

The Temporal Legacy of the Monroe Doctrine

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Throughout the relatively short time span of American history, the goals and policies of administrations have changed, as has the public mood and the increasingly complex nature of foreign policy prerogatives. Through examining the policies, speeches, writings, and actions taken by several U.S. Presidents over the course of American history, I will weigh the merits of the idea that the Monroe Doctrine was a critical juncture in American history, which set U.S. presidential behavior on a pathway towards a definable model of preemptive action in the face of significant threats to national security. From the moment the Monroe Doctrine was adopted it revolutionized foreign policy and America's role in the world. Therefore, I will develop a logical progression in terms of those presidents whose actions helped to solidify the pathway in presidential behavior that developed as a result of the Monroe Doctrine and consequently, how interpretations of current presidential behavior should be refocused as a result of these findings.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE: ESTABLISHING A MODEL IN EXECUTIVE BEHAVIOR

In the discussions to which this interest has given rise and in the arrangements by which they may terminate the occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers...It is impossible that the allied powers should extend their political system to any portion of either continent without endangering our peace and happiness; nor can anyone believe that our southern brethren, if left to themselves, would adopt it of their own accord. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition in any form with indifference... (Elliot 1969, 60-9).

--President James Monroe's Seventh
Annual Message to Congress, December 2, 1823

The evolution of increasing power and prestige vested in the executive over time carries with it a need for the critical understanding of presidential behavior in light of these abilities. The formation of foreign policy and conduct in foreign

affairs has typically been one of the substantial areas of power and influence in the executive, at least since it was indicated early on in the Federalist papers. The President may be confined by law, yet the precedents established early on in the second Washington administration would surely solidify the Presidents monopoly over this area of policy (Perkins 1962, 157-9). Because of this degree of undue influence in shaping the state of the nation, specifically during periods of increased threat to the nation's security, it becomes all the more fundamentally important to grasp the derivation of executive behavior during these times and consequently, how one declaration of policy has contributed to a definable model of executive behavior from which we can shed new light on current policy endeavors.

The United States has gone through intermittent periods of increased and decreased isolationism in the realm of foreign policy throughout its history, and at times many years after the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, yet the behavior/actions of the president, in regards to threats to national security, do not seem to develop an offensive-oriented, preemptive model of behavior until after the Monroe Doctrine was adopted. While foreign policy can surely not occur in a vacuum, the Monroe Doctrine, arguably, was not the effect of the type of distinctive presidential behavior that ultimately evolved with its' precedent. These two ideas are crucial in constructing a defensible analysis of historical events in this manner. Therefore, in order to highlight the importance of the Monroe Doctrine and its' significance in this respect, it will be necessary to delve into the state of the nation and events leading up to the culmination of Monroe's foreign policy remarks that have become, arguably, one of the most important doctrines in American foreign policy.

As it is frequently referenced in regards to the character of U.S. foreign policy for the first several decades of Independence, President George Washington's Farewell Address in 1796 states:

Taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies...The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations... (Washington 1896, 28-31).

This excerpt taken from George Washington's Farewell Address characterizes not only U.S. foreign policy for the first several decades after Independence from Great Britain, but also the type of presidential behavior that prevailed during this time. Moving forward progressively towards the events surrounding the Monroe Doctrine, and in demonstrating the type of defensive, conciliatory presidential behavior that existed prior to the events surrounding the Monroe Doctrine, it is necessary to briefly take the Quasi-War with France in 1798 and the War of 1812 into consideration.

