

⁸⁵ William Stueck, 'Placing Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy', in *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era*, ed. Gary M. Fink and Hugh Davis Graham (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 244.

⁸⁶ Stueck, 258.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 259.

Iran.⁸⁸ This developed an image of weakness to the American public when events developed against the United States' interest in those countries. It is this negative public perception (enhanced by past debacles like the Vietnam War, Watergate and Angola) that put the largest strain on Carter to develop a more hard line against the Soviets. Even when taking into consideration these complicating factors, overall Carter's foreign policy had some major long-lasting effects on the foreign policy of the United States. The author emphasizes the continuity of the increased defence spending, normalized relations with China and a firm human rights policy towards the Soviet Union, with an American foreign policy which started out as not centred on relations with the Russians, but ended up in a more traditional Cold War theme.

The author puts an important focus on keeping in mind the historical context that Carter had to operate in to succeed in his chosen foreign policy goals. The difficulties of a resistant domestic front (in the form of Congress, which was not keen on getting directly involved in a foreign war, but also wanted a reaction to Soviet aggression) and the general negative perception of his policies (no matter what they were).

Robert Strong is a professor of politics at Washington and Lee.⁸⁹ Strong's *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy* fits in the revisionist scholarship on the Carter presidency that developed from the 1990s onwards. He focuses on different aspects of foreign affairs handling by the office of the president, based on nine detailed case studies. Furthermore, Strong aims to defend the foreign policy during the Carter years against oversimplifications of contemporary media and punditry. By this he is referring to the myth that has prevailed amongst public and professional opinion that Carter's administration and his own role therein was at best a mediocre one.⁹⁰

By making use of new (at the time) archival evidence, Strong argues for a revaluation of the conventional view on Carter as a weak and chaotic foreign policy leader and president.⁹¹ Interestingly enough, the Ogaden War is only mentioned as a footnote in the nine case studies that Strong uses to explore different aspects of Carter's presidency. This choice was probably made because events in other countries were deemed more important during the Carter administration. This shows as he analyses the foreign policy in regards to Iran, South America and Afghanistan.⁹² He does, however, give a clear categorization of the negative assessments

⁸⁸ Stueck, 'Placing Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy', 261.

⁸⁹ 'Jimmy Carter', Miller Center, 26 September 2016, <https://millercenter.org/president/carter>.

⁹⁰ Robert A. Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2000), 261.

⁹¹ Strong, *Working in the World*, xii–xiii.

⁹² Strong, 8–9.

of the Carter administration (unlike Stueck, who can also be seen as a revisionist when it comes to the foreign policy analysis of Carter's presidency, but does not clearly name and categorize the overly critical early publications on the Carter administration). The main arguments as to why the Carter years are referred to as an era of failure in foreign affairs, according to Strong, are:

1. The majority of major foreign policy goals Carter set himself were consistently unpopular or entangled in long-standing controversies (such as the Panama Canal treaties).
2. Carter was new to international politics and was seen to be not up for the job by the general public.
3. His style of leadership was seen as being too much focused on the details of each policy, without thinking about a broad strategic vision. Furthermore, he failed to resolve the differences between his National Security Advisor Brzezinski and Secretary of State Vance, which resulted in the inconsistency of the foreign policy in the Carter Administration (in the eyes of his critics).
4. His mismanagement of the American relationship with the Soviet Union and the fact that he did not have a consistent approach to his fundamental foreign policy problem, i.e. how to deal with the Soviet threat.⁹³

Of the above mentioned four points, the Vance-Brzezinski split is the most commonly noted feature from the more critical commentaries on the Carter's administration's foreign policy decision making. But according to Strong, the differences between these two key advisors have been grossly exaggerated. There were of course differences between these two, but a lot of the commentaries have seen conflicts where they simply did not exist.⁹⁴ Strong gives several of such examples, mainly of press and other commentators exaggerating about tensions between the National Security Council and the Department of State. There were tensions between these Departments (as various primary and secondary sources state), but the newspaper reporters and junior members from within the administration did not always know what went on in the highest levels of deliberation.⁹⁵ While these are interesting points that show how unfounded the critique

⁹³ Robert A. Strong, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2000), 262–66.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 265–66.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 266.

from the early part of the historiography is, some remarks have to be made about Strong's own comments.

First, a lot of the comments that Strong is criticizing came from the period during the Carter administration itself. Hence, these are no observations made years later after Carter's term as president was over, which was when more sources were steadily being made available. Secondly, Strong does not always provide footnotes to back up these points. That being said, a lot of these points are mentioned by other authors (such as Hargrove and Dumbrell), so they do fit into the arguments that the revisionists make about Carter and his critics.

Even though Carter did receive a lot of criticism for not being consistent when it came to his foreign policy, he was very committed to his most important beliefs, such as: support for human rights, the peaceful resolution of international disputes, arms control agreements, limited use of military force, and the spread of democratic institutions throughout the world. He remained committed to these ideals throughout his presidency, even when he moved towards a more traditional Cold War approach in dealing with the Soviet Union after 1980. This is proven by his achievements when successfully conducting America's foreign policy: the Camp David Accords, Panama Canal Treaties, the formal recognition of China, the peaceful transition to majority rule in Rhodesia, the negotiations of SALT II and most important of all the enhancement of international and domestic attention to human rights.⁹⁶

Therefore, while Stueck also finds that Carter's greatest legacy is also a point that made him less successful in the other goals he set himself, Strong still sees this as his greatest achievement. Human rights were something Carter had always seen as (one of) his most important goals. Perhaps because this publication is an entire book as opposed to a single chapter that Stueck contributed, Strong has more room and attention to give to the critics of Carter. In that sense, this addition to the historiography does not differ that much from the last one in that it is part of the revisionist history on Carter.

2.4 Post-Revisionists on Carter

⁹⁶ Ibid, 269, 273–74.

Recent publications have taken a different approach in comparison to earlier works and even the revisionists on assessing Carter's foreign policy. These authors tried to look further than just labelling Carter as a dove or a hawk who was dominated by his NSA. But at the same time, they can still make an assessment of Carter and his (foreign) policies as successful or not.

Nancy Mitchell is a professor of history at North Carolina State University and has published extensively on United States' foreign policy and international relations. She has contributed a chapter to *The Cold War and Jimmy Carter* that examines the evolution of the Cold War from the Helsinki Conference of 1975 until the Soviet collapse in 1991. Here she gives an overview and assessment of the way Carter governed the United States, with an emphasis on foreign policy. The three main themes she focuses on with regard to Carter's foreign policy are: his leadership style, the historical context and the role of U.S. allies in the conflict.

Mitchell makes some interesting comments about the influence that Vance and Brzezinski had on Carter's viewpoints. Other (more critical) authors have stated that Carter was torn somewhat between Vance and Brzezinski (and their rival views on foreign policy making), and that this resulted in the incoherent and inconsistent foreign policy of the Carter administration. Mitchell, however, states that this was not the case, because Carter actually held both of their viewpoints simultaneously. He believed in patient diplomacy and in the dramatic gesture; he saw beyond the Cold War and was the firm Cold Warrior.⁹⁷ In other words, he was both in favour of both a globalist (like Vance) and a regionalist (like Brzezinski) foreign policy. Mitchell goes on to nuance this in the sense that there was some incoherence in his policies, because of the practical reality of the times in which Carter had to lead his country. His vision was that the United States' foreign policy should reflect its values, but in practice there were compromises. This is what led to the incoherence that went further than just debates and disagreements between his key advisors.⁹⁸ Although some incoherence was thus still present because compromises had to be made, Carter was clear on a number of points. He was very cautious about deploying military force, but he used diplomatic options all the more often. He believed that he should be able to point out the fault of the Soviet Union and at the same time negotiate arms-control treaties that were in the interest of both countries.⁹⁹ He was both a hawk and a dove. He wanted to deny the Soviet Union any advance, but at the same time was also

⁹⁷ Nancy Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Volume III*, ed. Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, Reprint edition, vol. 3, Cambridge History of the Cold War Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 69.

⁹⁸ Mitchell, 'Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 70.

⁹⁹ Mitchell, 73.

convinced despite the defeat the United States had suffered in Vietnam, that America should not over-emphasize the threat of communism.¹⁰⁰

In the end, according to Mitchell, it is less useful to distinguish the U.S. policy makers, that aim to define U.S. national interest in foreign policy, as simply hawk versus dove. Globalist versus regionalist would be better, as both groups were fighting the Cold War; they only disagreed about the most effective way to do it. This was of course what Carter was trying to do, but at the same time focus on other issues (i.e. the Panama Canal negotiations and the civil war in Rhodesia) to not get sucked into the traditional Cold War narrative of confronting the Soviet Union to combat communism. He could do this by other means. This again got him labelled by critics as ineffective.¹⁰¹

This brings the second theme of Mitchells analysis into play, namely the historical context. Like Stueck, Mitchell puts a lot of emphasis on the very complex international situation (or historical context) that Carter's administration had to operate in (arms control, human rights, the Middle East, Iran, China, Horn of Africa, to name a few examples). Because these cases and the past cases like Watergate, the Vietnam War and Angolan Civil War gave a negative image of U.S. performance on the international stage, Carter focused on a more positive goal. This was (one) of his most important foreign policy goals, namely human rights.¹⁰² The American public was desperate to hear something positive, in other words to hear the simple affirmation that they were good people who pursued something good, they should trust and vote for this man.¹⁰³ But because there were so many situations on the international scene that required his attention, Carter could never completely pursue any of his goals. In that sense, he had to make choices in what he could do with an overcrowded schedule (especially during his first year in office). This then again got him criticism for being soft, chaotic and ineffective.¹⁰⁴

The third and lesser theme that the author addresses, is the role of United States' allies in Carter's foreign policy. Most of the authors do not look at this aspect as thorough as Mitchell. Economic and strategic motives are usually mentioned. In that sense this author makes a valid contribution to the historiography of Carter's foreign policy and that of the United States. According to Mitchell, countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia played an important role in Carter's perception of not only the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also the Soviet policy in Africa.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 75.

¹⁰¹ Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 75–76.

¹⁰² Strong, *Working in the World*, 103.

¹⁰³ Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 71.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 76.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 74.

The then president of Egypt, Sadat, and other conservative Arabs, whose help Carter needed to move the Middle East peace process forward, put pressure on Carter to intervene in the Horn of Africa.¹⁰⁶ Several Arab states and leaders were worried about Soviet influence in the area after they got permission to construct a naval base at Berbera on the southern Gulf of Aden. Important shipping lanes went through the area, so economic motives played a role there for Carter (apart from the obvious political and strategic ones of the Soviet presence there). Because of this, Carter kept good relations with the Egyptian president and the Saudi royal family and ordered Vance to improve relations with Somalia. The later loss of Iran as an ally was also a major blow to the United States, which was further worsened by the storming of the U.S. embassy in November of 1979 and the hostage situation thereafter.¹⁰⁷ Hence, the role of allies was an important one in Carter's foreign policy.

In her concluding remarks about Carter's foreign policy, Mitchell states (like Stueck) that the dark shadow of previous American defeats made the American public reluctant to support a president that wanted to project military power abroad. At the same time, this legacy also made the Americans exaggerate their own weakness. The aims of Vance and Carter (at times) to pursue a regionalist policy was ultimately doomed, because within the context of simple Cold War paradigms, any Soviet victory (no matter how costly like in the Horn of Africa) was seen like another humiliation to the United States. This sense of self-vulnerability was further enforced by more setbacks in the Horn of Africa, Iran, Afghanistan and South America.

Ultimately, the Cold War was a power game, so the fact that the U.S. looked weak, must mean that the Soviet Union must be strong in the eyes of the American public (and the international community). This and the earlier mentioned increasing complexity of international affairs in the period of *Détente* in the late 1970s would further complicate the choices Carter had to make.¹⁰⁸

Mitchell, like Stueck, puts emphasis on the historical context to explain the choices Carter made in his foreign policy. She does this in a more elaborate manner by also taking into account the internal debate between Vance and Brzezinski. Although most authors state that this compromised Carter (in a way according to Mitchell, Carter was forced by the timeframe he had to operate in so he could not choose between their two ways of doing things). In that

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 77.

¹⁰⁷ Fifty-two American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 444 days from November 4, 1979 to January 20, 1981. They were held hostage by supporters of the Iranian Revolution who had overthrown the Shah, who was the autocratic leader of Iran before the revolution and was an ally of the US.

¹⁰⁸ Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 87–88.

sense, it is an interesting addition to the historiography and also gives a new insight on the internal debate and the foreign policy choices that were made by Carter. Lastly, Mitchell is one of the few authors that also mentions the foreign allies and the influence they had on Carter on getting America involved in the Horn of Africa.

In her book *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War* Mitchell focuses on the Africa policy of the Carter administration. It is similar in its approach in its placement of Africa and the “arc of crisis” at the centre of the administration’s foreign policy battles. Furthermore, she describes Carter not as a naïve idealist, but as a realist who was not blinded by those issues to the realities of Cold War politics (in context of the conflict with the Soviet Union).¹⁰⁹ Mitchell (much like previously discussed scholars) pays a lot of attention to the historical context of the decision-making of the Carter administration. She looks at the policy of the previous Ford administration stance on Africa and the role of NSA and Secretary of State in relation to foreign policy-making. She does this in order to showcase the various changes and continuities within the Carter administration.

Even more importantly, she looks at the role the various American allies in Europe and the Middle East had in influencing the United States to intervene in Africa. In that sense, it is an additional potential motive to add to the ones Jackson has already mentioned in her work. Even more relevant is the extensive analysis she makes of the different foreign policy actors within the Carter administration. Not only does she reveal their differences, debates, and fissures (like most historians in this specific field already do), but she also looks at the less important actors, such as Carter’s U.N. ambassador Andrew Young (who is not or barely mentioned by the other authors). Ultimately, she looks beyond the narratives that have been produced by earlier authors that Carter was dominated by one or the other advisor. According to Mitchell, the rivalry was present, but Carter made up his mind regardless of these internal disputes.¹¹⁰ Hence, as previously mentioned, this is a useful source, which, when compared to others, can constitute a more realistic and nuanced picture of how complex the debate amongst the influencers of U.S. foreign policy was during the Ogaden War.

2.5 Carter’s leadership

¹⁰⁹ Nancy Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter in Africa: Race and the Cold War*, (Washington, D.C : Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2016), 8.

¹¹⁰ Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter in Africa*, 442.

Odd Arne Westad is a professor of US-Asia Relations at Harvard University, where he teaches contemporary international history at the Kennedy School of Government. Before 2015, he taught International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science.¹¹¹ In *The Cold War: A World History*, he places an emphasis on the human rights agenda that Carter pursued. American liberal values, like democracy, is why the president got involved in the Horn of Africa. Westad argues that at the core, this conflict was an ideological struggle between two states (and thus between their two ideologies: capitalism and communism). According to Westad, this struggle had its roots in the late nineteenth century, the First World War and of course the Second World War. The key to this superpower struggle and the massive impact it had on the globe was caused by the ideological differences between the Soviet Union and the United States. He focuses on the global aspect of this conflict, but also gives attention to the other ‘Third-World actors’ and the way they were affected by this ideological battle. However, because this is a more traditional big history (with a focus on a grand narrative of the individual historical actor), the main focus is on the major states and actors.

According to Westad, Carter saw the United States as morally superior to the Soviet Union on the grounds of values such as human rights, freedom of religion and self-determination. The American foreign policy should reflect this and the Soviet Union should be confronted if it trampled on human rights. Carter did in fact want to confront the Soviets and no longer let them do what they wanted, as had happened in the period of Détente. This would help restore the loss of respect America had endured on the global stage.¹¹² This last point is where Westad puts a lot of emphasis on in explaining Carter’s foreign policy choices and the ultimate negative image of his performance by the general public and critics.

Furthermore, the author sides with the authors like Kaufman and Stueck who think that Carter was hampered in forming a clear, coherent and effective foreign policy by the differences in opinion between Vance and Brzezinski. He takes this internal debate at face value, in the sense that Carter would definitely have been influenced in his foreign policy views by the differences between his two most important advisors.¹¹³ This conflicts with other views on Carter, which are of the opinion that either these differences have been exaggerated by commentators at the time, or are inaccurate, because they came from members of Carter’s administration who were too unimportant to have really known what went on at the top of the

¹¹¹ ‘Schwarzman Scholars’, *Schwarzman Scholars* (blog), accessed 31 May 2019, <https://www.schwarzmanscholars.org/faculty-profile/odd-arne-westad/>.

¹¹² Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, 1 edition (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 545.

¹¹³ Westad, *The Cold War: A World History*, 546–47.

chain of command. Some of these even go as far as to claim that it was in Carter's nature to stimulate internal debate, as he enjoyed the intellectual encouragement it gave him. Reasons for this that are mentioned are for example Carter's lack of political experience upon entering office. He needed experienced men around to help him carry out his goals. A second point bears this out, as all of the important advisors (actors) stated later on in their memoirs that Carter was always open to discussions on foreign policy issues. He listened to them and met with his advisors regularly and valued their opinions.¹¹⁴

Westad further criticizes Carter for his inexperience with foreign policy (and that of his closest advisors), which resulted in the initial cooling of relations between the Americans and Soviets after Carter became president.¹¹⁵ This argument has also been mentioned in the categorization that Stueck made of the main critiques on Carter's administration. It must be noted that later on in the chapter, Westad describes Carter as a practical leader in the context of the Cold War on several occasions, making decisions that benefitted the United States in the long run (SALT II accords and normalization of relations with China).¹¹⁶ It would seem that Carter's inexperience did not hamper him much later on in his presidential career.

The main focus of Westad's chapter on Carter remains the pressure from the American public opinion on his administration. This was shaped by the historical context of the time. Because of this, Carter was forced in a way to concentrate on national security issues. Despite his efforts to try and halt Soviet aggression and expansion, it did nothing to boost his reputation amongst the general public.¹¹⁷ The once glorious American superpower was being outdone, while fighting for its once unassailable position. Westad does see Carter as a practical president who tried to turn the tide of Soviet aggression (at least in the eyes of the American administration) in a time of Détente. But the circumstances in which he had to lead a nation did not allow him to take full credit for this. This was something that Reagan would focus (and get credit for) on, restoring America to her former glory. The Détente thus fell prey to internal politics of the United States, according to Westad. Even though Carter did try to placate them in his attempts to either counter or work with the Soviets, he was still either seen as indecisive or accused of placating to the Russians.

This fifth and most recent publication on the Carter foreign policy adds a mixed assessment of Carter's foreign policy achievements. Westad is critical of Carter on several points, like the

¹¹⁴ Vance, Mondale and Brzezinski all stated later on that they enjoyed working with Carter and that they believed that he truly valued their advice, even though he did not always follow it.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 546.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 550–51.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 557–58.

earlier authors were at the end of the Cold War itself. But eventually he seems to tend towards the more revisionist authors within the historiography that tend to give a more balanced view on how Carter tried to work within the difficult timeframe he became president in. In other words, the historical context is taken into account in judging if Carter formed clear foreign policy goals and if he managed to succeed in achieving (some of) them. Overall, Westad does place liberal values at the core of Carter's foreign policy formulation (and thus as motivation for getting involved in the Horn of Africa).

Erwin C. Hargrove worked as a professor of political science and director of the Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies. In various publications, he focused on the American presidency and political leadership. Hargrove can also be placed within the approach of Liberalism, as Hargrove puts an overall emphasis on the course that Carter himself wanted to set for the administration by reforming various bodies. In *Jimmy Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of the Public Good*, Hargrove focuses on the organisational (reform) aspect and history of the Carter administration. The author describes the process the administration went through as Carter tried to set up an organisation for his foreign policy advisors.¹¹⁸ Ultimately, this means that the author actually puts the individual at the centre of power, as Carter pushed through all of these reforms (and how Carter related to other individual advisors within his administration).

In practice, this meant that Carter re-organised a lot of bodies, committees and functions. For example, he decreased the number of committees within the National Security Council and made the position of National Security Advisor less powerful. The author only mentions the Ogaden War to illustrate the first noticeable conflict between Vance and Brzezinski.¹¹⁹ He focuses mostly on the internal debate in relation to other events in Iran and Afghanistan. But the main contribution Hargrove makes, is in helping to understand how the different actors and organisations related to each other and how these same organisations came to be. The author does this by re-creating the historical context of the two years leading up to the election of Carter as president.¹²⁰ By doing so, the central ideas and themes formulated by Carter (including the other two main actors) for a future foreign policy, such as human rights and nuclear

¹¹⁸ Erwin C. Hargrove, *Jimmy Carter as President: Leadership and the Politics of the Public Good* (Miller Center Series on the American Presidency) (Paperback) - Common (Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 113–20.

¹¹⁹ Hargrove, *Jimmy Carter as President*, 149.

