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COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE REALISM IN U.S.  
MILITARY INTERVENTIONS IN GRENADA, PANAMA, AND HAITI

Bachelor's Thesis

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Tartu 2026

**Declaration of authorship**

I have composed this work independently. All viewpoints of other authors used, as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

Word count: 13279

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## **Abstract**

Three U.S. military interventions in Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), and Haiti (1994) span the structural transition from late bipolarity to established unipolarity, providing controlled variation in systemic context against which the security-maximising disposition of offensive realism and the restraint-oriented posture of defensive realism can be assessed comparatively. Existing scholarship has located causal drivers at the unit level or in shifting normative beliefs. No prior study has assessed the two schools against the now-declassified deliberative record of all three. A comparative case study structured by Most Different Systems Design supplies the research design, with cases varying on rival presence, polarity, and unit-level background while sharing the outcome of U.S. military intervention to remove a government. Twenty-two declassified National Security Council files from the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton presidential libraries constitute the empirical basis, coded through an indicator framework operationalising the theoretical expectations of each school. Each case returns the same classification. Grenada, Panama, and Haiti all register as offensive-realist dominant, with the security-maximising orientation persisting through the transition itself. Polarity shapes the form this orientation takes, moving from rival denial at Grenada through sphere enforcement at Panama to self-referential credibility maintenance at Haiti, yet does not determine whether it prevails. Defensive content appears in every case but is consistently subordinated by a mechanism that narrows progressively as external constraints dissolve. Absence of systemic constraint in unconstrained unipolarity generated internal pressure toward intervention.

### ***Acknowledgements***

*I wish to thank the staff of the National Security Archive and George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum for their assistance in navigating the archival holdings. Their provision of finding aids, search operators, and orientational guidance was essential in reducing the initial pool of candidate documents to a methodologically defensible corpus.*

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## **Abbreviations**

APNSA – Assistant to the president for national security affairs

DOD – Department of Defence

FOIA – Freedom of Information Act

INF – Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (Treaty)

MDSO – Most Different Systems Design

MNF – Multinational Force

NAC – National Archives Catalog

NSC – National Security Council

NSDD – National Security Decision Directives

OAS – Organisation of American States

OECS – Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States

PCC – Policy Coordinating Committee

PDF – Panama Defence Forces

PRG – People's Revolutionary Government

SSG – Special Situation Group

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

# 1. Introduction

Great powers have historically intervened in weaker states to consolidate sphere-of-influence control and deny rivals a regional foothold. Military intervention has served as the instrument through which dominant states enforce preferred regional orders, foreclose external access, and signal the limits of their tolerance. Neither the frequency nor the form of such intervention has been uniform. Both have shifted with the structural conditions surrounding them. Unipolar moments generate different intervention incentives than bipolar ones, altering both the costs of peripheral action and the rationale behind it (Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 1979; Monteiro 2014). Question of which logic prevails under different polar configurations extends beyond the cases examined here.

During the Cold War, this dynamic operated within a bipolar frame, imposing costs on peripheral action by tying any intervention to the primary balance with a peer competitor (Waltz 1979). Any resources committed to peripheral operations risked inviting exploitation by the rival at the primary level. The Cold War's dissolution might have been expected to diminish the incentives for hegemonic intervention, removing the peer competitor whose presence had imposed those costs (Waltz 2000). Yet it remains unresolved whether those incentives diminish without a rival or intensify in its absence. The U.S. interventions in Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), and Haiti (1994) span precisely this structural transition and offer a controlled opportunity to examine how shifting polarity reshapes the rationale for intervention.

Existing scholarship on these cases has located causal drivers overwhelmingly at the unit level. No existing study has evaluated the two frameworks comparatively against the classified deliberative record of all three cases. The relevant archival collections postdate the principal secondary studies, and this thesis draws on that subsequently declassified record. Unit-level accounts have traced<sup>1</sup> each intervention to presidential perception and decision-making dynamics (Brands 1987, 620–622; Crandall 2006, 1–2), or to shifting normative beliefs instead of material distributions (Finnemore 2003, 2–3). Where realist accounts have been applied to the broader problem of hegemonic intervention, the offensive and defensive variants have not been disaggregated: existing work either combines systemic and regional variables without testing the two schools against each other (Miller 2003, 34), or applies a neoclassical lens to major wars rather than to the peripheral operations of the kind

examined here (Dueck 2009, 139). Whether the repeated U.S. use of force reflects a power-maximising rationale or a restraint-oriented one, and whether polarity shapes which prevails, therefore remains unestablished<sup>2</sup>.

This gap extends beyond the three cases themselves. The interventions span a structural transition from late bipolarity at Grenada through the collapse of superpower competition at Panama to established unipolarity at Haiti. Each structural setting generates different predictions about the propensity and rationale for intervention. The three cases therefore provide variation in systemic context against which each school's explanatory reach can be assessed. Where both schools generate competing predictions covering different polar settings, the case selection is positioned to determine which school's logic the evidence favours.

Accordingly, the thesis aims to assess to what extent the power-maximising logic of offensive realism or the restraint-oriented posture of defensive realism accounts for the strategic reasoning documented in the classified U.S. policy record on the three interventions. A supplementary aim is to examine whether the prevailing strategic orientation shifts between structurally different settings or remains stable: variation would suggest that polarity shapes which logic predominates, whereas stability would point to a hegemonic calculus that operates independently of the systemic constraints surrounding it. The central research question is the following:

*To what extent does the transition from bipolarity to unipolarity determine which strategic logic prevails in U.S. deliberations on the interventions in Grenada, Panama, and Haiti, whether the security-maximising orientation of offensive realism or the restraint-oriented posture of defensive realism?*

Three sub-questions structure the inquiry:

- 1. Which strategic orientation predominates in the classified documentary record of each case?*
- 2. Through which reasoning patterns does the prevailing orientation manifest in structurally different settings?*
- 3. What structural conditions determine which logic predominates where power-maximising and restraint-oriented logic coexist in the same record?*

These questions require a research design that can isolate structural variation while holding the outcome constant. Declassified National Security Council (NSC) records, drawn from the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton presidential libraries, constitute the empirical basis. NSC documents capture senior-level deliberations in settings designed for candid internal discussion, making them the most direct available record of how structural pressures were processed at the institutional level. The thesis addresses this through a comparative case study of the three interventions, structured by a Most Different Systems Design. This approach selects cases that differ on as many background conditions as possible yet share the same outcome, so that any recurring pattern in the documented record is most plausibly attributable to structural over case-specific factors. The three cases satisfy this logic: they span three separate administrations, distinct polar contexts, and varying unit-level background, yet all resulted in U.S. military intervention to remove a government. The indicator sets derive from the theoretical expectations of each school, allowing the comparative pattern in cases to be assessed on systemic as opposed to case-specific grounds.

The theoretical chapter develops the two frameworks and derives analytical expectations, the methodology sets out the research design and indicator framework, empirical analysis follows through three case chapters, a cross-case synthesis then establishes the comparative findings, the concluding chapter draws them together.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 Security, power, and intervention in a structural realist theory**

The realist tradition in International Relations has long held that the struggle for power is a defining feature of politics among states. In its classical formulation, advanced most systematically by Morgenthau (1985, 4), this struggle was rooted in human nature. The drive to dominate was treated as universal and expressed throughout political life. This causal foundation proved difficult to falsify, since a motive located in fixed human nature cannot account for variation in state behaviour across time and context without recourse to supplementary unit-level variables. Waltz (1979, 65–66) demonstrates precisely this deficiency, showing that unit-level approaches lead to the indefinite proliferation of ad hoc variables and to arguments doomed to inconclusiveness. Classical realism consequently remained wedded to historically grounded, inductively justified insights rather than to the standards of systematic causal explanation. Waltz's structural reformulation (1979, 1–6) responded to this limitation, recasting realist theory as a deductively ordered body of hypotheses grounded in a small number of systemic variables from which testable predictions could be derived.

Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979) marked an analytical break in this tradition that moved focus from human nature and the inner character of states to the structure of the international system (Waltz 1979, 79–80). Structure, in Waltz's derivation, is defined by two elements: the ordering principle and the distribution of capabilities among units (Waltz 1979, 88–89). The ordering principle is anarchy, which generates predictable patterns of behaviour regardless of the internal character of the states that compose the system. Since states under anarchy are functionally alike and must provide for their own security, it is variation in the distribution of power, not in the character of states, that explains the different outcomes observable in interstate relations (Waltz 1979, 97–99). The distribution of capabilities, measured in military, economic, and technological terms, determines the polarity of the system and with it the structural incentives and constraints that states face. Polarity consequently carries the most analytical weight for this thesis, since each of the three cases examined falls at a different point in the transition from bipolarity to unipolarity.

Waltz's structural realism generated a broad consensus on foundational assumptions that remain influential within the realist tradition. Both strands of realist thought examined in this

thesis accept that (I) anarchy forces self-help, (II) survival is the minimum goal all states share through any available means, (III) uncertainty about others' intentions is an inescapable feature of the system and (IV) system shapes the way in which states act on the foreign realm, without strictly determining specific policy choices (Waltz 1979, 91–97, 102–128; Mearsheimer 2001, 30–32). Waltz's structural theory does not claim that the system bypasses states. Rather, structure operates through them, restricting the options that decision-makers perceive as viable and penalising choices that deviate from what the competitive environment rewards (Waltz 1979, 92–93). Where the schools diverge is on what anarchy compels states to do. Snyder (1991, 12) labelled this the distinction between aggressive and defensive realism. Taliaferro (2000/01, 128–129) identifies it as the most significant split within modern structural realism. This divergence, rather than the shared foundational premises, is the analytical question this thesis puts to the empirical record.

## **2.2 The offensive–defensive divergence**

The disagreement between offensive and defensive realism is narrow but consequential. Both schools share the same structural starting point in anarchy, self-help, and survival as the primary goal, yet diverge on what those conditions compel states to do. For defensive realism, security is achievable at a level short of dominance: a state that possesses sufficient capability to deter attack and maintain territorial integrity has no structural reason to expand further, since doing so risks provoking counterbalancing coalitions and triggering the very insecurity it sought to avoid (Waltz 1979, 126). Offensive realism draws the opposite conclusion from the same premises: because intentions are unknowable and power distributions shift in ways no state can predict, vulnerability is never fully eliminated short of regional hegemony, making continuous accumulation of relative power the rational response to anarchy (Mearsheimer 2001, 34–35). Sufficiency and maximisation represent the competing pathways each school proposes, and each generates a distinct set of predictions about when states are expected to intervene.

### **2.2.1 Defensive realism**

Emerging from post-Waltz debates in the late 1970s, defensive realism holds that anarchy often favours restraint over expansion. Although the international system is competitive, it provides incentives for expansion only under specific conditions. Balancing against the strongest actor is the structurally preferred response (Waltz 1979, 126), since the stronger side

threatens the autonomy of weaker states, giving them incentive to form coalitions that prevent any single power from achieving dominance. Balancing coalitions are a systemic product, not the result of deliberate design. The first concern of states is to preserve their position, and the system induces balancing against power concentration as the mechanism through which that preservation is achieved (Waltz 1979, 126–128).

Glaser (2010, 35) formalised the distinction between security-seeking and greedy states, identifying state motives, material capabilities, and available information about an adversary's intentions as the principal determinants of strategic choice. The security dilemma, in Glaser's account, is not a constant feature of anarchy but varies in severity with the offence–defence balance and the distinguishability of military postures (Glaser 1997, 172). Where these conditions are favourable, states can signal benign intent through costly measures that a greedy state would find disproportionately expensive, thereby reducing the adversary's insecurity and making cooperative outcomes more attractive (Glaser 2010, 52–53). Restraint is consequently a rational strategy when material conditions permit it, not a failure of nerve or a departure from structural logic.

Walt (1987, 21) advances a complementary but distinct argument: states balance against threats, not merely against power. Alliance formation is driven by assessments of threat that extend beyond aggregate capability to include geographic proximity, offensive power, and perceived aggressive intentions (Walt 1987, 22). Intention carries independent weight because a powerful state is not inherently threatening if its conduct signals restraint (Walt 1987, 26). In a system where balancing predominates, policies that convey restraint reduce the likelihood of counterbalancing, whereas states perceived as aggressive provoke opposing coalitions regardless of their material position (Walt 1987, 27).

Defensive realists also identify structural modifiers that stand between systemic pressures and state behaviour, including the offence–defence balance and geographic proximity (Taliaferro 2000/01, 136–138). When defence has the advantage, security is more readily available and expansion is not structurally incentivised; where it occurs, defensive realists attribute it to domestic factors such as logrolling (Snyder 1991, 7) or misperception (Taliaferro 2000/01, 129) rather than to systemic pressures. Van Evera (1999, 191–192) develops the offence–defence balance into a systematic causal theory, arguing that war is more likely when conquest is easy and less likely when defence dominates. Where that condition holds, states

can protect their borders without projecting power outward, reducing the incentive to intervene in other states' affairs (1999, 123–124). Conversely, when offence dominates, states face incentives for both opportunistic and defensive expansion, first-move advantages grow larger (1999, 121–123).

On these foundations, a set of conditions under which defensive realism expects intervention can be derived, both of which operate at the structural rather than the unit level. The first is the presence of an identifiable threat to the intervening state's positional security: Walt's balance-of-threat framework establishes that states respond not to power as such but to configurations in which aggregate capability, proximity, offensive posture, and perceived aggressive intent combine to endanger their position (Walt 1987, 22, 26). For a great power, the relevant threat takes the form of a challenge to regional preponderance, specifically a rival establishing a foothold, contesting the dominant state's sphere, or shifting the local balance in ways that alter the broader distribution of capabilities. Van Evera's offence–defence logic reinforces this threshold requirement, since when defence dominates states have little structural incentive to project power outward and intervention becomes costly relative to the security it yields (1999, 123–124). The second condition is that the global distribution of power must permit action: under bipolarity, resources committed to peripheral interventions siphon support away from the primary balance, whereas under unipolarity no peer competitor exists to impose equivalent costs (Waltz 2000, 28–29). Yet the same structural shift that removes the permissive constraint simultaneously weakens the threat condition, since the rival whose presence drove the original calculus is no longer present, and this tension gives defensive realism its sharpest predictive purchase at the moment of systemic transition. Where both structural conditions are met, intervention is expected; where either is absent, the structural logic predicts restraint, independently of what individual decision-makers may prefer.

### **2.2.2 Offensive realism**

Mearsheimer (2001, 34–35) draws a different conclusion from the same structural premises outlined above. Because the consequences of miscalculation may be fatal and the distribution of capabilities shifts unpredictably over time, no amount of power short of regional hegemony eliminates vulnerability. Accumulating relative power is therefore the rational response to anarchy. States look for opportunities to improve their relative position, exploiting them when the expected costs are acceptable (Mearsheimer 2001, 31).

Two features separate offensive from defensive realism at the strategic level. First, no amount of power is sufficient. The pursuit of relative gains is continuous and ends only when hegemony is achieved (Mearsheimer 2001, 34). Second, the security dilemma is treated as inescapable rather than manageable. Signalling restraint is unreliable because gestures of benign intent cannot be verified, and present restraint does not guarantee future behaviour (Mearsheimer 2001, 31, 45–46). States in this framework are therefore permanent revisionists. They are not reckless aggressors, however; they refrain from action when the prospects of success are low (Mearsheimer 2001, 37–38).

The relationship between offensive realism and the balance of power differs fundamentally from the defensivists' thought. Where defensive realism expects intervention only to restore a balance that has tilted against the state, offensive realism holds that marked power advantage is itself an incentive for action (Mearsheimer 2001, 31). A state that already enjoys a favourable balance has both the capability and structural motivation to press that advantage further, because the opportunity to widen the gap may not recur. The absence of a specific threat is therefore not a barrier to intervention under offensive realist logic. Under this logic, intervention is triggered by the alignment of favourable conditions, with no requirement for a specific threat to have materialised.

Under bipolarity this logic is restricted. A great power facing a rival must weigh any peripheral action against the primary balance, and resources committed to a regional intervention may invite exploitation by the competitor (Mearsheimer 2001, 31). Under unipolarity, this restriction dissolves. Threshold for intervention falls accordingly as the sole regional hegemon faces no peer whose response must be calculated into the cost of action. Mearsheimer's own framework acknowledges that the ideal position for any great power is to be the only regional hegemon (2001, 36), and such a state goes to considerable lengths to preserve that distribution. The offensive realist prediction under unipolarity is that intervention becomes more likely, not less, because the permissive conditions are at their widest.

### **2.3 Structural realism and asymmetric intervention**

All three cases of U.S. intervention involve a predominant power intervening against far weaker states in its own sphere of influence. The Waltzian theory of international relations is designed to explain great power interaction under bipolarity and framed explicitly as a theory of international politics, not a theory of foreign policy (Waltz 1996, 54–57). Similarly, Mearsheimer (2001, 29) limited his analysis to great powers. Neither directly addressed cases in which a hegemon intervenes against states that pose no military threat to it. However, structural logic has implications for asymmetric intervention even where the theory does not formally model it. Waltz (2000, 29) himself observed that the United States has a long history of intervening in weaker states in the Western Hemisphere, with little restraint in the absence of countervailing power.