The Quasi-War with France, beginning in 1798, came about as a result of a number of antagonizing actions taken on the part of the French. On numerous occasions the French violated American neutrality at sea and with the publication of the notorious XYZ papers—an insulting attack on the national dignity—the United States, as well as the president, would have been completely justified in taking a hard-line stance against the French (Perkins 1962, 138). It was however, simply not the case. According to Dexter Perkins in his book entitled, “American Approach to Foreign Policy,” the voting record of Congress would suggest the Quasi-War with France was “...accepted only reluctantly by the Adams administration itself, which seized upon the first opportunity to bring it to an end” (Perkins 1962, 139). The threat to national security posed by France at this time, while initially debatable, was solidified nevertheless, by these initial violations of neutrality at sea. Furthermore, President John Adams’ message to the Senate and House on February 5, 1798, in regards to the actions of a French Privateer who repeatedly violated American neutrality at sea, characterizes President John Adams behavioral inclinations. Consequently, this behavior ties into the type of presidential behavior that existed in the face of national security threats prior to the Monroe Doctrine. President John Adams states that “...Whenever the channels of diplomatical communication between the United States and France shall be opened, I shall demand satisfaction for the insult and reparation for the injury” (Adams 1969, 155). This excerpt serves to not only highlight the type of proposed action to be taken once the “channels of diplomatical communication” are opened, but says nothing about the Presidents course of action for dealing with the situation as it existed at that moment in time. Moreover, demands against an aggressive government for its’ violations of American neutrality are, if anything, much more symbolic of a defensively-minded, pacifistic, resort to maintain American isolationism, that is, in the face of the threat posed by France. The War of 1812 and the presidential behavior of James Madison will, for the scope of this paper, suffice in bringing the argument chronologically into the events/actions surrounding the Monroe Doctrine.

The actual declaration of war with Great Britain may have been drawn up by William Pinkney and declared on June 18, 1812, however the threat to the nation’s security, posed by Great Britain, materialized several years prior to a declaration of war and the commitment of troops to action (Gilman 1898, 108). Beginning in the summer and autumn of 1805, large numbers of Americans were being detained or “pressed” into service aboard British ships and brought into British ports. Losses, in this respect, included the goods aboard these American merchant vessels as well as the ships themselves (Gilman 1898, 101). James Monroe and William Pinkney—acting as the two American commissioners to England—were instructed to “...insist on an explanation upon this important point...” (Gilman 1898, 102), yet the treaty that was drafted under the auspices of Monroe and Pinkney did not contain an article pertaining specifically to the subject of impressments and Great Britain’s maritime conduct. Furthermore, the attack of the American frigate Chesapeake on June 23, 1807, continued England’s hostile policy towards U.S. neutrality, the inevitability of war, and its existence as a real

threat to national security (Gilman 1898, 103-4). Therefore, by establishing the prevalence of the threat posed by Great Britain throughout the years preceding the U.S. declaration of war, the first inaugural address of President James Madison on Saturday, March 4, 1809, and the views, opinions, and perspectives he enunciates in this respect, will be a fair metric in characterizing presidential behavior in light of these threats:

The present situation of the world is indeed without a parallel and that of our own country full of difficulties...If I do not sink under the weight of this deep conviction it is because I find some support in a consciousness of the purposes and a confidence in the principles which I bring with me into this arduous service. To cherish peace and friendly intercourse with all nations having correspondent dispositions; to maintain sincere neutrality toward belligerent nations; to prefer in all cases amicable discussion and reasonable accommodation of differences to a decision of them by an appeal to arms... (U.S. Congress 1989, 26-27).

The decision to go to war or to endeavor in actions that would escalate the chances of war, on the part of the President, may always be constrained by extenuating circumstances on which point there is no argument. Conversely, putting all other considerations aside, President Madison does not exhibit, as alluded to by his first inaugural address, a disposition that would indicate he even entertained the notion of a measured, preemptive response to Great Britain's aggressive behavior; that is, insofar as the state of the security situation facing the nation would have been improved. Moreover, President James Madison's role in bringing the country into the War of 1812 was weak to say the least.

In his June war message, President Madison had apparently never anticipated a direct threat to the soil of the United States (Perkins 1962, 107). This makes sense as the war sentiment did not begin with President Madison, but with the congressional elections of 1810 (Perkins 1962, 171). Presidential behavior during the Quasi-War with France and the War of 1812—two significant periods of increased threat to the nation's security—was used to further develop and pinpoint a correct assessment of presidential behavioral responses in times of national security crisis' prior to the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine. Establishing the Monroe Doctrine's role in bringing about a distinct pathway in presidential behavior will, however, require us to understand how perceptions on national security have changed with it.

There is a vast literature on the topic of determining and isolating which events or people actually led to the principles contained in the Monroe Doctrine, yet of all the events or actions that took place during the few preceding years leading up to December 2, 1823, none of them characterized the type of threats to national security that were established in the previous two wars. Russian expansionism along the Northwest coast of America, arguably, is one part of a "dual origin and dual purpose," (Perkins 1927, 1) that ultimately led to these enunciated principles.