¹²⁰ Hargrove, 113.

proliferation, become clearer. Also, the extent to which Carter, Vance and Brzezinski influenced each other is an element that Hargrove discusses.¹²¹

2.6 Realism views on Carter

Some authors focus on motives of power, self-interest and competition in regards to the U.S. involvement in the Horn of Africa. Louise P. Woodroffe is a historian in the Office of the Historian at the U.S. Department of State, where she focuses on U.S. foreign policy in relation to postcolonial Africa. Her main focus is on the most important individuals in the Carter administration and their efforts to gain influence over the formulation of policy. Overall though, Woodroffe focuses on the conflict between the U.S. and the S.U. over the Horn of Africa within the context of the Cold War. In *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden*, Woodroffe tries to recreate the responses that the Ford and Carter administrations gave to the events in the Horn of Africa during and after the Ogaden War and their effects on the Soviet-American relations. This is done based on new archival research and interviews with key figures from (both) administrations.¹²² The focus of this source is therefore on the American foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa and how disagreements over that region influenced superpower Détente. The author makes five central arguments. The Horn of Africa served as the central test case for Détente in the eyes of the U.S. government; The Horn of Africa was essentially the schoolhouse for foreign policy for president Carter; The case of the Horn showed to the U.S. that the Soviet Union would not abide by the agreements of Détente; The U.S. could not move beyond a bipolar competition conception of the Cold War; that ultimately, the intervention in the Horn of Africa would be a terrible failure for all involved.¹²³

The arguments that the author makes are indirectly addressed through the lens of the debate that the two major actors, Vance and Brzezinski, engaged in and the change in policy decision that president Carter made accordingly. The focus on the differences within the administration comes to the forefront in chapter four, where Woodroffe provides a chronological overview of

¹²¹ Hargrove, 112.

¹²² Woodroffe, *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden*, 4.

¹²³ Ibid, 4.

the debate between the main actors about the Ogaden War and what to do with the Soviet involvement in the region (to link it to Détente or not).

Woodroffe is particularly useful in comparison to Hargrove, in his efforts to reconstruct the decision-making process of the Carter administration leading up to and during the Ogaden War (instead of just discussing and judging the choices that were made by president Carter). This author does make use of some sources (and interviews) by the minor actors (Harold Brown and Paul Henze) within the administration. It will be interesting to see how much more complex the debate actually was, as opposed to what one would initially think just by looking at the differences between the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State.

2.7 Historical context of the Ogaden War

Some historians do not necessarily aim to judge Carter's administration as either a success or failure, but try to look at the various arguments for him to get the US involved in the Horn of Africa. They also provide some more historical context (the most important events of the war) on the niche subjected that is the Ogaden War

Wondim Tiruneh Zeleke, teacher at a College of Teacher's Education in Ethiopia, recently assessed the course and various causes for the outbreak of the war between Somalia and Ethiopia. He emphasizes the foreign intervention that played a large role in this conflict.¹²⁴ Moreover, Zeleke also gives insight into the different foreign powers that were involved in this conflict in the Horn of Africa. In other words, the motivations of the U.S. and S.U. (but also East Germany, Cuba and North Korea) for choosing one of the sides in the conflict are briefly discussed. The author also devotes some time to the direct causes of the war in the region. In the end, this article does not deal with the foreign policy of the United States directly, but does give an insightful overview of the conflict itself, the historical background of the region, the various countries involved and the various motives for the US and the SU for getting involved. In other words, this source helps in adding much needed historical context to the conflict that led to the policy debate within the Carter administration.

¹²⁴ Wondim Tiruneh Zeleke, 'Leading Factors for the Somalian Invasion of Ogaden: Foreign Intervention, and the Ethiopian Response (1977-1978)', *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 6, no. 6 (25 May 2018): 55, <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v6i6.3301>.

Donna Jackson published several articles and this larger volume, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa: Cold War Policy in Ethiopia and Somalia*. Like most other publications that cover the Carter administration and its approach towards the Ogaden War, the main focus of Jackson is to add to the existing historiography that paints Carter and his administration either in a positive light, negative light or somewhere in between those two. In this publication, the author chooses the first of those options. Carter was committed to the Cold War like his predecessors, but was the first president after Vietnam and Watergate and was thus limited in his actions, unlike his predecessors.¹²⁵

Various motives for the administration to get involved are discussed by Jackson, such as American economic interests in the Indian Ocean, requests by the Somali dictator for American intervention, human rights issues, opposing the presence of Soviet forces in the region (Ethiopia) and the long-term goal of restoring or extending American influence in the region.¹²⁶ Jackson also pays attention to the internal debate between Brezniski and Vance. A major focus point for these two factions was the practical implementation of the protection of human rights and if (and how) opposition to the Soviets should be interlinked with the Détente (SALT II accords).¹²⁷

More importantly, the author claims that the internal debate was for the most part dominated by the two main actors within the administration.¹²⁸ Seeing as this is based on the memoirs of these actors, some scrutiny has to be applied. On the other hand, Jackson does suggest that there were some internal differences between other actors such as Henze (staffer on the National Security Council) and various members of the State Department.¹²⁹ These differences were related to the foreign policy that they felt should be pursued in the Horn of Africa. Exploring the differences within the administration, which Jackson does, other than just Vance and Brezniski, is of added value to this thesis.

Another publication by Jackson is the 'The Carter Administration and Somalia', a supplement to the first publication, as it also provides some historical context to the involvement of the Carter administration in the Horn of Africa and the Ogaden War.¹³⁰ This source complements the first one by the same author in justifying this topic as an overlooked part of U.S. presidential

¹²⁵ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, xii and 5.

¹²⁶ Jackson, 6-7 and 105.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 105.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 103-4.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 9 and 104.

¹³⁰ Donna R. Jackson, 'The Carter Administration and Somalia', *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 4 (2007), 703.

history.

The current historiography of Carter's foreign policy is dominated by two themes: the difficulties and dilemmas facing the Carter administration in formulating a foreign policy with the limits imposed by Vietnam and Watergate and the importance of foreign policy towards Somalia in relation to the demise of Détente.¹³¹ Jackson focuses more on the historiography than Jackson's larger publication and thus compliments it by adding a positive appraisal of Carter as a president.

Chapter 3: the Ogaden War

In this first chapter, the geographic and historical background of the Ogaden War is discussed, as well as the various factors that led to the outbreak of this conflict in July 1977. The course

¹³¹ Jackson, 704.

of the war is also described, as well as the role of the Soviet Union in this conflict. This is done in order to answer the first sub-question: What was the Ogaden War?

3.1 General background

The Somali Democratic Republic (established in 1969) is located in East Africa and more specifically in the Horn of Africa. This state covers an area of 637,540 square kilometres. Over 2,900 kilometres of its eastern border is hemmed in by the Gulf of Aden to the north and the Indian Ocean to the east. For the most part, Somalia consists of flat plains, with the exception of some mountain ranges in the northern part of the country.¹³² Its neighbours are the Republic of Djibouti (north), Ethiopia (west and south) and Kenya (south-west). The Arabian Peninsula is a short distance away, being separated by the Gulf of Aden to the north. One can notice, by its geographical location, that the Somalian state is located at an important intersection of various state borders and maritime trade routes that come along the Gulf of Aden. As a result of this, foreign powers have always been interested in this area, no doubt contributing to the instability that the region historically and at the present still endures.¹³³ The various borders that meet in the Horn of Africa are as artificial as those of most other African states that were created before, during and after the Second World War. Several powers were involved in dividing the various peoples of the region along indiscriminate lines that coincided with their own interests. As a result of Italian, French and British rivalries for control of territory, the Somali people as a whole got divided amongst several different states: British Kenya (Republic of Kenya), Ogaden (in Ethiopia), French Somali land (modern Djibouti), British Somaliland and briefly Italian Somaliland.¹³⁴ Somali, the language of the majority of the Somalian population, has only been officially introduced as a script since the beginning of 1973. Although Somali is the dominant language, English and Italian are used in some newspapers and the university (Arabic is also used in the northern part of the country).¹³⁵

In the years before the Ogaden War erupted in 1979, the total Somali population was

¹³² Harold D. Nelson, *Somalia: A country study, Foreign Area studies* (Washington DC: The American university press, 1984), 14.

¹³³ Joseph K. Nkaisserry, *The Ogaden War: An Analysis of Its Causes and Its Impact on Regional Peace on the Horn of Africa* (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 1997), 5.

¹³⁴ Alexander A. Vadala, *Major geopolitical explanations of conflict in the Horn of Africa* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2003), 627 – 628.

¹³⁵ Nelson, *Somalia: A country study, Foreign Area studies*, 15.

estimated to be around 3.7 million. The majority of these lived a nomadic or semi-nomadic life. This group makes up about three-fifths of the total populace. The remaining two-fifths is roughly evenly divided between sedentary rural and urban living peoples. This last group is concentrated around the Somali capital of Mogadishu. Overall, the Somali people are Sunni Muslims and ethnically divided into two main groups, the ‘Sammal’ (these being pastoral nomads) who make up around 75 percent of the population, and the ‘Sab’ (these are sedentary or semi-sedentary peoples). This second group made up around 2 percent of the population, with a remaining 5 percent made up of various minorities.¹³⁶

Although the Somali people are an homogeneous ethnic group, no single Somali state has ever managed to unite all of these peoples in the past. As a consequence, strong divisions have developed over the ages amongst the different Somali tribes.¹³⁷ This point will come back later in this chapter, when the various causes of the conflict are discussed.

Why is it relevant to the background of this conflict to mention the ethnic makeup of Somalia? The significance of this topic lies in the composition of the local population of the Ogaden province of Ethiopia. The population of this province numbered around one million, the majority of which were pastoral nomads of Somali descent. This group is made up of twelve clans, of which the most important is the Ogaden clan (after whom the province is named).¹³⁸ The importance of a large Somali minority living in Ethiopia is addressed later in this chapter, when the causes of the conflict are discussed.

3.2 Causes of the Ogaden War, 1977-1978

The Somali invasion of the Ethiopian province Ogaden on the 23th of July 1977, was not an isolated incident in the conflict between the Somali Democratic Republic and the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia. The latter, which had been ruled by a military junta since 1974, was usually called The Derg, which is the Ethiopian term for “committee” or “council”. These two states and their historical predecessors had been in conflict with each other since the Middle Ages. Tensions had existed between the Muslim Somali tribes,

¹³⁶ Nelson, 15.

¹³⁷ Fred Hailiday, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (Manchester: University press, 1981), 199 – 200.

¹³⁸ Kinfe Abraham, *Ethiopia from Empire to Federation* (London: New York University Press, 2001), 349 – 350.

inhabiting the eastern parts of the Horn of Africa, and the Ethiopian Christian state ever since.¹³⁹ These tensions were amplified, however, after the extensive redrawing of the borders in the Horn of Africa during and after the Second World War.

The first factor that played an important role in the Somali invasion of 1977 had to do with the historical background of the region that goes back to the nineteenth century. Ethiopia historically has always been a more centralised state when compared to the Somali peoples living on the coast of the Horn. It expanded its influence across the Horn where large numbers of ethnic Somali's lived as semi-nomadic peoples. The Ogaden was one such region, which was included into what are the present day borders of Ethiopia. This expansion by Ethiopia was recognized by Italy, France and Britain, who were themselves expanding their own influence along the Somali coast from 1897 onwards. Somali nationalism in the Ogaden was stimulated by Italy, in order to divide and weaken the Ethiopian state, whilst it occupied it from 1936 until 1941.

After the Italians were defeated by British forces in Africa, the latter continued the policy of stimulating Somali nationalism, after their takeover of the the Horn of Africa from 1941 until 1950. While Britain continued to govern the Ogaden and the rest of the Somali peoples, Britain favoured the creation of a new state to enter the British Commonwealth that would include all of the Somali-speaking peoples in the region. This policy was never carried out though, because Ethiopia did not want to lose its influence over Somalia. The United States got involved in the region 1946 for the purpose of exploiting oil reserves.

In summary, the factors that are causes for the fact that Somalia did not recognize the Ethiopian-Somali border, are firstly that according to Mogadishu, the international recognition that solidified the Ethiopian control over the Ogaden in 1879 violated earlier treaties signed between the Europeans and the various Somali clans living in the region. Secondly, that the border is vague and contradictory and remains a provisional administrative line despite attempts by Ethiopia and Italy to further define it under UN and US pressure after the Second World War. Finally, the Somalis claim that the Ogaden has never fully been administrated as a true Ethiopian province until recent times. This last has to do with points referred to in the first part of this chapter, these being that the Ogaden is a sparsely populated region with various semi-nomadic Somali tribes moving in and out of the region to access the grazing grounds.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Don Oberdorfer, 'The Superpowers and the Ogaden War', *Washington Post*, 5 March 1978, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/03/05/the-superpowers-and-the-ogaden-war/00f60ef2-01b4-4cd3-8c5f-e545df388def/>.

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The Ogaden Situation. Central Intelligence Agency, 1980, 5-7.

As has been mentioned during the discussion of the historical factors contributing to the outbreak of the Ogaden War, some political factors also played a role in the conflict. One of those was the irredentist goal of the Somali dictator Siad Barre, who came to power in 1969, to create a greater Somalian state, which would not only include Somalia and the Ogaden region, but also the Northern District of Kenya and the French held Somali territory (what is now Djibouti). The idea behind this was to supersede the internal divisions between various Somali clans, created by Italian, French and British imperialism, and to unite these clans into one Somali nation.¹⁴¹

Although this point is raised by several other authors as playing an important factor in Siad's decision to invade the Ogaden in 1978, some remarks have to be made about this.¹⁴² The existence of an independent Somali state stimulated the irredentism ideology that would lead to the start of a long insurgency in the Ogaden from 1963 onwards. This uprising would later serve as one of the excuses for Siad to invade the Ogaden. It is not completely clear, however, to what extent this insurgency was spontaneous or being coordinated and controlled by Mogadishu.

Furthermore, the Ogadenis (Somali clans living in the Ogaden) had their own motivations to revolt against their Ethiopian overlords.¹⁴³ Even if it is hard to establish a direct link with between the emergence of the insurgents in the Ogaden and Somalia, the latter did support them and tried to gain more control over them with the creation of the Western Somali Liberation Front, which was created in 1975.¹⁴⁴ Mogadishu's control over them was tenuous, however, and during the nineteen sixties, the Somali's were having second thoughts about pursuing irredentist goals (Its support for insurgents in Ethiopia and the northern parts of Kenya was costing a lot of resources and damaging its reputation on the international diplomatic stage). During the nineteen seventies, Ethiopia was weakened by internal revolutions and rebel advances in Eritrea and other dissident movements. On top of that, the United States had ended its military supply to Ethiopia by April of 1977. Somalia's invasion of the Ogaden in July of 1977 must thus not only be seen in the light of some grand political scheme to unite all the Somali peoples, but in practical terms of opportunism by Somalia's dictator Siad. He hoped to

¹⁴¹ Donna R. Jackson, 'The Ogaden War and the Demise of Détente', 199.

¹⁴² Zeleke gives an extensive historiographical overview of the causes: Wondim Tiruneh Zeleke, 'Leading Factors for the Somalian Invasion of Ogaden: Foreign Intervention, and the Ethiopian Response (1977-1978)', *International Journal of Social Science Studies* 6, no. 6 (25 May 2018): 56–58, <https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v6i6.3301>.

¹⁴³ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The Ogaden Situation, 7.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 7-8.

win over the Ogaden by a quick campaign.

A third factor that could have played a role in motivating the Somali invasion of the Ogaden was economic in origin (large numbers of semi-nomadic Somali tribesmen travelled to and from the Haud pasturelands in the Ogaden during the six months of the rainy season). Ethiopia was trying to stop this movement of peoples. Furthermore, oil and gas had been discovered from the nineteen forties onwards, which provided a possible attractive source of income that Siad's regime very much needed in order to legitimize itself towards his own people.¹⁴⁵

Although economic factors could have played a role, other authors claim that the Ogaden region was barren and of no economic value to Somalia whatsoever.¹⁴⁶ In addition, if irredentism was an important factor, why did Siad not invade Kenya or Djibouti? The answer could lie in his own personal background. His mother belonged to an Ogedani clan, and Siad was born in Ethiopia. This would then have been a fact he must have kept hidden in order to be able to rise within the Somali army. Personal factors (possibly) led him to invade the Ogaden.

The fifth and last factor is formed by the international support that the Somali regime received (and stopped receiving) from the Soviet Union, Egypt and later America. The support it got gave it an opportunity to wage a full scale war against its neighbour Ethiopia. Egypt lost interest after Nasser's Egypt was defeated in the Arab-Israeli war of 1967. On top of that, although Somalia had received military aid from the Russians since 1963, Moscow refused to fully support the irredentist claims.¹⁴⁷ This point would come back later, as after Somalia had captured over 90 percent of the Ogaden, the Soviets warned the regime not to advance any further into Ethiopia. They consequently stopped supplying the Somali regime and switched to supporting Ethiopia with military supplies and advisors. This could be interpreted as a trigger for Siad, that the support for his regime was waning and that he had to act, as Somalia had (only) received enough weaponry to wage war for approximately six months.¹⁴⁸ In that sense, even the limited support that it did get enabled and facilitated it to wage a war it could not have done otherwise. In that sense it is still very much an important factor in causing the war. The

¹⁴⁵ Zeleke, 'Leading Factors for the Somalian Invasion of Ogaden', 57–58; U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The Ogaden Situation, 7-8.

¹⁴⁶ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 48.

¹⁴⁷ This support included: 250 tanks and 300 armoured personnel carriers, which enabled Barre to equip 35.000 of his own men and 15.000 Ogaden fighters of the WSLF.

¹⁴⁸ Zeleke, 'Leading Factors for the Somalian Invasion of Ogaden', 59.

oversupply of Soviet weapons to the Somali's was also seen by American officials as the real reason for the invasion, as Paul Henze (close associate of Brzezinski) noted.¹⁴⁹

The point of foreign support is further reinforced by the fact that in the months leading up to the war, the United States had begun to retract its support for Ethiopia and the SU had still yet to fully realign itself with Somalia.¹⁵⁰ The retraction of US support for Ethiopia had been set in motion after events in Ethiopia in 1974. The new revolutionary regime, that had come to power, was becoming increasingly pro-Soviet and anti-imperialist. It was also a very brutal regime that demanded large arms shipments from the US to deal with Eritrean separatists.

All of these factors made it increasingly difficult for the US to openly support this regime with arms. Perhaps in an attempt to show Carter's commitment to human rights, the US administration announced an aid cut in late February of 1977. This was also accompanied by Carter's decision to further downgrade the alliance with Ethiopia by closing an important US communications base which formed the core of the US presence in the country. The Ethiopians demanded as a consequence that all American personnel should leave the country.¹⁵¹

As a result of waning US support, the SU began to increase its influence in the country, which culminated in a 100 million dollar arms deal agreement in December of 1976.¹⁵² In an effort to counter SU influence, the US replied to Somali pleas for assistance. The closer ties between the US and Somalia had been made possible by Siad's distancing of the SU, because of his territorial ambitions on Ethiopia. The Soviets had offered to negotiate a peaceful resolution between Ethiopia and Somalia, which indicated to Said that the Soviets would not back a possible Somali military campaign to capture the Ogaden.¹⁵³

As the guerrilla war in the Ogaden between the Ethiopian army and the WSLF was rapidly transforming into a real war, the State Department proclaimed it would grant military assistance to Somalia.¹⁵⁴ An opportunity to quickly defeat Ethiopia seemed like something that could be achieved by the Somali armed forces at the end of July 1977.

¹⁴⁹ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 71.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 69–70.

¹⁵¹ Oberdorfer, 'The Superpowers and the Ogaden War'.

¹⁵² Kenneth G. Weiss, 'The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War': (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, 1 February 1980), 3–4, <https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA082219>.

¹⁵³ Weiss, 6–7.

¹⁵⁴ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 70.

3.3 The course of the war

When Barre ordered his troops to invade the Ogaden region in July 1977, over 35.000 SNA soldiers and 15.000 WSLF irregular Ogedani fighters went into action. A week later, more than half of the Ogaden was in Somali hands (at the height of Somali expansion, around 90% of the Ogaden would be under their control). Although the dual efforts of the SNA and the WSLF insurgents gained them a lot of ground early on in the war, some setbacks also happened. The defending Ethiopian forces at Dire Dawa and Jijiga inflicted heavy casualties on the Somali's. Moreover, the Ethiopian Air Force (supplied by the SU) had also begun to establish air superiority, despite the Somali advantage with their Soviet supplied equipment.

In the meantime, the Soviets, who had started switching their material support from Ethiopia in favour of Somalia, where, like the Americans, not in favour of a Somali attack and annexation of the Ogaden. While no ceasefire was in sight, the Soviets started to increase the shipments of arms to the Ethiopians. Not only did they send large numbers of military advisors and equipment (around a billion dollars' worth of weapons, including hundreds of tanks, armoured vehicles, helicopters and artillery), but eventually around 18,000 Cuban combat troops would be stationed in Ethiopia and saw action in the Ogaden from January of 1978 onwards.¹⁵⁵ Not only the Soviets were involved in supporting the Ethiopian regime; the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, North Korea and East Germany also offered help. Not surprisingly, Somalia broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba as a result of this.

The culmination of the Somali invasion came in September, when a renewed assault on Jijiga resulted in the mutiny of Ethiopian troops and their ultimate retreat from the town. The Ethiopian troops in the area could not withstand this new assault and had to retreat even further behind the strategic strongpoint of the Mard Pass, which is halfway between Hijiga and Harar. By the end of September, the Ethiopian forces had lost control of nearly all of the Ogaden and had been pushed back into the non-Somali areas of Harerge, Bale and Sidamo. However, although their initial thrust had eventually yielded Jijiga in mid-September, the Somali offensive had bogged down by November.¹⁵⁶ A combination of attrition (caused by Ethiopian

¹⁵⁵ For more on the Ogaden War and the (general) positions of Carter's most important advisors regarding this conflict: Zeleke, 'Leading Factors for the Somalian Invasion of Ogaden', 62; Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 86; Daniel J. Sargent, *A Superpower Transformed: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 267.