Mearsheimer's logic extends more readily to asymmetric cases. If states seek regional hegemony, and do not practise self-denial when they have the means to act, then intervening against weak neighbours to consolidate sphere-of-influence control follows from the theory's own premises. Monteiro (2014, 144–154) extends this logic, noting that powers in a position of relative weakness that resist the unipole face the structural pressures of containment or intervention, or what he terms "extreme self-help" (2014, 155).

Each of the three cases falls at a different time period along the bipolar-to-unipolar transition. In addition, each theory generates different predictions as structural conditions change (Waltz 1979; Mearsheimer 2001). Grenada (1983) occurred during late bipolarity, when superpower competition limited the actions of the United States and Soviet–Cuban presence provided a plausible security rationale. Panama (1989) fell at the moment of systemic transition: the Berlin Wall had fallen but the Soviet Union had not yet dissolved, although in a process of degradation. The intervention in Haiti (1994), in contrast, ensued under clear unipolarity, with no peer competitor and no security threat to justify intervention. This variation in structural context provides an opportunity to assess whether the preferred realist logic remains stable or shifts as external conditions change, and whether its expression varies across structurally different settings.

## **2.4 Analytical expectations**

This thesis does not seek to confirm or disconfirm either variant of structural realism in a binary sense. It examines the extent that deliberative reasoning patterns in internal government documents reflect the processing of and response to structural pressures and assesses if these changes consistently align with one school's strategic logic over the other and any shift as the structural conditions transform. Insofar as structural pressures are processed through the state's security-seeking rationale, internal deliberations reflect threat-driven reasoning. Consequently, the decision-makers ought to name a specific insecurity, assess its capabilities and intentions as distinct factors, and orient the proposed response toward restoring the status-quo. This calibration ensures a symmetrical response designed to maintain the balance of power without provoking spiral dynamics or counterbalancing. Absent a clear threat, the approach is expected to be non-intervention.

If state security is associated with maximisation of power, and regional hegemony, internal considerations reflect an opportunity-driven pursuit of power maximisation, rather than a purely threat based calculus, then officials are expected to treat favourable conditions as sufficient justification for action. Security is framed in terms of relative power superiority, and intervention is evaluated independently of whether an identifiable threat actor exists. The agreed trigger for intervention is the alignment of favourable factors, such as low cost, military readiness, superiority and the vulnerability of the target. Crucially, intervention is expected even where the balance of power already favours the intervening state, in contrast to defensive realism, which anticipates action only where the balance has tilted against it.

In both cases, the analysis traces structural logic as it operates through the state's institutional apparatus. The question is not what individual decision-makers believed, but what structural rationale shaped the reasoning observable in classified deliberations. It should also be noted, the structural realist framework treats target states as objects of great power action rather than as independent actors. Where both orientations coexist in the same record, polarity shapes which prevails: peer-competitor costs give defensive arguments greater structural weight under bipolarity; as those constraints dissolve, offensive logic operates without equivalent systemic check.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research design**

The indicator framework developed in the following sections operationalises the theoretical expectations derived in the preceding chapter. This thesis employs a comparative case study design based on Most Different Systems Design (MDS), a theory-driven small-N approach rooted in Mill's method of agreement. MDS selects cases that differ on as many background variables as possible yet share the same outcome on the dependent variable (Przeworski and Teune 1970, 34; Anckar 2008, 396). In this study, the dependent variable is U.S. military intervention to remove a government in the Americas, that is Western Hemisphere. Three cases are compared: Grenada (1983), Panama (1989) and Haiti (1994). These cases differ considerably in their structural context, leadership, domestic political conditions and target regime type, yet all resulted in the same outcome.

### **3.2 Case selection**

This research draws its cases from the universe of U.S. military interventions in the Western Hemisphere during and immediately after the Cold War. The limitation to a single intervening case is a deliberate methodological choice. Introducing cases involving a broader range of interveners would create variation in the structural position of the intervener state itself, as each occupies a different place in the international system. Holding the intervening state constant isolates the variables the theory identifies as explanatory, namely the type of structural logic driving action, with polarity and the balance of power treated as the structural context against which that logic is assessed. At the same time, the relatively recent declassification of documentary records offers a level of access to internal deliberations that make structural realist predictions about hegemonic behaviour testable.

Five criteria define this selection. First, the intervention must involve overt U.S. military force. Second, it must occur within the Western Hemisphere, consistent with the Monroe Doctrine sphere where the United States has historically exercised hegemonic authority. Third, the target state must possess no considerable military force or nuclear capability. Fourth, the target state's GDP must be less than five per cent of U.S. GDP, ensuring a stark material asymmetry. Fifth, the intervention must fall within the transitional *détente* period<sup>3</sup>.

Selected cases vary on several dimensions that make them suitable for MDSD. They span three administrations, three structural contexts, country backgrounds and foreign policy doctrines. Mentioned interventions differed in scale, duration, and military character<sup>4</sup>. The comparison therefore allows assessment of whether the shared outcome is associated with threat-driven defensive or opportunity-driven offensive logic in otherwise different cases. Despite these differences, the United States deployed military force to remove the incumbent government. Cases of non-intervention fall outside the scope, as the dependent variable is the type of strategic reasoning in the deliberative record, not the occurrence of intervention itself.

Haiti serves as a particularly useful comparative case. Defensive realism predicts intervention only where decision-making centres on an identifiable security threat, whereas offensive realism anticipates that intervention is produced by a combination of structural advantages and regional hegemony, independent of any specific external peril. Under unipolarity, the two theories diverge sharply. With no peer competitor and no proximate military threat, defensive realism provides no structural mechanism that would compel intervention. Offensive realism expects intervention to become more likely, because the permissive conditions are at their widest, and opportunity to consolidate control persists.

For each case, the temporal scope of the primary source search follows the archival boundary of the administration in office and ends on the day before the intervention commenced. This captures the full arc of each administration's deliberations on the target country from the moment it assumed office, rather than narrowing the search to the immediate pre-intervention period, which would risk missing the gradual evolution of threat perceptions<sup>5</sup>.

### **3.3 Primary documentary source: the National Security Council**

The National Security Council (NSC) was established by the National Security Act of 1947 as the principal forum through which the president receives advice on national security and foreign policy. It integrates perspectives from the Departments of State, Defence, and Treasury, the intelligence community, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other relevant agencies into a unified advisory structure (Inderfurth and Johnson 2004, 1, 24; Daalder and Destler 2009, 10; Rothkopf 2005, 5; Prados 1991, 27–32). Consequently, NSC records capture senior leadership deliberations within an institutional apparatus explicitly designed for candid discussion of national security threats and policy options.

As the archival research progressed, it became clear that NSC materials provided the most direct available record of how structural pressures were processed at the institutional level. Unlike public addresses, press conferences or congressional testimony, NSC documents represent the institutional deliberations in which threats and strategic considerations were discussed. Principally, that institutional character makes NSCs uniquely suited for assessing structural realist theories, serving as an indirect measure of the factors each theory puts forward as most important. Structural pressures reach states through their institutional apparatus rather than bypassing them. That in turn narrows the range of options actors treat as credibly available within the competitive environment they inhabit (Waltz 1979, 92–93). The records capture this process by documenting the institutional justifications through which policy options were assessed<sup>6</sup>. Several categories of sources are deliberately excluded. Public presidential addresses, press briefings, and other materials intended for external audiences are excluded due to reflecting strategic communication rather than genuine internal threat assessment. These exclusions ensure that the analysis captures contemporary internal considerations and not post-hoc constructed narratives<sup>7</sup>.

### **3.3.1 Personnel files and formal NSC series**

The archival records fall into two broad categories. Formal NSC series constitute the official institutional record, comprising policy papers, decision directives, and meeting minutes. Personnel files are the working collections of individual staff members whose portfolios cover the relevant region. Where the formal series records what was decided, personnel files preserve the analytical record that preceded those decisions<sup>8</sup>. Both are consulted because the formal series alone does not capture the full deliberative record across all three administrations.

## **3.4 Document collection**

Primary sources were collected through the National Archives Catalog and three presidential libraries: the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, the George H. W. Bush Presidential Library and the William J. Clinton Presidential Library<sup>9</sup>. The search process began with broad queries within each repository, filtered by date range, digitalised access, textual records, relevant record groups and keyword terms. Results were then narrowed to NSC-level materials and further refined by excluding public-facing materials, documents not specific to the case,

administrative metadata and records outside the temporal scope. The filtering process retained a total of 22 files for three cases: ten for Grenada, five for Panama and seven for Haiti<sup>10</sup>. The corpus is necessarily bounded by the scope of available declassification. Documents remaining classified fall outside the evidentiary base, and the analysis proceeds on the assumption that the declassified record is sufficiently representative of the deliberative process to sustain the indicator-based classifications derived from it. While file counts differ across cases, page volume across the three corpora is roughly comparable.

### **3.5 Indicator-based classification**

A methodological distinction is drawn between strategic-level and operational-level reasoning. Strategic reasoning as understood here concerns *why* the United States should intervene, in other words, what threats or opportunities justified military action. Operational reasoning, on the other hand, concerns *how* the intervention should be executed, e.g., force composition, timing, logistics and rules of engagement. Only strategic-level content is coded for this classification, because operational planning language is theoretically non-diagnostic. That is, both offensive and defensive realism are compatible with efforts to reduce casualties, ensure operational effectiveness and manage escalation risks (Waltz 1979, 109; Mearsheimer 2001, 31).

Methodologically, the study proceeds through a theory-driven qualitative document analysis of classified National Security Council records, assessing the explanatory power of defensive realism (Waltz 1979; Glaser 1997 & 2010; Van Evera 1999; Walt 1987) and offensive realism (Mearsheimer 2001) by treating those records as an indirect measure of the factors each theory identifies as most important. The documents are treated as institutional records of internal deliberation in which strategic options are assessed and justified, whereby theoretically derived categories can be applied systematically to the source material. Institutional justifications recorded in NSC documents therefore serve as an observable trace of which structural factors decision-makers treated as operative at the point of decision (Waltz 1979, 92–93). A security-maximising orientation should produce opportunity-driven, power-gap framing independent of specific threat. Status-quo-oriented reasoning should instead produce threat-calibrated assessment with proportionate objectives. Coding the deliberative record for the preponderance of these indicators provides a systematic basis for assessing which disposition prevailed.

The independent variable is the type of structural logic observable in the documentary record, operationalised through the presence or absence of theoretically derived indicators in the primary documents. Each sentence identified as containing strategic-level content is coded against the indicator sets outlined below. A sentence is classified according to the school whose indicators it reflects. If a sentence invokes both frameworks, the analytical task is to identify which is doing the explanatory work. That is an interpretive judgement, not a methodological rule. Where the reason given for action is a specific threat, the sentence is coded as defensive regardless of incidental power-maximising language, only where the reason given is structural opportunity independent of any identified threat, it is coded as offensive. Passages that cannot be attributed with sufficient confidence are not coded. Classification of each case is determined by the preponderance of coded results drawn from the full document corpus for that case. If the majority of coded sentences align with one school, the case is classified accordingly. The threshold is interpretive rather than strictly numerical, that is where the distribution is close to even, the case is treated as indeterminate and subjected to additional qualitative scrutiny. The full case-specific coding tables on which these classifications rest are reproduced in Appendix 3. Grenada, Panama and Haiti are examined in turn to draw the two schools of thought into contrast in each deliberative record. Each case section develops the principal lines of argument before arriving at a case-level assessment.

### **3.5.1 Defensive realism parameters**

The central variable for defensive realism is the posture toward status-quo preservation, defined as the tendency to frame intervention as warranted only by specific threats and to favour objectives limited to restoring rather than reshaping the existing order (Waltz 1979, 126; Glaser 2010, 55–56). The variable is measured on a nominal scale. A case is classified as status-quo-oriented where the preponderance of coded indicators across the full document corpus reflects this disposition, with cases where the distribution is close to even treated as indeterminate. Three indicator groups operationalise this disposition in the documentary record. Specific threat identification requires that decision-makers assess a concrete threat through capability, proximity, and intent before warranting action (Walt 1987, 21–22). Status-quo restoration is present where stated objectives are limited and proportionate, aimed at returning conditions to their prior state (Glaser 2010, 55). Escalation sensitivity is reflected in documents registering concern about counterbalancing, overextension, or security spirals

(Taliaferro 2000/01, 129, 136–139). The full indicator breakdown is provided in Appendix 2.1.

### **3.5.2 Offensive realism parameters**

Three indicator groups operationalise the offensive realist disposition toward security maximisation, defined as the tendency to treat power accumulation and structural opportunity as the principal drivers of action independent of any specific threat (Mearsheimer 2001, 29–35), in the documentary record. Measurement proceeds on a nominal scale, with cases where the distribution is close to even treated as indeterminate. Opportunity exploitation is present where favourable conditions are treated as sufficient grounds for intervention regardless of whether a specific threat has materialised (Mearsheimer 2001, 29, 37). Regional hegemony and rival exclusion are reflected in arguments treating predominance in the Western Hemisphere and denial of rival influence as objectives in themselves, evaluating third-state developments through a zero-sum lens (Mearsheimer 2001, 141–143). Credibility and resolve projection is present where demonstrations of resolve are linked to sphere-of-influence control and positional advantage beyond the immediate crisis (Mearsheimer 2001, 166–167). The full breakdown is provided in Appendix 2.2.

## **4. Core analysis: U.S. interventions in Grenada, Panama, and Haiti**

The following chapter presents the findings from the analysis of U.S. interventions in Grenada, Panama, and Haiti and identifies the predominant strategic reasoning in each intervention. Focus is on what the classified deliberative record reveals about the rationale underpinning intervention, and on whether the pattern of reasoning in each instance corresponds more closely to offensive or defensive realist expectations. Each case is considered on its own terms, yet the three also read cumulatively in order to establish the broader empirical pattern that emerges across the thesis. In this way, the chapter determines both the predominant disposition in each intervention and the extent to which that remains stable across changing structural conditions.

### **4.1 Grenada (1983)**

Analysis of ten Grenada documents indicates a clear predominance of the security-maximising actor disposition (see Appendix 3.1). Bosworth's February 1982 policy review stands apart as the only document that reflects a defensive realist pattern (see Appendix 3.2). The record nevertheless shows that this more cautious logic remained secondary to a broader pattern centred on rival denial, sphere enforcement, credibility projection, and the treatment of crisis as strategic opportunity. Grenada occurred under late bipolarity, and the structural context shaped the specific form offensive logic took: rival denial and zero-sum framing figure prominently, with Soviet-Cuban presence providing both the referential content and the justificatory vocabulary of the intervention rationale. Accordingly, the chapter treats the intervention decision as one in which a bounded protective rationale existed while the dominant pattern of evaluation remained wider and positional.

#### **4.1.1 Rival denial and positional advantage**

The Grenada record reads as an assessment of what the island would afford a rival, with Grenada's own capabilities occupying a secondary place. Infrastructure and political developments were evaluated in terms of the operational reach they would extend to Moscow and Havana. NSDD 110, issued on 21 October 1983, characterised the internal collapse of authority as a condition that would lead to "further radicalization of Grenadan society and increased Cuban/Soviet presence and activities on the island" (Reagan 1983c, 1). The directive's operational objective reflected this premise, stating that the U.S. was to be prepared

to join a multilateral effort to "prevent further Cuban/Soviet intervention/involvement on the island" (Reagan 1983c, 1).

This treatment was not confined to the immediate pre-intervention period. As early as 1982, Bosworth's policy review noted that "Point Salines airport will be available to the Cubans for military purposes and 'due to its strategic location' could also be used by the USSR" (Bosworth 1982, 6). Its relevance derived from external-power utility instead of domestic function. The Sapia-Bosch chronology recorded a 1982 Soviet offer to build a deep-water seaport on Grenada's east coast "with the proviso that Soviet warships be granted visiting rights" (Casey 1983, 30). Tillman-file material added that Point Salines runway, once complete, would "accommodate TU-95 reconnaissance aircraft and the IL-62 aircraft used to support the Cuban forces in Africa" (Howe 1983, 8). In each case, infrastructure was discussed through the operational reach it would afford the Soviet Union, instead of through Grenada's own military capacity.

