Do Advisory Systems Matter?
- How compare decision processes across advisory systems?

  o Need to find comparable decision-situations
    ▪ e.g., is March 1999 Serbia bombing decision-situation comparable to March 2003 Iraq invasion decision-situation?
    ▪ Is Uruguay Round trade d-s similar to Doha round d-s?
    ▪ Is human right policy situation toward Saudi Arabia comparable to Burma/Myanmar

  o Must compare processes with known information and predicted outcomes, not unknown information and actual outcomes
    ▪ Good decision process may still yield unwanted outcomes
    ▪ Other actors may behave differently than expected

  o Hard to avoid selection bias
    ▪ Tend to focus on decisions that resulted in unwanted or unanticipated outcome
    ▪ Need to focus on decisions that yielded good outcomes as well
3 Models from *Essence of Decision* (Allison & Zelikow)

- Rational Actor Model
- Organizational Behavior Model (Org. Theory)
- Governmental Politics Model (Bureaucratic Politics)

**Rational Actor Model**

- president and advisors make choice from set that maximizes the chance of realizing their objectives
- “high-quality” decision as the ideal
  - decision that correctly weighs the national interest and choose option that it most likely to achieve national interest at acceptable cost and risk (A. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking*, 1980)
- within model, conflicting judgments over national interests, evaluation of options, and standards of acceptablility
- outside model, constraints in personal, organizational, political, and socio-economic factors