Russian interest in the Northwest coast of America, going back to the second quarter of the 18th century, materialized more or less with the July 8, 1799 creation of the Russian-American Company. This company went on to establish a post named Fort Ross sometime between the end of 1811 and the beginning of 1812 near Bodega Bay—an area roughly around 50 miles from the bay of San Francisco (Perkins 1927, 4-5). Around this same time Tsar Alexander I of Russia had issued an imperial decree concerning Russia's entitlements in this area. In his imperial decree Tsar Alexander I renewed Russia's privileges and trading rights by setting the southern limit of these rights at 51 degrees and forbidding all foreign vessels between the Behring Straits and 51 degrees, that is, with the backing of a Russian warship (Perkins 1927, 7-8). Nevertheless, this imperial decree, as well as any of Russia's commercial, military, or economic endeavors in this region, did not directly attack U.S. commerce, its citizens, or any of its settled, contiguous territory at that time. For this reason, Russia's endeavors in the Northwest coast of America could not have been imminent in the sense they could have been considered a direct threat to national security at the time. And, if they weren't a direct threat to national security, as conceived at the time, then no one at that time, including President Monroe, can be given credit for establishing a precedent in preemptive response, since no real threat was substantially afflicting the U.S. at this time.

Furthermore, the fear of European intervention in South America, whether because of economic security or territorial security, was the second part of the origin and purpose that, according to Dexter Perkins, guided the principles espoused in the Monroe Doctrine. Though the Spanish occupied East Florida for some time (Perkins 1962, 11) and continued to maintain their rights to the colonies they had established in South America through military force (Perkins 1962, 42), the nature of these events would reveal that they were neither a real threat to the territorial security of the U.S. nor were they of the character of events that were typically perceived as threats to national security at that time. That is, the Spanish did not have a strong hold over the region in East Florida which led to a negotiated treaty of cession with the United States by 1819 (Perkins 1962, 11). And, beginning in 1817, the success of several of the colonies in establishing their independence from Spain began to solidify the impracticality of European endeavors in South America (Perkins 1962, 42-3). Therefore, the reality of a threat posed to the territorial security of the U.S. in regards to European intervention in South America, was neither tenable nor in line with the type of aggressive actions undertaken by France and Great Britain in the previous two wars. That being said, determining how large our economic interests in the region were at that time, and consequently, whether or not European intervention would have been injurious enough to regard their interference as a significant threat to our national economic security, should be considered as well.

The prospect of European intervention in South America, coupled with the notion that it would have maintained the colonial system in place, may have garnered fears concerning commercial exclusion, yet the relative importance of these fledgling trade markets to the U.S. economy does not seem to coincide with

these fears. According to Dexter Perkins in his book titled, “The Monroe Doctrine: 1823-1826,” John Quincy Adams—Secretary of State at the time—opposed European colonization in 1823 because “He was thinking primarily of the commercial interests of the United States,” (17) which was—at least in his mind—“...based on immediate economic factors, not on vague fears of the future” (17). Moreover, Dexter Perkins also goes on to ascertain from the statistical records contained in Watterston and Van Zandt’s book titled, “Tabular Statistical Views,” that trade with Cuba and Spain was much more important than the newly created republics in South America (40) and that by 1821 “...only 2.3 percent of American exports and 1.6 percent of American imports were South American in destination or origin” (41). Using this to be a correct assessment of the state of our economy with respect to South America, the importance of our trade with these fledgling markets does not appear to be statistically significant enough to be considered either immediate or to a degree that even commercial exclusion from their markets would have had a profound impact on U.S. economic security.

European expansion, specifically Russian advances on the Northwest coast of America and Spanish rule in East Florida, as well as a continuance of non-recognition, colonial-era governance on the part of the Spanish were in no way reflective of the type of direct attacks on U.S. commerce and territory, which had shaped the dominant perceptions of national security threats that existed at this time. This, therefore, should prevail in driving home the point that while the Monroe Doctrine may have developed riding on the pretenses of economic and territorial security, the events leading up to its inception were not, in fact, characteristic of the events that plunged the U.S. into the previous two wars. Since the Monroe Doctrine did not, therefore, develop as a result of actual, imminent threats to national security, it cannot be considered indicative of a presidential behavioral response in the face of such threats. As a result, President James Monroe’s behavior during the years preceding the Monroe Doctrine is irrelevant not only to the trend in presidential behavior that existed for several decades prior to the inception of the Monroe Doctrine, but also to helping establish the paradigm of presidential behavioral that emerged after him.