Defensive indicators were present throughout the case but occupied a clearly secondary position. An instructive counterpoint is provided by the sole defensive-dominant document in the selection, the February 1982 Bosworth policy review. Produced during an earlier, less pressured phase of policy review, this document embodied a genuinely cautious posture. It warned that "precipitous U.S. actions would be counter-productive now" (Bosworth 1982, 9) because premature action risked sympathy for Grenada, embarrassment for supportive Caribbean democracies, and division from hemispheric partners. It defined concrete thresholds for escalation: "more drastic U.S. measures" (Bosworth 1982, 8) would be accepted only "if triggered by the establishment of Cuban/Soviet bases in Grenada or definitive evidence that the PRG is training Caribbean revolutionaries" (Bosworth 1982, 9). The document frames caution as the default position and ties stronger action to explicit escalation thresholds. Even this document contained the basis for later escalation. It acknowledged that "we need to position ourselves to be able to move to a harder position if necessary" (Bosworth 1982, 10), and tied Grenada to the wider rivalry with Cuba: "given Grenada's close links with Cuba, the results of this review should be consistent with . . . our policy toward Cuba" (Bosworth 1982, 6). Yet that threshold-based caution was largely absent from the later record, where prospective rival access and positional value were often treated as sufficient grounds for concern.

Global nuclear balance entered the deliberative record explicitly. Briefing materials circulated on the night before the invasion argued that Point Salines runway, once complete, could land "nuclear capable bombers there -- perhaps one way of carrying out their threats to respond with 'analagous [sic] measures' to the coming INF deployment in Europe" (North, Menges, and Fontaine 1983, 19). In the same briefing, infrastructure at St George's was linked directly to Soviet naval positioning: "The port . . . is capable of accommodating Soviet nuclear ballistic submarines and their tenders -- another possible Soviet response to INF" (North, Menges, and Fontaine 1983, 19). These passages reflect a security-maximising logic in which concern is generated already by the possibility that Grenada might improve Soviet-Cuban access and leverage before any base or military installation had materialised<sup>11</sup>.

#### **4.1.2 Sphere enforcement and hegemonic prerogative**

The same principle pervaded the governing directives. NSDD 105 identified the promotion of "independent democratic governments friendly to the United States and free of Cuban and Soviet influence" (Reagan 1983a, 1) as the principal U.S. objective in the Eastern Caribbean. The directive made the exclusion of rival presence the basis of the sub-regional goal. It treats the Western Hemisphere as an exclusive American sphere in which external influence is inherently unacceptable and instability in smaller states is taken as directly relevant to the overall power structure. This is the broadest expression of offensive realism in the case. NSDD 32 had already instructed, in its regional aims, that the United States was to "blunt and contain the projection of Soviet and Cuban military power" and "eliminate Soviet influence in Cuba" (Reagan 1982, 21). Neither directive calibrates action to a specific threat; both treat rival-power presence as sufficient cause for concern<sup>12</sup>.

The vocabulary of dominance was not confined to NSC directives. Norman Bailey's memorandum on Latin America, written approximately a year before the invasion, argued that recovery was possible "only if the U.S. will now take clear, forceful, and if necessary . . . unilateral actions . . . to reassert our dominance in the area" (Bailey 1982, 13). Bailey called for "a willingness to work directly for the overthrow of antagonistic regimes, such as those of Grenada, Nicaragua and Cuba" (Bailey 1982, 14), and for the exploitation of "all windows of opportunity" on the grounds that "the only "special relationship" we are interested in is one involving U.S. leadership" (Bailey 1982, 14). The vocabulary is not defensive. It is the vocabulary of a state seeking to maximise its position, not to preserve it.

Tension between the two schools surfaced most sharply in Sapia-Bosch chronology. While NSC officials pressed for intervention as a demonstration of hegemonic resolve, "State representatives object vigorously on the grounds that such action would cause us to lose the rest of the Caribbean" (Casey 1983, 30). The State Department's objection warned that intervention would alienate regional allies and invite counterbalancing, but it was overridden by the rival-denial, credibility, and opportunity-driven reasoning that shaped the final directives<sup>13</sup>.

#### **4.1.3 Zero-sum framing and the rival power balance**

In the Grenada deliberations, the island itself disappears from the strategic ledger. Grenada entered the documents as a pawn in a contest whose other party was always Moscow or Havana. Its behaviour was assessed only insofar as it altered the position of external rivals. NSDD 32 named Grenada among the locations in which "Communist gains" (Reagan 1982, 59) were to be reversed, alongside El Salvador and Nicaragua. The above shared little except the direction of their political alignment. Alignment toward the rival bloc was treated as actionable in its own right, independently of any individual state's military capacity.

Case-level material reproduced the same ledger logic. Bosworth's policy review described the People's Revolutionary Government as continuing "to move closer politically and militarily to the Cuban/Soviet camp" (Bosworth 1982, 8), a phrasing that collapsed Grenada's internal direction into a metric of bloc alignment. A judgement that in the Tillman files was characterised as "the emergence of a Cuba/Grenada/Suriname axis" or being "of major geopolitical import, particularly in view of the relative absence of countervailing forces" (Howe 1983, 9). Neither Grenada nor Suriname possessed meaningful armed forces, yet the alarm was acute. These formulations registered no materialised military capability on Grenada's part but took alignment shift as sufficient grounds for concern. Defensive logic requires a concrete capability shift before action is warranted. Responding to political vector alone falls outside that threshold and into the security-maximising one<sup>14</sup>.

#### **4.1.4 Credibility, resolve, and demonstration effects**

The signalling logic in the Grenada record is not directed at a single adversary but projects dominance to multiple audiences at once. At a NSC meeting captured in the Sapia-Bosch chronology, senior officials called "for the U.S. to give evidence of its readiness to use its power in its sphere of influence to force a small nation to behave" (Casey 1983, 30). What is

notable here is that the target is identified not by the threat it poses but by its size and defiance. The proposed response was designed to demonstrate hegemonic discipline.

NSDD 100 directed that military activities in the region "must be significantly increased to demonstrate our willingness to defend our allies" (Reagan 1983b, 1). An inter-agency evaluation in the Tillman files emphasised the same point, arguing that the U.S. must show its commitment to Eastern Caribbean states to "offset the growing projection of Cuban and Soviet power in the sub-region" (Hill 1983, 21). In his preparatory memorandum for the president's Latin America trip, Shultz cast continued engagement with Central America as a test of endurance: "We have stopped the drift to Marxism/Leninism. We now need to show our staying power" (Shultz 1982, 32). Each case subordinated the immediate situation to a wider signalling imperative; credibility operated not as a response to a discrete threat but as a standing instrument of positional maintenance, which places it squarely within the offensive realist indicator set rather than the defensive one<sup>15</sup>.

#### **4.1.5 Opportunity**

A threat-driven calculus confronting the Grenada crisis of October 1983 would have counselled delay and further information-gathering before force. The cable Ambassador Bish sent six days before the invasion reasoned in the opposite direction: "the political turmoil on Grenada may pose an opportunity as well as a problem" (Bish 1983, 11). Bish urged action while conditions remained favourable, noting that "the next ten days provide a window of opportunity" (Bish 1983, 11). The cable is analytically telling because Bish's own initial reading was that "there does not appear to be an immediate threat to American citizen interests" (Bish 1983, 11), yet the absence of peril did not dampen the appetite for action. Under defensive realist logic, the absence of materialised threat would counsel restraint. Here, the favourable conditions were themselves the justification, and the window was defined by its anticipated closure rather than by any escalation of danger.

The stated objectives of the intervention reveal how a bounded rationale was folded into a far broader programme. NSDD 110 noted that the "coup and subsequent disorders . . . have created a situation that could seriously jeopardize the lives and safety of American citizens" (Reagan 1983c, 1). In the Menges files, "Assuring the safety of American citizens on Grenada" (Reagan 1983d, 1) stood as the first of three intervention objectives. Taken in isolation, this coheres with defensive realism's preference for bounded, threat-proportionate

objectives. Read alongside the two other stated objectives, however, the picture shifts. "The elimination of current . . . Cuban intervention in Grenada" (Reagan 1983d, 1) and "the restoration of democratic government" (Reagan 1983d, 1) accompanied citizen protection in every directive that articulated the intervention's aims. Citizen safety, while genuine, was embedded within a programme of full-scale military intervention, the expulsion of Cuban presence, and regime change that no purely defensive calculus would generate. A security-seeking state responding to an identifiable threat to its nationals would, on a defensive logic, have mounted an evacuation. Bish's initial recommendation was precisely "to evacuate a maximum of 800-1000 citizens" (Bish 1983, 11). The escalation from evacuation to full invasion marks the point at which the defensive rationale was absorbed into an offensive strategic architecture. Accordingly, the case fits the chapter's offensive-realist indicators more closely than a bounded evacuation would have done.

One further defensive strand warrants attention. Early in the crisis, "State tells NSC that it is not prepared to characterize the Bishop government as a Cuban puppet" and instead suggested it was "'cooptable' by either the Cubans or the U.S." (Casey 1983, 29). The State Department was holding open a space for independent evaluation of the regime's intentions, and resisting the automatic equation of alignment with hostility. The position was consistent with a status-quo-oriented reading of the evidence available at that stage of the crisis. As with the counterbalancing warning, this more nuanced reading was subsequently eclipsed by logic that treated any Soviet-Cuban foothold in the hemisphere as inherently intolerable<sup>16</sup>.

#### **4.1.6 Summary of findings**

The Grenada case is classified as offensive realist. The security-maximising disposition predominated throughout the record, with rival denial, sphere enforcement, zero-sum framing, credibility projection, and opportunity exploitation each outweighing the subordinate defensive strands documented above. Bosworth's threshold-based caution and the State Department's counterbalancing warnings constituted the most sustained defensive content. Both were overridden as the pattern of positional evaluation broadened into the final directives. A bounded protective rationale centred on citizen safety was present but was absorbed into a programme of regime change and rival expulsion that no status-quo-oriented calculus would generate. The escalation from Bish's evacuation recommendation to full invasion marks the point of absorption. Late bipolarity conditioned the form the security-maximising disposition assumed: Soviet-Cuban presence provided both the

referential content and the justificatory vocabulary through which the dominant indicators were articulated<sup>17</sup>.

## **4.2 Panama (1989)**

Within the Panama collection are five National Security Council documents spanning April to October 1989. The documents treat Noriega's removal, treaty-rights assertion, and coercive pressure as instruments of positional control. Records examined concern the Bush administration's policy toward Noriega's regime, the Panama Defence Forces, the fraudulent May elections, the failed October coup, and the possibility of intensified pressure or direct U.S. action. Panama fell at the moment of systemic transition, with bipolarity dissolving but unipolarity not yet consolidated, and the structural shift is legible in the record itself: unlike Grenada, no Soviet competitor appears in any of the five files, and the audiences named for U.S. signalling are regional rather than global. Offensive logic remained dominant, but its expression had already shifted – sphere enforcement and opportunity exploitation now operated without reference to a global rival. In the collection, offensive realist logic predominates (see Appendix 3.3), although defensive concerns are not absent (see Appendix 3.4). Personnel protection, readiness, treaty assets, and escalation management matter, but mostly as constraints on how pressure should be applied, without displacing the objective of removing Noriega. Coding therefore rests on the preponderance of indicators across the collection, with the threshold interpretive rather than strictly numerical. Unlike crisis-driven interventions, the planning unfolded over months, allowing planners to articulate and contest strategic premises at length.

### **4.2.1 Power maximisation and opportunity exploitation**

A policy paper for the April 1989 National Security Council meeting listed "opportunity" as the first category of strategic consideration because favourable conditions, such as the inaugurated U.S. Administration, combined with public support and Congressional backing "could combine to . . . employ May 7 election as a potential triggering device" (NSC 1989b, 27). This pattern is consistent with a state seeking to maximise its room for manoeuvre. The same document enumerated further opportunities: "public support for strong anti-drug policy gives Administration a virtually free hand to move against Noriega" (NSC 1989b, 27). A third opportunity concerned Noriega's internal weakness because of his authoritarian rule "70-80% of Panamanians want him gone" (NSC 1989b, 27). Had defensive realist logic prevailed, the

election would more likely have appeared as a source of instability to be managed cautiously. Instead, it appears as a triggering device for pressure.

This pattern sharpened after the failed October coup. A Policy Coordinating Committee working paper assessed that intensified economic and military pressure could leave the regime vulnerable, but that, although "there are no guarantees of success without direct U.S. intervention, there is a reasonable prospect that intensified pressures will lead to change from within Panama" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 47). The coup's failure prompted assessment of whether Noriega had become more vulnerable, not reconsideration of American objectives. It then proposed exploiting declining morale inside the Panama Defence Forces by "stimulating further divisions within the PDF and increasing anti-Noriega sentiment among key PDF officers" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 48). Uncertainty and internal fragmentation were therefore treated as openings to be exploited. This is closer to offensive realist opportunity exploitation than to defensive balancing, because the central question is how to accelerate regime collapse, not how to stabilise a deteriorating situation.

Baker's memorandum provides the clearest illustration of defensive means serving an offensive disposition. Personnel withdrawal was justified partly because "it reduces vulnerability to future pressures by signaling that we are clearing the decks, giving ourselves more freedom for future, unspecified action" (Baker 1989, 16). Its stated purpose was simultaneously to "[r]educe the vulnerability of our personnel, and send a signal to Noriega and the PDF to create uncertainty in their minds concerning U.S. intentions" (Baker 1989, 9). Timing reinforced the dual function. The process "should not exceed 30 days" to send "the correct signal of creating uncertainty regarding U.S. intentions" (Baker 1989, 9), and a slower withdrawal "would tend to reassure the PDF that the U.S. was not considering any military options" (Baker 1989, 9). The PCC minutes characterised the dependent withdrawal as "getting rid of hostages" (NSC 1989b, 20). Canal operations, the PCC acknowledged, required balancing "the comparative vulnerability of this segment of the USG community with the important role these U.S. citizen employees play" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 49). After noting that the administration was "in the process of reducing our vulnerability in the event of any deterioration of law and order" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 49), the same working paper argued that further reductions "would send Noriega and Panama a strong message of resolve" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a,

49). Protective measure and coercive signal were the same action viewed from different angles. Personnel protection cleared the way for escalation rather than substituting for it.

#### **4.2.2 Sphere enforcement**

The audience-signalling material in the Panama record could be read as a generic concern with how the United States appears to external actors. Yet the signals named are not directed at credibility in the abstract. Named audiences include regional adversaries, partners, and opposition movements. A policy paper warned that accommodation would signal "to the Sandinistas, Central American democracies and internal opposition that U.S. is unable to protect its interests" and would "likely strengthen Sandinista and FMLN intransigence" (NSC 1989a, 36). National Security Council minutes similarly record Bush's observation that "policy toward Panama could have an important spillover effect toward Nicaragua" (NSC 1989b, 21). This spillover framing shows that Panama was not treated only as a local crisis. It was also a test of Washington's capacity to enforce its preferred regional order.

Scowcroft's covering memorandum made this logic explicit. It reported that the Policy Coordinating Committee and National Security Council Deputies had identified "the fundamental question which needs to be addressed" as "whether we are willing to accept Noriega's remaining in power indefinitely, and if not, under what conditions and for what purposes we are willing to use force to get him out" (Scowcroft 1989c, 51). The question presumed that removal was the objective. Uncertainty concerned the conditions and timing of action. This framing treats Panama's domestic political arrangements as subject to U.S. determination, which aligns with sphere enforcement and hegemonic prerogative. A more defensive logic would have centred on limiting exposure and preserving treaty access without necessarily deciding who could govern Panama. Here, by contrast, the United States evaluates whether and how to impose a preferred political outcome within its regional sphere.

The May 1989 National Security Council meeting produced a consensus along similar lines. Secretary Brady posed the foundational question directly: "where are we headed? What are we trying to achieve? What do we hope to accomplish? What will get done by our measures?" (NSC 1989b, 17). Minutes record Scowcroft's view that present U.S. policy was "not going to get rid of Noriega" and that "we won't get rid of him except by force and pressure" (NSC 1989b, 17). Bush accepted that proposed measures would not themselves remove Noriega, but framed the election as an opening for further action: "we should look at the elections as a

starting point" (NSC 1989b, 17). He added that removal would require "more U.S. actions", combined with "some other thing happening" (NSC 1989b, 18). The vocabulary belongs to a state seeking to maximise its position.

#### **4.2.3 Strategic asset control**

A reading anchored in the institutional logic of treaties would predict that the 1977 Canal Treaties function as constraints on U.S. action through dispute-resolution, compliance and reciprocal obligation. The policy paper proceeds in the opposite direction. In the files, the treaty-rights regime is treated as a positional asset whose erosion has cost the United States and whose reassertion would restore relative position. This distinction is consequential. The framing question on the table was whether suspension or abrogation would provide leverage, or if, however, "vigorous assertion of our Treaty rights better secure our policy" (NSC 1989a, 29). Pros listed for direct assertion are positional. Among them, the option "[e]nhances U.S. ability to protect strategic interests" (NSC 1989a, 32) sits alongside the treaty-recovery framing. The Strategic Alternatives section assessed that removal of Noriega "could begin recovering eroded Treaty rights" (NSC 1989a, 40), and noted further that the same alternative "[m]aximizes subsequent choice of alternatives if PDF does not act or PDF coup fails" (NSC 1989a, 40). The treaty regime is weighted for what it can deliver in relative power.

