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Battling the Irony: Israel's Decision-Making in the First Gulf War

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Israel's decision-making during the First Gulf War has been time and again brought to scholarly debates, necessarily because of the unconventional choice made by the state going against its tradition. The decisions were shaped by several levels of the government and organs of the state. An assay to understand the decision-making process in Israel in 1991 using Graham Allison's three decision-making models resulted in few carefully considered research findings. The bureaucratic politics model perhaps captures and explains the complex behaviour of Israel during the War comparatively better than the rational actor and organisational models.

Keywords: Decision-making, Graham T. Allison, Israel, First Gulf War, Iraq, Middle East

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The Geopolitics of the Middle East has been of perennial interest to the great powers in the world. The events and eventualities have shaped global politics and have become landmarks for the practitioners of geopolitics and international relations. One such event from the end of the twentieth century was the First Gulf War. Thirty-five states joined together to take down one belligerent, Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Israel was one state that chose to stay out of the War, though being constantly attacked by Iraq. What made Israel a state that believes in pre-emptive strikes and an active participant in many conflicts to take such a decision has been a curious question several scholars have tried analysing in the past. The complexity of arriving at any such decision, however elite it is, demands explanations in the current scenario to understand contemporary political decision-making. This perhaps can be understood through decision-making theory to set the premises and then further move into three prominent factors that affect the decision-making process of a state: the rational actor model, the bureaucratic process model and the organisational model, as explained in the seminal work of Graham. T. Allison through decision-making models.

Decision-making theory is a theory of how rational individuals should behave under risk and uncertainty. It uses a set of axioms about how rational individuals behave, which has been widely challenged on empirical and theoretical grounds. However, every state and its decision-makers face a complex scenario of arriving at decisions while running day-to-day administration. While arriving at decisions on a day-to-day issue is entirely different from a crisis scenario. The decision to arrive at

a crisis demands a greater understanding of the strengths and vulnerabilities of the state; it should be rooted in the national interest and be politically viable to sustain power to rule the state. Decision-making being an authoritative allocation of resources, it must be just, equitable, and a conscious allocation to fulfil predetermined values of the state and its welfare. The state is expected to exercise its decision-making abilities by presenting a cost-benefit analysis to attain expected goals. It is also imperative that the decision taken must invariably deliver the promised good. If it fails to deliver, it would be a decision disaster or even may be termed as a missed opportunity forever. The state is expected to make plans to utilise the available resources, not stretch itself beyond its capacity. As observed in international relations, the independence a state enjoys in decision-making is still unclear; many states must sacrifice their interests through alliances and further understanding. Here, decision-making becomes a complex exercise and understanding decision-making becomes a challenge. There are also push and pull factors that determine the decision and the outcomes.

Any nation-state's policy formulation is a careful outcome of its decision- making. A decision is made considering the "risks and uncertainties" the state can encounter in the future. Also, these decisions are made considering several factors native to the state, such as political culture, geopolitical environment, economic and military might, and demography. Notably, some structural determinants also influence the decision taken by the state. Just as any other sovereign nation-state, Israel also has unique, influential factors that give way to particular decisions. Distinctive geopolitical surroundings, historical experiences, religion, size of the state and population have majorly affected the state's policy decisions. Apart from these factors, several other aspects related to leadership and government have strongly influenced the state's decision-making process at each juncture. This can be seen during the wars that Israel was involved in as well as during peacetime and other watershed moments in its history.