President James Monroe’s role in developing the Monroe Doctrine, whatever that may arguably be, is inconsequential insofar as the establishment of the paradigm that developed after it was an effect of the principles espoused in the Monroe Doctrine, which redefined and broadened our perceptions of national security. President Monroe did enunciate these principles, yet even if his influence had been much larger than it was, it was not the result of any significant national threat as it was previously conceived; therefore, this paradigm in presidential behavior was not modeled upon the precedence of his actions. It was an unforeseen effect of the redefining and broadening of the scope of U.S. national security prerogatives that “...pronounced not only the opinion then prevalent, but a tradition of other days which had been gradually expanded, and to which the country was wonted, that his words carried with them the sanction of public law” (Gilman 1898, 164).

These specific principles contained in President Monroe's message to Congress on December 2, 1823, were more than likely built on practical considerations of self-interest, yet regardless of their origins, they were unprecedented in the way they shaped our foreign policy. By asserting that the American continents be free and independent, namely South America, the growth of liberty and our values abroad became inescapably linked to our own national security interests (Jayne 1900, 1). As our own national security interests were redefined and broadened, so too was our conceptualization of national security threats. With this re-conceptualization, the Monroe Doctrine founded a foreign policy precedent that ultimately shaped the evolution of presidential behavior in response to significant threats to the nation's security.

SITUATING THE MODEL: TEMPORALITY AND PATH DEPENDENCE

The notion that the Monroe Doctrine simply shaped presidential behavior from its inception on has many merits, and while there are numerous ways to manipulate the parameters to simply fit an argument along these lines, the reality is that the Monroe Doctrine is not an event isolated by itself in time and history. My approach does not seek to limit the importance of the Doctrine in shaping this behavior, but to situate our understanding of it in relation to time and history. In order to progress forward in understanding the how and why, Paul Pierson, in his book entitled "Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis," offers an intuitive example:

Imagine a very large urn containing two balls, one black, one red. You remove one ball, and then return it to the urn along with an additional ball of the same color. You repeat this process until the urn fills up. What can we say about the eventual distribution of colored balls in the urn? Or about a series of trials in which we fill the urn and then start over again one hundred times? (17).

This example, which mathematicians refer to as a "Polya urn process" (Pierson 2004, 17), is one of the bases from which Paul Pierson derives his claims upon Path Dependence,¹ and how it can explain important social processes (Pierson 2004, 20-21). As my argument unfolds, it will reveal that the Monroe Doctrine was an important juncture that was solidified as a path in presidential behavior through an accumulation of subsequent events. That is, while the Monroe Doctrine set an important precedent in terms of re-conceptualizing the existing tenets of U.S. national security and in the justification of far-reaching, preemptive, executive behavior, it was an accumulation of subsequent uses of the Doctrine over time that produced the type of positive feedback that ultimately solidified its path as a cornerstone in American presidential behavior.

¹ Pierson employs the term path dependence to refer to "social processes that exhibit positive feedback and thus generate branching patterns of historical development" (Pierson 2004, 21).

From the outset, many of the opinions, actions (or lack thereof), and circumstances that followed the December 2, 1823 enunciation, suggest that the primacy of those principles may have very well been doomed to a sort of ideological atrophy. Around the time of the Latin American Revolution, and in response to the growing sentiment of these non-colonization principles in Latin America,² the Panama Congress was convened on June 22, 1826 (Sanders 1954, 141-3). Prior to the Panama Congress, and primarily in regards to what Congress saw as a forum for the extension of the Monroe Doctrine, heated debates ensued in both the House and Senate regarding this extension, with the debates in the House lasting from March 25, 1826 to April 22 of that same year (Perkins 1927, 216-22). Congress eventually voted in favor of the necessary appropriations, yet the overall policy of the Adams' administration and the general sentiment among Congress (Sanders 1954, 153) did not reassert anything close to the original principles contained in the Monroe Doctrine. President Adams reinforced the stance his administration would take in a message to the U.S. Senate on December 26, 1825:

It will be seen that the United States neither intend nor are expected to take part in any deliberations of a belligerent character; that the motive of their attendance is neither to contract alliances nor to engage in any undertaking or project importing hostility to any other nation (Richardson 1897, 884).