NSD 17 had formalised a campaign "designed to assert our treaty rights, heighten Noriega's uncertainty, and keep him and his people off guard" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 47). The military exercise programme received extensive treatment in the October working paper. Assessment by the PCC confirmed that these practices had succeeded in forcing the PDF to "react in places and at times of U.S. choosing" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 47). Criteria for the future included to "emphasize in a dramatic way that Noriega's continuation in power is a threat to the survival of the institution" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 48). The institution was PDF itself. American military posture was being calibrated to fracture the loyalty structure binding Panamanian officers to their commander.

If structural defensive realism operates anywhere in the Panama record, the escalation discussions are where it should be visible. Sustained engagement with the risks of provocation, military confrontation, and resource commitment runs throughout the files. The objectives raised, nevertheless, were tactical rather than strategic. Eagleburger warned the President that asserting that treaty rights carried "the danger of military confrontations with

the PDF" and that the situation "could be a shooting match" (NSC 1989b, 17) with the PDF. General Thurman's concern, reported by the PCC, was that those exercises not expose his forces "to PDF attack as a result of geographic extension to remote areas of Panama" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 47). Exercise criteria included avoiding "significant additional criticism beyond those minimal levels already seen in Latin America and Panama" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 48). These concerns operated on questions of execution. The direction of policy was not in dispute. Eagleburger's comment produced discussion of rules of engagement, not reconsideration of the underlying posture. Bush's response to escalation risk was rhetorical rather than substantive. He held that respect would attach to action framed as ensuring the protection of a treaty, but "otherwise, force could be counterproductive" (NSC 1989b, 18). Bush treated the risk of counterproductive force as a legitimation problem to be managed, leaving the decision to use force intact. The April policy paper had registered the same disposition: regional and international criticism would be "very costly if operation failed, likely to abate quickly if it succeeded" (NSC 1989a, 38). A separate assessment warned of an "extremely negative response in Latin America and throughout the Third World" (NSC 1989a, 37). Neither touched the propriety of coercive action itself<sup>18</sup>.

#### **4.2.4 Credibility**

Resolve directed at Noriega and the PDF differed in kind from the regional signalling traced in the preceding section. The April action plan named "Demonstrate U.S. resolve" (Baker 1989, 8) as a stated objective. October planning carried the same logic forward, holding that further personnel reductions "would send Noriega and Panama a strong message of resolve" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a, 49). The audience for these signals was Noriega and the PDF directly.

Darman pressed for revision of the presidential statement "to avoid the problem of the past of presenting the image of a paper tiger" (NSC 1989b, 20). The October documents carried the same concern forward. Supporting an Endara government would require "clear commitment of U.S. political prestige" to "avoid Endara being marginalized as was Delvalle" (Policy Coordinating Committee 1989b, 57). Delvalle's name functioned as shorthand for a prior failure still requiring correction. Non-realist content, including democratic transition, electoral integrity, and hemispheric norms, appeared throughout the record as stated rationales. It did not drive the strategic case.

Dissent visible throughout the Bush administration's planning did not challenge the strategic consensus. It operated within the boundaries that consensus had already set. Eagleburger and Thurman each raised objections on how the administration would pursue removal, but absent from the former was the consideration of whether removal was the right objective to pursue. Defensive-realist opposition of the kind that Bosworth and the State Department mounted in Grenada's case has no analogue in the Panama documents. The strategic case for removing Noriega was, nonetheless, not built on democratic or normative grounds but on power-political ones. Power-political logic had determined the objective, but normative language supplied the presentation.

#### **4.2.5 Summary of findings**

Panama registers as offensive-dominant on a clear majority of coded indicators. Power maximisation, sphere enforcement, strategic asset control, and credibility carried the case for action against Noriega. Defensive content appeared in the form of tactical concerns about treaty assets, personnel protection, and escalation management, yet none generated an alternative to the premise of removal. Dissent concerned the calibration of pressure and operated within strategic consensus. The absence of any analogue to the institutionally grounded counter-positions mounted by Bosworth and the State Department at Grenada, itself a reflection of the receding Soviet competitor, is itself significant. No document in the Panama record challenged whether removal was the correct objective, only how and under what conditions it should be pursued. Non-realist content, including democratic transition and electoral integrity, framed objectives the documents had already settled on through positional reasoning<sup>21</sup>.

### **4.3 Haiti (1994)**

Seven documents from the William J. Clinton Library made the final Haiti file set, four drawn from the NSC Presidential Records Series files and three from Alan Kreczko's Staff files. The documentary trail covers NSC discussions conducted between the escalation of the Haitian migration crisis and the administration's preparations for military intervention under UNSC Resolution 940. Lake's action memoranda on the UN approach, Berger's response to the La Gonâve seizure proposal, and the background paper for the 29 July foreign policy team meeting make up the Presidential Records Series. From the Kreczko files come the legal memoranda concerning presidential authority, internal NSC emails, action memoranda, and

post-decision planning papers. The materials point to a strategic logic dominated by credibility, resolve, favourable operational expectations, and a wider regional-hegemonic conception of American interests (see Appendix 3.5). Defensive considerations appear in the file (see Appendix 3.6), yet they shape the calibration of timing, scope, and exposure more than the underlying choice to intervene.

#### **4.3.1 Coercive resolve and the compulsion to act**

The strongest pattern in the Haiti file is a strategic logic organised around credibility, resolve, and coercive leverage. Lake's July 1994 memorandum to the President on Haiti and the United Nations presented credibility as the central variable in the intervention decision. Secretary Christopher and DOD recommended "incorporating a deadline into the resolution, both for its psychological effect on the Haitian military and for the forcing function it would have . . . by bringing closure to the Haiti issue" (Lake 1994d, 13). Two arguments operated within this recommendation. One concerned coercive signalling directed at the Haitian military leadership, whose capitulation a fixed timetable was intended to compel. Another concerned internal policy discipline, because a deadline would force the administration's own machinery towards resolution. Lake's memorandum made the dual pressure explicit: "we would place pressure on the 'de factos' but also on ourselves" (Lake 1994d, 13). Because the recommendation came jointly from the Secretary of State and the Department of Defence, it reflects the core principals-level framing of the issue.

Berger's response to the La Gonâve seizure proposal disclosed the same insistence on a credible posture through the rejection of limited alternatives. Establishing Aristide on the island was criticised because "[i]t could also mislead the Haitian military about our resolve, increasing their intransigence" and ". . . could lead domestic and international opinion to conclude that the crisis was over when in fact we would be no nearer our objectives . . ." (Berger 1994, 6). In this formulation, half-measures were dangerous because they weakened the signal sent to the Haitian military and reduced the administration's ability to compel the outcome it sought. An internal NSC email reinforced the same logic by warning that a commitment to "seek prior Congressional action removes uncertainty about immediate US intentions, and removes an incentive for them to step aside promptly" (Kreczko 1994b, 60). That email generalised the lesson: "Legal differences aside, successive Presidents have found it important to be able to say that "no option" has been ruled out" (Kreczko 1994b, 60). The preservation of ambiguity therefore served coercive effect and was valued for that reason<sup>22</sup>.

Together, the deadline proposal, the rejection of La Gonâve, and the preservation of strategic ambiguity show how the absence of serious external constraint was translated within the policy apparatus into compulsion for decisive action. Credibility, resolve, and freedom of action became the mechanisms through which permissive structural conditions were converted into pressure to act.

Lake's memorandum on the UN approach contains a passage that resists the offensive-dominant reading established above. Against Christopher and DOD's advocacy for a resolution deadline, Lake argued that "a deadline would unnecessarily and perhaps dangerously constrain our timetable in Haiti and trigger a Congressional debate now" (Lake 1994d, 13). Clinton approved the recommendation to avoid a deadline, yet simultaneously approved the overall approach to the UNSC resolution. Intervention was advanced at every level, excluding a specific timetable. This is the single instance in the Haiti record where defensive and offensive advocacy competed at the principals level.

Lake described the recommendation as "that of the Vice President, although it is a close call" (Lake 1994d, 13), indicating that the contest was genuine. Defensive position drew support at the highest institutional level, where a separate passage in the same memorandum registered concern that intervention "could have unintended consequences elsewhere in the world (Korea, Iraq) if others thought we would be preoccupied" (Lake 1994d, 7). This is the only passage in the Haiti record that registers concern about overextension, a consideration squarely within the defensive indicator set. Yet Clinton resolved both reservations by accepting the defensive position on timing while preserving the offensive course intact.

#### **4.3.2 Credibility beyond the immediate crisis**

A planning paper from the Kreczko files identified the regime's persistence as itself the source of danger: "acceptance of the de facto government threatens regional stability and encourages anti-democratic elements throughout the region" (Lake 1994c, 65). The threat was not an action the Haitian military had taken or might take, but the continued standing of a government that had defied American policy. The same document concluded that "force is now necessary in order to maintain the credibility of U.S. and UN commitments" (Lake 1994c, 66). Force served the enforceability of commitments, not the neutralisation of a security threat. No rival power was named as the audience for this signal, and no specific

capability was identified as requiring counteraction. The credibility imperative operated without an external referent<sup>23</sup>.

"To maintain credibility, we would probably have to act soon after the deadline, just as the US attacked Iraq as soon as that deadline came" (Lake 1994d, 13). This historical analogy detached the credibility imperative from the specific balance of capabilities in Haiti. Declared commitments were treated as requiring military follow-through once publicly issued, even though Haiti posed no serious conventional challenge. The issue was therefore not whether Haiti could threaten the United States, but whether American warnings would be seen to carry consequences. Lake's wording anticipated that sequence by noting that a deadline might prompt "[t]he coup leaders" to "finally realize that the international community was serious about removing them . . ." (Lake 1994d, 13). Military pressure appears here as the condition under which diplomacy might succeed.

Other documents widened those reputational stakes. A memorandum on presidential authority warned that "Such defiance, if successful, could have serious consequences in other cases where U.S. interests are at stake, such as Iraq and Bosnia" (Lake and Cutler 1994, 78). An NSC Staff Paper similarly framed the Haitian military's conduct as a challenge to American policy itself: "The regime's rejection of our diplomatic overtures and its refusal to respond constructively [sic] to the will of the international community constituted a repudiation of US policy" (Kreczko 1994b, 88). Those formulations moved the issue beyond Haiti by presenting failure there as a precedent that could weaken the credibility of coercive diplomacy elsewhere. A background paper for the 29 July foreign policy team meeting asked "what timeframe is most advantageous from the multiple perspective of credibility and leverage with the military leaders" (Lake 1994e, 10). Timing thus mattered because it shaped bargaining advantage and the reading of American resolve.

Defensive material again enters as a secondary qualification. Lake's concern about a deadline reflected caution about self-binding and domestic political complications, not a rejection of the credibility-centred framework. What was under discussion was the choice between alternative ways of preserving coercive effectiveness while managing timing, escalation, and procedural exposure. The weight of the evidence therefore remains with an offensive-dominant reading: credibility and resolve shaped the purpose of action, while

defensive considerations modified the tactical form through which that purpose might best be advanced.

#### **4.3.3 Exploitation of favourable conditions**

"Unlike Desert Storm, for example, the situation in Haiti is not expected to involve substantial military engagements or casualties" (Lake and Cutler 1994, 77). A second offensive pattern is visible in the administration's assessment of Haiti's military capability. Lake and Cutler's memorandum assessed that "[t]he operation is likely to involve low intensity and short conflict" (Lake and Cutler 1994, 5). Drafting notes from the Kreczko files stated most directly that the Haitian military "do not represent a conventional military threat to the multinational force or to U.S. forces" (Lake 1994c, 65). These judgements did not primarily function as warnings against action. They identified the conditions under which force could be used effectively and at low cost.

Comparison with Desert Storm reinforced that point. The contrast served to show how limited the expected burden would be in Haiti, not to emphasise the dangers of military action. Anticipated costs, casualties, and combat intensity all appeared to fall well below the threshold associated with serious military or political risk. In that sense, assessments of weak resistance and low casualties strengthened the case for intervention by indicating that coercive aims could be pursued from a position of overwhelming advantage.

#### **4.3.4 Western Hemisphere as exclusively United States'**

Where favourable conditions established the operational basis for action, regional hegemony supplied its broader justification. The memorandum on presidential authority noted that "[t]he Caribbean has also historically been of great importance to U.S. national interests, as demonstrated by the many previous U.S. interventions in the region" (Lake and Cutler 1994, 78). Internal instability in the Caribbean registered as a standing concern for the predominant power without constituting a direct security threat. The formulation treated hemispheric hegemony as an established condition that both justified and required action. It situated Haiti within a pattern of regional enforcement that predated the ongoing crisis. No countervailing regional power was named as a check on that primacy.

Read together with the credibility material, this regional framing strengthens the offensive-dominant interpretation. The rejection of incomplete solutions, the insistence on

preserving leverage, and the extension of reputational stakes to other theatres all fit with a view of the Caribbean as a space in which the United States expected compliance with its strategic preferences. Defensive qualifications remain visible here as well, above all in the repeated emphasis on a limited mission and finite presence. Even so, those constraints narrowed the intended scope of regional enforcement without displacing the assumption that the United States should act to shape the political outcome.

Exit-strategy language reinforced the pattern of operational self-limitation. "Our presence in Haiti will not be open ended" (Lake 1994c, 66), and an NSC Staff Paper predicted that "the period of combat operations will measure in days, not weeks" (Kreczko 1994b, 90). A preliminary cost estimate of "\$500-\$600 million through February 1996" (Lake, Griffin, and Cutler 1994, 53) quantified the fiscal boundary. "The MNF has a limited, and well-defined role and duration" (Kreczko 1994b, 89). These passages bounded duration, cost, and operational scope. They shaped how the intervention would be conducted without revising the intervention decision. Defensive considerations occupied the operational envelope. The strategic rationale remained offensive throughout. An administration genuinely limited by defensive instincts would have questioned whether intervention was warranted at all.

Democracy promotion, humanitarian concern, and domestic-political arguments appear prominently in the Haiti record. Lake and Cutler's memo enumerated national interests including "promoting human rights and democracy in our hemisphere; immigration concerns; the safety of U.S. nationals; and the enforcement of Security Council decisions" (Lake and Cutler 1994, 5). Such arguments provided public legitimisation while credibility and opportunity-exploitation drove the decision to act. With no rival power to deny, no security threat to neutralise, the administration had few realist justifications available for public consumption. Credibility maintenance and the exploitation of favourable structural conditions shaped the calculus beneath the public justifications<sup>24</sup>.

#### **4.3.5 Summary of findings**

Credibility constituted the dominant strategic calculus throughout the Haiti file, and the case classifies as offensive realist on a clear preponderance of coded indicators. The Gulf War parallel, the rejection of incomplete options, and the extension of reputational stakes to Iraq and Bosnia framed the intervention as a test of American coercive capacity rather than a response to any identifiable security threat. A second offensive strand, though resting on a

narrower evidentiary base, the assessment that Haiti's military weakness created permissive conditions for force projection, confirmed that the administration treated a favourable power differential as sufficient ground for action. Defensive indicators were present and on the deadline question carried the day: Lake's reservation prevailed against Christopher and DOD, moderating timing without revising the intervention's direction. Exit-strategy language, cost ceilings, and operational scope constraints bounded execution throughout, yet at no point did defensive considerations generate an alternative to the underlying decision to intervene<sup>25</sup>.

## 5. Synthesis of findings

The three cases return the same classification. Grenada, Panama, and Haiti each register as offensive-realist dominant, with the security-maximising orientation prevailing in the full documentary record. That this orientation persists through the structural transition from late bipolarity to established unipolarity is itself the primary empirical finding. Polarity shaped the form the security-maximising disposition assumed but did not determine whether it prevailed.

As the peer competitor receded, the referential target of offensive reasoning contracted inward. Grenada's record had been organised around rival denial and zero-sum framing against Soviet-Cuban presence. The Panama record registered sphere enforcement and strategic asset control in the absence of any Soviet competitor, with the audiences for American signalling having contracted from global to regional. At Haiti, credibility maintenance had become self-referential, operating without any external addressee. No rival required managing and no specific adversary required deterring. American prior commitments had themselves become the forcing mechanism. Soviet competition receded from the deliberative record. The security-maximising orientation did not.

Defensive content followed a parallel trajectory, present in every case yet subordinated through a mechanism that evolved in a consistent direction. At Grenada, Bosworth and the State Department mounted institutionally grounded counter-positions that were overridden by the broader pattern of rival denial and credibility projection. In the Panama record, defensive content addressed treaty-asset protection, escalation management, and personnel vulnerability without contesting the strategic premise that Noriega's removal was the objective. Dissent operated within consensus rather than against it. At Haiti, Lake's reservation on the resolution deadline moderated timing without altering the intervention's direction or rationale. Dissent became less structurally possible as external constraints loosened. The institutional space for a genuinely competing position narrowed with each successive case.