¹⁵⁶ Weiss, 'The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War', 10.

resistance), Ethiopian air attacks and the worsening weather conditions stopped the Somali offensive in its tracks. This did not mean that Barre stopped trying to restart the offensive and capture more territory. The SNA, supported by the WSLF, tried to capture Harar from October 1977 until January of 1978. Although some new gains were made, the 40,000 Ethiopian troops withstood this assault with the help of the Cuban troops and Soviet equipment. The Somali's were repulsed and could not take the city and could do nothing else but wait to see when the Ethiopian and Cuban troops would counterattack.

At the beginning of February 1978, this counterattack occurred in the highlands between Jijiga and the border with Somalia. The Cuban and Ethiopian troops successfully bypassed the majority of the SNA forces in the Mard Pass. These troops were consequently attacked from two sides, which resulted in the capture of Jijiga by the Ethiopians. This proved too big of a blow for the Somali's, as thousands of their men were either captured or killed. In the following weeks, nearly all the towns that the Somali's had previously occupied in the Ogaden were recaptured. The Somali dictator Barre recognised that he could not maintain the occupation of the Ogaden and ordered a general retreat of the SNA (the WSLF would remain in its own land, which is one of the important reasons for the continuation of the guerrilla war after the Ogaden War ended) on the 9th of March 1978. In the following week, all of the remaining regular forces of the Somali armed forces left Ethiopia ending the war.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter of this thesis deals with providing the historical background and context wherein the main topic resides, this being the internal debate within the American administration on its involvement in the Ogaden War. While it was a relatively short war, its importance cannot be underestimated in influencing not only the immediate future of the Horn, but also US and SU relations during the Cold War.

This war 'only' lasted for about nine months and could be seen as just another African conflict over the arbitrary borders that the Europeans colonial powers left the African states to deal with. Although the war itself might have been relatively short, the armed conflict between the peoples of Ethiopia and Somalia had been going on before the war broke out, and it continued after it ended. The WSLF stayed behind in the Ogaden and continued its guerrilla war against Ethiopia. But the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia is part of something much deeper and fundamental than that. It was a conflict between Christians and Muslims, nomads

and city dwellers, a central organised state and a country that had only recently been created out of a collection of tribes. In addition to that, the reasons for the eventual war were just as varied: irredentism, economic gains, a legacy of European colonialism and last but not most importantly due to foreign intervention. The Soviet Union would end up supporting both parties before switching its support to Ethiopia. In fear of losing influence in a strategic and economically important area, the United States would end up backing Somalia. The Détente would indeed, as Brzezinski had claimed, end up being buried in the Ogaden. It signalled the beginning of a reorientation of Carter's foreign policy, from regionalism and human rights to a more traditional Cold War approach, focused on globalism and containment.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 172–73.

Chapter 4: the actors

4.1 Stansfield Turner

Stansfield Turner was born near Chicago on 1 December 1923. Like Carter, he joined the US Navy during the war and received an appointment to the United States Naval Academy. Although they were in the same class, they did know each other well. Later on, he became a scholar at Oxford and earned a M.A. in 1954.¹⁵⁸ His military career would continue in the navy, serving in several wars and reaching the upper echelons of the naval leadership. Before retiring from this service in 1978, he became leader of NATO in Southern Europe. After Carter withdrew his initial first choice, Turner was appointed as Director of the CIA in February 1977. Turner played a smaller role in the formulation of the foreign policy towards the Horn than the other actors. He supplied Brzezinski and Carter with intelligence in order for them to make decisions. But he also gave his opinion on other military matters, as he was present on all the important NSC meetings. According to other historians revealing the role of the CIA in this conflict is difficult, because most of the sources are still classified.¹⁵⁹ New CIA documents have been released since then, however, and these could provide a better understanding.¹⁶⁰ These include reports from Paul Henze, who was a CIA operative and an important advisor to Brzezinski and the NSC from the CIA and Turner's perspective. He provided the committees and Brzezinski in particular with assessments and recommendations on the Horn of Africa.¹⁶¹ He could prove to be a good addition to uncovering the input from the CIA's perspective on the situation in the Horn.

Furthermore, while Turner did not espouse a large all-encompassing worldview like Brzezinski and Vance, his opinion in other foreign policy cases makes his views clear. He was strongly in favour for the CIA to back Brzezinski and Brown's plan to intervene militarily in the Iranian hostage crisis.¹⁶² This, combined with the literature and primary sources on the

¹⁵⁸ Tim Weiner, 'Stansfield Turner, C.I.A. Director Who Confronted Communism Under Carter, Dies at 94', *The New York Times*, 8 June 2018, sec. Obituaries, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/18/obituaries/stansfield-turner-dead.html>.

¹⁵⁹ Woodroffe, *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden*, 78.

¹⁶⁰ 'FOIA | CIA FOIA (Foia.Cia.Gov)'.

¹⁶¹ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 104.

¹⁶² Steve Smith, 'Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position: The Case of the American Hostage Rescue Mission', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 61, no. 1 (1984): 16, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2619777>.

Ogaden War would suggest that he was at least not completely on the same side as Vance in the debate on the Horn.

4.2 Walter Mondale

Walter Frederick Mondale (or “Fritz” as Carter affectionately called him) was born in Ceylon, Minnesota in 1928. After serving in the Korean War, he earned a law degree and worked as a lawyer in Minneapolis. After serving in various political functions, he became a U.S. senator until he resigned to succeed to become vice president in 1977.

Although Mondale did not expect to have any more influence on the general goals and formulation of the Carter administration than any of his predecessors did, he ended up being one of the most influential Vice Presidents in American political history. This was largely due to Carter’s eagerness to work very closely with Mondale. Although it would be necessary for any Vice President to attain influence to be informed about the policies of an administration, Mondale wanted more than that: unpresented access to Carter in order to become a true junior partner in the presidency and to influence presidential policy.¹⁶³

He stated this clearly in a memo that he had drafted for Carter, which contained his ideas for a successful vice presidency. In it, he urged that he be involved in the formulation and direction of foreign policy, that the cabinet members be as responsive to him as to the president and that he be an active member of the National Security boards. Carter agreed with him on these points and both their staffs would work together closely in sketching the broad themes to lend coherence to the Carter presidency. Mondale concluded the memo by stating that he wanted to make a contribution to the administration as a “general adviser” to Carter who was not tied down to any particular department.¹⁶⁴

In that sense, Mondale had influence (together with Brzezinski) on Carter in the effort to have him focus on a few rather than many themes in the foreign policy formulation.¹⁶⁵ He received detailed advance copies of the president’s schedule so he would not miss any significant meetings. He could attend important briefings with Stansfield Turner (CIA) and Brzezinski (NSA), but also when Brzezinski and Vance (SOS) would meet each Friday for their

¹⁶³ Lewis, *Mondale*, 200.

¹⁶⁴ ‘How the Vice Presidency Changed, Exactly 40 Years Ago. | University Press of Kansas Blog’, accessed 9 July 2019, <http://universitypressblog.dept.ku.edu/uncategorized/how-the-vice-presidency-changed-exactly-40-years-ago/>.

¹⁶⁵ Lewis, *Mondale*, 201; Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 34.

90 minute foreign policy meetings at breakfast with Carter. Furthermore, he was expected to participate in all National Security Council and Cabinet meetings.¹⁶⁶ That way Mondale was aware of even the most sensitive negotiations with all manner of foreign leaders or national security questions (like SALT for example). He could even sometimes study sensitive foreign intelligence reports before they reached Carter and then later read the presidential directives that they inspired.¹⁶⁷ He was fully in the loop of the foreign policy process. His influence was also shown when selecting key cabinet members and other top positions within the administration and the foreign policy. Mondale was standing near the apex of this selection process, only just below Carter himself.¹⁶⁸

Practically this meant that because of Mondale's advocacy, several close friends and former employees were elected to important positions, such as Bob Bergland (agriculture), Joe Califano (Health, Education and Welfare) and last but not least David Aaron (who was Brzezinski's deputy). Although these men were not directly employed by Mondale, they were loyal to him and in high, sensitive positions under Carter. Positive remarks about Vance and Brzezinski were also made in relation to their appointments to Carter. Although Carter already knew Brzezinski particularly well and later stated that these did not influence him as he was the one that made the final decision to take on Brzezinski (Brzezinski's assertive foreign policy ideas were what Carter wanted).¹⁶⁹ His influence as a vice president was unprecedented in comparison to previous VP's.

Although he did not try to use this influence to make major changes to the policies of the administration, he was a pragmatic politician who tried to make modest and achievable goals.¹⁷⁰ This had in part to do with Carter's own view of how the key members of his administration should relate to him. He realized that his success in office depended on how influence was exercised and by whom. His lack of familiarity with Washington and its various power centres required that he be influenced by someone with the kind of insider's knowledge of the political game that he lacked. In that sense, Mondale was in the right position to be able to influence Carter, but at the same time he had to support Carter to advance his own interests and career. As he was very much dependant on Carter "I fully realize that my personal and political success is totally tied up in yours and the achievements of your administration".¹⁷¹ So

¹⁶⁶ Lewis, *Mondale*, 206–7.

¹⁶⁷ Lewis, 207.

¹⁶⁸ Lewis, 198.

¹⁶⁹ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 50–52.

¹⁷⁰ Lewis, *Mondale*, 210–11.

¹⁷¹ Lewis, 200.

personal dependence on Carter could have played a role in Mondale's role in the debate.

It seems clear that Mondale had unlimited access to all of the important meetings and briefings within the administration, as well as a close working relationship with the president himself. He was in charge of the president's long term planning. He would present Carter with a thick preliminary draft of a memorandum on various domestic and foreign policies and would select a few issues as deserving presidential attention. In that sense, he also had an influence on the administration on what topics it choose to focus on. But did this mean that Carter and Mondale always pursued the same foreign policies (i.e. did Mondale influence Carter because they shared the same policies?)?

Although none of the sources state exactly and precisely how much influence Mondale had over Carter and the administration, Brzezinski (who worked also worked closely with him), stated that by the end of the first year in office, Mondale's ability to influence Carter's policies had its limits.¹⁷² If Mondale's advice collided with what Carter wanted, the outcome was predictable.¹⁷³ But if Carter's mind was made up this was not the case, they did also differ a lot on various topics (economic themes for example: Carter was more conservative than the Liberal Mondale, who campaigned for higher minimum wages and high farm prices, which were not implemented by Carter).¹⁷⁴

Furthermore, as time went by, Mondale did attain more influence, but he did not press his advantage for two reasons: he became more and more preoccupied with the more historic limitations of the vice-presidential duties, namely defending and supporting the president and his policies. The second point having to do with Mondale's nature as a politician. He only sought limited victories, as a guarantee that he would also only suffer limited defeats.¹⁷⁵

Other points are also made by Brzezinski that Mondale was important and made a substantiate contribution to the Carter administration. He was a vital political barometer for the President (who did not have a lot of political experience, as was stated earlier). Carter respected his opinion on the domestic implications of policy decisions (such as the increase in the defense budgets as the years went on, that Mondale and others on the Domestic Policy Staff tried to block).¹⁷⁶ As Mondale attended a lot of meetings, Carter found Mondale's ability to focus on the important topics without getting bogged down in the minutiae useful.¹⁷⁷ Lastly, while none

¹⁷² Although it must also be noted that no theories or approaches exist that can precisely measure the influence of individuals in a policy debate.

¹⁷³ Brzezinski cited in: Lewis, *Mondale*, 202–3.

¹⁷⁴ Lewis, 202–3.

¹⁷⁵ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 34; Lewis, 208–10.

¹⁷⁶ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 45.

¹⁷⁷ Brzezinski, 33–34.

of the sources explicitly address Mondale's comments on what to do with the Soviet aggression in the Horn of Africa and the Ogaden in particular, Mondale was uneasy with Brzezinski's inclination to make an issue of Soviet aggression in the Third World.¹⁷⁸ In other words, Brezniski was in favour of linking the Russian behaviour to the SALT accords and Mondale was not. While the Ogaden War is not named specifically, other instances of Russian aggression, like their invasion of Afghanistan, is. Mondale was very much opposed to Carter's decision to renew draft registration and to impose an embargo on grain sales to the SU in retaliation for its invasion.¹⁷⁹

Overall then, it would seem that Mondale was largely in favour of Carter's policies. Sometimes there were differences on policy questions. They weren't insignificant differences, but they didn't rise to the level that these were insupportable.¹⁸⁰ Because Mondale personally did not advocate for major policy changes, he was becoming more focused on supporting Carter's policies as time went on.¹⁸¹ Still, as he was an important member of Carter's foreign policy team, he participated in most of the relevant committee meetings and met most of the important foreign leaders, his involvement should not be underestimated. Ultimately, his influence would be shown in advising Carter, while keeping in mind the interests of the president (and himself) in relation to domestic politics and public opinion.

4.3 Harold Brown

Harold Brown was born in New York in 1927 to Jewish parents who, were Democrats. After graduating from secondary school, he attended Columbia University, earning a Bachelor degree. He pursued a Master degree and eventually obtained a Ph.D. in physics at the same institute. After various academic positions that focused on radiation research at several California laboratories, he had other functions at governmental institutions, such as the California Institute of Technology, Secretary of the Air Force and director of Defense and Research and Engineering (during the Nixon and Ford administrations).

According to a recent source, he supported reduction in military spending, clashing with the more important actors within the National Security establishment. Woodroffe even clearly

¹⁷⁸ Brzezinski, 34.

¹⁷⁹ Lewis, 211.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 211.

¹⁸¹ Woodroffe, *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden*, 78–79.

states that the main debate on the formulation and course of American foreign policy was determined by the National Security Council staff and the State Department.¹⁸² In other words, Brown is not to be considered if one wants to fully grasp the internal debate going on about the American involvement in the Horn of Africa and the Ogaden War. Even though Woodroffe states this, he provides no further explanation to this point. He does go on to state on several occasions that Brown did in fact play a role in the debate on the American foreign policy towards the Horn of Africa and Ogaden War (even if it was a minor one). But even though he played a small role, Woodroffe's statement does not do the debate a favour by stating (like other sources) that it was only between Vance and Brzezinski.

Brown already had some political experience with the Kennedy administration as a technical advisor to the president, before becoming Secretary of Defense under Carter. He was also a member of the Trilateral Commission, which was a small group of influential journalists, academics, business people and politicians.¹⁸³ Brzezinski decided to recruit Brown (who desired to gain more insight in foreign affairs and national security policy in the years running up to the election campaign). He and Carter met each other at a meeting for the commission in Kyoto in May of 1975. Throughout the year in meetings like this, Carter would discuss papers on foreign policy and national security matters with Vance, Brown and Brezniski. Carter stated himself that he learned a lot from discussing a great variability of issues with these 'big names'.¹⁸⁴

Although these two men came from different backgrounds and worlds (Carter being from a southern progressive Baptist background), they shared some similarities and differences in their political world view in the context of the Cold War. Although Brown considered himself a liberal internationalist, he did not believe that the United States should pursue human rights issues if they clashed too directly with American international interests. This unlike Carter, who championed human rights, democracy, international disarmament, arms control, anti-racism and a concern for the Third World.¹⁸⁵ So although Brown did share Carter's progressive thoughts on some international topics, he was more practical (like Brzezinski) in the formulation of American foreign policy (also in relation to the SU). It could be that his background from the world of a physics laboratory and his later work on advising previous presidents on the use of missiles and the Soviet thermonuclear bomb influenced him in that regard. He had sympathy for Carter's unwillingness to sell American weaponry to Third World

¹⁸² Woodroffe, 78.

¹⁸³ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Keefer, 9–10.

¹⁸⁵ Keefer, 8–9.

totalitarian regimes, but understood that the Soviets or other powers would do this in any case.

Furthermore, he had no (in that sense differing from Carter to some extent) qualms about the existence of nuclear weapons in the context of the Cold War. This could have had something to do with Brown's background as a scientist involved with ballistic and nuclear missiles (he had even witnessed several nuclear detonations). Brown saw these weapons as a necessity in order to deter the use of conventional weapons by the two ideological camps of the Cold War era.¹⁸⁶ This aspect of Brown's view of the projection of American power in the foreign policy arena was confirmed by Brzezinski. He stated that especially from second half of the Carter administration (that would be from mid-1978) onwards, Brown became a strong vocalist of the need to build up American power and to project it assertively. This development in Brown's toughening stance manifested itself in different areas: in that sense (and Brzezinski also acknowledge this) Brown and Brzezinski were very much alike in their view of American foreign policy.¹⁸⁷

Brown's opinion on the American foreign policy in dealing with the Soviet Union had some similarities and differences in comparison to Carter (just like in the case of human rights and nuclear weapons). Brown was under pressure to defend the interests of Joint Chiefs of Staff, because his background, which involved developing weaponry (he developed and designed both nuclear and airborne weaponry) was extensive. He believed in using them if strategic threats from the Soviets occurred. Accordingly, he had few illusions about the Soviet expansion in the Horn of Africa, but he believed in "essential equivalence" between the two ideological superpowers. In other words, the threat of Mutual Assured Destruction would minimize the actual use of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union and the United States. Carter was a Cold Warrior in that sense also, but saw the threat of conventional weapons as the ultimate deterrence.

Brown was, according to Brzezinski, usually more in line with his viewpoints than those of Vance in trying to pressure the president to act assertively in response to threats from the Soviet Union in the Horn of Africa. Brzezinski complained that Brown stated privately that he was a hardliner against the Soviets, but he did not always say the same things when the president was actually present in meetings. In that sense, Brown can be seen being somewhat in the middle, between Vance and Brzezinski (but leaning towards Brzezinski), when it came to foreign policy and dealing with the Soviets. An example of this occurred when in late February of 1978 it became clear the number of Soviet arms and Cuban troops flowing into Ethiopia were

¹⁸⁶ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 10.

¹⁸⁷ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 44.

increasing. Brown was in favour of the Department of Defense's wish to send a U.S. carrier task force to coast of East Africa, in order to send a strong signal towards to the Soviets. While he agreed with Brzezinski's wishes by supporting that point, he did have reservations in authorizing the carrier task force without a specific purpose. In that regard, he agreed more with Vance that a "bluffing game" in the Horn would be a mistake. In addition to this, Brown was also in favour of trying to further cooperate with the Chinese to counter the Soviets. Again, this was a strategy that Brzezinski was very much in favour of and Vance not.¹⁸⁸

4.4 Cyrus Vance

Carter's Secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, was born in West Virginia in 1917. Despite being born in the south, he was not a southerner like Jimmy Carter, because Vance's family moved to New York and later Switzerland. After earning his law degree from Yale Law School in 1942, he served in the United States Navy during the Second World War. During the war, he saw action in several campaigns in the Pacific Ocean theatre. His political career began during the Kennedy administration, where he served as Secretary of the Army, later on (under President Johnson) serving as Deputy Secretary of Defense. He later quit this position, because he changed his position on supporting the Vietnam War (which is noteworthy, as he also quit his position as Secretary of State under Carter in 1980). After this, Vance became a member of the Trilateral Commission, through which he met other influential Americans, Europeans and Asians. Another member was President-Elect Carter, who later asked Vance to become his Secretary of State.¹⁸⁹

Vance set out his general worldview and foreign policy ideas during Carter's election campaign. Later on, he detailed these ideas in *Hard choices: Critical years in America's foreign policy*. He hoped that by articulating four clear foreign policy principles, he could influence Carter's foreign policy choices. At the heart of his world view was the belief that the national interests of America encompassed more than just its relation with the Soviet Union. In addition to this, many developments did not fit neatly in the traditional East-West rivalry of the Cold

¹⁸⁸ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 487-488.

¹⁸⁹ 'Cyrus Roberts Vance - People - Department History - Office of the Historian', accessed 4 May 2019, <https://history.state.gov/departmentshistory/people/vance-cyrus-roberts>.

War era.¹⁹⁰ What these points would mean practically when formulating America's foreign policy, is illustrated later on.

The first point Vance raised had to do with how American foreign policy was formulated. It should always be supported by the American people and the Congress. The Congress should also actively be involved in the process of formulating the foreign policy objectives.¹⁹¹ In order to do this, the Carter administration should keep Congress correctly and accurately informed about the most important issues concerning foreign policy. This was done to avoid the situation that occurred in past administrations, where Congress was kept in the dark by Kissinger, for example.¹⁹²

After Vance commented about the process of foreign policy formulation, he continued with the analytical aspect of his worldview. In his opinion, there was a need to develop a (new) relationship with the Soviet Union that looked beyond the context of East versus West. As the Soviet Union was an equal to the United States, it would be in its own interest to avoid a direct confrontation, because it would result in its own destruction. As has been discussed before, Vance thought that the Russians acted out of opportunism when meddling in the Horn of Africa or other Third World states. It did try to advance its own interests of course (just like the United States did), but not purely out of ideological motivations for a world dominated by communism. Vance was in the end a realist to some degree in that respect. What would this practically mean for Carter's administration in relation to the Soviet Union's possible future behaviour? He summed up his views as follows:

1. "The scope and prospects for cooperation were modest. The Soviet Union would continue to try to expand its influence when possible. Competition was, and would continue to be, the principal feature of the relationship. It would be the administration's task to manage this."
2. "Patience and persistence in pursuit of American long-term objectives were essential, and we should strive to reduce the swings in mood and attitude that had made a consistent policy difficult in the past."
3. "We had to remain military strong and determined in the defense of our vital interests and our values without being bellicose. And we had to be firm and resolute, but pragmatic, in

¹⁹⁰ Cyrus R. Vance, *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 27–33.

¹⁹¹ Vance, 27–28.

¹⁹² Mary DuBois Sexton, 'A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Of Georgetown University In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy In History', n.d., 41.

identifying the American interests so vital that they would justify recourse to military force.”