Although different domestic factors may have constrained President Adams ability to enforce the Monroe Doctrine (Sanders 1954, 154), as originally stated, his position towards the Republics of South America, whom were still engaged in war with Spain (Richardson 1954, 885), lies in sharp contrast to the firmly held beliefs contained in the Monroe Doctrine. It must be noted, however, that while the Monroe Doctrine did not prescribe a specific course of action for the circumstances then present, "It left the United States discretion to act at all times as its opinion of its duty and interest might require" (Dozer 1965, 7). As I mentioned previously, the Monroe Doctrine did not single-handedly bring about the path in presidential behavior that developed over time, yet it is this precedent to preempt action that was founded here, and as we will see further on, used at important junctures that reinforced the development of this behavioral process.

For the scope and purpose of this paper, it is not necessary to examine in depth the behavior of every president facing threats to national security from the Monroe Doctrine forward. The use of Congressional sentiment in regards to acting upon the non-colonization principle in 1826, and the neutral position of President John Quincy Adams in the face of the very situation President Monroe stated the U.S. would not tolerate, are used here to characterize the unpredictable nature of early events. Presidential behavior has, undoubtedly, ebbed and flowed from this

² Simon Bolivar initiated the Panama Congress upon the premise of establishing a confederation for enhancing regional power, in which case its acceptance as a prevalent Latin American creed is evident by the fact that the major Latin American states of Peru, Colombia, Central America, and Mexico all accepted the invitation and attended the conference (Sanders 1954, 142).

preemptive, offensive-oriented, path in presidential behavior after the inception of the Monroe Doctrine, yet they are temporally insignificant insofar as the critical junctures that reinforce the stability of this behavioral process do not begin to materialize until several years later. Yes, there are exceptions in presidential behavior—in response to national security threats—that have occurred over the course of American history, but I will attempt to illustrate how their frequency diminishes over time after these “critical junctures” take effect, and that these presidents were constrained in their behavior to act preemptively through certain extenuating circumstances at the time.

One such “critical juncture” was President James K. Polk’s reassertion of the non-colonization principle contained in the Monroe Doctrine in his annual message to Congress on December 2, 1845:

This principle will apply with greatly increased force should any European power attempt to establish any new colony in North America. In the existing circumstances of the world the present is deemed a proper occasion to reiterate and reaffirm the principle avowed by Mr. Monroe and to state my cordial concurrence in its wisdom and sound policy (Richardson 1897, 2249 IV).

President Polk’s message to Congress on December 2, 1845, as well as the enunciation of the Doctrine in 1823 by President Monroe, are both extremely significant in terms of their sequence. All things considered, the issues of Texas and Oregon were an inevitable issue of contention. If President Polk did not have the ideological precedent of the Monroe Doctrine prior to this issue of contention, he would not have had a strong basis for the U.S.’s territorial rights to these areas or the concept of “manifest destiny”³ as we now know it. Furthermore, it is quite possible that if President Polk had not reiterated the non-colonization principle of the Monroe Doctrine when he did, the lack of a foundation from which to legitimate his preemptive actions along the Rio Grande (Graebner 1993, 119), could have galvanized the anger already existent in Congress—regarding the preemptive power of the president (Graebner 1993, 119)—into a potent political force. While this is only a theoretical calculation of how these several events could have led to Congressional limitations on the power of the presidency, and consequently, a different pathway in presidential behavior, the timing of Polk’s message nevertheless, ensured the pathway in preemptive presidential behavior would remain viable—at least for the time being.

Since prominent modes of argument and explanation in the social sciences typically associate large outcomes with large causes (Pierson 2004, 19), I will briefly assess President Lincoln’s actions during the Civil War in order to broaden our understanding of them as something additive and path-reinforcing—in contrast with these prominent modes of explanation. The unprecedented nature of Lincoln’s

³ A term which characterizes the wish of numerous Americans to the concept of an “eventual possession of no less a domain than the entire North American continent” (Ruiz 1963, 55).

conduct in regards to the threat posed by the Confederacy, or secession generally, may incline those who interpret them to be the foundation or “large cause” from which similar presidential behavior derives. Lincoln’s conduct in helping bring about the suspension of the Act of Habeas Corpus (Formby 1910, 187) and several of his war measures, to include expanding the regular armed forces beyond the previous total authorized by U.S. law (Graebner 1993, 120), were unprecedented in scale. Yet, even if the specific scale of his actions had not been reached previously in presidential behavior, the inherent qualities of political processes mean that the implications for positive feedback are relevant here:

Indeed, factors such as the prominence of collective activity in politics, the central role of formal, change-resistant institutions, the possibilities for employing political authority to magnify power asymmetries, and the great ambiguity of many political processes and outcomes make this a domain of social life that is especially prone to positive feedback (Pierson 2004, 19).