Under unipolarity, credibility became self-referential. At Grenada it was directed at the Soviet-Cuban rival; at Panama at regional audiences; at Haiti at the administration itself and at other theatres. The signal no longer required an external addressee. Compulsion for decisive action had become self-generated, a dynamic the theory renders possible without predicting. In all three cases, offensive and defensive logic coexisted asymmetrically in one

consistent direction: defensive considerations qualified execution without revising the intervention decision itself. No document in the combined documentary record contains a defensive argument that displaced the security-maximising rationale for the use of force.

## 6. Conclusion

This thesis addressed the question of whether the transition from bipolarity to unipolarity determines which actor disposition prevails in U.S. decision-making on military intervention. The two dispositions at issue were the security-maximising orientation of offensive realism and the status-quo-oriented disposition of defensive realism. The research problem arose from a gap in existing scholarship: unit-level, normative, and neoclassical realist accounts of all three interventions exist, but no prior study had evaluated offensive and defensive structural realism as competing frameworks against their classified deliberative records. Nor had any prior study established whether polarity determines which orientation predominates.

Offensive and defensive realism served as competing theoretical lenses, with indicator sets derived from each school's expectations about when and why preponderant states employ force. The central theoretical argument held that the two schools' predictions diverge most sharply under unipolarity, where defensive realism anticipates that the dissolution of superpower competition reduces the perceived urgency of action and counsels restraint, while offensive realism anticipates continued or intensified intervention as structural constraints loosen. A Most Different Systems Design structured the comparison. Twenty-two declassified NSC archival files constitute the empirical basis, accessed through the National Archives Catalog and three presidential libraries and coded for the structural realist dimension of deliberation rather than the full deliberative record.

The main research question asked to what extent the bipolar-to-unipolar transition determines which disposition prevails. Underlying this question was a puzzle: whether incentives for hegemonic intervention diminish without a rival or intensify in its absence. The evidence supports the latter. In all three deliberative records, the security-maximising orientation dominated. Polarity conditioned the form that offensive reasoning assumed at each structural juncture. The underlying orientation, however, persisted across all three settings. Stability of this kind indicates a hegemonic disposition that operated independently of the systemic constraints surrounding it.

On the first sub-question, the security-maximising orientation predominated in each case. Grenada, Panama, and Haiti all classified as offensive-realist dominant on the basis of indicator preponderance. Regarding the second, the dominant orientation expressed itself

through distinct patterns whose referential content shifted with structural context across all three cases, as the preceding synthesis establishes. The third, i.e. the structural condition that determined which prevailed where both orientations coexisted was polarity itself: peer-competitor costs gave defensive arguments real structural weight under bipolarity, and as those constraints dissolved, the security-maximising logic encountered no structural counterweight. The progression from genuinely contested deliberation at Grenada to unchallenged consensus at Haiti reflects precisely this dynamic. In all three cases, the offensive-realist classification held regardless of which administration oversaw the intervention

The stability of the security-maximising disposition across structurally different settings suggests that structural realism accounts for patterns of hegemonic intervention more effectively than existing scholarship has recognised. Three implications follow. These findings extend the empirical reach of offensive realism beyond great-power rivalry to asymmetric intervention against states posing no conventional threat, suggesting that the logic Mearsheimer formalised applies beyond the great-power scope within which it was derived. Defensive realist expectations that unipolarity produces restraint are not confirmed. The absence of a peer competitor did not reduce the propensity to intervene but altered the justificatory vocabulary while leaving the orientation intact, and Haiti, the case where the defensive prediction should have held most firmly, produced the weakest defensive content. The Haiti record yields a further finding beyond what either framework directly anticipates. Offensive realism predicts that permissive conditions facilitate intervention, but it does not predict that the absence of external constraint becomes, of itself, a source of compulsion. That the policy apparatus generated internal pressure to act precisely because no rival required managing suggests a productive boundary of the theory's predictive reach.

Several limitations constrain these conclusions. Twenty-two documents represent only the declassified fraction of a larger record. Redactions and unprocessed materials reduce its completeness. Non-realist content, including democratic promotion, humanitarian concern, and domestic-political calculation, was identified but not systematically coded. The analysis therefore establishes which structural realist disposition predominated within the realist dimension of the deliberations but cannot determine whether structural reasoning outweighed non-realist reasoning in the overall record. The three cases do not permit generalisation to the full range of U.S. interventions, yet the consistency of the offensive-realist classification

across three structurally different settings suggests that the pattern is not an artefact of case selection.

Productive avenues for further research include extending the indicator-based framework to a larger set of asymmetric interventions, applying it to post-2001 cases in which unipolarity remained constant, and testing whether the patterns hold outside the Western Hemisphere. That pattern has direct bearing on the present moment, as emerging great power competition would constitute precisely the structural shift the framework developed here is positioned to analyse, testing whether renewed systemic constraints moderate the disposition this study documents. Cases in which the United States considered but declined to intervene would be particularly informative, as they would test whether the security-maximising disposition operates with comparable consistency where structural conditions are less permissive. A systematic comparison of structural realist and non-realist reasoning within the same documentary record would address the analytical boundary this study acknowledges.

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## 8. Appendix

### 8.1 Appendix 1. Endnotes

1. Studies of Grenada have situated the causal mechanism in leadership judgement and perceived Soviet-Cuban threat (Brands 1987, 620–622; Crandall 2006, 225), while accounts of Panama have emphasised bilateral crises, drug-policy politics, and the credibility imperative of the emerging sole superpower (Gilboa 1995, 540; Crandall 2006, 172–173). Haiti has attracted the most theoretically diverse scholarship: Finnemore (2003, 52) treated the intervention as evidence against realism; Girard (2004, 162) traced the outcome to a convergence of disparate motives including democracy restoration, migratory pressures, and domestic political calculation; and Kreps (2007, 449, 467–468) demonstrated that the operation was predominantly unilateral despite its multilateral framing.
2. Offensive realism anticipates that states seek to maximise relative power and exploit structural opportunities to consolidate regional dominance, with the removal of peer-competitor constraints rendering intervention more rather than less likely (Mearsheimer 2001, 34–35). Defensive realism predicts the opposite: states favour restraint and limit action to cases where a specific and identifiable threat materialises, such that the dissolution of the Soviet competitor should produce a more cautious posture rather than expanded intervention (Waltz 1979, 126; Glaser 2010, 55–56). The three cases, spanning late bipolarity, systemic transition, and established unipolarity, provide variation in structural context that allows assessment of whether the dominant disposition shifts as constraints loosen or persists regardless. Without this comparison, the repeated U.S. use of force in the Caribbean basin can only be read as three case-specific decisions driven by domestic politics, individual perception, or immediate crisis, obscuring any structural pattern in hegemonic behaviour.
3. Several cases are excluded after the above criteria have been applied. Guatemala (1954) involved covert CIA operations rather than overt military force and therefore does not meet the direct intervention criterion (Crandall 2006, 3). The Bay of Pigs (1961) was a failed clandestine operation further complicated by the Soviet nuclear dimension, which confounds structural realist analysis (Crandall 2006, 3). The Dominican Republic (1965) falls within a different structural context where bipolarity was firmly established rather than in transition (Crandall 2006, 3; Brands 1987, 608). Nicaragua during the 1980s similarly involved covert support to the Contras rather

than direct U.S. military invasion (Crandall 2006, 3). Grenada, Panama, and Haiti are left as the cases that satisfy all five criteria.

4. Operation Urgent Fury (25 October 1983) deployed approximately 7,600 U.S. troops and 300 Caribbean allies to Grenada after an internal coup led to the execution of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. Stated objectives were citizen protection, the removal of Cuban and Soviet presence, and the restoration of democratic government. Combat lasted one week. Elections followed in December 1984. Operation Just Cause (20 December 1989) deployed approximately 27,000 U.S. troops against the Noriega regime in Panama after the annulment of the May 1989 elections. Major combat lasted five days; Noriega surrendered on 3 January 1990 and the PDF was dissolved. Operation Uphold Democracy (19 September 1994) deployed approximately 20,000 U.S. troops to Haiti under UNSC Resolution 940 to restore President Aristide, ousted by a 1991 coup. Last-minute negotiations converted the planned invasion into a permissive entry. Aristide returned to office on 15 October 1994. No U.S. combat casualties were sustained.
5. Specific timeframes are as follows: Grenada, 20 January 1981 to 24 October 1983; Panama, 20 January to 19 December 1989; and Haiti, 20 January 1993 to 18 September 1994.
6. Secret memoranda, cables routed through the NSC system, policy review papers, and decision directives record how threats and strategic considerations were framed, weighed, and acted upon within classified settings.
7. Public presidential addresses, press briefings, and other materials intended for external audiences were excluded because they reflect strategic communication rather than internal threat assessment. Telephone conversations and memoranda of conversations with foreign leaders were excluded because they capture diplomatic signalling rather than internal reasoning. Memoirs and oral histories were excluded as retrospective accounts subject to ex post rationalisation.
8. For Grenada: Secretary of State George P. Shultz; Secretary of Defence Caspar W. Weinberger; DCI William J. Casey; APNSA William P. Clark, succeeded by Robert C. McFarlane on 17 October 1983; Chairman JCS General John W. Vessey Jr. NSC staff cited in the record include Oliver North, Constantine Menges, and Roger Fontaine (Latin American Affairs Directorate), Norman Bailey (Senior Director for International Economic Affairs), and Stephen Bosworth (author of the February 1982 policy review). Milan D. Bish served as U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern

Caribbean States; Charles Hill as Executive Secretary of the State Department. For Panama: Secretary of State James A. Baker III; Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney; APNSA Brent Scowcroft; DCI William H. Webster; Chairman JCS General Colin L. Powell. Lawrence Eagleburger served as Deputy Secretary of State; Richard Darman as OMB Director; Nicholas Brady as Secretary of the Treasury; General Maxwell Thurman as Commander, SOUTHCOM. For Haiti: Secretary of State Warren Christopher; Secretary of Defence William Perry; APNSA Anthony Lake; Deputy APNSA Samuel R. Berger; DCI R. James Woolsey; Chairman JCS General John Shalikashvili. Alan J. Kreczko served as NSC Legal Adviser; Lloyd N. Cutler as White House Counsel.

9. Primary source collection relied on the National Archives Catalog ([catalog.archives.gov](http://catalog.archives.gov)) as the primary gateway for locating records across the federal archival system. The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library provided digitalised Grenada-related NSC records, including finding aids, Executive Secretariat country files, National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs), and personnel files from officials within the Latin American Affairs Directorate, as well as records from the European and Soviet Affairs Directorate. George H. W. Bush Presidential Library provided Records of the National Security Council (NSC), comprising formal meeting minutes and policy papers from principals-level deliberations. The William J. Clinton Presidential Library provided personnel files from the Office of Inter-American Affairs, containing classified working materials from senior NSC staff with direct responsibility for Haiti policy.
10. This process reduced tens of thousands of initial search results to approximately 980 files. A second filtering pass retained only a series originating from the National Security Council apparatus, including NSC meeting files, National Security Directives, National Security Decision Directives, and personnel files from senior NSC staff. This reduced the corpus to a comprehensible level and allowed closer case-by-case examination of series requiring further refinement. The nature of this approach varied by case, as each presidential library organised NSC records according to different archival conventions shaped in part by how the administration itself had structured its paperwork. The Bush Library maintained a centralised and sequentially numbered meeting system established under National Security advisor Brent Scowcroft, whereas the Reagan and Clinton libraries organised records primarily by staff member, with working papers distributed among individual personnel files. First,

for Grenada, the Reagan Library holdings consisted of 46 files. The Executive Secretariat's NSC Cable Files were excluded as retrospective Situation Room compilations assembled after the intervention. Christopher M. Lehmann files were excluded on portfolio grounds, as Lehmann served in legislative affairs. Second, the Bush Library NSC series contained 92 files for Panama, spanning multiple policy domains. Files addressing topics unrelated to Panama were set aside on content grounds, and three files dated to January 1990 were excluded as post-intervention. The files of Robert M. Gates were excluded as multi-year compilations consisting mostly of memoranda with foreign leaders. Third, the nature of document distribution for the Haiti administration and Clinton Library filing system presented the most extensive filtering requirements. The files of Morton Halperin were excluded because they did not provide case-specific internal deliberations on the intervention decision. Nancy Soderberg's files contained cables to foreign leaders. The NSC Records Management System series documented United Nations proceedings rather than internal deliberations.

11. This reflects the offensive realist expectation that states assess third-state developments against the overall balance with their primary rival (Mearsheimer 2001, 144–145). The contrast with defensive realist expectations is direct. A status-quo-oriented actor would require evidence of a concrete capability change before infrastructure access warranted concern. For example, the establishment of a Soviet or Cuban base, the deployment of materiel, or confirmed training activity on the island. Bosworth's 1982 threshold logic, the only defensive-dominant document in the file, embodied precisely this requirement, conditioning stronger action on the establishment of Cuban or Soviet bases or definitive evidence of revolutionary training (Bosworth 1982, 9). The pre-invasion briefing materials operated at an earlier stage: concern was triggered by the potential for access, not its realisation.
12. Their recurrence across both global strategy directives and case-level documents supports the inference that the pattern reflects structural pressures channelled through the security apparatus rather than the dispositions of particular officials. A purely threat-driven response would have produced a limited containment operation along the lines Bosworth (1982, 9–10) recommended.
13. Its marginalisation as a classic overextension warning illustrates the hierarchy of deliberative orientations within the decision-making apparatus, where

status-quo-oriented reasoning entered the record but was institutionally superseded by the security-maximising disposition that shaped the final directives.

14. A status-quo-oriented actor operating under the same structural conditions would require evidence of a concrete capability shift – base establishment, training activity, or a discrete military presence – before Grenada's bloc trajectory warranted concern. The threshold-based logic of the Bosworth document, the one defensive-dominant item in the file, illustrates precisely this contrast.
15. A state acting on defensive realist logic would direct credibility signals at the specific counterpart posing the threat and calibrate them to the local balance. Here the signal was hemispheric, the audience multiple, and the purpose the projection of positional standing rather than the management of a discrete danger.
16. Non-realist material was also present. The restoration of democracy, criticism of the incumbent regime's human rights record, and references to the OECS request for assistance introduced public-facing and legal justifications. These elements appeared most frequently in sections dedicated to public communication and legislative strategy, outside passages that verbalised the strategic rationale for action itself (Reagan 1983d, 1–2).
17. Defensive reasoning was present but subordinated within a deliberative hierarchy that favoured the security-maximising disposition when the two came into conflict. Systemic conditions do not reach policy by direct transmission but through bureaucratic channels in which alternative readings contend. Documents record a full military intervention aimed at regime change, the removal of Cuban-Soviet presence, and the consolidation of hegemonic control.
18. Cheney's objection addressed the gap between declared posture and operational preparedness, not the direction of policy. The regional-reaction assessment appeared alongside the strategic case for removal in a list of considerations; it registered cost without generating reconsideration of the underlying objective. The pattern matches the defensive content throughout the Panama record: tactical qualification within strategic consensus.
19. Where offensive and defensive logics coexist within the same documents, the offensive prevails because the defensive content does not contest it at the strategic level. Eagleburger, Cheney, and Thurman raised concerns about execution, readiness, and rules of engagement; none advanced an objection to the premise of removal itself. Defensive-realist opposition of the kind that Bosworth and the State Department

mounted in the Grenada case has no analogue here. Structural pressure consequently operates through the planning archive at the tactical level, and the receding Soviet competitor accounts for the absence of strategic dispute.

20. Democratic transition and electoral integrity entered the record as justificatory framing after sphere enforcement, treaty-rights assertion, and credibility had established the direction of policy. Where the April policy paper enumerated opportunities for pressure and the October working paper assessed mechanisms for accelerating regime collapse, normative language appeared in the rationale sections rather than in the strategic analysis. The non-realist content was not systematically coded, which constitutes a limitation; a dedicated study of how normative framing interacted with positional reasoning would test whether these arguments operated independently.
21. Across the documents, removal figures as a settled premise rather than a contested question, with deliberation focused on exploiting the alignment between domestic political support, international legitimacy, and target vulnerability. Escalation was consequently framed as a means of creating conditions that could not be specified in advance, rather than as a proportionate response to deteriorating circumstances. The calibrated character of the pressure campaign is therefore consistent with offensive opportunism rather than reactive threat management.
22. Throughout all indicator categories in the Haiti coding table, executive authority and power maximisation returned the highest frequency of coded instances. The administration's legal memoranda consistently asserted presidential authority to deploy force without prior congressional approval. Kreczko stated that "No President has accepted that his Constitutional authority to use force is limited to situations of imminent danger to American citizens" (Kreczko 1994b, 60), rejecting the premise that force requires an identifiable threat – the defensive realist threshold condition. Lake, Griffin, and Cutler proposed to "position us to argue to the public that Congress has recognized that a prior congressional authorization is not needed" (Lake, Griffin, and Cutler 1994, 32). Congressional approval was pursued as a tactical asset; the institutional apparatus managed potential veto points rather than deferring to them.
23. That rival-management logic is entirely absent from the Haiti record is not a gap in the analysis but a substantive finding in its own right. At Grenada, Soviet-Cuban presence supplied both the target and the vocabulary of the security-maximising disposition; at Panama, the Soviet Union had disappeared from the documentary frame, but audiences for American signalling remained identifiable at the regional level. At Haiti,

no external audience is named. The credibility imperative addressed the enforceability of American commitments as such, without reference to any actor whose behaviour the signal was designed to alter.

