

Coalition Building and Overcoming Legislative Gridlock in Foreign Policy, 1947-98

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Political analysis of gridlock and legislative stalemate has not differentiated between foreign and domestic policy. Foreign policy is widely considered different from domestic policy, with less conflict and greater cooperation between the branches. The author offers explanations for gridlock that focus on conditions related to coalition building within Congress and between the branches. It is hypothesized that gridlock in foreign policy increases under divided government. Other important indicators of foreign policy gridlock include ideological differences between the two chambers of Congress and between the two political parties as well as the ideological cohesiveness of the two parties. An examination of the significant, consequential, seriously considered foreign policy legislation that failed to pass since 1947 supports the coalition model. When indicators suggest the ability to build coalitions is high, legislative gridlock in foreign policy is reduced.

The failure of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in October 1999 highlights the degree of partisan conflict that existed between President Clinton and the Republican majority in Congress. Observers argued that politicians should set aside partisanship and pass a treaty that most analysts agree is beneficial to America's strategic position (Broder 1999; Judt 1999). However, as many political scientists have noted, bipartisan cooperation in Washington has declined in recent decades (Binder 1999, Bond and Fleisher 2000; Cooper and Young 1997), even in the foreign policy arena (Fleisher et al. 2000; McCormick and Wittkopf 1990, 1992; McCormick, Wittkopf, and Danna 1997). Examples of the inability to enact significant foreign policy change exist throughout the postwar era. President Truman lobbied Congress for universal military training during the Eightieth, Eighty-first, and Eighty-second Congresses but was rebuffed. President Eisenhower successfully blocked attempts to change the president's treaty and international agreement making powers. Is the defeat of the test ban treaty an anomaly, or is it representative of a broader trend of gridlock stemming from increased partisan politics in foreign policy?

The study of legislative gridlock, or the inability of government to pass significant legislation, has gained new life since the publication of Mayhew's groundbreaking book *Divided We Govern* (1991). Mayhew challenged the conventional wisdom that split party con-

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trol of Congress and the presidency leads to legislative gridlock. In his book, Mayhew catalogued the significant legislation passed from 1947 to 1990 and found no difference in the rate of passage between times of split-party control and unified government. Several authors have challenged Mayhew's findings (Binder 1999; Coleman 1999; Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997; Kelly 1993) as well as the theoretical approach of focusing attention on the dynamics of party control rather than preference positions (Brady and Volden 1998; Krehbiel 1998). While some of these authors have demonstrated that divided government leads to gridlock, other factors are clearly important, including the degree of partisanship on Capitol Hill, ideological diversity among partisans, and ideological differences between the chambers of Congress (Binder 1999; Coleman 1999). In this article, I measure foreign policy gridlock by counting the number of significant foreign policy bills¹ that failed to pass in a given Congress. I explore determinants of the variation in foreign policy gridlock across time. Foreign policy is a significant, important subset of American policy with different assumptions about political behavior, and it deserves attention. It is often presumed that presidents dominate foreign policy (Peterson 1994; Wildavsky 1966) and that gridlock in the foreign policy realm is inherently dangerous to America's national security.

The focus on divided government as the main contributor to gridlock is unsurprising given the fact that we have only seen six years of unified control since 1968 (1977-80 and 1993-94). Coinciding with split-party control of government has been the rise of partisanship on the Hill. Cooper and Young (1997) demonstrated significant increases in partisan voting since the 91st Congress, with especially steep increases during the '80s and '90s. Binder (1999) noted a related decrease in the number of "centrists" in Congress, making coalition building increasingly difficult on the Hill. The parties in Congress have become more ideologically distinct, leading to fewer cross-pressured members willing to cross party lines to form coalitions (Fleisher and Bond 2000). Moreover, as partisanship in Congress has increased, opposition parties in Congress have forwarded their own foreign policy agendas (e.g., the Republicans' missile defense in the 104th Congress). This crowding of the agenda has led presidents to respond by opposing more legislation when the opposing party controls Congress (Edwards and Barrett 2000; Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997).