President Lincoln’s actions indicate that he used his political authority to magnify his capacity to handle the threat of secession. Therefore, the way he employed his political authority is what’s really important here. If the employment of political authority to magnify power asymmetries is what is truly important to the type of positive feedback processes that develop path dependency, then the sheer scale of President Lincoln’s actions are not only irrelevant, but an analytical shortcoming. It was the Monroe Doctrine, because of its timing and ideological precedence, that dictated presidential behavior on a path towards preemption; which is also cumulative and not attributable to one single, explanatory cause or event. That being said, Lincoln’s actions—or the way in which his political authority was used—are not a formative, critical period in American history, but an additive, path-reinforcing, period, which should be more carefully linked to the precedential and temporal significance of the Monroe Doctrine.

Again, it would seem troublesome at first glance, the idea of dismissing an assessment of each president’s behavior when facing threats to national security, however, it is not only an impractical venture, but an unnecessary one as well. For President Polk’s message ensured the pathway in preemptive presidential behavior would remain viable, it was another critical juncture—the Roosevelt Corollary—that further re-conceptualized American national security prerogatives, and formalized a basis for all preemptive presidential behavior from its conception forward. While path-dependency arguments generally assert that the further down a path, “the costs of switching to some previously plausible alternative rise” (Pierson 2004, 21), they innately offer no specific indication of how far down the path that is. Even though it is not necessary to pinpoint where these costs have reached a threshold, only to illustrate a branching pattern of development, it is the formalized enunciation of the Roosevelt Corollary, where I believe the costs of taking a different path become fairly costly. Moreover, once the Roosevelt Corollary has been given an adequate assessment in line with these assertions, it is extremely

important to account for any presidential behavior that might significantly diverge from this pathway.

Building upon the justification for previous interventions in several Latin American countries (Graebner 1993, 120-1), President Theodore Roosevelt asserts his interpretation on U.S. foreign policy prerogatives in his fourth annual message on December 6, 1904:

Therefore it follows that a self-respecting, just, and far-seeing nation should on the one hand endeavor by every means to aid in the development of the various movements which tend to provide substitutes for war, which tend to render nations in their actions toward one another, and indeed toward their own peoples, more responsive to the general sentiment of humane and civilized mankind; and on the other hand that it should keep prepared, while scrupulously avoiding wrongdoing itself, to repel any wrong, and in exceptional cases to take action which in a more advanced stage of international relations would come under the head of the exercise of the international police. A great free people owes it to itself and to all mankind not to sink into helplessness before the powers of evil (Richardson 1897, 7053 XVI).

President Theodore Roosevelt's rhetoric—the use of words such as humane, wrongdoing, and evil—formalizes the U.S.'s ability to interpret the actions of other countries within a moral context, and the justification for preemptive action on these grounds. This was a sequentially important endeavor as it came at a time when the U.S. was still relatively immature militarily, politically, etc. Although the U.S. has repeatedly endeavored militarily in order to settle disputes up to this point, it had not involved itself in any large-scale military action outside of the Western Hemisphere. What President Roosevelt espoused here, was the first all-encompassing, moralistic rhetoric, which gave future U.S. presidents an important basis from which to preempt action. It also provided a unique lens, which would shape, as we will see later, subsequent presidents' and their views regarding events outside of the Western Hemisphere.

Richard Olney, Secretary of State during the Cleveland administration, may have extended an important aspect of the Monroe Doctrine in 1895, yet it cannot be similarly weighted with the significance of President Theodore Roosevelt's interpretation. Richard Olney's dispatch on July 20, 1895, speaks with clear deference to the right of the U.S. to justly intervene in disputes between other nations (Perkins 1937, 154), but clearly asserts that his statements are only in reference to one single purpose and object: "It is that no European power or combination of European powers shall forcibly deprive an American state of the right and power of self-government and of shaping for itself its own political fortunes and destinies" (Perkins 1937, 156).