Military deterrence has been a central pillar in Israel's strategy, and being a state that was only 20 years old then, it opted for pre-emption to deter attacks from a coalition of powerful Arab states in 1967. The preventive strike on Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981 and the invasion of Lebanon are other classic examples. Notwithstanding, an anomaly in Israel's threat-based decision- making is seen during the first Gulf War. Even though the threat was looming at its periphery, Israel did not formally become a party to the War. What stopped the state that usually believes in pre-emptive and preventive measures that involve offensive actions? Was it a decision taken only due to internal reasons, or did external forces play any role to pressurise Israel to stay away from the War? These questions are fundamental to analyse using Graham Allison's models to understand the decision-making process in Israel in the early 1990s. It is compelling to look into whether Israel benefited from such a decision and whether it received any reward so captivating that it was even ready to discount its national security interests and objectives that it held on till then. Through this analysis, it can also be incurred whether Graham Allison' three models fit in Israel's case during the first Gulf War or if there is any limitation in proving the extent of the models through this case in point. Therefore, this research has modestly tried to understand Graham T. Allison's three models of Decision- Making. Further, it has assessed Israel's security strategy and its decisions to thwart its threats until the first Gulf War. Also, Israel's decision- making during the first Gulf War has been analysed

using the three decision-making models. Finally, a critical analysis of whether the models could explain the determinants of Israel's decision-making during the War has also been attempted.

This paper has used descriptive and analytical research methods to understand the First Gulf War and Israel's decision-making. The descriptive component is used to find the role of individuals, the situation at that time relating to the political condition of Israel and the state of affairs influencing Israel's decision-making. The analytical component is used to critically evaluate the decision through the information gathered by interpreting the causal relations. It is an ex post facto study or after-the- fact research used to evaluate an occurrence in which the attempt has been to discover pre-existing causal conditions and their interaction to find out what has been regarded as one-of-a- kind events in the history of Israel. The paper has used historical research techniques to aid descriptive and analytical research methods to systematically recapture the complex nuances of decision-making in Israel which has influenced subsequent decisions and shaped the present behaviour of Israel in the contemporary context. The triangulation method has been used to cross- verify the facts and the interpretations available, as well as test Allison's three models of Decision Making.

Decision-Making Theory in International Relations

Decision-making forms the fundamental process any state embarks on formulating a policy and implementing the policy during times of peace as well as crises. Decision-making theory in International Relations attempts to understand decision making at various levels- state, and international – and its implications for policy pronunciations. In general, the theory considers states as rational actors and their choices to be naturally rational. The idea of this theory is closely associated with game theory and can even be said to be a subset of game theory. Snyder, Bruck& Sapin, (1962) throw light on the decision-making phenomenon of states through a theoretical perspective. According to the authors, decision-making is a very determining feature in a complex and dynamic society, and several actors influence states' decisions. So, in the interest of understanding society or the dynamics of states, it is essential to analyse the decision-making process, the factors involved, the outcomes and the impact it has on society.

Graham T. Allison's Models of Decision-making

In 1969, Graham T. Allison designed a new lens through which he explained his theorisation of decision-making, taking the case of the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. In his article, *Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1969), he propounded three models, using which the process of decision-making of a state can be analysed. This was further elaborated in his subsequent work, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (1971). The three models are the Rational Actor Model, the Organisational Model, the Bureaucratic Process or the Governmental Politics Model. Each model, with its tenets and features, enables an understanding of the various factors involved in a state's decision-making during a particular event or crisis. These models examine the 'how and why' aspect of decision-making, trying to produce a 'poliheuristic approach' to this theory. This will help analyse a state's foreign policy and the underlying rationale. According to the theory, no one model can explain a state's behaviour at a time. The combined tenets of all three models can explain the

actions comprehensively. This section will not delve into explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis through the theory but will lay down the cardinal features of these three models as drawn by Allison. These models in subsequent sections will be used to explain the decisions taken by Israel during the First Gulf War. A basic assumption while looking into each of these models, in Allison's words, 'analysts think about problems of foreign and military policy in terms of largely implicit conceptual models that have significant consequences for the content of their thought.' (Allison, 1971) While analysing, the most determining and relevant factors are to be considered rather than every possibility.