4. “There existed areas, especially in nuclear arms control, where cooperation with the Soviet Union was possible because our interest coincided with theirs. When cooperation could enhance our security, as in limiting the nuclear arms race, it should be pursued without attempting to link it to other issues.”¹⁹³

The third ‘brick’ in his worldview was concerned with the importance of understanding the (changing) historical context of the various political, economic and social problems that threatened the Third World states that the Americans and Russians were vying for influence and control. If the United States (but the Soviet Union also) did not take into account and deal with the problems that came with human rights, economic development, energy, population growth, environmental damage, food, nuclear proliferation and arms transfers, they would pay dearly for it. This would not only increase the internal problems of these nations, but could also draw the two superpowers closer to a direct (nuclear!) conflict, which was something that Vance always wanted to avoid. In short, this meant that Vance tried to advocate within the Carter administration and amongst the top actors a foreign policy that dealt with each issue (in this case the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia) on an individual basis, without linking this to the wider struggle for power between the United States and the Soviet Union. This point comes across most clearly in Vance’s major disagreement with Brzezinski about linking the conflict in the Horn to the SALT II accords; Vance was not in favour, Brzezinski was (more on this in the next chapter).¹⁹⁴

The emphasis on the advancement of universal human rights, was something Vance shared with Carter and was an important point he tried to advance. He clearly stated that the “growing demands of individuals around the world for the fulfilment of their rights” was something that the United States and other countries around the world needed to acknowledge and respect.¹⁹⁵

Although he shared this point with Carter, Vance remained a realist and emphasised that the administration had to be pragmatic in dealing with specific cases that might affect the national security of America. This meant that in promoting and pursuing a human rights policy as a cornerstone of American foreign policy, they had to keep into consideration the limits of American power. Again, his emphasis on dealing with cases on country-by-country basis comes

¹⁹³ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 28–29.

¹⁹⁴ Westad, *The Cold War*, 550–51.

¹⁹⁵ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 29.

to the front here. This is also seen in his stance on dealing with the Soviet's expanding influence in the Horn of Africa. He thought that the Soviets were simply taking advantage of an opportunity to expand their influence in an instable region of the world. This needed to be dealt with accordingly (i.e. not linking this to a wider global Cold War struggle and thus something that would compromise the SALT II accords): combine diplomacy, negotiations, concerted Western actions and the powerful forces of African nationalism to resolve local disputes and to remove to justification for Soviet involvement in the first place.¹⁹⁶

Despite Vance's considerable experience with foreign policy matters and his intentions to work closely with the other important players within the foreign policy, developments on the international stage (in the form of increased Soviet involvement in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan and the regime change in Iran) would not do him any favours in the end. This commitment to a fair-play professionalism without undermining his colleagues would ultimately make him less effective at his job. He failed to counter the influence of his rivals on the direction of the foreign policy.¹⁹⁷

4.5 Zbigniew Brzezinski

Zbigniew Kazimierz Brzezinski was born in the Polish capital of Warsaw in 1928. His family managed to leave Poland and move to Canada before the Third Reich invaded Poland in September 1939. Brzezinski received a master's degree from McGill University in 1950. Three years later, he earned a doctorate in political science at Harvard and started teaching there. Later on, when Henry Kissinger got a faculty position instead of himself, he moved on to Columbia University. After gaining experience in the State Department under Lyndon Johnson and as a foreign policy advisor to Vice President Hubert Humphrey, he joined the Trilateral Commission. At these meetings he came into contact with Jimmy Carter, whom he had invited to become a member of said group in 1974. Two years after this, Carter became the Democratic nominee for president and hired Brzezinski as a foreign affairs advisor.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Betty Glad, *An Outsider in the White House: Jimmy Carter, His Advisors, and the Making of American Foreign Policy*, 1 edition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 78–79.

¹⁹⁷ Sexton, 'A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Of Georgetown University In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy In History', 33–35.

¹⁹⁸ Daniel Lewis, 'Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser to Jimmy Carter, Dies at 89', *The New York Times*, 21 December 2017, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/26/us/zbigniew-brzezinski-dead-national-security-adviser-to-carter.html>.

As the National Security Advisor of Carter, he had an unprecedented influence on the formulation and direction of the foreign policy of the United States (more on the nature of his influence will be explained in the next chapter). He chaired the Special Coordination Committee meetings and thus had the final say in the formulation of the memorandums on the meetings that dealt with national security and foreign policy.¹⁹⁹ As this committee was concerned with strategic arms and national security, it had influence in several departments. But what were the ideas that Brzezinski wanted to pursue with this influence on Carter?

Although he once stated that “On the whole, my views are strategically consistent, tactically very fluid” there are certainly some clear indications of what Brzezinski’s wider worldview was on foreign affairs, national security and thus foreign policy making.²⁰⁰ Because Brzezinski had experienced a lot during his lifetime and had lived in both the Eastern bloc and in the West, his ideas were made up out of several different political trends: realism, liberalism and perhaps also neoconservatism.

What is clear though, is that he placed importance in human rights. This tied in with a sense of liberalism, strong moral convictions and the sense of human rights on the international stage. These ideas aligned with his geopolitical preference for anti-communism. In that sense, he saw the issue of human rights more from a political perspective and as a political tool to advance American global interests, rather than an ideal in its own right (as Carter did).²⁰¹ He not only talked about this but worked for several organisations throughout the nineteen sixties, nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties (National Endowment for Democracy, Freedom House, Amnesty International) that advocated and defended human rights and democracy. This ‘pillar of his worldview’ would be difficult to defend at times though, as Brzezinski pushed the hardest to put pressure on communist regimes and relieve pressure on friendly dictatorial regimes during the Carter administration.²⁰² This aspect of his world view can be seen as one part of the three broad objectives that he wanted to focus his energy on while serving the Carter administration. The first one indeed being that he felt there was a need to increase America’s ideological impact on the world. According to him, in the previous decades the relevance of the American message to the world had declined. In other words, by reinvigorating the idea of American democracy as an example for the rest of the world to follow, making America the

¹⁹⁹ Woodroffe, *Buried in the Sands of the Ogaden*, 111–12.

²⁰⁰ Jim Hoagland, ‘Brzezinski: An Eagerness to Show Resolve’, *Washington Post*, 14 March 1978, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1978/03/14/brzezinski/8b154c49-c173-48e9-b75b-dd1f3e01d859/>.

²⁰¹ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 124.

²⁰² Justin Vaïsse and Catherine Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski: America’s Grand Strategist*, Translation edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 256–57.

carrier of optimism, hope and the future (and not to forget relevant at the international stage).²⁰³

The second goal can be traced back to an objective, dating back to his youth, of destroying the Soviet empire (by way of destroying their chokehold on Eastern Europe and provoking the implosion of the Soviet Union).²⁰⁴ He translated this point into a few strategies he saw as fundamental elements of the Cold War: confrontation, peaceful engagements, the reinforcement of alliances and the return to confrontations. Within the Cold War period, different strategies would have to be applied. In the case of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, he felt that the call from Congress to eject the Soviets out of Eastern Europe did not lead to American intervention to support the Hungarians. Another approach (i.e. peaceful engagement) was thus needed, which he had described in 1965.²⁰⁵ This amounted to a combination between luring and a ruse. The idea was to lure the Eastern Europeans away from Russian influence through human, economic and scientific exchanges.²⁰⁶ A strategy of reinforcing alliances, embodied in the Trilateral Commission (Brzezinski was closely involved in its founding) was another alternative. At a point in time where the United States was weakened by Vietnam and the domestic unrest caused by the war, it would not be in America's interest to increase the tensions with the Soviet Union, but in fact to decrease them.²⁰⁷ To face these shared internal and external challenges and manage the world order, America had to invest in reinforcing the ties with its allies in Japan and Europe. Instead of interacting with the Eastern Bloc, this strategy relied on optimism and patience.²⁰⁸ The increasing reassertion of Soviet international power in terms of strategic weapons and particular in the Third World (which began developing when Brzezinski's was NSA advisor under Carter), required a more classical strategy of containment. This translated into seeking normalisation of relations with China and support for the mujahedeen in Afghanistan.²⁰⁹ This was also translated by Brzezinski into one of his three major broad objectives while serving as NSA to Carter. The aim was to improve America's strategic position in relationship to the Soviet Union. The aim to improve its position came from the fear of the growing Soviet military power and influence that it used to exploit turbulence in the Third World (and thus in the Horn of Africa). Improvement of relations with the Chinese to further American strategic interests was also explicitly named by the NSA.²¹⁰ The third part of

²⁰³ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 3.

²⁰⁴ Vaïsse and Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, 258.

²⁰⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Alternative to Partition; for a Broader Conception of America's Role in Europe*, 1st Edition (McGraw-Hill, 1965).

²⁰⁶ Vaïsse and Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, 258.

²⁰⁷ Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 87–88.

²⁰⁸ Vaïsse and Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, 259.

²⁰⁹ Vaïsse and Porter, 259.

²¹⁰ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 3.

Brzezinski's worldview was made up of his political discourse. This included the need to maintain a strong military, role of nationalism and divisions within the communist bloc and the role of ideology.²¹¹ His views on these three points remained fairly consistent from the nineteen fifties and onwards throughout the nineteen eighties. The first pillar of his world view focused on combatting the Soviets influence worldwide. In 1965, he stated that "Western military strength must be maintained and Western interests vigorously protected".²¹² Five years later , in 1970, he stated this again but less clearly so, as he believed that the US military position would not suffer from less investment in the military. A possible "global consciousness" could probably lead to arms control treaties.²¹³ However, as noted earlier, he clearly 'returned' to the position for the need of strong investments in the military in 1976, by stating "the maintenance of a strong American military deterrent is a necessary precondition for a stable, increasingly, comprehensive as well as reciprocal Détente, a Détente which will remain both competitive as well as cooperative".²¹⁴ This makes clear that his belief in a bi-polar Cold War was still very much alive when he served under Carter as NSA.

This can be seen not as a return to traditional Cold War politics by Brzezinski per se, but more as a continuation of his wider world views that prevailed throughout his career. This reorientation can also be seen in Vance's worldview, they both indicated that the debacle of the Vietnam War contributed to this. But other international events like the Watergate scandal, the Angolan Civil War, the Teheran hostage crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan clearly alarmed Brzezinski. This can be seen throughout Carter's administration, as he continued to influence Carter to formulate a foreign policy that confronted the Soviets worldwide (in an indirect way) by expanding the military, normalising relations with China and securing a strong human rights policy towards the SU.²¹⁵

The second pillar of his political beliefs focused on encouraging divisions and nationalism. This was something he had put forth in his own master thesis in 1950 and later on in *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict*. The idea was that stimulating nationalism within the individual Soviet republics could weaken Soviet influence. Moreover, he explored the possibilities of improving American relations with Beijing, something he also advocated for.²¹⁶ The third and last pillar was the role of ideology. He recognized the importance of propaganda and information control within the SU. He thus

²¹¹ Vaïsse and Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, 260.

²¹² Brzezinski, *Alternative to Partition; for a Broader Conception of America's Role in Europe*, 134–35.

²¹³ Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages: America's Role in the Technetronic Era*, Revised ed. edition (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1982), 275.

²¹⁴ Vaïsse and Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, 260.

²¹⁵ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 23; Stueck, 'Placing Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy', 261.

²¹⁶ Vaïsse and Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, 260–61.

had always supported the broadcasting of illegal broadcasts to the Eastern Europe. He believed that broadcasting anti-communist ideas to the peoples within the Eastern bloc could “contribute positively to the gradual evolution of the Communist societies, and they are therefore positive instruments of promoting a Détente”.²¹⁷

These three pillars, that were part of his political discourse and worldview, tied in with the third major policy goal he had set upon entering the Carter administration. This goal was his hope to regain American influence in- and the friendship of the Third World. America’s political appeal had to be restored, because it had isolated itself too much during the course of the previous administrations.²¹⁸

4.6 Conclusion

What were the causes of the rivalry between Brzezinski and Vance with regards to the foreign policy of the United States? The most important actors within the Carter administration have been identified in this chapter: Vance, Brzezinski, Mondale, Brown, Turner. These men played the game of push and pull in order to influence Carter into making decisions in order to (hopefully) further their own foreign policy goals and world view. In general, we can already see that the policy goals of Vance, Mondale, Brown and Turner prevailed over those of Brezniski. They favoured a more indirect and regionalist approach to solving the problems in the Horn. This meant either letting the OAU mediate between Somalia and Ethiopia or supply Somalia with arms to counter SU support for Ethiopia in order to maintain a balance of power.²¹⁹ Brzezinski on the other hand was the only one (with the occasional support of Brown perhaps) that wanted to bring in American forces (in the form of a carrier force) in the region of the Horn to confront and warn the Soviets directly.

Brzezinski did end up getting his way later on as international developments pushed Carter more into his hard-line approach. The next chapters will look further as to what policy positions (and other factors) drove the rivalry of the two main actors (and ‘camps’) of the Carter administration and how the debate actually developed (and how Carter dealt with this in terms of policy).

²¹⁷ Vaïsse and Porter, *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, 261.

²¹⁸ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 3.

²¹⁹ Note that as long as Somalia occupied the Ogaden, the Americans (with an exception of Brzezinski) did not want to continue to supply Siad’s regime with weapons.

Chapter 5: the regionalist versus the globalist

5.1 Personal factors

An important feature of the foreign policy making process during the Carter administration was the rivalry between Brzezinski and Vance. Their relationship has been described by Brown in the following words: “They were at sword’s point from day one”.²²⁰ The source of this rivalry was determined by three factors.

The first factor was related to the personal relationships between Vance, Brzezinski and Carter. Since Carter had joined the Trilateral Commission and came into contact with Brzezinski, they had worked together closely on trilateral matters and took a liking to each other.²²¹ This cooperation continued during Carter’s election campaign. Brzezinski was closely involved in Carter’s campaign (Vance only played a very small role). Brzezinski would go on to become Carter’s chief foreign policy advisor.²²² As Carter’s dependence on Brzezinski increased more and more, others began to take notice of this. Patrick Anderson (Carter’s speechwriter) noted that “He [Brzezinski] always knew where Jimmy was sitting and always elbowed his way very close to the throne”.²²³ No other members of the foreign policy team could replicate this relationship, and this would continue after Carter got elected. Vance for example, stated in regards to this bond between Carter and the NSA that “I cannot claim that any special bond of closeness sprang up between us”.²²⁴ While the other actors remained important, it was clear that Carter needed and trusted Brzezinski to provide him with advice to foreign policy that he needed to win the election campaign and later on to carry out his policy goals. A term close associates of Carter began to hear more often was to “check this with Zbig”.²²⁵

²²⁰ Harold Brown and Joyce Winslow, *Star Spangled Security: Applying Lessons Learned over Six Decades Safeguarding America* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2012), 43.

²²¹ Carter even defined himself as “an eager student of Brzezinski” in: Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 51.

²²² Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 6–9.

²²³ Patrick Anderson, *Electing Jimmy Carter: The Campaign of 1976* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 41–42.

²²⁴ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 33.

²²⁵ Hamilton Jordan, *Crisis: The Last Year of the Carter Presidency*, First Edition edition (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1982), 46.

As Brzezinski became more involved in providing regular briefings, forwarded policy papers and drafted speeches, he became invaluable to Carter. Increasingly, Vance (and others like Brown) began to see themselves as “one of many advisors” in the sense that they also contributed papers, memos and other ideas to Carter, but that Brzezinski enjoyed the most influence.²²⁶ This is reinforced by the fact that Brzezinski was appointed NSA, before Carter had chosen any people for the positions of SOS. He had clearly made up his mind, even commenting to Brzezinski that “I knew some months ago, that you were my choice”.²²⁷ He was also closely involved with Carter in recruiting Vance as SOS.²²⁸ This would eventually result in Brzezinski increasingly being granted advantages and autonomy within the administration to develop and influence (foreign) policy at the cost of Vance and others.

As mentioned previously, such a closeness did not exist between Vance and Carter. Brzezinski was involved with Carter’s election campaign at a much earlier date and he developed a much closer relationship with Carter. This would have an effect on his ability to influence foreign policy making (in the future) and was a cause of rivalry and friction between these two players. While it was not in Vance’s nature to battle his main rival too openly and he did not object when Brzezinski was appointed as NSA, he did make some remarks which indicate friction. He thought that had he known Brzezinski better at the start of the administration he would have told Carter “this obviously cannot work”.²²⁹

5.2 Organisational factors

The second factor that played a role in fuelling the rivalry between Brzezinski and Vance, were the reorganisations of the new NSC system that Carter outlined in Presidential Directive Two (to create two foreign policy making committees).²³⁰ These were initiated in order to reduce the situation during the Nixon and Ford administration, where the NSA could act as a “Lone Ranger”.²³¹

²²⁶ Cyrus R. Vance, “Carter’s Foreign Policy: The Source of the Problem,” in: *The Carter Presidency: Fourteen Intimate perspectives of Jimmy Carter*, ed. Kenneth W. Thompson (Lanham: The University Press of America, 1990), 138.

²²⁷ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 4–12.

²²⁸ Brzezinski, 11.

²²⁹ Vance, “Carter’s Foreign Policy: The Source of the Problem,” 142.

²³⁰ ‘NSPM 2—Organization of the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council: A Summary’, Lawfare, 28 January 2017, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/nspm-2%E2%80%94organization-national-security-council-and-homeland-security-council-summary>.

²³¹ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 24.

With Brzezinski's help, he brought back the number of NSC subcommittees to two. This resulted in the effect of increasing the power of the president to directly influence foreign policy, as he told Brzezinski: "That he [Carter] wanted to make foreign...policy and the Secretary of State would execute his orders".²³² But at the same time this would assure that Brzezinski was the closest to the decision making process. Thus, increasing his influence as the NSA would be an "initiator" and the "coordinator" of foreign policy.²³³ In summary, Carter's reforms would mean that empowering Brzezinski would ultimately empower Carter. In a sense, this was the opposite of what Carter had wanted to achieve, to not make this a one man show. But as Brzezinski noted that Carter needed him to implement these changes, it was inevitable that the influence of the NSA would also be increased.

The SCC would be permanently chaired by the NSA and was concerned with the SALT II accords, intelligence policy issues and crisis management. The PRC was to be chaired by either the SD or the DOD. It would deal with more broader foreign policy, defense and economic issues.²³⁴ In practical terms, this would mean that that Brzezinski would be responsible (and thus in charge) of the most important and pending foreign policy issues, such as intelligence activities, covert operations, arms control policy (SALT) and crisis management.²³⁵

This new NSC system also meant that Brzezinski would be heavily involved in all of the PRM's requested by Carter. The president would request this if he wanted options and/or unanimous recommendations on specific foreign policy issues.²³⁶ But even though Carter did not chair the PRC, the PRM's that were drafted by both subcommittees would always go to the NSC or directly to the president.²³⁷ But in both cases, Brzezinski would draft a memorandum of the decisions or recommendations made, or send a descriptive account of the deadlocked meeting to Carter. When Carter had made a decision, the PD's were also drafted by Brzezinski and send out to the relevant departments to be carried out. On less important issues, Brzezinski would also sign a decision memorandum on behalf of the president.²³⁸ Carter had thus given the NSA unparalleled authority to control the flow of reports coming in and out of the NSC

²³² Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 29.

²³³ Glad, 29–30.

²³⁴ Glad, 30.

²³⁵ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 24–25.

²³⁶ Keefer, 24.

²³⁷ The PRM's went directly to Carter if the recommendation(s) was unanimous. If there were options to consider, these were sent to the NSC.

²³⁸ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 25.

meetings (seeing as he drafted and prepared the PRM's that issued the policies to be carried out in the president's name).

Vance was not happy with these developments and the dominance that Brzezinski had achieved in the foreign policy making process. He had a meeting with Carter and Brzezinski, where he lamented the fact that Brzezinski determined what was put into all of the summaries (of the subcommittee meetings) and PRM's that were sent to Carter. He argued that Brzezinski submitted these to the president without consulting Vance and that SALT and crisis management should be handled by the SD and not the NSA.²³⁹ Not only should draft memoranda be consulted by the other key players, but he also claimed that the summaries Brzezinski drafted "quite often did not reflect adequately the complexity of the discussion or the full range of participants' views".²⁴⁰ In other words, not only was Brzezinski making the discussion seem less complex in order to provide Carter with a simpler version (presumably in order to get his preferred outcome to the president's for approval), but on occasions they were incorrect, according to Vance.²⁴¹ Even though he tried to convince Carter that "the policy leadership should be assigned to the secretary of state", Carter's policy of centralising and simplifying the foreign policy making process would continue.²⁴²

5.3 Ideological factors

Ideological differences contributed further to the rivalry between Vance and Brzezinski. They both believed that the SU was a rival to the US and had to be dealt with. However, they did have different perspectives on how to deal with this rival. This different viewpoint came to light especially during the Ogaden War, as one journalist described the differences as "a silent struggle is under way within the Carter administration between its global strategists and its 'Africanists'".²⁴³ This was a reference to their world views and perspectives on American foreign policy. In essence, it was a globalist approach versus a regionalist one.

This can be traced back to their background and earlier careers, which shaped their

²³⁹ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 30.

²⁴⁰ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 30–31.

²⁴¹ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 25.

²⁴² Cyrus Vance quoted in: Christopher Wallis, 'The Thinker, The Doer and The Decider: Zbigniew Brzezinski, Cyrus Vance and the Bureaucratic Wars of the Carter Administration', n.d., 94.