24. Democracy-promotion, humanitarian concern, and immigration featured more prominently in Haiti's external justification than in either preceding case. With no rival to deny and no conventional security threat to invoke, the administration lacked the realist vocabulary that had framed Grenada's intervention around Soviet-Cuban presence and Panama's around treaty-rights assertion. Normative arguments filled this gap, yet the documentary record shows them entering after the strategic logic of credibility and opportunity had already been settled. The non-realist content was not systematically coded, which constitutes a limitation; a dedicated study of how normative framing interacted with structural reasoning in the Haiti deliberations would test whether these arguments operated independently or remained subordinate to the positional logic identified here.
25. Haiti's classification differs from Grenada and Panama in its evidentiary basis. No rival power appears in the deliberative record, no specific capability is identified as threatening, and the balance-of-threat logic that supplied the justificatory vocabulary at Grenada is entirely absent. The offensive-dominant classification therefore rests on credibility maintenance, opportunity exploitation, and regional hegemony without any rival-management dimension — the configuration most consistent with Mearsheimer's prediction for a fully consolidated unipole operating within its own sphere (2001, 36–37, 140–143). The deadline contest represents the clearest instance of genuine principal-level disagreement in the Haiti record; its resolution in favour of the defensive position on timing while preserving the offensive course confirms that defensive reasoning shaped the operational envelope without revising the underlying decision to intervene.

## **8.2 Appendix 2. Indicator coding framework**

For compact reference in the analysis, each indicator is designated by a letter prefix denoting its theoretical affiliation (D for defensive realism, O for offensive realism). A cluster number corresponds to the characteristic groupings above, and to a sequential indicator number within that cluster.

### 8.2.1 Appendix 2.1. Defensive realism indicator coding framework

Indicator group	Specific indicator	Main source(s)	Indicator
Security sufficiency and status-quo preservation	Threat-driven – responding to specific threat with proportional, limited objectives	(Glaser 2010, 55–56, 85)	D1.1
	Situation does not pose sufficient threat to warrant response	(Waltz 2000, 29)	D1.2
	Framing national interest narrowly, distinguishing core security from peripheral	(Glaser 2010, 90)	D1.3
	Protecting strategic asset as limited, security-driven objective	(Snyder 1991, 4; Glaser 2010, 85)	D1.4
	Arguments about whether to act	(Taliaferro 2000/01, 128)	D1.5
	Objective as restoring status quo not to pursue open-ended transformation.	(Glaser 2010, 55)	D1.6
Balance-of-threat assessment and calibrated threat perception	Identifying primary threat, organising response around containing it	(Walt 1987, 17; Taliaferro 2000/01, 138)	D2.1
	Distinguishing capability from intent, intentions require independent assessment	(Walt 1987, 21–22, 26; Taliaferro 2000/01, 129, 136)	D2.2
	Proximity-driven threat assessed via balance-of-threat factors, response proportional assessed severity	(Walt 1987, 22–26; Taliaferro 2000/01, 137–139)	D2.3
	Downgrading threat by noting state lacks threat factors	(Walt 1987, 26)	D2.4
	Invoking balance of threat.	(Walt 1987, 21–22)	D2.5
Security dilemma awareness, spiral avoidance, and reassurance	Worrying about provoking spiral	(Taliaferro 2000/01, 129)	D3.1
	Considering how US action will be perceived	(Taliaferro 2000/01, 129, 136)	D3.2
	Warning intervention will provoke backlash or balancing coalition	(Walt 1987, 25–26, 28)	D3.3
	Credibility as defensive resolve	(Glaser 2010, 55; Glaser 1997, 181–182)	D3.4
	Signalling restraint to reassure regional states	(Walt 1987, 27; Taliaferro 2000/01,	D3.5

		129)	
	Balancing is imperfect in timing but recurrent, making expansion self-defeating.	(Waltz 2000, 35–36; Snyder 1991, 22)	D3.6
Defensive posture, structural security, and offshore balancing	Nuclear/geographic factors provide sufficient deterrence	(Taliaferro 2000/01, 139–140; Van Evera 1999, 131)	D4.1
	Avoiding overcommitment beyond their vital interests.	(Waltz 2000, 25–27; Taliaferro 2000/01, 159–160; Van Evera 1999, 117–119)	D4.2
Costs of expansion and conquest	Conquest creates quagmires and overextension and doesn't-pay	(Taliaferro 2000/01, 139; Snyder 1991, 3)	D5.1
	Citing historical failed interventions as evidence.	(Snyder 1991, 4, 9)	D5.2

*Source: author's synthesis based on Waltz (1979; 2000), Walt (1987), Snyder (1991), Van Evera (1999), Glaser (1997; 2010), and Taliaferro (2000/01). Table compiled by the author.*

## 8.2.2 Appendix 2.2. Offensive realism indicator coding framework

Indicator group	Specific indicator	Main source(s)	Indicator
Power maximisation imperative	Opportunity-driven – gaining power, filling vacuums, demonstrating dominance	(Mearsheimer 2001, 29)	O1.1
	Exploiting an adversary's weakness to expand influence, regardless if a threat exists	(Mearsheimer 2001, 37)	O1.2
	Treating favourable conditions as the argument for action	(Mearsheimer 2001, 29)	O1.3
	Framing security as a function of relative power superiority rather than absolute capability or threat levels	(Mearsheimer 2001, 55–56)	O1.4
	Dismissing restraint as naive or dangerous	(Mearsheimer 2001, 29–35)	O1.5
Regional hegemony and sphere-of-influence enforcement	Western Hemisphere as exclusive U.S. sphere where external influence is inherently unacceptable	(Mearsheimer 2001, 141–143)	O2.1
	Intervention to deny a rival a foothold, staging area, or platform	(Mearsheimer 2001, 142–143)	O2.2
	Emphasis on denying positional	(Mearsheimer 2001,	O2.3

	advantage, not responding to specific attack	141–143)	
Relative power and zero-sum competition	Requires a rival identified	(Mearsheimer 2001, 31–32)	O3.1
	Protecting strategic asset framed as maintaining power position or denying rivals	(Mearsheimer 2001, 138, 143)	O3.2
	Evaluating developments in third states through lens of U.S.–rival power balance	(Mearsheimer 2001, 144–145)	O3.3
	Zero-sum framing where another state's gain is treated as an American loss	(Mearsheimer 2001, 34)	O3.4
	Treating rival intentions inherently unknowable	(Mearsheimer 2001, 31, 45)	O3.5
	Power gap must be maintained or widened	(Mearsheimer 2001, 33–35)	O3.6
	Cost-saving measure buck-passing	(Mearsheimer 2001, 139)	O3.7
Preventive action and proactive posture	Credibility as projection of dominance	(Mearsheimer 2001, 166–167)	O4.1
	Military action necessary now to prevent deterioration, even absent imminent attack	(Mearsheimer 2001, 34–35)	O4.2
	Inaction as a risk because power shifts are unpredictable	(Mearsheimer 2001, 34–35)	O4.3
Credibility and reputation as instruments of dominance	Allies and adversaries watching for weakness	(Mearsheimer 2001, 166)	O5.1
	Acting to demonstrate resolve to audiences beyond immediate crisis	(Mearsheimer 2001, 166)	O5.2
	Domino logic – loss triggering cascade	(Mearsheimer 2001, 166)	O5.3

*Source: author's synthesis based on Mearsheimer (2001). Table compiled by the author.*

### 8.3 Appendix 3. Case coding tables

Case-specific coding tables on which the empirical classifications in the analysis are based are presented in the following chapter. For each case, the tables identify offensive and defensive realist indicators and record the documentary basis of each coding decision by indicator label, source, page number, and illustrative quotation. Appendix 3.1 and 3.2 cover Grenada, Appendix 3.3 and 3.4 cover Panama, and Appendix 3.5 and 3.6 cover Haiti.

### 8.3.1 Appendix 3.1. Grenada – identified offensive realist indicators

Indicator	Source	Page	Quote
O1.1	Reagan 1983b	2	The Defense Department will complete plans as soon as possible for the development of a U.S. naval and air facility in Honduras.
	Reagan 1983d	1	The Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the Secretary of State and the Director of Central Intelligence, will land U.S. and allied Caribbean military forces in order to take control of Grenada, no later than dawn Tuesday, October 25, 1983.
	Reagan 1982	5	To strengthen the influence of the U.S. throughout the world by strengthening existing alliances, by improving relations with other nations, by forming and supporting coalitions of states friendly to U.S. interests, and by a full range of diplomatic, political, economic, and information efforts.
	Bailey 1982	14	A willingness to take advantage of all windows of opportunity (i.e. current Mexican financial problems); that the only "special relationship" we are interested in is one involving U.S. leadership.
	Bish 1983	11	It occurs to me, as it doubtlessly has to you, that the political turmoil on Grenada may pose an opportunity as well as a problem.
O1.2	Reagan 1982	5	To foster, if possible in concert with our allies, restraint in Soviet military spending, discourage Soviet adventurism, and weaken the Soviet alliance system by forcing the USSR to bear the brunt of its economic shortcomings, and to encourage long-term liberalizing and nationalist tendencies within the Soviet Union and allied countries.
	Bailey 1982	14	A willingness to work directly for the overthrow of antagonistic regimes, such as those of Grenada, Nicaragua and Cuba.
	Bish 1983	11	Who knows, a long look might turn up a number of unimagined ways to make life uncomfortable for the PRG.
	Bish 1983	11	The confused situation of divided loyalties poses an opportunity for a third force representing democracy and freedom. If we ever entertained the option of supporting, covertly or otherwise, such a

			force, now would seem to be the time to act.
	Department of State 1983	7	Because of their small size and limited potential for resistance, political takeovers in the islands can be accomplished without the need to engage in prolonged Central America-style insurgencies . . .
O1.3	Bish 1983	11	The next ten days provide a window of opportunity.
O2.1	Reagan 1982	21	In the Western Hemisphere, to blunt and contain the projection of Soviet and Cuban military power and influence in the Caribbean Basin and South America; to reduce and if possible eliminate Soviet influence in Cuba . . .
	Reagan 1982	7	In Latin America Communist exploitation of social and political unrest in Central America will continue to pose the most serious challenge to U.S. interests in the hemisphere since Cuba became allied with the USSR.
	Bailey 1982	13	In the Caribbean Basin area, recovery in my view is possible, but only if the U.S. will now take clear, forceful, and if necessary . . . unilateral actions in all fields, political, economic and military, to reassert our dominance in the area.
	Bailey 1982	13	The Pax Americana in the Western Hemisphere was born in 1895 with the issuance of the Olney Declaration ("the word of the United States is fiat upon this continent") and died in 1982 after weakening steadily after 1961 (Bay of Pigs).
	Casey 1983	30	Dr. Brzezinski, Ambassador Owen (NSC), and Deputy Secretary of Defense Claytor call for the U.S. to give evidence of its readiness to use its power in its sphere of influence to force a small nation to behave.
O2.2	Reagan 1983b	1	Adequate U.S. support must also be provided to the democratic resistance forces within Nicaragua in an effort to ensure that Nicaragua ceases to be a Soviet/Cuban base . . .
	Reagan 1983b	1	must be significantly increased
	Reagan 1983a	1	In the face of Grenada's growing military potential and the possible use of the island as a base for subversion, and Cuban/Soviet strategic outreach, the Eastern Caribbean states entered into a regional security arrangement in late 1982.

Reagan 1983a	1	Grenada, with increasingly closer ties to Cuba, serves as a location from which anti-democratic elements of each of the other islands receive encouragement, training, and financial support.
Reagan 1983c	1	The United States should also be prepared to participate in a multi-lateral effort to restore order on Grenada and prevent further Cuban/Soviet intervention/ involvement on the island.
Reagan 1982	21	. . . discourage the USSR from using Cuba as a base for mounting a strategic threat to the security of the hemisphere
Reagan 1982	10	In the Western Hemisphere, our primary wartime objective is the security of the North American Continent, the Caribbean Basin and the Panama Canal. In peacetime, our objectives are to modernize North America's strategic air defense system; to reverse Communist gains in Latin America; and to increase U.S. military presence.
North, Menges, and Fontaine 1983	13	Our objectives are straight-forward: . . . Prevent further Cuban/Soviet influence.
Bosworth 1982	6	In recent weeks a PRG minister stated publicly in Kingston that the new Point Salines airport will be available to the Cubans for military purposes and "due to its strategic location" could also be used by the USSR.
Reagan 1983d	1	The elimination of current, and the prevention of further, Cuban intervention in Grenada.
Casey 1983	30	The Soviets offer to build a deep water seaport on the east coast of Grenada with the proviso that Soviet warships be granted visiting rights.
Department of State 1983	5	The air-field will then be able to accommodate Soviet TU-95 naval reconnaissance aircraft and IL-62 aircraft used to support the Cuban forces in Africa. (The IL-62 cannot fly directly to Angola from Cuba, but could do so from Grenada, which is 900 miles closer to Africa.)
Department of State 1983	5	The battalion-sized facility could be used as a staging base for Cuban or other foreign forces.
Howe 1983	8	The Soviets opened a resident embassy, agreed to train Grenadans in intelligence techniques in the Soviet Union, and are expected to begin shortly a feasibility study of the Greenville deep water port,

			which could be used as a station for the Soviet Navy in the Caribbean.
O2.3	Reagan 1983a	1	None of the nations, with the possible exception of Barbados, has security assets and organizations that are adequate to meet the challenges posed by forces hostile to democratically oriented, pro-U.S. governments.
	Reagan 1983d	1	The recent violence and instability have also created a situation which could seriously jeopardize the lives and safety of American citizens.
	Reagan 1983d	1	. . . land U.S. and allied Caribbean military forces in order to take control of Grenada
	Reagan 1982	59	To reverse Communist gains in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada and other areas in Latin America.
	Shultz 1982	32	Engage the new Betancur administration in a cooperative approach to Central America and the region, before it veers off to the "Latin America versus U.S." ideas it is toying with.
	North, Menges, and Fontaine 1983	19	Cooperation with Cuba and Libya in subversive activities directed against neighboring Caribbean democracies.
	Bosworth 1982	6	The PRG is maintaining close contacts with Eastern Caribbean radicals, and is providing them with some financial assistance -- from Cuba.
	Bosworth 1982	7	Our current low-profile policies are designed to contain and isolate the Bishop regime.
	Reagan 1983d	1	These Caribbean democratic nations have unanimously and formally resolved to form a multi-national Caribbean force to remove 'the outlaw regime on Grenada' and restore democracy by any means, including force of arms.
	Casey 1983	30	Range: From Florida to Venezuela, one of the most powerful broadcasting capabilities in the Lesser Antilles.
Department of State 1983	6	These [Cuban airlift and sealift] capabilities could be used to reinforce the Grenadan or Surinamese regimes, or to transport troops from these countries or Cuba, or Caribbean subversives, to back up a minority group seizing power in other Eastern Caribbean states.	

O3.2	Reagan 1983a	1	U.S. military logistic support and reinforcements essential for use in a Persian Gulf contingency must also pass through the region.
	Reagan 1983c	1	commence planning for U.S. participation in a multi-lateral effort to restore order on Grenada and deter Cuban military intervention.
O3.3	Reagan 1983a	1	The principal objective of the United States in the Eastern Caribbean is to promote economically viable, independent democratic governments friendly to the United States and free of Cuban and Soviet influence.
	Reagan 1983c	1	the apparent breakdown of control have created a situation which could lead to the further radicalization of Grenadan society and increased Cuban/Soviet presence and activities on the island.
	Reagan 1983d	1	The elimination of current, and the prevention of further, Cuban intervention in Grenada.
	Reagan 1982	58	Latin America, and especially the Caribbean/Central American region, is an area with which we are closely associated by virtue of our Gulf Coast and Mexican borders, our dependence in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and the critical Panama Canal waterway. . . . Moreover, in event of war, half of NATO's supplies would transit . . .
	North, Menges, and Fontaine 1983	19	Completion of a new airfield with a 9,000 foot runway meant that the Soviet Union might land nuclear capable bombers there -- perhaps one way of carrying out their threats to respond with 'analogous [sic] measures' to the coming INF deployment in Europe.
	North, Menges, and Fontaine 1983	19	The port of St. Georges is capable of accommodating Soviet nuclear ballistic submarines and their tenders -- another possible Soviet response to INF.
	Bosworth 1982	6	Given Grenada's close links with Cuba, the results of this review should be consistent with and supportive of our policy toward Cuba.
	Bosworth 1982	6	Grenada's ties with Cuba and the Soviets have grown steadily over the past year.
	Howe 1983	9	The emergence of a Cuba/Grenada/Suriname axis is of major geopolitical import, particularly in view of the relative absence of countervailing forces.