The first model, also known as the Classical Model, centres around Realist thinking. The model assumes the government to be the unitary actor in the decisionmaking process. This model is laid on the lines of Rational Choice theory. A rational state will make the most pragmatic of the choices that will largely favour it and enable it to achieve its national interest. This model is supposed to be the best suited for times of crisis. During crises, there is usually not enough time to make decisions as there is only little or vague information about the challenge posed by the perceived or imminent threat. Nonetheless, it encourages the state to take cognition of the situation's intensity and decide the pros and cons accordingly. This will allow the rational actor to choose the option that maximises its utility and benefits it the most. This mechanism of decision- making inside the government will be based on the rational choice made by considering and prioritising the goals, evaluating alternative policy options, and probing into the possible risks and uncertainties that might arise as a consequence of the decision-making. The final choice is made after addressing all these concerns rationally. Thus, the state is considered to be completely informed and aware of its choices to optimise its actions. This model broadly explores the aims and objectives of the government. Through that, the model tries to deduce how the government makes a particular decision. It is presumed that whatever decision the state has made is the most rational thing that should be pursued in a given circumstance. The assumption- 'important decisions are results of important causes' is held, and the 'governmental choice' becomes the unit of analysis (Allison, 1971). However, this model takes a very narrow and simplistic view of the decision-making process, which is much more complex in reality. Many other actors, internal and external, individuals and organisations, play a role in shaping the decision being taken. This lacuna is addressed in the following two models, which will dissect the black box that is the state and explore the other pillars of the state decision making apparatus.

Organisational Model

The second model recognises various government-authorised organisations within the state in making an opinion about the course of foreign policy or a state action during an event of national importance. Allison denotes these governmental institutions as a 'conglomerate of semi-feudal and loosely allied organisations' (Allison, 1969, p. 698). The natural assumption is that the goals and objectives of the state are well laid out. These organisations follow their Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to collect information, probe into the available options and select the one they find favourable to implement the policy strategies. Every organisation has values, vision, mission and mandates that they believe in and abide by.

Consequently, their decisions are subjected to be influenced by such factors that are native to the organisations. Variables like budget, military strength, and impact on commerce and trade, to mention a few, affect the organisation's pursuit to shape the state's decision. The decisions may not necessarily be rational or optimise the interests of the states. It is rather fulfilling or satisfying the beliefs that these organisations stand for. Allison explains the behaviour of these organisations at a point 't' as 't-1', which means that the organisation's current reasons for a decision can be understood through its decision-making the last time because of the constant inertia in their day-to-day paraphernalia. These agencies' behaviour patterns are predictable as they are established and have a rigid program structure and SOP. This naturally tends to be limited. The decisions made are an output of these organisational structures.

A better approach to this framework is to consider the decisions as mere by-products of the organisational imperatives. These organisations generally include the armed forces of the state, the intelligence agencies, and the treasury. The unit of analysis under consideration is 'organisational output' (Allison, 1971). This model, unlike the first, also includes domestic institutional mechanisms as an influential factor in the decision-making process. The criticism is that the very routine of these organisations can sometimes render them not responsive to a situation the way it demands. The fixed notions of approaching various problems will not serve the state's best interests.

Bureaucratic Process Model

The third and the last of the models is also known as the Governmental Politics model. This model deals with a policy resulting from a 'bargaining game' between various contenders in the government bureaucracy. The participants are seen as political players with different portfolios, positions, perceptions, vested interests, and personal ambitions that might serve their organisations first and then the state. Sometimes, the nexus of 'amity and enmity' surfaced during the process. All the participants in the negotiation enjoy shared power over the decision-making process. The final word on the choice to be made is usually awarded to the player at the top of the hierarchy or who enjoys the greatest support. From there, the baton is eventually passed down the ladder. This principle follows, what is called, Mile's Law 'Where you stand depends on where you sit' (Miles, 1978, p. 399).