²⁴³ David Ottoway of the *Washington Post* quoted in: Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 104.

world views. Brzezinski's was very much influenced by anti-communist ideas as a result of his homeland being reduced to a satellite state of the SU. He saw the US as having the moral authority and high ground over the Soviets. As a consequence, the US had to act on this superiority to counter the SU, because it was a threat to global stability.²⁴⁴ This came to light during the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. Brzezinski was a hardliner in these conflicts and was in favour of direct interventions.

While Vance initially favoured this hard-line also, he later underwent an ideological reorientation in regards to American foreign policy, because of the Vietnam War. He had doubts about further American interventions as a consequence of the debacle in Vietnam. Consequently, he (like Brzezinski) wanted to see US security interests and foreign policy in broader perspective than just "the East-West geopolitical competition".²⁴⁵

While they agreed on that principle, Brzezinski differed in the approach to counter Soviet adventurism (especially in the Third World). He did not want accommodate Moscow by attempting to maintain cordial relations with the SU, like Vance preferred.²⁴⁶ This meant that the US should put pressure on the SU by underlining the importance of human rights and propagating democracy, and he urged Carter to do this.²⁴⁷ Further pressure could be put on the Soviets by not getting drawn into a classic Cold War conflict, but focusing primarily on American allies and normalising relations with China.²⁴⁸ Linking issues with Détente was also something he considered, which Vance did not want, because he wanted the focus of US foreign policy to be the preservation of Détente.

These ideological differences came to light on several occasions in 1976 and 1977 as the tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia began to increase. As discussion about the possibility of improving relations with Somalia by sending it military aid came about, Vance clearly stated that such actions would only aggravate relations with Ethiopia and increase their support for the SU.²⁴⁹ He (together with Carter) supported a policy of non-intervention. Staying true to his regionalist outlook, he also declared "African problems should be resolved peacefully in an African context and in a manner acceptable to the African nations themselves. We are

²⁴⁴ Gerry Argyris Andrianopoulos, *Kissinger and Brzezinski: The NSC and the Struggle for Control of U.S. National Security Policy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 39–41.

²⁴⁵ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 23.

²⁴⁶ Andrianopoulos, *Kissinger and Brzezinski*, 54.

²⁴⁷ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 7.

²⁴⁸ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 519–20.

²⁴⁹ Gaddis Smith, *Morality, Reason and Power: American Diplomacy in the Carter Years*, 1st edition (New York: Hill & Wang Pub, 1987), 153.

opposed to the use of force by external powers to bring about change in Africa”.²⁵⁰

Brzezinski initially agreed, because supporting either Ethiopia or Somalia would not be in American interests.²⁵¹ When some weeks later Somalia invaded the Ogaden, he changed his position.²⁵² The situation in the Horn was becoming a threat to US interests, as Ethiopian counterattacks into Somalia could provide the Soviets with access to the strategically and economically important Gulf of Aden. To Brzezinski it was clear that the Soviets were expanding their influence through Ethiopia in the region and that if the US did not intervene, it could damage American credibility with its allies.²⁵³

As the situation in the Horn became more precarious with each passing month, the ideological split between Brzezinski and Vance (but also Brown and Carter) became even more visible. Brzezinski proposed to send an American aircraft carrier task force off the coast of the Horn to send a “strong message to the Soviets”.²⁵⁴ But his attempt to bring this idea forward was shot down by Vance and Brown in a SCC meeting on 10 February, 1978.²⁵⁵ When he brought it up when Carter was present during a NSC meeting, Vance and Brown again disagreed, stating that the Somalis had brought this on themselves (referring to the fact that it was Somalia who had started the conflict by invading the Ogaden) and that the US should not risk its prestige by taking military steps, it was a risk they should not take.²⁵⁶ Carter agreed with Vance and Brown to not intervene in such a direct way. For Brzezinski this was a bitter pill to swallow and clearly increased the tensions between him and Vance and Brown, as he later stated.²⁵⁷

5.4 Conclusion

What were the causes of the rivalry between Zbigniew Brzezinski and Cyrus Vance with regards to the foreign policy of the United States towards the Ogaden War? In a more general

²⁵⁰ Cyrus R. Vance, “Statement before the CENTO Council of Ministers, May 14 1977,” *Department of State Bulletin* 76 (June 6, 1977), 617.

²⁵¹ The SU had began to support Ethiopia, so supporting that regime would not gain much for the SU. Somalia at that moment had already been heavily armed by mid-1977 by the Soviets also. Its claims on the Ogaden region made it impossible to publicly declare support for the Barre regime.

²⁵² Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter in Africa*, 70.

²⁵³ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 178–79.

²⁵⁴ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 182.

²⁵⁵ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 79.

²⁵⁶ “Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting,” 23 February, 1978, Volume XVII, Part 1, Horn of Africa, Document 62, FRUS, 1977-1980.

²⁵⁷ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 183–84.

sense, the causes for rivalry between Vance and Brzezinski started even before Carter was elected as president. Brzezinski developed a close relationship with Carter, while Vance did not manage to do the same. This put the NSA in a position to work closely with Carter in order to reform the NSC system, that the president had envisioned. Carter needed Brzezinski in order to simplify the foreign policy making process and at the same time solidifying his own control over this process.²⁵⁸ Brzezinski's personal relationship with Carter would help secure his own position within the reorganisations that Carter wanted to implement. In that sense, the first and second factors went hand in hand. Vance also recognised this by stating later that he should have protested to Carter for choosing Brzezinski as NSA, as they would never be able to work together, because the SOS would be overshadowed by the NSC led by Brzezinski.

The ideological factor would further widen the gap between these two important factors. This gap would continue to increase as the debate on the Ogaden showed clearly that Vance and Brzezinski wanted two completely different approaches to the conflict. This rivalry would reach its highpoint during the Iran hostage crisis, which ended in Vance's resignation in 1980.

²⁵⁸ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 29.

Chapter 6: Carter's worldview

Jimmy Carter was born in a small Georgian town in 1924. After he obtained a degree from the United States Naval Academy in 1946, he served in the US Navy. After climbing through the ranks, he did graduate work at Union College in nuclear physics and reactor technology, he returned home in 1953. After some time he began to work for the local municipality and eventually won a seat in the Georgian senate in 1962. He announced his candidacy for president of the United States on December 12, 1974. He won the democratic nomination and was elected president on November 2, 1976.²⁵⁹

While Carter often got accused for his lack of a coherent world view or vision in regards to a foreign policy for America, this is perhaps somewhat short-sighted. While Carter did also not explicitly discuss or state (in his memoir, *Keeping Faith*) his vision of a strategic foreign policy in terms of a certain theory or political conviction, he did address several problems or themes. This criticism probably stemmed from the fact that Carter only formed two broad foreign policy perspectives at the start of his presidency. The first of these major themes related to his belief in an idealistic “Wilsonian” world order which valued peace, human rights, self-determination and cooperation.²⁶⁰

He spoke more on this topic and stated that global changes had compromised the American foreign policy that had existed since the Second World War. Colonialism had almost disappeared and the national consciousness of these peoples had been awakened. They were more knowledgeable than before and thus also had strong desires for “justice, equality, and human rights”. This then also applied to the American people themselves, who had to comprehend and support this policy. In other words, Carter believed that the idea of democracy was not only important to America, but to the rest of the world as well. In order to adapt to this new world, American foreign policy of simply containing the Soviet Union with the help of other non-Communist countries would no longer work. Americans had to return to their own primary values in helping to shape this new “Wilsonian” world.²⁶¹

After shaping the foundation of his presidential vision as it were, he continued to five principles that defined what the administration had been doing and what it intended to do in future. The first point (as has been mentioned) related to human rights as a fundamental base

²⁵⁹ ‘Biography of Jimmy Carter - About Us - The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum’, accessed 11 May 2019, https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/about_us/biography_of_jimmy_carter.

²⁶⁰ Hargrove, *Jimmy Carter as President*, 111.

²⁶¹ Gary M. Fink and Hugh Davis Graham, eds., in *The Carter Presidency: Policy Choices in the Post-New Deal Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 247.

for its foreign policy. The world had to know that America could offer more than just economic cooperation and support. The most important unifying idea America could offer was the belief in democracy and thus human freedom. He took human rights to a much higher level than his predecessors, and embedded it in his foreign policy by creating special branches within various departments that focused on this aspect of the foreign policy.²⁶² The second principle related to the aim of reinforcing the bonds that America had with its democratic allies. This tied in with his belief in global interdependence and complexity of the world. The administration would work towards cooperation with other nations in order to build new relationships with friends, adversaries and the developing world.²⁶³

The third principle focused on the efforts to halt the strategic and nuclear arms race with the SU. Instead of trying to reduce the number of weapons, as previous administrations had done, he wanted to go beyond that. The idea was to attempt to actually eventually completely reduce all of the strategic nuclear stockpiles of the Soviet Union and the United States. He did not speak directly of linkage yet (the question if conflicts with the Russians should have consequences for the SALT talks), but he did state that in order for this to work, the Russians would be obliged to cooperate if they wanted the same results. This would mean that they would have to stop involving themselves in the Third World.²⁶⁴ One could say that Carter was not as naïve as critics had stated, because he also made clear that the Soviets had to cooperate with the US in order for it to work and if they overstepped, the increased US Defense budget could deal with possible threats (i.e. Afghanistan).²⁶⁵ The fourth and fifth principles were set in relation to finding a peace settlement in the Middle East and the reduction of the danger of nuclear proliferation and the worldwide spread of conventional weapons.²⁶⁶

From this wider worldview a set of ten foreign policy goals were created by Carter with the help of Brzezinski, Vance and others after ongoing discussions. Carter formally presented these new foreign policy goals in a speech he gave on May 22, 1977 at Notre Dame University.²⁶⁷ The most noteworthy policy points in relation to foreign policy were: America's repeated commitment to upholding human rights as a fundamental tenet of its foreign policy, avoiding nuclear proliferation, engaging with the SU to halt the strategic arms race,

²⁶² Stuart E. Eizenstat and Madeleine Albright, *President Carter: The White House Years* (New York, N.Y.: Thomas Dunne Books, 2018), 576.

²⁶³ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 29.

²⁶⁴ Stueck, 'Placing Jimmy Carter's Foreign Policy', 248.

²⁶⁵ Eizenstat and Albright, *President Carter*, 606.

²⁶⁶ Fink and Graham, 248–49.

²⁶⁷ For the complete list of policy goals set up by Carter and his NSA see: Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 53–57.

normalisation of relations with China and lastly to maintain defense spending in order to be able to deter the SU, both on the strategic and conventional level, from hostile acts and from political pressure.²⁶⁸

6.1 Conclusion

What were Jimmy Carter's opinions with regard to the American foreign policy in general? In summary, because of his personal beliefs in a combination with the wider attitude within America itself at the time, Carter (was forced to) try a new approach to foreign policy that moved away from the traditional Cold War themes. The American people were wary of direct foreign military interventions, because of the debacle of the Vietnam War.²⁶⁹ Further scandals like Watergate had also damaged the trust in the presidency. His new foreign policy would be based upon community and cooperation, rather than conflict. Because of the legacy of the Vietnam War, the focus of US foreign policy making would not be on its relationship with the SU. It would rather focus on creating a regionalist policy instead of a globalist one (when trying to deal with a crisis like the Ogaden War).²⁷⁰

²⁶⁸ Address at Commencement Exercises at the University, May 22, 1977, *Public Papers, Carter 1977 Vol I*, 958-962.

²⁶⁹ Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 71.

²⁷⁰ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 6.

Chapter 7: the debate on the Ogaden War

7.1 The factions

The players that were involved, in the debate on the US involvement in the Ogaden War, can be divided into roughly four groups. The first category consists of the ‘hawks’, who were the leading political proponents of military action and intervention in the Horn of Africa. This faction was chiefly led by Brzezinski.²⁷¹ While other players of the third faction did support the idea of giving US military aid to Somalia, only Brzezinski wanted to commit American ships to the area, while all of the other players disagreed with him in fear of escalating the conflict.

The second faction can be categorized as the ‘doves’. This group was led by Vance (but also consisted of a minor player like Warren Christopher, who was the Deputy Secretary of State). This group favoured a regionalist policy to solve the crisis of the Horn locally, either by diplomatic ends, negotiations or through the mediation of the AOU (in order to remove the justification for the SU involvement).²⁷²

The third group or faction cannot be categorized as either purely hawk or dove. Turner, Brown, Henze and Mondale can be allocated to this group. These three actors can be considered to be in between Brzezinski and Vance on foreign policy issues, while Brown and Turner increasingly leaned towards Brzezinski. This occurred as time went one during the Carter administration and can also be explained from the perspective of the bureaucratic politics model. As the CIA and DOD generally favoured covert operations and military actions.

Brown was categorized by Brzezinski as “the man in the middle”, between himself and Vance. He sided with Vance and sometimes with the NSA. However, Brown would increasingly side more and more with Brzezinski in terms of pro-defense spending, pro-use of force, pro-China and less willing to make concessions to the Soviets for the sake of SALT.²⁷³ Turner’s role was more ambiguous as it is clear from the sources that he proposed to undertake covert operations to discredit the new Ethiopian dictator Mengistu. Although the NSC and Carter considered this, Carter was too committed to his new approach to the presidency, which emphasised transparency and a move away from US intervention. Although some doubts can

²⁷¹ But he was not alone, as on several occasions Turner, Brown and David Jones (Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff) also favoured interventionist policies at times.

²⁷² Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 78–79.

²⁷³ Keefer, *Harold Brown*, 23.

be cast on the extent and effect of these operations, as Carter had imposed restrictions on these kinds of operations. Paul Henze (Brzezinski's CIA advisor on the Horn of Africa) complained about this fact in several memo's to Brzezinski. He also stated clearly that the US needed military access to the Horn of Africa to project power in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean.²⁷⁴

Mondale is the odd one out here, as he can be seen as leaning towards Vance's viewpoint of non-interventionism, indirect US aid to Somalia and regionalism. But more importantly his unwillingness to confront the SU too directly, because it could risk endangering SALT.²⁷⁵ His loyalty was primarily to the President and he supported policy positions that would support the President's domestic standing (i.e. foreign military interventions would not be considered as popular).²⁷⁶ He was thus in favour (together with Vance) of letting the Somali's buy military supplies elsewhere, but with US financial support.²⁷⁷ Public opinion was taken into account here, as the US could not openly support Somalia, while it still occupied the Ogaden.

The fourth group (or rather individual), consists of the President himself. He had to balance his desire to avoid using American military force too directly whilst dealing with increasing reports of increased numbers of Cuban troops in the Horn.²⁷⁸ Congress was also becoming increasingly worried about the increased presence of the Soviets and Cubans in the area and becoming increasingly critical of Carter's policy.²⁷⁹ Before and during the first stages of the conflict Carter, supported by Vance (and most of his advisors), remained committed to a regionalist policy by stating in an interview that "African problems should be solved by Africans themselves".²⁸⁰

Carter would maintain this position, despite attempts from Turner and Brzezinski to give US military aid to Somalia in order "to consolidate our political position with Siad and Somalia; to restrain Somali irredentism; and to prohibit the Soviets from restoring their

²⁷⁴ Jackson, *US Foreign Policy in The Horn of Africa*, 154.

²⁷⁵ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 34.

²⁷⁶ Smith, 'Policy Preferences and Bureaucratic Position', 17.

²⁷⁷ 'Vice President Walter Mondale Reports to President Jimmy Carter on His Meeting with Somali Ambassador Addou Regarding Soviet Pressure for Somalia to Accept Ethiopia's Existing Borders, and a Request for U.S. Economic and Military Assistance to Reduce Soviet Presence in the Area' (White House, 12 May 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYfn2>.

²⁷⁸ David B. Ottaway, 'Moscow on a Tightrope in Somali - Ethiopian Dispute', *Washington Post*, 7 August 1977, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1977/08/07/moscow-on-a-tightrope-in-somali-ethiopian-dispute/bee21d61-2c74-41b2-ab33-9bbf69dedc3f/>.

²⁷⁹ Report, War in the horn of Africa: A Firsthand Report on the Challenges for United States Policy, House of Committee on International Relations, February 3, 1978, 95th Congress, 2nd Session, Library of Congress.

²⁸⁰ Graham Hovey, 'Cuba Military in Ethiopia Now Put At 400 by U.S., Up From 50 in May', *The New York Times*, 15 November 1977, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/11/15/archives/cuba-military-in-ethiopia-now-put-at-400-by-us-up-from-50-in-may.html>

influence in Somalia”.²⁸¹ But Carter would not give any more aid if the Somali dictator did not issue “a renewed commitment not to dishonour the international boundaries of either Ethiopia or Kenya”.²⁸² A change in the debate on the continuing tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia after the Ogaden War did not come around until the beginning of 1980. After the hostage crisis in Tehran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Carter fundamentally changed his foreign policy in regards to the Horn of Africa. Human rights remained important, but the emphasis was placed more on confronting the SU, instead of working with allies and China to put pressure on that regime. Carter announced this new Carter Doctrine (as it later would be called) on January 23, 1980. In his State of the Union message he said the following: “An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the USA, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force”.²⁸³

7.2 The debate before the Ogaden War

The debate in relation to the Ogaden War can be divided into roughly three phases. The first phase of the debate started just after the Ethiopian Revolution and the ascension Mengistu Haile Mariam as dictator of Ethiopia in February of 1977 (which roughly coincided with the start of Carter’s presidency) and ended with the start of the Ogaden War in July of that same year.²⁸⁴ The first point of debate within the administration in relation to the Horn of Africa was if the US should continue to support Ethiopia (in spite of its ever strengthening relations with the SU and Cuba and its human rights violations) or to redirect US support to Somalia? The end result would be somewhere in the middle.

Mengistu had taken power from the Derg in a bloody coup on February 3, 1977. This forced the Carter administration to reevaluate its relationship and support for Ethiopia. As

²⁸¹ ‘Summary of the Special Coordination Committee (SCC) Meeting Regarding Assistant Secretary Richard M. Moose’s Mission to Somalia. Topics Include: Moose’s Message to Somalian President Siad Barre; Possible U.S. Military and Economic Assistance for Somalia’ (White House, 16 March 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JaVU4>.

²⁸² President Jimmy Carter in: “Carter, Congress Weigh YS Arms Aid to Somalia,” *Washington Post*, March 16, 1978.

²⁸³ Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Message, January 23, 1980, *Public Papers, Carter 1980 Vol I*, 197.

²⁸⁴ The popular revolution took place in February of 1974 and the Derg took power in September of that same year. But the left leaning dictator Mengistu (who Carter had to deal with) took power in February of 1977. This new leader set Ethiopia on a course to becoming a more totalitarian state with left leaning tendencies. Carter became president in January of 1977 and was forced to think about continuing the alliance that the US had had with Ethiopia since 1953.

Soviet and Cuban interest and involvement in the region began to increase as the new Ethiopian regime (under Mengistu from 1977 onwards) had been moving towards communism by nationalising its economy and turning into a one-party state.²⁸⁵ This would also mean that Somalia would be considered as a new ally for the US. This would ultimately result in a switching of military and financial support from Ethiopia to Somalia from mid-1977 onwards. This lasted until the Somali's decided to invade Ethiopia, which resulted in the Ogaden War.²⁸⁶

But other contextual factors also played a role in his initial reasoning (as Allison pointed out with his third question, the context wherein an actor has to make his choices is very important in influencing his decisions). Ethiopia (under Emperor Haile Selassie) had proven to be a reliable ally in the Cold War context and had worked closely with the US since 1953. Ethiopia was also considered by the US administration (and Henze in particular) as one of the biggest and most important African nations in the region. It could thus form a possible bulwark against communism in the Horn. To gain its support was seen as key to the Horn of Africa to Carter's administration as it had been under Ford.²⁸⁷ This would change after Mengistu began to work closer with Cuba and the SU in the coming months.

Other economic and geographical factors were also important for Carter to consider in his policy choices. Seeing as Ethiopia dominated the Horn and the Horn dominated the sea lanes and oil routes through the Red Sea passage. This importance was also noted by Henze, who saw the Horn as a "link in the chain of Western defences against Soviet expansionism and radical Arab disruptive activities".²⁸⁸

Brzezinski and Vance were (initially) very much in favour of supporting Ethiopia instead of Somalia.²⁸⁹ An important reason for Brzezinski (and the NSC) to make this policy choice, was his heavy reliance on Paul Henze for advice on the Horn of Africa. Henze had been appointed to the NSC as an advisor on African affairs earlier in the year because of his knowledge and expertise on the Horn (he had travelled there extensively and published several books on the region).²⁹⁰ Henze was also known to be very much in favour of supporting Ethiopia and not giving any aid to Somalia. Brzezinski appeared to agree for the most part with Henze's advice and favoured Ethiopia over Somalia. He and most of the other players did this, because

²⁸⁵ 'Ethiopia's Rulers Nationalize Banks, Insurance Firms', *The New York Times*, 2 January 1975, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1975/01/02/archives/ethiopias-rulers-nationalize-banks-insurance-firms.html>.

²⁸⁶ Weiss, 'The Soviet Involvement in the Ogaden War', 10.

²⁸⁷ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 37.

²⁸⁸ Paul B. Henze, *The Horn of Africa: From War to Peace* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 188–89.

²⁸⁹ And even though Brzezinski was not as dominant in the administration early on as he later would be, he was still one of Carter's primary advisors and headed the NSC

²⁹⁰ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 41–42.

Ethiopia was considered the biggest and most important player in the region and the Ethiopians had traditionally been allies since the Second World War.