O3.4	Reagan 1983d	2	Appropriate cover and deception measures are authorized to mislead the present Grenadian regime and the Cubans concerning our true intentions.
	Reagan 1982	5	To contain and reverse the expansion of Soviet control and military presence throughout the world, and to increase the costs of Soviet support and use of proxy, terrorist, and subversive forces.
	Reagan 1982	5	To neutralize the efforts of the USSR to increase its influence through its use of diplomacy, arms transfers, economic pressure, political action, propaganda, and disinformation.
	Bosworth 1982	8	The PRG has continued to move closer politically and militarily to the Cuban/Soviet camp and appears determined to maintain itself in power by coercive and authoritarian means.
	Bosworth 1982	4	We concluded that our low-profile distancing policy has encouraged Grenada's isolation in the Caribbean . . .
O3.5	Reagan 1983c	1	The Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will ensure that all possible measures are taken to preserve the security of these activities and reduce the possibility of pre-emptive action by the Soviets/Cubans.
O3.6	Reagan 1982	20	To limit the growth of, and where possible, to reduce Soviet military capabilities by demonstrating the sustained commitment of the U.S. to increase its military strength, to redress any significant imbalance favoring the Soviet Union . . .
	Reagan 1982	5	To limit Soviet military capabilities by strengthening the U.S. military . . . and by preventing the flow of militarily significant technologies and resources to the Soviet Union.
O3.7	Howe 1983	9	We are seeking to design our security assistance program to meet the immediate requirements of the system's rapid reaction force, and to make possible eventually an autonomous response by the system to potential threats.
O4.1	Reagan 1983b	1	Our ability to support democratic states in the region, and those on the path to democracy, must be visibly demonstrated by our military forces.

	Reagan 1983a	3	The United States should maintain sufficient military presence in the Eastern Caribbean to deter aggression to the various pro-democratic states and to respond to any such aggression, as necessary.
	Hill 1983	22	The United States should maintain sufficient military presence in, and sense of commitment to, the Eastern Caribbean to deter external aggression and to respond to any such aggression, as needed.
O4.2	Reagan 1983b	1	U.S. military activities in the region must be significantly increased to . . . deter further Cuban and Soviet Bloc intervention.
	Reagan 1982	24	The sense of enhanced security created by the Soviet military posture may encourage the USSR to continue to take advantage of local unrest . . . wherever Moscow perceives that it can undermine pro-Western governments, especially if this can be done without risking a confrontation with the US.
	Reagan 1982	8	The U.S. should also be capable of intervening militarily in regional or local conflicts. . . . The U.S. will remain the primary power for directly resisting the Soviets.
	Reagan 1982	51	Contingency planning should, however, include options for military actions in regions of clear U.S. advantage to dissuade the Soviets from continuing their attack. In this context, the threat of counteroffensives elsewhere is an essential element of U.S. strategy . . .
	Bish 1983	11	If we ever entertained the option of supporting, covertly or otherwise, such a force, now would seem to be the time to act. . . . The next ten days provide a window of opportunity.
	Bosworth 1982	10	Since future PRG actions could demand a strong U.S. stance, we need to position ourselves to be able to move to a harder position if necessary.
O5.2	Reagan 1983b	1	U.S. military activities in the region must be significantly increased to demonstrate our willingness to defend our allies and to deter further Cuban and Soviet Bloc intervention.
	Reagan 1983b	1	Exercise AHAUS TARA II should begin on or about August 1, 1983. . . . Naval and carrier flight exercises will be conducted in the vicinity of Honduras, Grenada, Suriname, the Eastern Caribbean, and the Pacific side of Central America.

	Reagan 1983a	1	U.S. policy for this subregion should also help generate support for U.S. objectives and efforts in Central America.
	Reagan 1982	73	Current US forward-deployed forces will be postured to facilitate the transition from peacetime to wartime posture, to foster military and non-military relations, to demonstrate US power and interest, and to assist in the retention of US rights, authorizations, and facilities abroad.
	Reagan 1982	73	Current US forward-deployed forces will be postured in peacetime to provide a capability for timely and flexible response to contingencies and to demonstrate resolve to honor US commitments.
	Reagan 1982	12	Deploy military forces rapidly to the area to signal U.S. commitment and to deter further aggression.
	Shultz 1982	32	We have stopped the drift to Marxism/Leninism. We now need to show our staying power.
	Casey 1983	30	call for the U.S. to give evidence of its readiness to use its power in its sphere of influence to force a small nation to behave.
	Howe 1983	9	Since maintaining an adequate U.S. presence is necessary in order to demonstrate our commitment to the security of the region, we are recommending that an appropriate exercise schedule be considered
	Hill 1983	21	In an effort to offset the growing projection of Cuban and Soviet power in the sub-region, it is essential that the U.S. signal its support for the democratic Eastern Caribbean states. A public statement underscoring our commitment to the security of the Eastern Caribbean would carry significant psychological impact.
O5.3	Reagan 1983a	1	Should the small states of the area fall under the control of radical groups with anti-U.S. orientation, the U.S. would face a significant threat to our economic and security interests.
	Reagan 1982	24	Moscow has perceived the US as politically constrained not only by the trauma of Vietnam but by an inability to achieve domestic consensus . . . In turn, the Soviets have probed US resolve in the Third World . . .
	Casey 1983	29	The occurrences leading up to Bishop's seizure of power do indeed present an interesting precedent in considering the Suriname matter.

Source: author's analysis of primary source documents. Table compiled by the author.

### 8.3.2 Appendix 3.2. Grenada – identified defensive realist indicators

Indicator	Source	Page	Quote
D1.1	Reagan 1983b	1	The democratic states of Central America must be assisted to the maximum degree possible in defending themselves against externally supported subversion or hostile neighbors.
	Reagan 1983b	1	The increasing threat to U.S. national interests in Central America requires that we strengthen our diplomatic and security efforts in the region.
	Reagan 1983a	1	The security situation, however, is a continuing concern; the small island states of the Eastern Caribbean are vulnerable to both internal and external threats.
	Reagan 1983c	1	The coup and subsequent disorders on Grenada have created a situation that could seriously jeopardize the lives and safety of American citizens.
	Reagan 1982	5	To deter military attack by the USSR and its allies against the U.S., its allies, and other important countries across the spectrum of conflict; and to defeat such attack should deterrence fail.
	Bish 1983	11	WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EVACUATE A MAXIMUM OF 800-1000 CITIZENS . . . I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT WE REVIEW OUR CONTINGENCY PLANS AND PERHAPS TENTATIVELY IDENTIFY THE MILITARY ASSETS THAT WOULD BE CALLED UPON SHOULD AN EVACUATION BECOME NECESSARY.
	Bosworth 1982	4	After considering pros and cons of taking new, more drastic measures . . . we determined that for the time being, we should stay on the present course, but take these new actions
	Bosworth 1982	9	In order to contain any more active security threat from Grenada we should continue: -- to devote more intelligence resources to monitoring PRG relations . . . to be sensitive to the views of Caribbean democracies

D1.3	Reagan 1982	10	Specifically, our most fundamental national security objective is to deter direct attack--particularly nuclear attack--on the United States, its forces and its allies and friends.
	Shultz 1982	33	Costa Rica is just working through its massive debt problems and, lacking an army, knows it cannot survive without the U.S.
	Bish 1983	11	WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EVACUATE A MAXIMUM OF 800-1000 CITIZENS, 600 OF THEM AT THE ST. GEORGE'S UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE CAMPUSES AT GRAND ANSE AND TRUE BLUE.
	Bosworth 1982	4	We concluded that our low-profile distancing policy has encouraged Grenada's isolation in the Caribbean while remaining sensitive to the views of Caribbean democracies critical of the PRG but opposed to totally isolating Grenada.
D1.4	Reagan 1983a	1	A significant portion of our imported oil and U.S. commercial shipping transits through the sea lanes of the Eastern Caribbean.
	Reagan 1983c	1	All prudent measures should be taken to protect the lives and safety of American citizens on Grenada, should the situation so require.
	Reagan 1983d	1	Assuring the safety of American citizens on Grenada.
	Reagan 1982	6	To ensure the U.S. access to foreign markets, and to ensure the U.S. and its allies and friends access to foreign energy and mineral resources.
D1.5	Bish 1983	11	THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE AN IMMEDIATE THREAT TO AMERICAN CITIZEN INTERESTS, BUT THE SITUATION COULD CHANGE, AND WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EVACUATE A MAXIMUM OF 800-1000 CITIZENS
D1.6	Howe 1983	10	What will emerge from this process will be basically a containment strategy, which does not attempt to address the fundamental problem of Cuban and Soviet involvement in the eastern Caribbean, but it may harden the targets of Cuban subversion and slow down the deterioration of our security position in the area.

D2.1	Reagan 1983b	1	The consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Nicaragua, committed to the export of violence and totalitarianism, poses a significant risk to the stability of Central America.
	Reagan 1983b	2	. . . other military exercises will be developed, as appropriate, to induce Cuba to curb its support for the violent overthrow of, and military threats to, democratic governments.
	Reagan 1982	16	The Soviet Union is and will remain for the foreseeable future the most formidable threat to the United States and to American interests globally.
	Reagan 1982	6	The key military threats to U.S. security during the 1980s will continue to be posed by the USSR and its allies and clients.
	Shultz 1982	33	. . . isolation and ultimate democratization of Nicaragua, control of territorial conflicts, and search for sustainable economic growth.
	Bish 1983	11	While BISHOP WAS NO FRIEND OF OURS, COARD AND RADICALS WILL MAKE MATTERS WORSE.
	Bosworth 1982	9	In order to contain any more active security threat from Grenada we should continue: -- to devote more intelligence resources to monitoring PRG relations with Cuba, the Soviet Union, and Caribbean radicals.
	Reagan 1983d	1	The recent violence and instability have also created a situation which could seriously jeopardize the lives and safety of American citizens.
	Department of State 1983	4	The security environment in the Eastern Caribbean is deteriorating markedly . . . growing Soviet and Cuban involvement in Grenada and the leftward lurch of the Suriname government provide further cause for concern.
D2.2	Casey 1983	29	State tells NSC that it is not prepared to characterize the Bishop government as a Cuban puppet and suggests that it is 'cooptable' by either the Cubans or the U.S.
D2.3	Bosworth 1982	9	More drastic U.S. measures, if triggered by the establishment of Cuban/Soviet bases in Grenada or definitive evidence that the PRG is training Caribbean revolutionaries, would probably be acceptable to the Caribbean democracies and defensible in the U.S.

	Bosworth 1982	12	Should GRENADA BECOME A MORE IMMEDIATE SECURITY THREAT TO THE REGION OR CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE AND EXPLOITATION OF GRENADA BECOME A GREATER PROBLEM, U.S. POLICY TOWARD GRENADA WILL BE REVIEWED ONCE AGAIN.
D2.4	Bish 1983	11	THERE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE AN IMMEDIATE THREAT TO AMERICAN CITIZEN INTERESTS, BUT THE SITUATION COULD CHANGE
D3.1	Reagan 1982	95	The inherent danger of pre-conflict measures is that they could provoke instead of deter conflict. Therefore, they must be integrated with appropriate diplomatic consideration to insure that no side feels impelled to wage war.
D3.2	Reagan 1983d	2	He will also inform Cuba and the Soviet Union of our actions at an appropriate time and provide for the safe passage from Grenada for their nationals.
	McFarlane 1983	18	The purpose of your statement at Tab A is to reassure the nation and the world regarding our participation in this action.
	Bosworth 1982	9	But concerted, harsh rhetoric or precipitous U.S. actions would be counter-productive now by: -- Arousing sympathy for Grenada (David and Goliath) thus fostering more support, e.g., in the European Community.
	Bosworth 1982	9	-- Dividing the U.S. from hemispheric democracies after having developed a strong degree of consensus in the OAS on Central America.
	Bosworth 1982	9	More drastic U.S. measures . . . could increase Grenada's economic woes, but -- if pursued in isolation -- could push potential Caribbean allies into an embarrassing position.
D3.3	Casey 1983	30	State representatives object vigorously on the grounds that such action would cause us to lose the rest of the Caribbean.
D3.4	Hill 1983	22	The Presidential letter should indicate our intention, in the event of an armed attack or other threats to the security of the democratic states of the region, to consult with a view toward providing appropriate contributions to the collective defense . . .

D3.5	Bosworth 1982	4	. . . remaining sensitive to the views of Caribbean democracies critical of the PRG but opposed to totally isolating Grenada.
	Bosworth 1982	10	Establish a record of willingness to talk with Grenada by permitting mid-level (Howard) exchanges (in which we would lay out our concerns with regard to PRG conduct).
D4.1	Reagan 1982	10	Deterrence can best be achieved if our defense posture makes Soviet assessment of war outcomes, under any contingency, so uncertain and dangerous as to remove any incentives for initiating attack.
D4.2	Reagan 1982	51	. . . the U.S. will seek to limit the scope of a U.S.-Soviet conflict to the extent commensurate with protecting U.S. vital interests.
	Reagan 1982	9	In contingencies not involving direct Soviet aggression, our strategy is to rely on regional states to the extent possible.
	Hill 1983	25	The United States should provide security assistance that will provide for eventual autonomous response by the Eastern Caribbean nations to any threat short of overt aggression by an outside power.

*Source: author's analysis of primary source documents.*

### 8.3.3 Appendix 3.3. Panama – identified offensive realist indicators

Indicator	Source	Page	Quote
O1.1	Baker 1989	8	Increase uncertainty by Noriega and within Panama Defense Forces regarding U.S. intentions.
	Baker 1989	9	. . . send a signal to Noriega and the PDF to create uncertainty in their minds concerning U.S. intentions.
	Baker 1989	10	Dispatch an infantry brigade-equivalent to Panama to augment currently assigned forces. The reenforcement should be announced with minimal explanation as to the purpose so as to avoid either threats or reassurances.
	Baker 1989	16	It reduces vulnerability to future pressures by signaling that we are clearing the decks, giving ourselves more freedom for future, unspecified action.
	Baker 1989	40	. . . it will be necessary to create freedom-of-movement exercises designed to assert

			our rights under the treaty.
	NSC 1989a	37	Organize U.S. military operation to remove Noriega and neutralize the PDF: U.S. would organize and execute a large-scale military operation to remove Noriega from power, neutralize the PDF . . . Advances U.S. interests and objectives.
	NSC 1989a	40	Evidence of U.S. inserting itself as an active player will: encourage opposition; open up choices for all Panamanians; unsettle PDF; raise threshold of uncertainty for Noriega.
	NSC 1989a	40	Maximizes subsequent choice of alternatives if PDF does not act or PDF coup fails.
	NSC 1989b	17	. . . we should look at the elections as a starting point.
	NSC 1989b	18	The only option he could see is more U.S. actions and hope that there would be some other thing happening to get this man out.
	Scowcroft 1989a	50	The action plan has several objectives: to increase uncertainty by Noriega and within the Defense Forces regarding our intentions; to demonstrate our resolve; and to preposition ourselves for subsequent measures.
	Scowcroft 1989c	38	There is general agreement at the Deputies level that they [opposition leaders] have become more important to the U.S. as a result of the October coup attempt
O1.2	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	47	In the aftermath of the failed coup of October 3, Noriega is extremely vulnerable to additional military and economic pressures. While there are no guarantees of success without direct U.S. intervention, there is a reasonable prospect that intensified pressures will lead to change from within Panama.
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	48	Exploit the existing disarray and demoralization within the PDF and among Noriega's dwindling cadre of civilian supporters, stimulating further divisions within the PDF and increasing anti-Noriega sentiment among key PDF officers.
O1.3	NSC 1989a	27	Opportunity: public support for strong anti-drug policy gives Administration a virtually free hand to move against Noriega.

	NSC 1989a	27	Opportunity: new Administration in U.S., strong public support in U.S. and Panama for moving decisively against Noriega, and Congressional desire to resolve issue could combine to . . . employ May 7 election as a potential triggering device.
O1.5	NSC 1989a	26	Noriega's confidence in his staying power will have been boosted after weathering the elections, however, and he will see little reason to offer significant concessions to the United States.
	NSC 1989a	38	Certain to evoke Latin American and international criticism, which would be very costly if operation failed, likely to abate quickly if it succeeded.
O2.1	NSC 1989a	28	failure to resolve the Panama situation by September 1 (end of Delvalle's term) will confront the Administration with fallout from a perceived foreign policy failure . . . with strong negative implications for U.S. Central America policy
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989b	51	If we decide to initiate the establishment and recognition of an Endara government we should be prepared to use U.S. military force to install and protect that government should this become necessary to ensure the removal of Noriega from power . . .
O2.2	Baker 1989	36	Might prevent some technology transfer to Cuba.
	NSC 1989a	25	We believe Noriega will probably look increasingly to Cuba, Nicaragua, and Libya for economic, military, and intelligence assistance, although he will continue to proceed cautiously to avoid antagonizing anti-Communist officers
O2.3	Baker 1989	16	some personnel are now non-essential to the attainment of present policy objectives and goals, i.e., the removal of Noriega from power
	Baker 1989	20	Tell Noriega supporters that the economy will get worse as long as Noriega remains in power.
	Baker 1989	40	exercises designed to assert our rights under the treaty. These exercises would require a concentration of U.S. forces sufficient to contain any PDF efforts designed to interfere with the exercise of our legitimate rights.