An official's position in the organisation and the power attached to the position depending on how much the person can influence the decisions. Here again, the decision being made is a satisfying outcome of the bargaining rather than what is beneficial for the state. The negotiation process will appreciate the individual's ambitions more than what could be the rational choice for the state. An analysis is done using variables such as the players involved, the relative power position and expertise of the players and the game played by these players. The model's concluding assumption is that the decision taken by the state is the result of these negotiations between individuals who stand for different arguments. The unit of analysis is 'Political resultant' (Allison, 1971). This model provides insights into the role of domestic politics in foreign policy drafting and explains why influential individuals sometimes act against the interest of the state. It also clarifies why sometimes irrational policies are formulated by states which usually portray prudent and rational behaviour. Nevertheless, this model has been put under scrutiny for bringing out a complicated

explanation, emphasising too much on individual deeds which are not always obvious and have a high probability of being misinterpreted. This makes applying this model difficult in cases where the information about the state's bureaucracy is limited or nil.

All three models are usually involved in any foreign policymaking to varying degrees. While model one gives a simplistic idea of the rational choice considered by the state in decision-making, the other two models provide additional detail into the intricacies of the decision-making apparatus. The following table represents the central aspects of the three models.

TABLE 1: Graham Allison's Three Models of Decision Making

	Determinant	*Basis*	*Manifestation*
Model 1	Rationale	Organisation	Choice
Model 2	Routine	Divisional	Output
Model 3	Bargaining	Individual	Outcome

Theories of International Relations help us understand the world and the events happening through various lenses. Here, the case of Israel's decision- making during the First Gulf War is analysed by using the decision-making theory in International Relations, narrowing it down to Graham T. Allison's three models that have been discussed above.

Decision-making in Israel before the First Gulf War

Israel has historically perceived challenges to national security because of wars with the neighbouring states, regional conflicts, terrorism, and sub- conventional or low-level attacks. Geographical and manpower constraints forced Israel to consider protecting its national security as a primordial prerequisite. This was reflected in its security strategy, which was executed in its course of action every time it encountered a situation that demanded prudent decision-making. With its small size and limited manpower, Israel had an inherent disadvantage against its regional rivals. This is compounded by its limited economic strength, majorly living out of foreign aid from the US. All these factors pressurised Israel to adopt a foreign policy and military strategy that centred around national security objectives and are based on technological development, offensive action and pre-emptive strikes or even massive retaliation, self-reliance, and everything that gives the state the required strategic depth (Ben-Horin & Posen, 1981). While history has shown that the 'security state' has always been attentive to its regional affairs and massively deterred any threat to its security, moving away from its doctrinal tradition during the first Gulf war contradicts the common wisdom. Trying to address the nature and dynamics of the decision-making process during the War through Allison's model can open a new avenue through which one can understand the facets of Israeli decision-making and appreciate the extent to which the decision-making models can be applied.

Israel's Decision-making During the First Gulf War

Following the eight-year War with Iran, Saddam Hussein's big ambitions led to

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The Iraqi dictator accused its Arab neighbour, apart from other members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), of overproducing oil, resulting in a drop in oil prices. Saddam received overwhelming support from the Palestinian territories and Jordan after he linked Israel's withdrawal from the occupied lands as one of the primordial conditions to Iraq's disengagement from Kuwait (Laub, 1990; Mattar, 1994, p. 35). Saddam Hussein's Iraq consistently showed its opposition to Israel being the occupier of the land of Palestine. His official pronunciations, private conversations, and dialogues with leaders of other states in Israel contained a hostile tone. Saddam's ambitions in the region and Israel being a hindrance to it was partly the reason for his animosity towards the Jewish state (Brands, 2011, pp. 138-139). He assured the US and Israel that if either of them even attempted to strike Iraq, he would massively hit back at Israel.