Thus, initially it would seem that Carter (and his administration) would continue the close relations that the previous American administrations had maintained with Ethiopia since 1953. Carter was even congratulated by the Ethiopian dictator after entering office in February of 1977.²⁹¹ This policy course would not even change after Castro had visited Mengistu on 3 February and the Cubans and Soviets began signing arms deals with the Ethiopians.²⁹² Despite all of these points, Carter still wanted to try and maintain good relations with the Ethiopians as far as this was possible. And because presidents make their decisions also on their own preferences and the possible ramifications of their policy choices, it would seem logical why Carter made this choice.

He had stated in his inaugural address, that he wanted to avoid getting the US involved in a war far away from the American shores (like Vietnam). In other words he was advocating a policy of non-intervention and long-term cooperation with African nations: “We will not seek to dominate nor dictate to others. As we Americans have concluded in one chapter in our nation’s history and are beginning to work on another, we have, I believe, acquired a more mature perspective on the problems of the world”.²⁹³ This meant that Carter would try to work with Third World countries, try to not look at them in the classic Cold War framework, and not let regime changes (that often did not last long) get in the way of possible cooperation. This needed to be done to also try and promote human rights in those countries by Carter (a very important point in Carter’s agenda).

Vance also agreed with this new foreign policy approach, stating in June of 1976: “We can be neither right nor effective if we treat Africa simply as one part of the third world, or as a testing ground of East-West competition”.²⁹⁴ This was noted in the PRM on the Horn of Africa he had issued shortly thereafter. It more or less stated that the new leftward trend that Ethiopia was heading into could not be stopped and that the US support for the previous Ethiopian regime under Haile Selassie made it (understandably) difficult for Mengistu and the Derg to trust

²⁹¹ ‘Telegram by Mengistu to State Department’ (Department Of State, 22 January 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JXSUX>.

²⁹² Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 49.

²⁹³ Jimmy Carter, “United States Foreign Policy Remarks to People of Other Nations on Assuming Office,” January 20, 1977, The American Presidency Project.

²⁹⁴ Speech, Vance to the Plenary Session of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, July 1, 1977, “Speeches, Articles and Interviews by Cyrus R Vance [while Secretary of State] 1977-1979” Folder, Box 39, Professional and Personal Activities, Group No 1664, Series No III, Cyrus R. Vance and Grace Sloane Papers, Yale University Library Manuscripts Collection. <https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/12/resources/4513> Accessed August 15, 2019.

Carter's administration.²⁹⁵

The possibility for future rehabilitation of US-Ethiopian relations (as is noted in Carter's new foreign policy approach) was also noted by all of his most important advisors (besides their possible private misgivings about supporting the Ethiopian dictator) in a PRC meeting that year. Brezniski, Turner, Vance, Mondale and Brown agreed that some relations with Ethiopia must be maintained for future cooperation.²⁹⁶ As a further consequence of Carter's decision, Brown and the CIA were severely limited in their ability to stage covert operations to discredit the Ethiopian dictator in order to maintain good relations as the president wanted.²⁹⁷ But several factors indirectly lead to increased tensions between the US and Ethiopia and changed Carter's stance on American support for that country.

Firstly, increasing reports were indicating that Mengistu, as the new leader of the Derg was cracking down on 'internal dissidents' in a brutal way. The situation was described by Henze as an "orgy of killings", with "increasing numbers of random shootings, as well as killings of students and regime opponents".²⁹⁸ The CIA (Turner) was also not expecting US-Ethiopian relations to improve in the future as Mengistu was getting closer and more dependent on the Soviets and becoming suspicious of US intentions towards Ethiopia (believing possibly that the US is funding the insurgents in his country).²⁹⁹ These killings were also coming to the attention of the US public as articles about these atrocities began to be published from early 1977 onwards.³⁰⁰

Thus public opinion must have also played a role in Carter's possible decision to change his policy on Ethiopia. Congress was also urging the administration to address these issues, as the House Subcommittee on Africa conducted its own investigations into the crimes being committed.³⁰¹ But even though no administration could effectively push through a certain

²⁹⁵ 'Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM) No. 21 Concerning U.S. Policy toward the Horn of Africa, with Particular Reference to Developments in Kenya and the Sudan' (National Security Council, 17 March 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYTJ4>.

²⁹⁶ 'Summary of a Policy Review Committee (PRC) Meeting Regarding the Situation in Each of the Five Horn of Africa Countries Following Somali and Eritrean Insurgent Advances in Ethiopia' (White House, 25 August 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8oUs26>.

²⁹⁷ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 52.

²⁹⁸ *National Security Council (NSC) Staff Member Paul Henze Provides National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski with His Evening Report. Issues Include: U.S. Policy toward Africa; International Broadcasting Matters; Update on the Greek and Turkish Conflict over Control of the Island of Cyprus* (United States: National Security Council, 1977), <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8J2vh2>.

²⁹⁹ FOIA | CIA FOIA (Foia.Cia.Gov)', accessed 20 August 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85S00317R000200070003-9.pdf>

³⁰⁰ 'Ethiopia, Under Military Leaders, Is Racked by Unrest and Warfare', *The New York Times*, 1 February 1977, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/02/01/archives/ethiopia-under-military-leaders-is-racked-by-unrest-and-warfare.html>.

³⁰¹ Report, War in the horn of Africa: A Firsthand Report on the Challanges for United States Policy, House of Committee on International Relations, February 3, 1978, 95th Congress, 2nd Session, Library of Congress.

foreign policy without the support from Congress, one of the most important points for the eventual change in US support were Carter's own personal views. These views entailed an emphasis on promoting human rights and judged the US's relations with a country based on how it dealt with this topic. This means that despite the new policy of regionalism, human rights violations by other African nations would not be tolerated by the US.

Ultimately though events in Ethiopia itself would 'force' Carter to make a decision either backing Ethiopia or Somalia in March of 1977. The administration was not only worried about the human rights of Ethiopians, but also about American personnel and civilians in the country itself. The increasingly unstable situation could prove to be dangerous to the American personnel who were mostly concentrated in Kagnaw Station in the north of the country. Carter decided to do this in order to protect the lives of US personnel (as was also in line with his policy of protecting human rights), furthermore the media or congress would likely have criticised Carter even further if American personnel would have been killed under his administration.³⁰²

Harold Brown was particularly vocal about his support of Carter's decision to close the base. Brown worried (as head of the DOD) about this point and advocated to have it closed.³⁰³ He did not give clear motives during the meetings, but it would be logical that he felt responsible for the security of US military personnel in the region. The opinion of the other players are not clear from the sources, but this may be due to the fact that the administration was planning on closing it anyway because it was not used as much anymore by the time Carter became president. In that sense, Brown's support for its closing could only have added to what Carter already wanted to do. It is clear that all of Carter's most important advisors agreed that, despite closing the base, the US had to maintain at least some diplomatic relations with Ethiopia and should not pull out of the country completely.³⁰⁴

The relations between the US and Ethiopia would reach a definitive low point as Mengistu responded to the closing of the American military base by expelling nearly all the American military and embassy personnel

³⁰² 'Memo to Zbigniew Brzezinski from Paul B. Henze on the Closing of the U.S. Military Base in Kagnaw, in the Horn of Africa' (National Security Council, 31 March 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYSj0>.

³⁰³ 'Memorandum from Secretary of Defense Harold Brown to Zbigniew Brzezinski' (Department Of Defense, 21 March 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8J56RX>.

³⁰⁴ 'National Security Council (NSC) Staff Member Paul Henze Provides National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski with His Evening Report. Issues Include: International Broadcasting Matters; U.S. Policy toward the Horn of Africa; Situation in Somalia; Update on President Jimmy Carter's Forthcoming European Visit; Fall of the Northwest Ethiopian Town of Metemma' (National Security Council, 11 April 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYSJX>.

as well as journalists from the country at the end of April, 1977.³⁰⁵ The Carter administration did not issue any strong worded objections to these events.

We can infer based on Carter's earlier statements about America's policy in Africa that this would have to do with the fact that Carter was planning for long-term cooperation with African states in order to be able to pursue human rights as a foreign policy point. Consequently, he had ordered the administration to do everything to strengthen ties with Somalia regardless of the current US relations or the possible SU influence in the country.³⁰⁶ As we have seen previously all of Carter's important advisors (with Brown probably having most misgivings) supported maintaining some contacts with Ethiopia. Although it is likely that Brzezinski in particular would have only done this out of practical reasons, rather than humanitarian ones. The Americans were well aware of the presence of Cuban troops and advisors in Ethiopia and that the SU was also increasing its presence in the country from May onwards. Perhaps some of Carter's advisors hoped to maintain at least some influence in the country to counter the increasing Soviet and Cuban presence. But other factors could also have played a role in Carter's decision process.

Traditional Cold War fears about Soviet influence in the Horn also played some role in his decisions as other states were voicing their concern to the Americans over the creeping communist influence in the Horn. Saudi-Arabia, Kenya and Sudan were especially worried about the increasing shipments of weapons and advisors from Cuba and the SU to Ethiopia (i.e. their increasing influence over Ethiopia) and appealed to the US for help in countering this. The fact that Carter indicated this in a PRM, suggests that he took these worries seriously (and thus probably also took them into consideration in determining the US policy for the Horn).³⁰⁷

Another reason for Carter to support Somalia could also have been the fact that Siad requested help from Carter in order to negate SU pressure on Somalia. The Soviets were trying to further increase their influence over Ethiopia by pressuring Siad to accept Ethiopian sovereignty over the Ogaden.³⁰⁸ Furthermore, as Siad had aspirations to eventually conquer the Ogaden and Ethiopia was receiving increasing economic and military support from the SU, this increased the likelihood of a war between these countries in the near future.³⁰⁹ Eventually

³⁰⁵ 'Ethiopians Expel Part of U.S. Embassy Staff', *The New York Times*, 7 February 1984, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/02/07/world/ethiopians-expel-part-of-us-embassy-staff.html>.

³⁰⁶ Oberdorfer, 'The Superpowers and the Ogaden War'.

³⁰⁷ 'Presidential Review Memorandum (PRM) No. 21 Concerning U.S. Policy toward the Horn of Africa, with Particular Reference to Developments in Kenya and the Sudan'.

³⁰⁸ 'Vice President Walter Mondale Reports to President Jimmy Carter on His Meeting with Somalian Ambassador Addou Regarding Soviet Pressure for Somalia to Accept Ethiopia's Existing Borders, and a Request for U.S. Economic and Military Assistance to Reduce Soviet Presence in the Area'.

³⁰⁹ Henze, *The Horn of Africa*, 140–42.

economic aid would be sent to Somalia under the guise of further stimulating human rights projects and economic development of the country.³¹⁰ But this was of course not what Siad was looking for. The major factor stopping Carter from openly support Somalia with military aid was the fact that Somali troops had infiltrated the Ogaden since May of 1977 and were support the local insurgents (WSLF) there.³¹¹

The start of the change in US support from Ethiopia to Somalia, however came after Brzezinski had informed Mondale that Siad was angered and worried about Ethiopia's growing power in the Horn.³¹² From this it is clear that Brzezinski was in favour of switching support (but not completely abandoning Ethiopia either). This could prove advantageous to America in strengthening its ties with the country he argued. Although at the same time he noted in the same memo to Mondale that public opinion would not support US military aid to the Somali regime, and neither would Congress. It seems that, according to Henze's account, Mondale also agreed with this approach as he thought (as a liberal) that removing communist influence from Somalia was a good thing to pursue.³¹³ Although he went a step further then Brzezinski and argued to encourage the Somali's to buy weapons elsewhere or even suggested to give direct military aid to Somalia!³¹⁴ It can thus be deduced that Mondale (and Vance) were close to Brzezinski's viewpoints on confronting the SU in Africa. Although Vance was generally inclined to not support foreign policy choices that might anger the Soviets and thus compromise SALT, he eventually announced (in name of the Carter administration) on July the first, that the US would consider making a deal with Somalia to supply them with defensive weapons.³¹⁵ This falls in line with the earlier policy of improving relations between the US and Somalia. He explicitly stated in the announcement that this proposition was made because they [the Carter administration] wanted to support "states who were threatened by a build-up of foreign military equipment and advisers on their borders in the Horn and elsewhere in Africa". This was also in

³¹⁰ 'Summary of the National Security Council Weekly Report No. 14. Topics Include: Soviet Leadership Changes; Micronesian-U.S. Negotiations Status; U.S. Relations with India; Civil Rights Issues; U.S. Economic Assistance to Somalia; Situation in Ghana; U.S. Foreign Military Sales; U.S.-Soviet Commerce Talks; Brazil's Nuclear Program; Economic Issues in Underdeveloped Countries' (White House, 26 May 1977), 14, U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JanQ3>.

³¹¹ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 54.

³¹² 'Memo from Zbigniew Brzezinski to Mondale on Possible Options with Regards to U.S. Aid to Somalia.' (National Security Council, 24 March 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYSj0>.

³¹³ Henze, *The Horn of Africa*, 147.

³¹⁴ 'Vice President Walter Mondale Reports to President Jimmy Carter on His Meeting with Somalian Ambassador Addou Regarding Soviet Pressure for Somalia to Accept Ethiopia's Existing Borders, and a Request for U.S. Economic and Military Assistance to Reduce Soviet Presence in the Area'.

³¹⁵ Graham Hovey Special to The New York Times, 'U.S. Offers an Alternative Source of Arms to Somalia', *The New York Times*, 27 July 1977, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/07/27/archives/us-offers-an-alternative-source-of-arms-to-somalia-its-ready-to.html>.

line with Vance's own belief of dealing with the Soviets through the regionalist policy of supporting local African states to deal with their problems.³¹⁶ Vance also believed that the Soviet's support for Ethiopia was opportunistic rather than part of a global strategy to counter the US's influence, as opposed to Brzezinski who saw the SU as a direct threat to shipping lanes to the Suez.³¹⁷ More direct support for Somalia was thus not necessary on his mind. A few weeks later just when the border war in the Ogaden was about to escalate into a full-scale war between Somalia and Ethiopia, the SD officially confirmed Vance's earlier statement that it would support Somalia militarily.

As Vance's was always inclined to support Carter in his policies (see chapter 4.4) we can assume that he did this in line with Carter's own policy choices at this time in the debate. Carter would explain his choice to support Somalia openly as his way to "aggressively challenge, in a peaceful way" the Soviet's presence in the Horn.³¹⁸ He would probably emphasise the fact that the weapons for Somalia were defensive in nature and that it was to counter the aggressive nature of the Soviets to square this with his earlier mentioned new policies of non-interventionism and peaceful cooperation. As most of his advisors were in favour of supporting the Somalis for various reasons, it seems that this was done to counter a situation that the Americans could no longer fully control. Mengistu's actions after the closing of the American base forced the Carter administration to look for new allies and Siad's pleas for help came at the right moment. Carter's announcement can be seen as a way of trying to combine more traditional Cold War politics with his attempt to try and look beyond this narrative.

This does not mean that Carter did not endure a lot of criticism, because he had offered the proposition at nearly the same time that the Somali's would invade the Ogaden. Henze (Brzezinski and Carter's closest advisor on the Horn) would state his amazement as to why Carter would announce this just as the tensions in the Ogaden were reaching their boiling point.³¹⁹

The position of Turner is not completely clear from the sources at this point in the debate. Even though Vance opposed this approach, several meetings did take place and

³¹⁶ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 78–79.

³¹⁷ Smith, *Morality, Reason and Power*, 154.

³¹⁸ David Binder Special to The New York Times, 'President Wants To Gain Friends In Soviet Sphere', *The New York Times*, 12 June 1977, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/06/12/archives/president-wants-to-gain-friends-in-soviet-sphere-calls-for-an.html>.

³¹⁹ 'Memo to Zbigniew Brzezinski from Paul B. Henze Reflects on the Carter Administration's Policy Failure in the Horn of Africa. Henze Proposes Steps the United States Can Take to Prevent the Russians and Cubans from Capitalizing on Their Success in Ethiopia to Move on to Central and Southern Africa' (National Security Council, 10 March 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYQLX>.

economic aid was eventually granted. Even though Brzezinski was not as influential as Vance at this point in the administration, Carter was very clear in the fact that he wanted to support Somalia at this point. And as the literature has shown, presidents have a significant stake in policy debates based on their own preferences.³²⁰ Even though most of his advisors seemed to support this policy for one reason or the other, Carter clearly states his own motivations. Even if debates took place, it does also not necessarily mean that this could have influenced Carter more if these did not take place. After all, he was known to encourage debates within his administration.³²¹ In the end, he was the one that had to make the decision.

It seems that Brzezinski and Mondale seemed open to the idea of military support (like Vance and Carter), while the exact position of Turner and Brown is not completely clear at this point. Although after the Ogaden War broke out Brown would support Vance in his point of not supporting Somalia with military aid, because the US could get “sucked in” and that the Somalis “had brought the war on themselves”.³²² From that we can infer that he probably would have supported the US supply of weapons to Somalia (before the war broke out), as even a moderate like Vance seemed to support this policy before the war had erupted.

The primary sources indicate that Mondale was very much inclined to actually openly supply the Somalis with weapons and Brzezinski was leaning towards covert support through US allies. While Brown’s viewpoint just before the Ogaden War are not completely clear, we can infer from his support of Vance just after the conflict broke out that he was not very much in favour of openly supporting the Somali regime with weapons, for fear of getting the US sucked into a conflict that Somalia had started itself. Vance wanted to avoid getting the US involved for fear of compromising SALT and Carter did not want to support Somalia (openly) as long as it was infiltrating the Ogaden (his personal beliefs of not intervening and regionalism also played a role here). This shows that while all of the players agreed to support Somalia militarily, as soon as it openly declared war on Ethiopia most of Carter’s advisors changed their view.

Nonetheless, in this first round of the debate the policy of economic and humanitarian aid and non-interventionism were at the core of Carter’s decision to eventually support Somalia militarily. The weapons were intended to be purely for defensive purposes. These policies were reaffirmed by Vance on July 1, 1977 (further indicating Vance’s support for Carter) in a speech

³²⁰ Hermann and Preston, ‘Presidents, Advisers, and Foreign Policy’.

³²¹ Westad, *The Cold War*, 546–47.

³²² Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 79.

he gave.³²³ This policy would have to be radically reevaluated though, as the conflict in the Ogaden escalated into a full scale Somalia invasion of the Ogaden in late July of 1977.

7.3 The debate during the Ogaden War

The second phase of the debate can be placed within the six months of the duration of the Ogaden War. The open warfare that had erupted between Somalia and Ethiopia, which was also intensified by Soviet and Cuban military support to these states, inflamed the debate on the course of American foreign policy in the region. The debate during the war can be approximately categorized into three themes of phases; the question of continued US support for Somalia, the danger of escalating the conflict and thus compromising SALT and lastly the issue on the possibility of direct US intervention by a deploying carrier force to the Horn.

The first point of discussion was somewhat of a consequence of Carter's decision to decide to supply Somalia with defensive weapons. This was something Vance and Brzezinski supported to a certain extent.³²⁴ But Vance had his doubts about this policy, as he noted the dangers of angering the Ethiopians by supporting their rival and driving them further into the arms of the Soviets.³²⁵

This policy by Carter would seem somewhat contradictory in relation to his commitment to regionalism. But despite his commitment to try and not follow a traditional Cold War foreign policy that was wholly focused on the US relation with the SU he could not ignore the obvious influx of Russian and Cuban troops and material into Ethiopia in 1977. Siad's increasing pleas for help throughout the second half of 1977 would also have influenced Carter in getting the US involved. These external factors seem to have outweighed any misgivings he might have had about the Somali infiltration into the Ogaden, because he addressed this in a PD in late August of 1977 (around the time, but still officially before the Ogaden War broke out). It stated that the US and SU relations would "be characterized by both competition and cooperation" and because of that the US would not neglect the balance of military power between the US and its allies and the SU and its allies on the other hand.³²⁶ This statement was clearly made

³²³ 'Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980, Volume I, Foundations of Foreign Policy - Office of the Historian', accessed 2 September 2019, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1977-80v01/d50>.

³²⁴ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 70.

³²⁵ Smith, *Morality, Reason and Power*, 153.

³²⁶ PD/NSC 18: *U.S. National Strategy*, August 24, 1977, National Security Archive, Washington, D.C., accessed 6 October 2019, <https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/assets/documents/directives/pd18.pdf>.

with the increasingly tense situation in the Horn in mind.

But while Carter indicated this himself, other external factors (as mentioned earlier) also influenced him; Siad had cut his ties to the Soviet bloc after invading the Ogaden and he was now totally dependent on possible arms deals with the US (and its allies in the ME). Although most members of the administration had stimulated US allies to supply Somalia with weapons, Carter had made it clear to Siad that as long as Somali troops occupied parts of Ethiopia, the US would not supply him with weapons.³²⁷

This is where Carter drew a line in the sand, he was unwilling to openly support a state which had invaded its neighbour. The Somalis had escalated the situation in the Ogaden by an invasion and the US would not support this openly.³²⁸ His most important advisors, Vance and Brzezinski, agreed with him on this policy point.³²⁹ This did not mean that others could not do this, thus US allies such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran were encouraged to make deals with the Somali's to provide several hundreds of millions worth of arms to at the beginning of November, 1977.³³⁰ Public opinion (another external factor) could have played a role in Carter's decision to stop supporting Siad as the US press (at the time) had accused Carter of causing the war to escalate, because of an announcement to support Siad around the time that the war broke out.³³¹ But this accusation would seem over the top, as even though Carter tried to challenge Soviet influence in the region, he always intended to do this in a "peaceful way" as he stated at the time.³³² While the most important advisors did not make any strong objections towards this policy and supported Carter for the most part, Brzezinski's most important advisor on the Horn [Paul Henze] did voice his criticism of Carter's timing to Brzezinski. According to him, Carter should not have announced US willingness to supply weapons around the time of the invasion.³³³ But there is no clear evidence to suggest that Brzezinski shared this opinion and he certainly did voice this in such a manner to Carter. Carter's ultimate decision to publicly cease

³²⁷ 'President Jimmy Carter to Inform Somalian President Mohammad Siad Barre That the U.S. Will Not Provide Arms to Somalia Because of That Country's Aggression toward Ethiopia' (National Security Council, 15 August 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYka6>.