Baker 1989	46	The United States also has a responsibility to uphold the 1977 Panama Canal Treaties and to safeguard the objective of the Treaties: an efficient, secure and neutral Canal . . . The Canal, the Treaties and the prospects for stability, prosperity and democracy in Panama are inextricably linked.
NSC 1989a	21	In the absence of a major US initiative following a fraudulent regime victory in the 7 May elections, we expect Defense Chief Noriega to have little difficulty in consolidating his grip on Panama and eliminating organized opposition to him.
NSC 1989a	28	Undermines U.S. policy objectives in Central America and the Administration's general ability to shape U.S. foreign policy.
NSC 1989a	28	failure to resolve the Panama situation . . . will confront the Administration with fallout from a perceived foreign policy failure . . . with strong negative implications for U.S. Central America policy
NSC 1989b	17	The President said that it must be clear from our policy that we will not continue business as usual and that we will ratchet up the pressure.
NSC 1989b	17	General Scowcroft answered that our present policy is not going to get rid of Noriega. The consensus was that we won't get rid of him except by force and pressure.
NSC 1989b	17	Where are we headed? What are we trying to achieve? What do we hope to accomplish? What will get done by our measures?
NSC 1989b	19	General Scowcroft said that a clamping down would be with the understanding that the PDF as an institution will be affected by sticking with Noriega.
Scowcroft 1989c	38	the fundamental question which needs to be addressed is whether we are willing to accept Noriega's remaining in power indefinitely, and if not, under what conditions and for what purposes we are willing to use force to get him out.
Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	47	Our program of actions was formalized by NSD 17 which identified a number of efforts 'designed to assert our treaty rights, heighten Noriega's uncertainty, and keep him and his people off guard.'

	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	47	. . . caused the PDF to react in places and at times of U.S. choosing.
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	48	Emphasize in a dramatic way that Noriega's continuation in power is a threat to the survival of the institution.
O3.2	NSC 1989a	29	Would U.S. suspension of Treaty implementation or a threat to abrogate the Treaties provide leverage against the Noriega regime? Conversely, would vigorous assertion of our Treaty rights better secure our policy?
	NSC 1989a	40	U.S. could begin recovering eroded Treaty rights.
O4.1	Baker 1989	8	Avoid any actions or statements which would reassure Noriega or the PDF.
	Baker 1989	9	a September 1 completion date . . . would tend to reassure the PDF that the U.S. was not considering any military options.
	Baker 1989	9	the maximum period for these actions to be completed, in order to send the correct signal of creating uncertainty regarding U.S. intentions, should not exceed 30 days.
	NSC 1989a	19	Promote high profile visit by Secretary Cheney to U.S. military installations in Panama prior to the election to arouse Noriega's concerns about his personal safety
	NSC 1989b	20	He believed the statement has a little bit of that quality to it [paper tiger] . . . avoid the problem of the past of presenting the image of a paper tiger.
	Scowcroft 1989c	38	The Panama PCC hopes that the discussion will provide a policy framework for the NSC Deputies to use in addressing such questions as intensification of military exercises . . .
O4.2	Baker 1989	16	signals that we are clearing the decks, giving ourselves more freedom for future, unspecified action.
	NSC 1989b	20	General Scowcroft said that the removal of dependents was a clearing the decks type of action; getting rid of hostages.
	NSC 1989b	20	General Scowcroft said that in the back of our minds, we ought to keep the military option open.

	Scowcroft 1989c	38	The paper poses questions concerning our goals, and lays out various possible action options. The Panama PCC hopes that the discussion will provide a policy framework for the NSC Deputies to use in addressing such questions as intensification of military exercises, reducing the number of military dependents and private citizens in Panama
	Scowcroft 1989c	38	The policy options paper and accompanying working paper at Tab D are designed to facilitate consideration of potential future actions which I believe should be the principal focus of the meeting.
O5.1	Baker 1989	47	Canal users, including Japan and many Latin American countries, will be galvanized over U.S. reliability as a Treaty partner and guarantor of the Canal's neutrality framework.
O5.2	Baker 1989	8	Demonstrate U.S. resolve.
	Baker 1989	36	Sends strong message to PDF about USG resolve and desirability of getting rid of Noriega.
	NSC 1989a	28	failure to resolve the Panama situation by September 1 . . . will confront the Administration with . . . strong negative implications for U.S. Central America policy and the Administration's general ability to shape U.S. foreign policy.
	NSC 1989b	16	The newspapers would say that our refusal to take the tough decisions undercuts our new plan.
	NSC 1989b	20	Richard Darman urged that we ought to take a second look at the presidential statement . . . to avoid the problem of the past of presenting the image of a paper tiger.
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	49	To the extent we can further reduce the size of our dwindling official presence or curtail the private U.S. community, we would send Noriega and Panama a strong message of resolve.
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989b	57	Clear commitment of U.S. political prestige will be necessary to avoid Endara being marginalized as was Delvalle.
O5.3	Baker 1989	45	If we signal that the subversion of free elections by military power such as has occurred in Panama bears no cost nor exacts any sanction . . . we send a dangerous signal throughout the hemisphere that could in fact encourage other groups and

			individuals hostile to elected government to take similar actions.
	Baker 1989	45	if we merely voice rhetorical opposition, but then resort to normal relations with an illegitimate regime, we send a dangerous signal throughout the hemisphere that could in fact encourage other groups and individuals hostile to elected government to take similar actions.
	NSC 1989a	35	Wait Noriega Out: . . . Undermines U.S. policy objectives in Central America.
	NSC 1989a	36	Signals to the Sandinistas, Central American democracies and internal opposition that U.S. is unable to protect its interests. Would likely strengthen Sandinista and FMLN intransigence, demoralize democratic allies, and strengthen rightist militant elements in Central America who argue the U.S. is an unreliable ally.
	NSC 1989b	21	The President observed that our policy toward Panama could have an important spillover effect toward Nicaragua.

*Source: author's analysis of primary source documents. Table compiled by the author.*

#### 8.3.4 Appendix 3.4. Panama – identified defensive realist indicators

Indicator	Source	Page	Quote
D1.1	Baker 1989	9	Reduce the vulnerability of our personnel, and send a signal to Noriega and the PDF to create uncertainty in their minds concerning U.S. intentions.
	NSC 1989a	33	responding to PDF harassment by systematic 'freedom of movement' challenges
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	49	By already removing U.S. embassy dependents and by sharply drawing down the number of SOUTHCOM dependents, we are in the process of reducing our vulnerability in the event of any deterioration of law and order or other situation which could place U.S. citizens at risk.
D1.3	Baker 1989	9	Withdraw over a 10-day period all U.S. citizen dependents of all U.S. agency sponsors living outside of U.S. military facilities
	Scowcroft 1989c	38	reducing the number of military dependents and private citizens in Panama

D1.4	Baker 1989	15	We regard General Noriega's continued illegal hold on power as a threat to the Panama Canal.
	Baker 1989	15	The United States intends to honor its treaty obligations: it also intends to protect vigorously its treaty rights.
	NSC 1989a	32	Vigorous Assertion of U.S. Treaty Rights . . . Enhances U.S. ability to protect strategic interests.
	NSC 1989a	45	Improve security for U.S. citizen community: Accelerate and complete U.S. Forces Reduction of Off-Post Personnel. . . . Review and test key elements of U.S. Mission's Emergency and Evacuation Plan.
	NSC 1989a	45	Reassert U.S. Treaty rights, aiming especially to end PDF challenges to U.S. right to unimpeded freedom of movement.
	NSC 1989b	18	we must be clear that we are prepared to protect our Treaty rights and our citizens.
	Scowcroft 1989b	38	The Secretary of Defense is directed to take all appropriate measures to vigorously enforce our full rights under the Panama Canal Treaties particularly as they relate to freedom of military movement . . .
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	49	any reduction effort would have to balance the comparative vulnerability of this segment of the USG community with the important role these U.S. citizen employees play in maintaining the Canal's operational efficiency.
D1.5	NSC 1989a	17	Sanctions alone will not cause Noriega's ouster.
	NSC 1989b	16	Secretary Cheney explained the Defense position on the pace of withdrawal . . . fewer problems with a more measured pace.
D3.1	NSC 1989b	16	Deputy Secretary Eagleburger . . . said that we should not hide from you, Mr. President, that there is the danger of military confrontations with the PDF. There could be a shooting match, and we shouldn't hide from making that assessment.
	Interagency Group 1989b	81	While the exercises would be designed to minimize the risk of confrontation, such an outcome -- with its possibility of casualties -- cannot be avoided.
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	47	we have been made aware of the concerns of General Thurman that his forces not become exposed to PDF attack as a result of geographic extension to remote areas of Panama.

D3.2	NSC 1989a	32	Would make the U.S. appear to the world as an unreliable Treaty partner.
	NSC 1989b	16	He warned that it would be bad policy to give every indication that we would embark on a military course without having made the decision to do so.
	NSC 1989b	18	The President said his view that there would be respect for what we do if we are protecting a right. We should make it clear that we are protecting a Treaty right. Otherwise, force could be counterproductive.
	Policy Coordinating Committee 1989a	48	Avoid, to the extent possible consistent with other USG goals, engendering significant additional criticism beyond those minimal levels already seen in Latin America and Panama.
D3.3	NSC 1989a	37	Would evoke an extremely negative response in Latin America and throughout the Third World, perhaps extending to U.S. allies.
D5.1	Baker 1989	11	Such a step would signal that we are preparing for a protracted stalemate undercutting the message that a rapid withdrawal of dependents and deployment of forces is designed to send.
	NSC 1989a	37	Requires major commitment of U.S. resources, including long-term commitment of resources to reform and support the PDF.
	Interagency Group 1989b	62	Economic sanctions alone will not force Noriega out. The regime can continue to cut expenses to match cuts in revenue.

*Source: author's analysis of primary source documents. Table compiled by the author.*

### 8.3.5 Appendix 3.5. Haiti – identified offensive realist indicators

Indicator	Source	Page	Quote
O1.1	Lake and Cutler 1994	5	The President has the constitutional authority to use military force to remove the de facto leadership in Haiti without specific congressional authorization.
	Lake and Cutler 1994	5	This authority includes broad power to deploy the Armed Forces, including into situations involving potential hostilities, without specific congressional authorization.
	Lake and Cutler 1994	5	We have important national interests in Haiti: promoting human rights and democracy in our hemisphere; immigration concerns; the safety of U.S. nationals; and the enforcement of Security

			Council decisions.
	Lake and Brophy 1994	67	Your predecessors of both parties have held, and we agree, that you have the constitutional authority to deploy American forces to Haiti without prior Congressional authorization. This is a long-standing disagreement with the Congress.
	Kreczko 1994b	60	No President has accepted that his Constitutional authority to use force is limited to situations of imminent danger to American citizens.
	Kreczko 1994b	60	Legal differences aside, successive Presidents have found it important to be able to say that "no option" has been ruled out.
	Kreczko 1994b	60	Committing now to seek prior Congressional action removes uncertainty about immediate US intentions, and removes an incentive for them to step aside promptly.
	Kreczko 1994a	2	Lloyd Cutler feels strongly we should call the President's attention to the authorization Congress has already given in the DOD Appropriation Act . . . without conceding a legal obligation to do so . . .
	Lake and Cutler 1994	4	. . . the report is unlikely to satisfy those in Congress pressing for such a vote. We are preparing the report on a contingency basis . . . while reserving your constitutional right to act without following the statutory procedures.
	Lake, Griffin, and Cutler 1994	32	Position us to argue to the public that (1) Congress has recognized that a prior congressional authorization is not needed and (2) we have not ignored Congress' role but instead acted consistently with its expressed request.
	Lake, Griffin, and Cutler 1994	32	Would bolster our legal position, with outside critics and in the event of litigation, that you can act without further congressional authorization.
	Lake 1994b	44	Submitting the report responds to this congressional request without compromising your constitutional authority to act unilaterally.
	Lake 1994f	50	. . . seeking congressional authorization for the use of force in Haiti would put our policy on a stronger political footing and would help rally the country behind you
O2.1	Lake and Cutler 1994	78	The Caribbean has also historically been of great importance to U.S. national interests, as demonstrated by the many previous U.S.

			interventions in the region.
	Lake 1994c	66	As the leading nation in the hemisphere, the United States has the influence and military might to lead such an operation.
O5.1	Lake 1994d	13	Sec. Christopher and DOD recommend incorporating a deadline into the resolution, both for its psychological effect on the Haitian military and for the forcing function it would have with regard to our own policy making by bringing closure to the Haiti issue.
	Lake 1994d	13	The coup leaders might finally realize that the international community was serious about removing them and, as a result, leave.
	Berger 1994	6	It could also mislead the Haitian military about our resolve, increasing their intransigence
	Berger 1994	6	. . . could lead domestic and international opinion to conclude that the crisis was over when in fact we would be no nearer our objectives . . .
	Berger 1994	6	. . . would be more costly than Guantanamo or a third country due to the complete lack of infrastructure and . . . risk creating a magnet effect.
	Lake 1994c	65	Acceptance of the de facto government threatens regional stability and encourages anti-democratic elements throughout the region.
	Lake 1994c	65	Our commitment to democratic regimes, and credibility, is undermined by this brutal military dictatorship.
	Kreczko 1994b	88	The regime's rejection of our diplomatic overtures and its refusal to respond constructively [sic] to the will of the international community constituted a repudiation of US policy.
	Lake 1994e	9-10	. . . whether you are prepared to use force; if so, whether you want to establish, at least internally, a deadline against which our planning can take place; what timeframe is most advantageous from the multiple perspective of credibility and leverage with the military leaders and support from the Hemisphere, the Congress and the public; whether we will encourage/discourage a prior Congressional vote; the terms and circumstances of any ultimatum to the coup leaders . . .
	Lake 1994f	50	it would send a clear and unequivocal message to the military leaders that their time is up

O5.2	Lake 1994d	13	To maintain credibility, we would probably have to act soon after the deadline, just as the US attacked Iraq as soon as that deadline came.
	Lake and Cutler 1994	78	Such defiance, if successful, could have serious consequences in other cases where U.S. interests are at stake, such as Iraq and Bosnia.
	Lake 1994c	66	. . . force is now necessary in order to maintain the credibility of U.S. and UN commitments.

*Source: author's analysis of primary source documents.*

### 8.3.6 Appendix 3.6. Haiti – identified defensive realist indicators

Indicator	Source	Page	Quote
D1.1	Lake and Cutler 1994	5	The operation is likely to involve low intensity and short conflict. Given the consent of President Aristide [sic] and the limited capability of the Armed Forces of Haiti, such action does not intrude upon the power of Congress to declare war.
	Lake and Cutler 1994	5	A U.S. military operation in Haiti would involve far less use of force than several of these examples. It is well within the President's constitutional authority and is consistent with past practice.
	Lake and Cutler 1994	77	Unlike Desert Storm, for example, the situation in Haiti is not expected to involve substantial military engagements or casualties.
	Lake 1994c	65	The Haitian Armed Forces do not represent a conventional military threat to the multinational force or to U.S. forces.
	Lake and Cutler 1994	78	There continues to be a threat of a large influx of illegal immigrants, which are a potentially serious burden for the United States and could threaten the stability of other Caribbean states.
D3.2	Lake 1994d	13	a deadline would unnecessarily and perhaps dangerously constrain our timetable in Haiti and trigger a Congressional debate now
	Lake 1994d	13	and that of the Vice President, although it is a close call
D4.1	Lake 1994c	66	Our presence in Haiti will not be open ended.
	Kreczko 1994b	89	The MNF has a limited, and well-defined role and duration.
	Kreczko 1994b	90	We predict that the period of combat operations will measure in days, not weeks.

D5.1	Lake, Griffin, and Cutler 1994	53	A conservative, preliminary estimate of Department of Defense and State Department incremental costs . . . is projected at \$500-\$600 million through February 1996.
	Lake 1994d	7	. . . could have unintended consequences elsewhere in the world (Korea, Iraq) if others thought we would be preoccupied . . .
	Lake 1994a	5	Tony asks that you add a bit of reality regarding past practice in police + army training. Others have tried + failed so we need to keep our goals realistic
	Lake 1994a	10	police military army - failed keep goals down

*Source: author's analysis of primary source documents. Table compiled by the author.*

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