Studies of partisanship in foreign and defense policy demonstrate a similar decline in bipartisan cooperation in Washington (McCormick and Wittkopf 1990, 1992; Meernick 1993). No longer does the axiom, "politics stops at the water's edge," represent presidential-congressional relations in foreign policy. Foreign policy, many argue, is as partisan as domestic policy (Fleisher et al. 2000; Wittkopf and McCormick 1998). Congress has been more assertive in the foreign policy realm since the end of the Vietnam War, challenging presidential leadership on international and defense issues (Henehan 2000; Lindsay 1994; Meernick 1993; Ripley and Lindsay 1993). A more assertive Congress may increase interbranch conflict over the direction of foreign policy, as presidents move to protect their foreign policy prerogatives.

1. Foreign policy is defined as issues affecting U.S. relations with other nations, including defense legislation related to strategic policy, diplomatic measures, treaty measures, economic sanctions, foreign aid, and foreign trade. Aid and trade issues have received greater attention in recent years by Congress, particularly since the end of the Vietnam War. Since 1973, 42 percent of the failed bills identified in the article were either aid or trade. Prior to 1973, only 19 percent of the failed bills were aid or trade.

Traditionally, many observers of politics consider gridlock, or legislative stalemate, an important failing of the American system of separate institutions sharing power and weak political parties (Burns 1990; Sundquist 1988). At the same time, however, foreign policy is supposedly different from domestic politics according to the ideal that partisan bickering should not threaten national security. Despite this ideal that presidents, members of Congress, and candidates for office typically exhort, rarely today does the ideal represent reality in government. Instead, foreign policy entrepreneurs (oftentimes the president) must overcome the inefficiency of the American political system and the partisan rancor on Capital Hill to build coalitions to pass significant policy change. This article seeks to explain the variation in legislative gridlock in foreign policy over time by focusing on coalition building. In so doing, we can determine when winning coalitions are more likely to overcome the partisan rancor and the inefficient system to pass significant foreign policy change.

For instance, presidents cannot always count on their party's support in Congress. Presidential support scores among the president's party, historically, average 66 percent (Edwards 1989). To pass policies, a president must build coalitions including members of the opposition party. The same is true for other policy entrepreneurs. This is especially the case during divided government. The ability of a policy entrepreneur to build winning coalitions depends a great deal on the makeup of the opposing party, not just whether his or her copartisans control Congress. Zeroing in on foreign policy gives us insight into when coalitions are most likely, during both types of party government, in a policy area where presidents are considered to have their greatest influence (Peterson 1994).

Previous research that focused on partisanship and the legislative process relied on floor vote analysis (e.g., McCormick and Wittkopf 1990, 1992; Meernick 1993). While floor voting is an important decision stage of the legislative process, floor vote analysis may underestimate the level of gridlock between the two branches and within Congress because legislation that never makes it to the floor of either house is excluded. For a more complete picture of the process and gridlock, more recent analyses have encompassed the entire legislative process (Binder 1999; Coleman 1999; Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997; Mayhew 1991).

Borrowing from these most recent studies, I measure foreign policy legislative gridlock as the number of important foreign policy bill failures over time. Gridlock in foreign policy has seen an increase during the past two and half decades, with a noted rise since the end of the Vietnam War. A more strained relationship between the president and Congress, due to recent congressional assertiveness in the international arena (Henehan 2000; Ripley and Lindsay 1993), explains part of the increase. The dynamics of partisanship between the parties and between the two chambers of Congress also play an important role. Determining the importance of each of these factors is the object of this study.

Hypotheses

Scholars who focus on divided government as the primary determinant of legislative gridlock adopt the party government perspective on policy making in American politics. Central to this perspective is the idea that political parties are vital to American legislative

institutions (Schattschneider 1942). Parties provide the mechanisms by which Congress is organized, policies are developed, winning coalitions are built, and relations between the executive and legislature are fostered. Certainly, party dynamics cannot explain entirely the gridlock inherent in the American political system. American parties are generally considered ideologically heterogeneous and undisciplined. Other important causes of legislative gridlock relate to the design of our government: a bicameral legislature that shares legislative authority with the executive. Still other explanations focus on the distribution of policy preferences among key legislators in both the Senate and the House, downplaying the importance of political parties (Brady and Volden 1998; Krehbiel 1998).

Party Control

The American political system is one in which the executive and legislature share policy-making power. Authority and influence in policy making are not distinctly separated between the branches. Rather, the president and Congress must cooperate to enact significant policy change (Jones 1994; Neustadt 1960). American political parties are important linkage institutions between the two political branches of government. Party provides the most important resource for presidential leadership of the legislature (Bond and Fleisher 1990). Members of the president's party are predisposed to support the president, and party leaders in Congress are even more supportive of the president than rank and file members (Edwards 1989).