³²⁸ It could also not publicly support Somalia with (defensive) weapons after the invasion of the Ogaden at the end of July 1977. Public opinion would not allow for Carter to support the aggressor in this war. Carter's own rhetoric of non-interventionism, humanitarianism and his statements on pursuing a non Cold War foreign policy added to his (congress was also not willing to back this as has been stated earlier).

³²⁹ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 72.

³³⁰ Radoslav A. Yordanov, *The Soviet Union and the Horn of Africa during the Cold War: Between Ideology and Pragmatism*, Reprint edition (Lexington Books, 2017), 188–190.

³³¹ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 79.

³³² Times, 'President Wants To Gain Friends In Soviet Sphere'.

³³³ 'Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Paul B. Henze Analysing the Carter Administration Policy in the Horn of Africa' (National Security Council, 10 March 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYSy0>.

US support after the war broke out indicates that he did not want to cause open warfare in the Horn as he had previously stated.

Initially Carter's concerns for the stability of the region (as a motive to keep US and Somali relations going during the war) seem to have come from his own genuine convictions (and a feeling of guilt) of a regionalist policy. This was illustrated by his support for the OAU to play a key role in ending the conflict in the Horn (African problems should have African solutions). While of the important actors, only Brzezinski and Turner were present at this meeting, representatives of all the other departments were present and agreed to the conclusions and recommendations of the PRC.³³⁴ Carter and his advisors also made the policy choice to not supply either belligerents with weapons. This would seem in line with Carter's intentions of regionalism. At the same time they would also not send an ambassador to Ethiopia (to try and include them in the peace process) in order to not damage US and Somali relations.

The only minor actor who pushed against these conclusions was Henze (Brzezinski's advisor), who tried in vain to convince Brzezinski to push for more (open support) for Ethiopia. The reason being that if the Somalis overrun Ethiopia and it collapses, the Soviets would put in its place an even more radical left-wing government.³³⁵ This was in line with Henze's own position of seeing Ethiopia as the biggest and most important player in the Horn which should be won over to the US side in order to counter the SU's influence.³³⁶ These ideas could have been reinforced by Henze's own travels through Ethiopia and his intimate knowledge of that state. But ultimately the decision was made to not send an ambassador, despite Henze's private remarks to Brzezinski. These points were not brought up by him at the previous PRC meeting and as such no policy change occurred.

More traditional Cold War arguments were also mentioned as possible concerns for the Carter administration. A peaceful end to the conflict should be sought because this would minimize the influence that the Soviets could have in the Horn by supplying either parties with weapons. In order to achieve without getting involved directly, Carter and his senior advisors agreed to support the OAU in trying to establish an international arms embargo for the import of weapons to Somalia and Ethiopia.³³⁷ This policy would be pursued despite news reports of

³³⁴ 'Summary of a Policy Review Committee (PRC) Meeting Regarding the Situation in Each of the Five Horn of Africa Countries Following Somali and Eritrean Insurgent Advances in Ethiopia'.

³³⁵ 'Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Paul B. Henze Regarding Reasons Why the U.S. Should Not Abandon Ethiopia, Even as Somalian Aggression Threatens to Cause the Collapse of the Ethiopian Government' (National Security Council, 17 August 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JZFw8>.

³³⁶ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 37.

³³⁷ 'White House Briefing Notes on the Following Items: Update on Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's Visit to the U.S.; U.S. Notification to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat of Begin's Visit; Preparations for

the continued import of weapons to the Horn from the SU and Saudi Arabia to both Ethiopia and Somalia.³³⁸ The latter being unhappy that Carter was not doing anything against the SU support for Ethiopia and its presence at base northern Ethiopia (Berbera).³³⁹

Still, it is doubtful Carter would have confronted the Soviets openly about these findings when one looks at his past policy decisions on the Horn discussed earlier in this chapter.³⁴⁰ This is further reinforced when one looks at the role of the CIA in the Horn. As mentioned earlier, Carter and his administration were operating in a time when the Vietnam War had effected public opinion negatively in terms of US foreign interventions.³⁴¹ Any chance of removing Mengistu from power (who was increasingly leaning towards the SU after the war broke out) through some sort of covert operation via the CIA, would have had severe repercussions for public support of Carter's administration. This is what some of the players such as Turner, Brzezinski, Henze, and Aaron stated in a series of interviews with Jackson.³⁴² Although it is clear that out of all the players, Brzezinski was most keen on improving the methods that the CIA had of gathering intelligence in the future.³⁴³ This not only had to do with Brzezinski's hawkish nature, but also the period in which the SU's involvement in the Horn was intensifying.³⁴⁴

Despite pressure from American media and members of Congress for the US to intervene and stop the war (the latter putting the focus more on ending the war to remove Soviet influence, support and bases from the Horn), Carter continued with his policy of regionalism (non-interventionism) regardless of criticism in an effort to keep discussions with both Ethiopia and

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's Discussions in Amman, Jordan; Procedural Questions Concerning the Cairo Conference; Reports of Sinai Exercises to Be Conducted by Israel; Israeli Compliance with a UN Security Council Arms Embargo on South Africa; Soviet Actions in the Horn of Africa; Soviet Airlift to Ethiopia' (White House, 12 December 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYQf6>.

³³⁸ 'Paul Henze Provides Zbigniew Brzezinski with His Evening Report. Issues Include: Cuban Military Deployments to Ethiopia; Soviet Military Aid to Ethiopia; Somalian-Ethiopian Relations; Saudi Arabian Military Support in Somalia' (National Security Council, 31 January 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8J5Zj4>.

³³⁹ Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 74 and 77.

³⁴⁰ See his earlier statements about confronting the Soviets in a "peaceful way".

³⁴¹ This does not mean that there was also not any criticism directed towards Carter that focused on his lack of willingness too intervene in the Horn directly to end the war and push back Soviet influence in the Horn.

³⁴² Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 76.

³⁴³ 'In a Memorandum to Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Director Admiral Stansfield Turner, National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski Recommends Ways to Improve Political Intelligence Methods. Brzezinski Lists His Observations Concerning Three Current Problems: (1) Lack of Priority Attention to the Opportunities for Overt Collection; (2) Insufficient Collection by Clandestine Means of Basic Political and Economic Information; (3) Inadequate Exploitation of Information Already in Hand' (White House, 14 January 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8Mbfn0>.

³⁴⁴ Throughout January and February of 1978 the tension between the US and the SU was building up over the Soviet (and Cuban) support for the Ethiopian war effort. As a result of this a debate began within the Carter administration about moving a fleet to the Horn to pressure the Soviets.

Somalia going.³⁴⁵ This also seems to have been possible due to the minimal differences between the two major internal factions (NSC and DOD) on the overall foreign policy course. All the major players agreed for the most part that the war should end and that Soviet influence should be countered. The question was how far should US interference go and to what extent (if at all) should this have consequences for US-Soviet relations (SALT) and the wider Cold War?

These policy choices that Carter wanted came to the forefront via Vance's attempts to let the OAU and the UN mediate a settlement between the two warring powers in October and early November of 1977. This was also very much in line with Vance's preferences, as he wanted a diplomatic solution to the conflict in order to remove any justifications for Soviet presence in the Horn in comparison with Brzezinski who would later on advocate sending in the US navy to the area.³⁴⁶ These attempts would ultimately amount to nothing however, as the Ethiopians refused to sign any settlement as long as Somalia occupied parts of the Ogaden. However, some progress was made as Somalia cut most of its ties with the Soviets and Cuba in mid-November of that year (expelling most SU and Cuban personnel and even closing the Soviet bases on its coast).³⁴⁷

It does not seem likely that Siad broke with the Soviets because of any actions undertaken from the players in Carter's administration. As we have seen before, external factors could have just as much influence on the policy choices made in the Horn. It is more likely Said broke with the Eastern Bloc, because the Soviets had cut off their support to Somalia in October.³⁴⁸ The Soviets condemned Siad's initial invasion of the Ogaden and his support for Somali rebels in Ethiopia. They would continue the shipment of arms to Ethiopia though. At this moment it must have been clear to Siad that he had to send a signal to the West for support against Ethiopia (and their Soviet and Cuban supporters).

Any direct intervention by one of Carter's players seems further unlikely if one looks at the internal discussions in early November of 1977. Henze had organised a committee with representatives from all the departments.³⁴⁹ All of the departments agreed, except for Vance, that reaching out to Siad publicly would jeopardize the fragile and complicated situation in the

³⁴⁵ David Ottaway, 'U.S. Wary of Somali-Ethiopian War', *Washington Post*, 18 November 1977, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1977/11/18/us-wary-of-somali-ethiopian-war/69ef2b02-7fa3-488d-b81f-d4c6b4da0b4b/>; Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 77.

³⁴⁶ Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 78-79.

³⁴⁷ John Darnton, 'Somalia Expelling All Soviet Advisers, Halts Use of Bases', *The New York Times*, 14 November 1977, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/11/14/archives/somalia-expelling-all-soviet-advisers-halts-use-of-bases-cites.html>.

³⁴⁸ Milton R. Benjamin, 'Soviets Halt Supply Of Arms to Somalia', *Washington Post*, 21 October 1977, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1977/10/21/soviets-halt-supply-of-arms-to-somalia/e354af6d-cb02-4e2f-b1b1-9e6fd2557bf9/>.

³⁴⁹ These included DOS, DOD and the CIA.

Horn.³⁵⁰ In other words Henze advised Brzezinski (and thus Carter) to maintain the long-term policy of regionalism.³⁵¹ It would not seem that Vance fundamentally disagreed with this policy goal, but he probably would have wanted to still send the letter and maintain direct contact with both the leaders of Somalia and Ethiopia. This position would seem logical when one looks at Vance's consistent choices for continued dialogue with the SU and other powers during the Cold War (to promote arms limitations). At this time Carter made no definitive decision on the subject of sending an American ambassador to Ethiopia.

Henze and the other players (that he represented at that meeting) preferred abstaining from getting the administration too involved with both parties. This difference indicated again that the overall policy goals of all the players were the same, but that the way to achieve this was something that they disagreed over at times. This further emphasises that the minor players varied in their policy choices between Vance and Brzezinski over the course of the debate. Mondale was generally closer to Vance, as he feared confronting the eastern Bloc would endanger SALT for example.³⁵² At this time he (along with the other minor players) went with the other choice.

Whilst internally Brzezinski (in particular) indicated his pleasure at the loss of Soviet influence in the Horn, because of Somalia's actions, he too went along for the time being. Officially, Carter maintained the current policy of trying to restrict any arms being sent to the Horn in an effort to negotiate a peace between the two warring states (despite some criticism from the media, Congress, and Brzezinski that Carter was being too soft on the Soviets).³⁵³ Despite the restrictions that the president had placed on possible covert operations that CIA could undertake, it still proved its usefulness by intercepting messages from the Soviets.³⁵⁴ In this regard, Turner wielded some indirect influence over Carter and the debate.³⁵⁵ By providing direct evidence to Carter of direct Soviet influence in the Horn, it pressured him to openly confront the Soviets. In combination with criticism from Brzezinski, but also congress and the

³⁵⁰ 'Memorandum to Zbigniew Brzezinski from Paul Henze Regarding the Situation in the Horn of Africa. Developments Include: Somalian Expulsion of Soviet Armed Forces; Murder of Atnafu Abate, Vice Chairman of the Ethiopian Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC); Situation in Eritrea' (National Security Council, 14 November 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JXy91>.

³⁵¹ Henze was speaking on behalf of representatives the three other branches (DOS, DOD and CIA) with whom he had discussed the issue in a special committee.

³⁵² Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 34.

³⁵³ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 79–83.

³⁵⁴ 'Intelligence Cable Regarding the Role of Soviet Military Advisor V. I. Petrov in Ethiopia. Petrov Recommends That Ethiopia Attack Northern Somalia' (Central Intelligence Agency, 14 December 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8MdYn4>.

³⁵⁵ Several of these reports go into great detail that the Russians were not only supplying the Ethiopians (which was already known), but that Russian generals and advisors were taking charge of directing the Ethiopian war effort by advising their generals.

US media, Vance was ordered to request that the USSR would cease these activities.³⁵⁶

But despite being reprimanded by Carter's government, the Soviets continued their support of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the Ethiopians were not prepared to let the OAU negotiate a peace as long as Somalia was occupying the Ogaden. And if the OAU could have brokered a peace, it would not have been able to enforce it, because it had no standing army of its own. In that sense it was very much a 'paper tiger' as Brzezinski in particular commented. One of Carter's other core principles and policy goals was still pursued during this time though, this being human rights. Despite the regimes of both countries regularly trampling on the rights of their own citizens, Carter ordered economic aid to help with a famine that was developing in both Ethiopia and Somalia, towards the end of December, 1977.³⁵⁷

The stalemate with the situation in the Horn continued throughout January and February of 1978 as Carter and Vance continued to emphasise that peaceful negotiations would be needed to end the war. It seems that this was in line with what Henze advised the Carter administration to do in the Horn. This meant to not let the US get too invested with any of the other powers and thus keep its options open.³⁵⁸ It seemed that Carter did follow this line of reasoning as he continued to try and not get the US entrenched in the ever increasingly complicated politics of the Horn. He was both a dove and a hawk.³⁵⁹ While this did earn him scorn from Brzezinski (and probably Brown and Turner), Congress, and the media that he was too soft, he had to deal with increasing reports (from Turner) that Russian generals and increasing numbers of Cuban troops were assisting the Ethiopians throughout the first months of 1978.³⁶⁰

Towards the end of January and the beginning of February tensions were increasing further in the Horn. Ethiopian troops succeeded in driving the SNA forces from Ethiopia and were even considered to possibly invade Somalia itself with Soviet and Cuban support. This alarmed US allies such as Saudi Arabia and certain members of Congress, who demanded that

³⁵⁶ 'Summary of U.S. Ambassador Malcolm Toon's Conversation with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko Regarding Soviet Involvement in the Conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia' (Department Of State, 12 December 1977), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8J5Pq2>.

³⁵⁷ David B. Ottaway, 'Ethiopia Takes Action to Avert Repeat of 1973 Famine', *Washington Post*, 15 January 1977, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1977/01/15/ethiopia-takes-action-to-avert-repeat-of-1973-famine/2023063e-c8e1-4173-a494-b5d66aa7830d/>.

³⁵⁸ 'Memorandum from Paul B. Henze to Zbigniew Brzezinski on the Situation in the Horn of Africa. The Carter Administration Disengaged Its Military Relationship with Ethiopia and Avoided a Relationship with Somalia, and, as a Result, the U.S. Is Uncommitted in the Conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia' (National Security Council, 12 January 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYT81>.

³⁵⁹ Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 75.

³⁶⁰ 'Minutes of the 2/23/78 National Security Council Intelligence Briefing on the Military Situation in the Horn of Africa. Topics Include: Ethiopian Build-up; Somali Withdrawal; Reports of an Ethiopian Invasion of Somalia; Iranian and Egyptian Involvement; Cuban Flights to Ethiopia' (White House, 23 February 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYSZ3>.

the US would support Somalia militarily to prevent a complete takeover of the Horn by the communists.³⁶¹ But despite this criticism, Carter remained resolute in his criticism of the SU, whilst at the same time maintaining the long-term US policy of regionalism and a peaceful ending of the conflict without letting it escalate by a US intervention into the horn.³⁶² It would appear from Henze's discussions with the other players, that most of them wanted the Soviets to leave just as much as Brzezinski, but that they were unwilling to risk a direct military confrontation in fear of either escalating the local war or the SALT accords. Furthermore it did not seem that the Soviets would be leaving the region anytime soon anyway, as they were deeply entrenched in their support (together with the Cubans) for Ethiopia.

Ongoing discussions that started back in November came to fruition as Vance got his way, with Carter agreeing to send an ambassador to Ethiopia at the end of January. He had won a debate against Henze, who succeeded in getting most of the other minor players to support him in objecting to sending a US ambassador to Ethiopia. Or at least it would seem this way as he spoke on behalf of a committee he led that represented the other departments. In any case, Carter did not make a decision back in November. He did now, probably not only because of Vance's support for this policy decision, but because Somalia had broken all relations with the Soviets and wanted to align itself with the US. At the end of January the SCC recommended doing the aforementioned to Carter.³⁶³ A couple of weeks later David Aaron was sent to the Ethiopian capital.

But even more importantly, all of the important players: Brown, Brzezinski, Vance and Turner (Mondale was not present at SCC meetings) also agreed to step up on putting military pressure on the Soviet influence in the Horn. This would have had something to do with the advancement of Ethiopian and Cuban troops towards the Somali border (Siad having asked for direct US assistance around this time). Measures were to be taken to increase Turner's capabilities of gathering intelligence for military purposes.³⁶⁴ As well as a request for Brown, who was chairman of the JSC, to prepare plans to deploy a naval task force to the Red Sea as

³⁶¹ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 89–90.

³⁶² 'Memo to Zbigniew Brzezinski from Paul B. Henze Regarding Fundamentals in the Horn of Africa Situation. The U.S. Wants the Soviets out of Ethiopia, but Is Reluctant to Make Commitments in the Area Which May Jeopardize Long-Term Interests' (National Security Council, 16 January 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYSe4>.

³⁶³ 'Summary of a Special Coordination Committee (SCC) Meeting on the Horn of Africa. Issues Include: Review of the Latest Developments in the Horn; Recent Contacts with the Soviet Union and Cuba Concerning Africa; Possible U.S. Political, Diplomatic, and Military Initiatives in Africa; Adequacy of U.S. Intelligence Collection in Africa; Congressional Interest in the Area' (National Security Council, 27 January 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYRp8>.

³⁶⁴ This being something Turner was very much in favour as can be read in his earlier letter to the NSA.

soon as possible.³⁶⁵ Henze was there as Brzezinski's advisor on the Horn and his influence can be traced in the conclusions of the meeting, in the sense that caution would be maintained in not getting involved too directly in case this would provoke the Soviets. Henze's was a supporter of Carter's regionalism. It would seem that Vance and the rest of the players agreed, as they stated that no direct military support would be given to Siad in spite of his requests.³⁶⁶

It could be argued that Carter was further pushed to take actions by advice given by two minor players, Turner and Brown. They had both argued in a NSC meeting with the other players and Carter in late February, that it was not unlikely that the Ethiopians could and would invade Somalia itself, even though the Soviets would advise against it.³⁶⁷ Brzezinski also leaned against inaction as this would make the US look passive. The only actor that had any objections was Vance, as he asked about the validity of the reports that Turner and Brown were basing this on.³⁶⁸ Turner stated that these were indeed credible. Carter himself did not (as far as the document is readable) choose one side or the other, but asked for more information as the players gave it. Whatever Carter might have said or thought, an outside factor in the form of assurances from Ethiopia, Cuba, and the SU (communicated through Brzezinski), apparently convinced him that an invasion was not going to happen.³⁶⁹

Although during a large part of this phase of the debate the differences in opinion about American foreign policy were relatively small in comparison to the later years of the Carter administration, this was about to change.³⁷⁰ This was because despite Carter's apparent belief that no Ethiopian invasion of Somalia would come, internally Brzezinski was worried the President was still being too soft on the Soviets. Reports kept coming in of an increase of Cuban troops serving in Ethiopia, SU naval equipment being brought in, as well as them constructing a naval base on the Ethiopian coast. Saudi-Arabia was also shipping weapons to Somalia.³⁷¹ These continued reports (dating late January until early March), despite earlier assurances by the Soviets that they would not escalate the tensions in the Horn, only confirmed Brzezinski's view that the US should confront the SU openly if necessary.³⁷² In that sense Brzezinski still viewed the conflict in a global Cold War perspective ((perhaps even more so as the Soviets

³⁶⁵ 'Summary of a Special Coordination Committee (SCC) Meeting on the Horn of Africa. Issues Include'.

³⁶⁶ Jackson, 'The Ogaden War and the Demise of Détente', 94.

³⁶⁷ 'Minutes of the 2/23/78 National Security Council Intelligence Briefing on the Military Situation in the Horn of Africa. Topics Include'.

³⁶⁸ It must be noted that a large part of this document has been coloured in to make an analysis of further debate impossible.

³⁶⁹ Jackson, 'The Ogaden War and the Demise of Détente', 96.

³⁷⁰ Mitchell, *Jimmy Carter in Africa*, 75.

³⁷¹ 'Paul Henze Provides Zbigniew Brzezinski with His Evening Report. Issues Include'.

³⁷² Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 186 and 519–20.

and Cubans were seriously supporting the Ethiopians in their war effort).