In April 1990, Saddam Hussein uttered a threatening statement: "'I swear to God we will let our fire eat half of Israel if it tries to wage anything against Iraq"' (Williams, 1990). There were also reports of Saddam giving his generals the liberty to retaliate against Israel and ordering the air force to strike Israel if it embarked on a raid against any of the Arab states (Jewish Virtual Library, 2021). This threat continued even after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. In a case where Saddam succeeded in the first Gulf war, making Iraq a regional power, it could have posed a direct threat to Israel's national security. In 1991 when the Gulf War was going on, 39 Scud missiles were launched by the Iraqis against the civilians in Israel ("Saddam gave orders", 2014). However, Israel refrained from attacking back, heeding the US's pressure as the latter asked Israel not to get involved in the War. Was such a decision from the Israeli side taken only as the result of external pressure, or were other domestic factors and rationales supporting this unwonted decision? An analysis using the three models of decision-making could help clarify this.

Model I: Rational Actor Model

Although repeatedly at the receiving end of Iraq's threats, Israel did not become a part of the War. It had its own goals and objectives apart from the incessant pressure from the US to keep Israel at bay. Israel could not have found a better opportunity to mobilise opinions against Iraq during the invasion of Kuwait because the attention of the world community then had turned towards Iraq, including that of the other Arab states (Bard, 2002). This will also persuade the US to stop emphasising the Israel-Palestine peace process and support Israel's agenda as a strategic partner in the Middle East.[1] To achieve these ends, Israel had to pay heed to America so that the coalition of states that the Americans had mobilised to fight against Iraq did not get disturbed. This mainly concerns the then-Saudi King's assertion that Israel was not welcome to be part of the coalition but could do as much to defend itself (Arens, 2018).

Moreover, the invasion did not affect the pulse of Israel much as Kuwait was not geographically proximate to Israel. When the Scud missiles were launched from Iraq, Israel was almost close to calibrating a massive retaliation against Saddam's army. The missiles killed two and injured 230 others (Karsenty, 1991). Most of the missiles were targeted at Tel Aviv, with a population density of 7000 people per sq.

1 According to a Gallup Poll, 64 per cent of Americans had opinions favourable to Israel in January 1991 while only eight per cent favoured the Arab states.

km. The missile strikes eventually led many residents in the capital city to evacuate as their properties were damaged (Lewis, Fetter & Gronlund, 1993). However, the emotive reaction to hit back was controlled eventually. David Welch records:

> Israeli leaders experienced a perfectly normal phenomenological response to every strike: first shock, then anger, followed by an intense desire for retribution that would gradually subside for hours to permit reflection and calm deliberation (Welch, 1992, p. 342).

The choice of restraining was made because it was a rational option as Saddam intended to pull Israel into the War and change its nature from an 'Arab-Arab' to an 'Arab-Israeli' war. While Israel stuck to complete restraint, the government was sure that it would not settle for being attacked repeatedly. This was noted in the official statement of Foreign Minister David Levy, who proclaimed that Israel has been monitoring the activities in its region and has also been keeping an eye on Syria's missile imports from North Korea and that Israel will not be silent for long (Welch, 1992, p. 343). Like any rational actor, the government of Israel was also prepared to reassess its policy of restraint when the US tried to settle the Gulf crisis diplomatically by inviting Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to the tables. A statement by Foreign Minister Levy asserted that Israel would not hesitate to return to its offensive posture and resort to pre-emption if its national security is endangered. By being partially resistant to US pressure and being self-reliant when needed, the Israeli state tried maximising its benefits whenever it needed to (Shlaim, 1994).

Model II: Organisational Model

The invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi troops in 1990 was seen as a failure of the Israel intelligence machinery (Shlaim, 1994). Though pieces of information were collected regarding the mobilisation of Iraq's army along its border, the lax arrangements to act backfired on Israel. Some reasons can be cited for this lapse in intelligence collection. Israel did not share borders with Iraq, it did not operate any satellite systems then, and very importantly, Saddam's Iraq was a closed society. The intelligence organisations seemed to have stuck to their mandates and, due to organisational inertia, did not align their data collection process to look at the broader picture. Apart from that, the intelligence agencies of Israel were immersed in their routine job of monitoring affairs related to Syria. The *intifada* also consumed much of their attention.

The Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Shamir, represented the Likud Party. The Likud Party then was known to be a rejectionist party regarding peace talks with the Arabs. The Party had already lost the Labour Party's coalition support in 1990 because of its nationalistic ideology that resisted any negotiation with the Arab world. Shamir himself was a hard-liner (Gambrell, 2016). Such was the right wing in Israel since 1948. Interestingly, a right-wing government decided to be a silent spectator of the War after declaring it a threat to Israel's national security and only imposed a state of emergency. The model's proposition of 'rigidity and inertia' in the ideas or mandates of an organisation (in this case, the party ideology) leading to decisions of a similar kind cannot explain why the government decided to do what it did. Instead, the US insistence on staying clear was a major reason for Israel to keep a low profile.

The Israeli Defence Forces are known for their gravitas and extreme military shrewdness. An institution that got used to being led by highly enthusiastic political

leadership was denied active guidance from Prime Minister Shamir. The lack of enthusiasm was seen in many instances, including when the IDF failed to protect the civilians hurt by the Iraqi Scud missiles. This lackadaisical gesture from the IDF pertains to the structural constraints that continuously barred it from utilising its prowess to retaliate against Iraq. Even after the IDF had prepared an action plan and the army chief tried persuading the Defence Ministry, the plan could not see the light of day (Melman, 2021). According to the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry, the IDF nevertheless played an active role in defending the civilians, coordinated between agencies, and prepared the standing army stationed in Central Israel and Haifa (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

During the onset of the War, the representatives of the Israeli Defence Forces were asked by the Prime Minister for their opinion on whether Israel should participate in the War. Both the Chief of Staff, General Dan Shomron and Chief of Staff Designate, Ehud Barak, preferred Israeli action in Iraq, although the former preferred coordinating with the US while launching such attacks. However, the Military Intelligence Director, General Amnon Shahak and the Director-General of the Defence Ministry, General David Ivry, were against Israel attacking Iraq lest suffering heavy loss or compromising ties with the US (Sofrin, 2017, p. 8). This series of events did not conform to the IDF's tradition, which is generally combat-ready and does not take chances in the event of imminent threat, as seen in the wars of 1967 and 1973.

Model III: Bureaucratic Process Model

Israel's intelligence community shared information on Iraq's military modernisation and development of non-conventional weapons with the political class in the mid-1990. The cabinet ministers categorically ignored this signal. According to Shlaim (1994), one of the ministers dismissed the warnings given by General David Ivri, the Defence Ministry's Director-General. The decisions of these ministers who were part of the cabinet were final irrespective of the intelligence gathered by different intelligence agencies. Some Israeli Military Generals did discreetly express to the Americans that the Israeli military would not strike back in response to limited attacks from Iraq during the war period. Prominent political figures like Yitzhak Rabin of the Labour Party remarked that Israel should not become a part of the War. This attracted severe criticism from the ruling Likud Party. Major General Aharon Yariv also seconded Rabin's voice against Israel's involvement in the War (Keinon, 2021). While other cabinet members such as Yuval Ne'eman, Ariel Sharon and Raphael Eitan believed that the Israeli Defence Forces could handle the Scud Missiles better than the Americans and actively promoted the idea of Israel entering the War. Sharon's support had more profound implications. The Likud Party then believed that Jordan was part of Palestine, and if Palestinians were provoked to claim Jordan as their land, it would be in the best interests of Israel. So, by waging war on Iraq, he found a possibility to disturb the regime in Jordan and make it susceptible to external interventions (Shlaim, 1994).