More than likely a culmination of narrowly conceived, practical considerations regarding the boundary dispute between Great Britain and

Venezuela (Perkins 1937, 154), Olney's extension of the Monroe Doctrine, while additive and self-reinforcing, does not carry the same visionary foreign policy precedent that Roosevelt delineates in 1904. Ascribing such importance to President Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine is necessary because it is at this point—proven considerably only by presidential action and behavior throughout the rest of 20th century American history—that the strong status quo bias of political institutions (Pierson 2004, 30) seemingly emerges in this context, and when the costs of reversal seem to gain momentum. From here it will be necessary to demonstrate this preemptive presidential behavior as an emerging status quo, by highlighting the behavioral responses of several key presidents, as well as an explanation for one(s) that might significantly diverge from this pathway.

Before going any further, however, there are some aspects of this argument that need clarification, and center specifically on one of the points made by Paul Pierson in his book entitled, "Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis." One of the main points that he makes is that the "ameliorative mechanisms that Liebowitz and Margolis identify in economic systems are often ineffective in offsetting path dependence in politics" (30). He then goes on to list several characteristics for why this is so—specifically, "the shorter time horizons of political actors" (30). The case for path dependency arguments is substantive and is also central to my interpretation of evolving presidential behavior over the course of American history, yet I also believe the arguments surrounding path dependency are far too rigid, inflexible, and absolutist in nature. My reasoning along these lines is actually a reversal of the aforementioned characteristic Pierson delineates in his argument. The shorter time horizons of political actors does not explain why the ameliorative mechanisms which offset path dependence in economic systems, do not offset path dependence in politics; it should serve instead as a tool for explaining why political actors—in this case presidents—might be forced to diverge from a generally stable, path equilibrium. Instances where this does occur should not be interpreted as going against path dependency arguments, but as justified divergences, resulting from the powerful effects of these shorter time horizons.

In order to allow these assertions to become more lucid, presidential behavior surrounding an important economic downturn in American history (the Great Depression), and up into WWII should help strengthen our understanding. Even before the series of bank failures in 1930 and the "misconceived policies of the Federal Reserve Board" (Dubofsky 1990, 246) took root, the entire world had been devolving economically after WWI. Melvyn Dubofsky, in his book entitled "The American Economy during the Great Depression," helps to describe the state of the world at this time:

Broadly speaking, the world Depression can be viewed as a broad capitalist affliction, generated in more than one country independently, or one of transmission. The logical guarantor of international liquidity after WWI, the United States, failed to carry out the leadership that devolved upon it (250).

The massive debt accrued from losses during the war, reparation payments, etc., had an enormous impact on the U.S. economy, and as we see from Melvyn Dubofsky, an enormous impact on the political leadership as well. Therefore, the U.S. economic downturn, as well as the “domestically-focused” public sentiment that undoubtedly came with it, can help us refocus our understanding of path-dependency arguments and presidential behavior that might diverge from this previously expounded, presidential behavioral pathway.

It is the “shorter time horizons of political actors” and the nature of these shorter time horizons that cause Presidential behavior to be more concerned with becoming elected and re-elected and thus, more influenced by domestic crises such as the Great Depression. While these shorter time horizons may cause and explain the reasoning behind diverging presidential behavior from this pathway, it also provides legitimate justification for them—also an important institutional status quo that cannot be ignored. Because the desire to become elected and/or “electable” is an ingrained feature of American presidential behavior, it should not therefore, have any implications in regards to the path and cornerstone of presidential behavior that is central to the argument presented in this paper. President Herbert Hoover, and even more so President F. D. Roosevelt’s behavior, reflects the inescapability of domestic crises from offsetting presidential behavior.

While President Hoover’s time in office was not earmarked by any significant external threats to national security, his isolationist U.S. foreign policy behavior is important because it came at a time when the U.S. was in an economic downturn and recovering from the previous world war. This dire domestic situation undoubtedly shifted public sentiment, and thus limited his ability to maneuver more or less independent of the circumstances prevailing at the time. President Hoover’s speech on “Rugged Individualism” in 1928 shows the president to be fully aware of the situation he will be facing as well as his limitations in this regard. “The foundations of progress and prosperity are dependent as never before upon the wise policies of government, for government now touches at a thousand points the intricate web of economic and social life” (Widmer 2006, 370). Furthermore, President Hoover’s foreign policy limitations as a result of this domestic instability can provide adequate reasoning behind Undersecretary of State, J. Reuben Clark’s memorandum limiting the degree of power associated with the Monroe Doctrine (Clark 1930, XX11).