In other words, linkage was an issue here. The other players seemed to be agreeing with his point of view, as in early February the earlier decisions on increased intelligence gathering and movement of a fleet to the Red Sea were taken further.³⁷³ All the players were present at this SCC meeting and in conclusion agreed to move a non-carrier naval task force closer to the Horn and an additional carrier task force at Subic Bay (Philippines) in case it was needed to move further into the Indian Ocean towards the Horn.³⁷⁴ This did not mean that Vance was not worried about linkage. He still viewed it as a local conflict and the Soviets should be approached from a regionalist perspective in order to not compromise the talks with the Soviets on SALT as he had pointed out in early March.³⁷⁵

Again, most of the other players agreed with Brzezinski (during this meeting) in confronting the Soviets. Mondale, who was there on behalf of Carter was the only other player that seemed to have some reservations on Brzezinski's conclusion that Soviet activities in the Horn would cause linkage (as Vance did also). Henze, who was present as a notetaker, did not speak during the meeting. It seems that his role at this time remained one of being Brzezinski's main advisor on the horn. Vance and Mondale were viewing Soviet influence in the Horn from a regionalist perspective in that they questioned if Soviet aggression in the Horn and US condemnation of these acts would not jeopardize the wider US and SU relations during the Cold War. Mondale later on even states that the pressure the other players wanted to put on the Soviets would make the US seem impotent in the Horn. He clearly did not believe in that approach.

Brzezinski, Brown and Turner (to some extent) were viewing it from a globalist perspective at this stage in the debate.³⁷⁶ We can gather from Turner's emphasis on the danger that the Somalis would be in if the US forced it to abandon all occupied territories in Ethiopia before the US would support it that he was at least somewhat in favour of maintaining support

³⁷³ 'Summary of Conclusions Reached at the Special Coordination Committee (SCC) Meeting with Regard to the Horn of Africa. Issues Include: A Review of the Latest Information on the Military and Political Situation in the Horn; U.S. Diplomatic Initiatives in the Area; Muslim Countries' Intentions in Somalia; Plans for the Possible Ready Deployment of a U.S. Carrier Task Force' (White House, 10 February 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYRj1>.

³⁷⁴ Carter was present later on in the meeting, before that Mondale was there to represent the White House.

³⁷⁵ 'Minutes of Meeting on the Horn of Africa. Topics Include: Strategy for Political Settlement; Measures Designed to Convey U.S. Displeasure to the Soviets; Measures Designed to Convey U.S. Displeasure to the Cubans; Moves toward Ethiopia; U.S. Military Posture; Status of U.S. Consultants with Other Governments' (Department Of State, 2 March 1978), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8J4h72>.

³⁷⁶ It is difficult to ascertain Turner's true feelings about this topic during this important meeting. He gives some insights, but a part of what he stated in this important meeting has been erased from the source.

for Somalia so that it would not fall. If not for this support the regime there could collapse, thus lessening the US influence in the region and amongst its Muslim allies (i.e. Saudi-Arabia). In that respect, Turner was more in line with Brown and Brezniski than Vance or Mondale. Brown even went so far as to state that Soviet activities would cause linkage as a matter of fact, whatever the US reaction. Furthermore sending a carrier force to the Indian Ocean first would be seen as a regular training exercise of some sort, so there was minimal risk in doing so. His belief that the Soviets would do what they wanted to do regardless if a SALT treaty would have already been established, places him firmly across from Vance, who he clearly stated his worries about linkage several times during this meeting.

Eventually, some form of compromise was reached, even though Brzezinski saw this as a defeat for his favoured policy of moving the task force closer to the Horn. Vance had won this final round in the debate, as a more direct method of pressure on the Soviets would not be pursued. Carter opted for stationing the carrier task force in Singapore, which was in the Indian Ocean but not too close to the Horn that it could be perceived as an act of aggression.³⁷⁷ Before any more policy debates about this issue could go on the war began drawing to a close. Despite the ongoing discussions about US support for Somalia, Siad had to capitulate to the overwhelming Ethiopian forces and their allies. This prompted Carter to again reiterate his policy of regionalism in supporting the OAU to negotiate a solution to the ongoing terrestrial claims of both states that remained even as the war came to an end in March of 1978.³⁷⁸

7.4 Aftermath of the debate post Ogaden War

Unfortunately, the end of the Ogaden War did not mean an end to the existing tensions in the Horn. While open warfare had stopped, Siad remained in power and was still committed to reclaiming the Ogaden in order to unite the Somali people into one state. This meant he continued to support the WSLF in the Ogaden. On the other hand, the Soviets and Cubans remained in the region to support their Ethiopian ally. This also meant that not only was small-scale warfare in the Ogaden ongoing (even towards the end of Carter's term in 1980), but huge

³⁷⁷ 'Minutes of Meeting on the Horn of Africa.Topics Include'.

³⁷⁸ 'Summary of the Special Coordination Committee (SCC) Meeting Regarding Assistant Secretary Richard M. Moose's Mission to Somalia. Topics Include'.

numbers of ethnic Somali peoples fled the Ogaden to seek refuge in Somalia.³⁷⁹

In the years between the end of the Ogaden War and end of Carter's time as president in early 1981, Brzezinski's influence on the debate in regards to the US foreign policy in the Horn and the SU in general began to increase. However, this had not so much to do with developments in the Horn (as this situation stayed more or less as complex as it had been during the war itself), and more with events outside Africa. Despite the fact that Vance had (more or less) won the debate on confronting the SU and the risk to possible SALT talks, Brzezinski would steadily gain influence in relation to Carter's foreign policy choices.³⁸⁰

This was in a large part due to two important events in early November of 1979. The first being the Iranian hostage crisis and the subsequent Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the day after the crisis in Tehran began.³⁸¹ Despite the fact that a lively policy debate was something Carter had stimulated (especially during the first two years of his term), these external factors would influence this trend.³⁸² In other words, the more classic globalist view of the Cold War that Brzezinski (and to a lesser extent Brown and Turner) favoured would start to influence Carter's foreign policy decisions more than Vance's regionalist approach would. The naked Soviet aggression shown by the invasion of Afghanistan and the crisis in Iran confirmed Brzezinski's earlier comments on the nature of Soviet foreign policy.³⁸³ The US had to do something in order to not look weak, as criticism from the American public was pressuring the administration to take action. Carter acknowledged later on that the crisis in Iran and the SU invasion of Afghanistan in particular convinced him to fundamentally rethink his foreign policy.³⁸⁴

This meant that a policy of trying to prevent the situation in the horn from escalating (as Henze advised) was abandoned by Carter in favour of maintaining and expanding US influence in the Horn. It did not matter as much anymore what the Soviets or Ethiopians would think of this. Siad's continued requests and offers of for the US to establish several military bases in Somalia would prove a welcome opportunity in that respect.³⁸⁵ It would give the US the chance

³⁷⁹ Gregory Jaynes; Special to The New York Times, 'Somalia Struggling with Refugee Flow', *The New York Times*, 29 October 1979, sec. Archives, <https://www.nytimes.com/1979/10/29/archives/somalia-struggling-with-refugee-flow-guerrilla-war-against-ethiopia.html>.

³⁸⁰ Jackson, 'The Ogaden War and the Demise of Détente', 102–3.

³⁸¹ Steven L. Rearden and Jr Foulks, 'The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1977-1980' (Fort Belvoir, VA: Joint Chiefs of Staff Washington DC, 2015), 103–4, <https://apps.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA614272>.

³⁸² Westad, *The Cold War*, 546–47.

³⁸³ Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 432.

³⁸⁴ Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa*, 137–38.

³⁸⁵ 'OAO Corporation Chairman Cecile DeLisle Barker's Letter Is Written at the Request of Somalian President Mohammed Siad Barre. Siad Is Willing to Let the U.S. Use Somalia's Facilities for Military Purposes, and He

to maintain and expand its influence in the Indian Ocean and the Middle-East.³⁸⁶ Carter had been convinced by these external factors, and consequently Brzezinski's more traditional globalist approach to foreign policy began to dominate Carter's administration until the end of Carter's term as president.

7.5 Conclusion

What can we conclude after describing and analysing the internal debate within Carter's administration? In other words, how did the internal US debate on the Ogaden War develop between 1977-1981? Some authors have claimed that the policy debates between Brzezinski and Vance in particular were exaggerated by the media at the time.³⁸⁷ While the media did play a role in Carter's decision making process (as external factors also play a role in policy debates according to Allison) a debate on the issue already existed at the start of Carter's presidency which influenced his decisions.³⁸⁸

The first phase was dominated by the shift in US support from Ethiopia to Somalia. Vance, Brzezinski, Henze, and the other minor players were initially in favour of supporting Ethiopia. Henze, who was the primary expert on the Horn (and Brzezinski's primary advisor on the region), also favoured this course. Other historical and strategic factors also played a role in this overall stance of the main players. Ethiopia had been an ally of the US since the Second World War, and it was the largest and most important country in the Horn.

A change in this policy came about during this phase for several reasons.³⁸⁹ Cold War motives certainly played a role as Carter claimed that he was aggressively combatting the SU threat (i.e. influence) in the region by supporting the Somali military. The possibility of extending humanitarian aid to the Somali people through improved US relations with Somalia was another motive for Carter. While what the literature says is true to a certain extent, differences between the actors did exist even at this early stage. While most of the players

Requests U.S. Economic Assistance for His Country' (White House, 15 July 1980), U.S. Declassified Documents Online, <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/8JYmX0>.

³⁸⁶ Smith, *Morality, Reason and Power*, 155; Henze, *The Horn of Africa*, 10–12.

³⁸⁷ Strong, *Working in the World*, 265–66.

³⁸⁸ External factors can be the influence of: the media (public opinion), Congress, other events like the Iran hostage crisis, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, but also events like Somali army being pushed back or Siad's plea for help from the US. All of these events had a strong impact on Carter's decision making process.

³⁸⁹ This shift was not absolute however as contact and (economic) aid continued between the US and Ethiopia.

agreed that Somalia had to be supported, there were differences in opinion on the degree of support that the US should give Somalia. Mondale suggested to directly supply Somalia with weapons. The others (Carter included) were more in favour of supplying them indirectly, or only with defensive weapons.³⁹⁰ But external factors forced his decision making process.

The increasingly instable Ethiopian regime was not only turning on its own people, but threatening US personnel in the region. Brown requested Carter to close US bases, which Carter eventually did. But he was forced to fully support Somalia, after the Ethiopians expelled all US personnel following the closure of a US military base in Ethiopia. This did not mean that Carter would openly supply Somalia with weapons, as he could not do this so long as Somali troops infiltrated the Ogaden. Mondale did not get what he had advocated for. But all of the players eventually agreed that Ethiopia's behaviour forced the US to look to Somalia to expand its influence and counter the Soviets.

The second phase of the debate began as Somali troops invaded Ethiopia. The debate shifted to whether the administration (and thus the players) could continue to support Somalia or not? Somalia was the aggressor, so open US support for Siad and his regime could damage the reputation of Carter's administration. Already here some differences arose, as Henze supported Ethiopia, while Vane pushed for a purely diplomatic solution for the crisis. But the differences between their positions became more visible when Ethiopian troops (supported by the SU and Cuba) pushed Somali troops back to the border and were posed to invade Somalia itself. While all of the players agreed that Soviet influence in the region should be halted and removed, there were differences in the length the administration should go to achieve this. Turner and Brown were most in line with Brzezinski and pushed for taking action against the Soviets, but when it came to sending a carrier task force, Brzezinski was the lone supporter. Vance and Mondale were more in line with Carter in wanting to pursue a diplomatic solution to not let the conflict escalate and possibly risk the SALT accords.

Ultimately, Vance and his 'camp' won this debate as Carter decided to station the task force nearby but not directly off the coast of the Horn. The end of the Ogaden War thereafter after ended this discussion on the Horn. But while Brzezinski lost this battle, he would win the war. After the Tehran Hostage Crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan happened, it convinced (or forced) Carter into taking a more traditional Cold War perspective of relations with the Soviets. From then on, Carter would take a harder stance on communist influence in the world. The President would expand US influence in the Horn by building bases on the

³⁹⁰ Indirectly meaning that US allies like Saudi Arabia would be allowed to supply the Somali regime with weapons directly. Furthermore economic aid would be supplied openly and directly by the Carter government.

Somali coast after increased pleas for help from Siad.³⁹¹ A clear deviation from his earlier policy of regionalism.

³⁹¹ State Department Announcement, August 22, 1980, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol 80, No 2043, October 1980, Library of Congress.

Chapter 8: conclusion

This thesis has analysed the internal debate within the Carter administration on the Ogaden War, in order to answer the main research question: how did the internal differences within the Carter administration, during the debate concerning the United States' involvement in the Ogaden War, shape Jimmy Carter's foreign policy?

Firstly, the Ogaden War itself was discussed. How long it lasted and what the most important events were of the war. But more importantly, this question dealt with the significance of the war, its consequences for US and Soviet relations, and the future course of Carter's policy choices. The second question identified who the main players in Carter's administration were and what their views on foreign policy were in relation to the Horn of Africa. The third sub-question described the factors (personal, organisational and ideological) that were the causes for the rivalry between the two most important players, Brzezinski and Vance. Seeing as the minor players would follow or fall somewhere between their foreign policy choices, this was of importance. After this, Carter's own ideas on overarching foreign policy were discussed, such as regionalism and the promotion of human rights. Lastly, the course of the debate, in three phases, was described in chapter seven.

The entire approach of this thesis was mostly done with Allison's approach to foreign policy making, but also included some influences from Herman and Preston. According to Allison, individuals are the most important factors in determining what policy choice a government will make. But at the same time the literature shows that Presidents also make decisions based on their personality, leadership style and preferences.

Furthermore, decision-makers tend to pay a lot of attention to the ramifications of their choices, and are therefore cautious when taking in the suggestions of their advisors (the players). External factors such as Congress, media, public debate, and other countries also play an important role according to Allison. While other factors have thus also been taken into account, the biggest contributor is Allison with his bureaucratic politics model. It puts the focus of this thesis firmly on the individual actors and their ideas, policy choices and ultimately their influence on Carter in combination with other factors that were mentioned previously.

How did the internal differences within the Carter administration, during the debate concerning the United States' involvement in the Ogaden War, shape Jimmy Carter's foreign policy? While it is true that Vance was more successful in influencing Carter early on and Brzezinski was more influential in the period after the Ogaden War, one has to look beyond

this two dimensional analysis of the Ogaden and how Carter made his policy choices. The first chapter explained how most of the literature takes the aforementioned approach to this topic. But Carter listened to more players than just Vance and Brzezinski. He did not choose any one of these two, but tried to incorporate both of their views (dove versus hawk and regionalism versus globalism).³⁹²

As a consequence he mostly followed Vance's approach of finding a diplomatic solution to the Ogaden War and to not get the US involved to directly in order to not risk the SALT accords. External factors such as Congress and the media also played a role in pressuring Carter to not repeat a disaster like the Vietnam War. While Mondale and Henze could be placed in Vance's camp in the sense that they did not want to confront the Soviets directly, Mondale was an exception in that he suggested that Carter should supply Somalia with weapons directly. This was something Carter did not do as it would damage US reputation so long as Somalia was the aggressor in the war.

Brzezinski, Brown and Turner achieved more support for their policy preferences of directly supplying Somalia and constructing US bases in the region to expand US influence and diminish the presence of the Soviets after the Somali army was defeated. While Brzezinski was the most vocal of these three in wanting to deploy US ships to the area (something that Carter did not want to do just yet, he instead opted to send them to the Indian Ocean) the other two players got what they wanted. As soon as it became clear that the Soviet-backed Ethiopian troops could invade Somalia, Ethiopia expelled all US personnel. Siad had broken with the Soviets, and now Carter started to listen closer to Brzezinski and the other 'hawks'. He began to openly criticize the Soviets for their meddling in the Horn and approved the construction of US military bases on the Somali coast. After the Ogaden War had ended, Brzezinski's influence would increase even more after the Tehran Hostage Crisis and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan forced Vance's resignation. While the decline of Détente was clearly well underway by the end of 1979, this process started with the Ogaden War.

As has been touched on before, it has been the aim of this thesis to add to the existing literature on the Ogaden War. While most authors have only looked at Brzezinski and Vance when trying to understand Carter's decision making process, this research has looked further and included the minor players in his administration.³⁹³ From this it has become clear that Brzezinski was

³⁹² Mitchell, 'The Cold War and Jimmy Carter', 69.

³⁹³ See chapters 1.4 and 2 for more details on the gaps in the existing literature and the state of the historiography on Carter's administration.

not the only hardliner as he had claimed later on.³⁹⁴ Players like Brown and Turner also pushed Carter towards possibilities for covert operations and the supply of weapons to Somalia. It was external factors that Carter had to take into account that prevented him from letting this faction gain the upper hand early on in the administration over Vance and Mondale (and Henze in some sense). Thus, it is evident that the internal policy debate went much further than just Vance versus Brzezinski.

There have been limitations in the scope and depth of analysis of this thesis. Numerous sources (as has been noted throughout this thesis) have still not been completely disclosed to the public by the US government. As a consequence some sources that detail discussions and meetings of the key players are only partially readable. This hampers the understanding of the policy debate on the Ogaden War. Perhaps in the near future more primary sources will be made available so an even better understanding of the debate can be reached. Furthermore not all of the primary sources have been taken into account. Further research could be undertaken with the help of the sources that are available in the Carter library for example.

Despite these limitations, this thesis has made a clear addition to the historiography of the Carter administration. While it was clear that Carter had transformed into a ‘traditional cold warrior’ by the end of his presidential term and had learned how to grab the Soviets by the Horn. The complexity of the internal debate that led to this transformation was not as clear as it had been in reality. Furthermore, the beginning of this transformation also began earlier, namely during the short lived and (seemingly) insignificant border war between Ethiopia and Somalia between 1977 and 1978. While the Détente was clearly over by the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the beginning of the end of the Détente started in the Horn of Africa. The demise of the Détente had indeed been buried in the sands of the Ogaden.

³⁹⁴ Vance, *Hard Choices*, 87; Glad, *An Outsider in the White House*, 79.

Appendix I

Timeline of the Ogaden War³⁹⁵

Year	Military Activity	Somali-Ogadeni Relations	Political Events
1975		Founding of WSLF under Siad's protection.	Chaos and purges in Ethiopia.
1976 December	Increasing guerrilla activity in Ogaden.		Continued political chaos and purges in Ethiopia. First Soviet-Ethiopian arms deal.
1977 February-April	First Soviet-sponsored arms deliveries; PDRY (South Yemen) equipment transferred in ships.	SNA general staff establishes separate command to maintain liaison with WSLF insurgents.	Mengistu in Moscow, signs second arms deal with Soviets.
April	US advisors withdrawn from Ethiopia.		
May	First direct Soviet arms deliveries to Ethiopia.		
June	WSLF destroys railroad bridges in		

³⁹⁵ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The Ogaden Situation, (Central Intelligence Agency, 1980), 17-19. Accessed 21 October 2018. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP97S00289R000100190006-3.pdf>.

	northern Ogaden.		
July	WSLF-mounted offensive repelled, regular Somali units invade Ogaden.	SNA liaison unit disappears as separate entity. Guerrillas are brought under direct Somali army command.	Siad visits Saudi Arabia in early July.
August	Somalia occupies most of the Ogaden.		Siad visits Moscow 29-31 August.
September	Jijiga falls on the 13th.		
November	Soviet airlift to Ethiopia begins on the 28th.		Siad abrogates Somali-Soviet Friendship Treaty on 13th. Two days later Soviet military delegation arrives in Addis Ababa.
Dec '77- Jan 1978	Arrival of Cuban combat units, counteroffensive begins.		
1978	Counteroffensive continues.		
February			
March	Somali regulars withdrawn from Ogaden.	Somali regulars “volunteer into WSLF. WSLF units directly subordinate to SNA.	Abortive coup in Somalia; plotters flee and eventually become part of Ethiopian-backed SSF.
April			
May	Revival of guerrilla activity in the Ogaden.	WLF adopts structure of conventional army. Use of specific Somali words	Mengistu warns against further Somali activity in the Ogaden.

June	Addis Ababa-Djibouti rail line reopens, but, on the 18th, WSLF guerrillas destroy a bridge, closing it again for two to three weeks.	suggests close parallel to contemporary SNA restructuring effort inside Somalia.	
August onwards	Heavy fighting in Ogaden.	WSLF guerrillas come under direct SNA administration.	Tribal splits, anti-Siad sentiment in WSLF.
Nov - Dec			
Dec '78 - Jan 1979	Ethiopian air raids in northern Somalia.	Siad reduces aid to guerrillas, apparently to gain military assistance from the U.S.	SSF founded in Addis Ababa.
1979			
February		Guerrilla command structure shifted from Somali ministry of Defense to the WSLF	Civilian and military discontent in Somalia over reduction of support for guerrillas.
March	WSLF activity drops off as Siad reduces support. Ethiopians conduct sweeps in the southern Ogaden.	Regular Somali soldiers operating with guerrillas given choice of returning to Somalia or resigning.	
April-May	Heavier military activity in the Ogaden.		
May		Somali Government restores previous levels of logistic support.	

July	Somalia sends para-military police into Ogaden to help guerrillas.		
September	Continued Ethiopian sweeps have little effect.		Kosygin (Russian diplomat) in Addis Ababa. Apparent disagreements with Mengistu over the level of Soviet aid.
October		WSLF guerrilla commands adopt exact designators of their counterpart SNA commands. WSLF thereby effectively becomes auxiliary army to SNA.	
November	Ethiopian air raids on WSLF supply bases in the Ogaden. First strikes into Somalia in late November.	Regular Somali units in the Ogaden. May have been there as early as July.	
Dec 1979 - March 1980	Air raids continue; they last for two to three days and come at intervals of up to two to three weeks because of Ethiopian resupply problems. Heavy but intermittent ground combat continues in the Ogaden.	SNA appears to implement broad and well-coordinated program of intervention in Ogaden.	
1980 March	WSLF and Somalia regulars attempt to stop Ethiopian supply convoys.		

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