The government of Israel did not come up with a formal policy directing it not to respond to attacks from Iraq. The decision to stay away from striking back was reviewed after every attack from Iraq (Buchan, 1991). The power to decide was in the hands of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir alone. A team consisting of Shamir, Defence Minister Moshe Arens and Foreign Minister David Levy managed and controlled all crucial matters and negotiations regarding Israel's stand in the Gulf War (Welch,

1992, p. 340). Choices were made over issues like distributing gas masks to civilians to guard them against any chemical attack by the Iraqis. While Levy supported the decision to distribute the masks as public demand was high, Moshe Arens and his team thought otherwise. Such a decision could have two outcomes that might misguide the Iraqi establishment. On the one hand, it might mislead Iraq to perceive Israel as a weak state, fearing Iraq, thus reinforcing its ideas of chemical attacks. On the other, it could create an image of Israel preparing for a pre-emptive strike that could prove counterproductive. Such a response from Arens was natural as he was responsible for the ministry that oversees Israel's defence. However, the popular reasoning, backed by the prime minister and the foreign minister, prevailed, and the state went on with the choice of safeguarding the civilians by distributing the masks (Steinberg, 1993, p. 91).

Critical Analysis of the Validity of the Models

Israeli decision-making during the First Gulf War was a complicated process involving many factors. Though comprehensive, Graham Allison's three models of decision-making could not explain the whole phenomenon as it has left out a few other determinants that affected the decision-making of Israel. The Rational Actor Model posits that states are the primary actors of decision making and are rational in deciding, keeping in mind the broader strategic objectives and utility. The model's limitation is that it cannot wholly explain Israel's decision-making because, the government was not the only factor that made all the decisions. Significant external factors, mainly the US, also played a major part in shaping Israel's course of action. Nevertheless, Israel continued to be a rational actor by prioritising the State's interest, even though it had to succumb to the US' directions at different junctures. Israel did find an opportunity through the War to turn the world's focus on Iraq instead of itself. For the time being, the state partially compromised on its traditional security strategies and gained the strong support of the US, on which it was heavily dependent, economically and politically. At the same time, Israel did not sacrifice its core security interests.

Israel would not have hesitated to retaliate against Iraq had the latter would have escalated the attack through chemical weapons. Israel's decision sustained the coalition of states against Iraq under the US leadership. Tel Aviv's benign role turned all heads towards Baghdad. As a rational state, Israel chose the midcourse and maximised its utility in a limited option scenario. The Organisational model is unable to explain the decision-making process to the full extent in this context. In Israel's case, the allegiance to a particular political ideology did not compel the Likud Party to maintain its hard-line stand against the Arab states irrespective of the incoming threats. Moreover, the scenario could have been entirely different if the Israeli intelligence agencies had grasped the real reason behind the mobilisation of Iraqi troops along the Kuwait-Iraq border. Despite having one of the foremost intelligence communities in the world, the inertia in their daily agenda had left no space for them to think of such inadvertent consequences. It was an apparent 'output' of the organisational inertia. Prompt action on such real-time intelligence could have even stopped the invasion of Kuwait by deterring Saddam's forces with the help of other states. Eventually, however, such an event also turned out to benefit Israel's ambitions and interests as the attention turned towards Iraq as an aggressive power.

The Bureaucratic Model could effectively explain the decision-making process in

Israel during the crisis. As assessed earlier, hierarchy in the bureaucracy and power positions did matter in the Israeli cabinet. The final word was always with Prime Minister Shamir, who at times overrode the suggestions of his ministers and generals of the IDF. The inputs on Iraq's weapon program from the intelligence community were also ignored several times by the political. The officials involved in decision-making were influenced by their perceptions and ambitions associated with their power and position in the government. The decision resulted from deliberation, negotiation and bargaining as outlined in the bureaucratic model. A significant limitation of these models is that they only consider the domestic actors in a state's decision-making and do not discuss the external actors in the play. In this case, the US played a massive role in guiding Israel's decision-making. The US had its interests that led it to impose certain restrictions on Israel. Because of the condition put forward by the Saudi King, it had no choice but to ask Israel to stay out of the coalition. Its more immense interest was to keep the coalition strong enough to deter the growing threat from Iraq. At some point, its stubbornness was seen so clearly when President George H. W. Bush asserted that he would not even hesitate to brand Israel to have been a threat to the safety of the US troops in the Gulf region if Israel tried in any way to endanger the unity of the coalition of states set to fight Iraq (Osterlund, 1991).