This domestic instability continues into President Roosevelt’s time in office and may have had the effect of limiting his ability to take appropriate preemptive actions, yet his own personal beliefs/actions reflect a sincerity of behavior towards these types of measures. President Roosevelt repeatedly delivered messages, addresses, etc, during his time in office stating his inclinations for peace and neutrality. However, domestic instability continued to plague the country during his time in office—which he again acknowledges in his recommendations to Congress in 1938 (Roosevelt 1941, 240-3 Vol. 1938). Also, restrictions were essentially placed on him by Congress when it limited military planning for combat strictly to the Western Hemisphere in 1938 (Secunda 2007, 48). Clearly, many

extenuating circumstances made it plausible to assert his notions on peace and neutrality as necessary and desirous effects of the conditions he was presented with at the time. All things considered, a narrow interpretation of isolationism, that is, in line with the position Roosevelt repeatedly endorsed in his messages and addresses, would probably have coincided with a strictly defensive posture limited to only direct attacks on the soil of the Western Hemisphere. This would not occur until 7:49 A.M. on Sunday, December 7, 1941 (Secunda 2007, 54), although President Roosevelt had made it clear a long time before these attacks in one of his “Fireside Chats” to the public on May 26, 1940, the inescapability of a model in presidential behavioral that was launched many years before he came to office:

It is the task of our generation, yours and mine. That we build and defend not for our generation alone. We defend the foundations laid down by our fathers. We build a life for generations yet unborn. We defend and we build a way of life, not for American alone, but for all mankind. Ours is a high duty, a noble task (Roosevelt 1941, 240 Vol. 1940).

The events in Europe had been unfolding some time before 1940 and it doesn't seem to be one single event that somehow transformed President Roosevelt's rhetoric to the scale that we see here. Furthermore, President Roosevelt provided military aid to the allied countries, ordered the American occupation of Iceland, and ordered full naval engagement of German submarines (Graebner 1993, 121), prior to the attacks on Pearl Harbor. The proper conclusions that should be drawn from all of this is that President Roosevelt's preemptive, ideological demeanor, did not happen over night or even over several nights. He was constrained in his ability to speak or endeavor in actions that would have garnered widespread public and congressional disapproval—not to mention that the disastrous U.S. economy at the time would also have impeded such action. When situations presented to the U.S. public finally made it possible to take aggressive action, he did. The main purpose here is to attempt to maintain that President Roosevelt's behavior, when not constrained by the sway of domestic instability and consequently the prevailing public sentiment, was forceful, ideological, and would have undoubtedly preempted action in the face of such previously-conceptualized national security prerogatives. However, the old saying “history does matter” holds true since people are not born intrinsically inclined to certain dispositions, they develop them from the precedents laid forth from other individuals through a historical branching pattern of development. President Hoover's actions were justifiable. President Roosevelt's actions were not only justifiable, but also demonstrate how deeply ingrained Presidential behavior has become ideologically at this point. Yet it is this infusion of ideology that has developed over the course of American history, and through critical, sequentially-important junctures that I have delineated through out this paper, that have given rise to Presidential behavior towards preemptive, aggressive, responses to significant national security threats.

It is without question in my mind that, when given the opportunity for research, one can draw similar analytical conclusions for future presidential behavior. The scope of this paper doesn't allow me to delve this far, yet in many ways the progression need not go any further. There is a significant branching pattern of development, which I have attempted to not only demonstrate its existence, but that the costs of reversal have become fairly high. I have also demonstrated that path-dependency, which is the cornerstone of my argument moving forward from the principles enunciated by James Monroe in 1823, is critically important, but cannot maintain a certain inflexible and rigid nature that might reflect negatively on scholarly discourse, which attempts to explain other political phenomena in this manner. I have attempted thus far to illustrate that that Monroe Doctrine did not come about as a result of imminent national security threats at the time. This is why the Monroe Doctrine, in its ideological value, should be looked at as the foundation from which future ideological Presidential behavior emerged. Without strong ideological foundations, the type of offensive-oriented, preemptive responses to national security threats, would not have withstood the oppositional forces over time. By refocusing our understanding of history through looking at these critical, temporally-significant actions and events, we should have a better understanding of the reasoning behind U.S. presidential behavior in light of the ever-evolving, complex nature of U.S. national security within an international context.

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