The US' intentions were made clear when it condemned Israel at the United Nations in October 1990 for killing about 20 Muslim protestors who were rallying outside the Temple Mount (Chartrand, 1990). The US was resolute in protecting the coalition and was ready to put any pressure on Israel to abide by it. This behaviour can be attributed to the asymmetry in the power relations and Israel's heavy dependence on the US economically and politically. Israel also could not stay without considering it because it was aware that the actions of the US would eventually benefit Israel's interests in the region. Therefore, Israel compromised on its long-standing strategic doctrine of offensive posture and pre-emption to abide by the US' direction (Arens, 2018). Lobby and pressure groups play a significant role in the decision-making of many states. This is very prominent in the case of the US. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), as one of the most vital links between the US and Israel, as well as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations, played a vital role in relaying messages from Washington DC to Tel Aviv (Judis, 1991; Barron, 1991, p. 67). By not considering these groups, the models reflect a potential limitation to Allison's theory in general as it does not describe the role of these crucial influencers in decision-making.

Conclusion

Traditionally, Israel's decisions in foreign policy have been taken by a few elites who perceived the same events differently. This state of affairs has been evident in the writings of several scholars, and precisely describes why the rational actor model cannot sufficiently explain the decision-making in Israel. States formulate policies that are compounded ramifications of the decisions made at each level of the government and by influential external factors. Israel has conventionally been a state that lays extra attention to its national security, attributed to its unique geopolitical dispositions. Hostile regional conditions have made it imperative for Israel to practise a security strategy that focuses on pre-emption, offensive actions, massive retaliation, and self-reliance. In 1991, Israel discounted its traditional

security strategy for the first time and did not participate in the War. Such a reaction from Israel is an outcome of a series of choices it had made during the War. After analysing Israel's decision-making using Allison's models, the research advances some considerations.

Every decision made by the state is rational, not in an absolute manner as expected in Allison's model, but using available options without a compulsion that it would fetch the maximum utility. The decisions are also made under pressure with certain options perceived by the decision-makers, which the rational choice model of Allison could not sufficiently explain. The organisational model explains Israel's decision in 1991 as yet another outcome of a standard operating procedure, typically exhibiting the pattern- what they did today is what they did yesterday. It proves that the organisational model is weak in explaining crisis-time decision-making but is mainly suitable for explaining peacetime decision-making. The bureaucratic politics model perhaps captures and explains Israel's behaviour better than Allison's other two models. The bureaucratic politics model largely explains the decisions arrived at as political resultants or bargaining of individual leaders in various positions within a government. The bureaucratic politics model explains decisions as a competitive game trait where several actors have multiple policy preferences, each of which can influence the decision based on their position and role within the bureaucracy and government. They struggle, compete, and bargain to arrive at a sound decision for that time in the conduct of foreign policy.

While analysing the decision-making process that Israel went through, it is observed that there was a basket of influencers involved, a few that are partially out of the purview of the models, if not completely. The assessment showed that all three models were applicable in this case. There was the use of rationality and the role of organisational values and individuals. All three, in different proportions, shaped Israel's decision-making throughout the War. Nonetheless, the models could not explain the role of the external factors, in this case, the US and pressure groups. Both these factors were very significant in driving Israel towards different decision-making courses. The models could explain Israel's behaviour during the First Gulf War to a large extent, if not the specific decision to restrain itself from entering the War.

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