Given the importance of political parties in facilitating interbranch cooperation, when government is divided, cooperation is reduced substantially and gridlock is the likely result. When the president and a majority of both houses of Congress have similar party labels, their policy preferences are closer than when the opposite situation occurs. Policy preference similarities between the executive and legislature are important throughout the legislative process and especially so during the agenda-setting stage. Minority presidents face opposing parties in Congress that control the legislative agenda through the committee chair structure and party leadership (Taylor 1998). Opposing party leaders are also more apt to put forth an agenda independent of the president, increasing the number of bills the president is likely to oppose (Edwards and Barrett 2000; Sinclair 2000).

Congress jealously guards its foreign policy prerogatives (Ripley and Lindsay 1993), and majority party leaders are less likely to defer to a minority president. Studies that show the demise of "two presidencies" and an increase in partisanship in foreign policy indirectly suggest that gridlock caused by party differences carry over into foreign policy (Fleisher et al. 2000; McCormick and Wittkopf 1990, 1992). If parties are important linkage institutions greasing the wheels of government, particularly the relationship between the branches, divided government should be an important indicator of gridlock (Binder 1999; Coleman 1999; Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997; Sundquist 1988).

Divided Government Hypothesis: Divided government increases foreign policy gridlock, while unified government decreases gridlock.

Partisanship and Ideology

Parties are more than labels placed on politicians. Parties represent ideological perspectives that tend to coalesce on a two-dimensional, liberal-conservative scale (Poole and Rosenthal 1997). Ideology plays an important role in congressional roll-call behavior (Kingdon 1989) and the level of support individual congresspersons give to presidents (Bond and Fleisher 1990). When the two political parties are more closely aligned ideologically, policy preferences are more closely aligned and bipartisan cooperation becomes more plausible. Some of the most productive legislative times of the postwar era have come during a time when the two parties were less ideologically distinct (the 1960s and 1970s). Also, during these times, moderate centrists in the legislature were more common, affecting the ease of compromise (Binder 1999).

Party Ideological Distinction Hypothesis: The greater the ideological distinctiveness between the two parties in Congress, the greater likelihood there is that gridlock will result.

Bicameralism

Formal theorists (Tsebelis and Money 1997; Riker 1992) have shown that bicameralism is an important hindrance to significant policy change. As the critical median legislator moves further away from his or her counterpart in the other body, the status quo outcome is most likely. Since the makeups of the House and Senate, by design, are different, along with the electoral pressures existing for Representatives and Senators, ideological differences between the two chambers should contribute to gridlock. Moreover, the partisan makeup of one house is likely to differ from the other, even to the point of a different party controlling each body, as was the case from 1981 to 1986. As Binder (1999) pointed out, any study of gridlock needs to account for the differences within Congress, not just between the branches.

Bicameral Distance Hypothesis: The greater the ideological distance between the median legislators in the House and Senate, the greater the level of foreign policy gridlock.

Coalition Building

The hurdles to policy change inherent in American politics, the most obvious being institutional separation, partisanship, and bicameralism, generally require coalition building to successfully change the status quo. Many of the large policy changes passed into law during the postwar era passed with overwhelming support (Krehbiel 1998; Mayhew 1991). Even so, it is possible that unified support did not exist throughout the process and did not coalesce until it became clear that the legislation would become law. In other words, opposition to significant change in the status quo is likely, even when such changes are deemed necessary or popular. That opposition could very well stymie new policy changes before they gain momentum in the legislative process. Coalition building, therefore, is a critical element in passing significant policy change.

Under certain conditions, bipartisan coalitions are easier to build for presidents and other policy entrepreneurs. Ideological distinctiveness between the parties makes coalition

building more difficult, as suggested above. However, interparty differences do not tell the complete story. Intraparty differences also play a role in determining gridlock (Coleman 1999). When the Democrats are more heterogeneous, Republican presidents are likely to be more successful persuading Democratic legislators to support their policies. The same is the case for Democratic presidents when Republicans are more heterogeneous. More generally, when the majority party (during divided government) is more diverse, minority presidents are better able to draw from the opposition for support.

Intraparty Factionalism Hypothesis: The greater the intraparty differences, the greater the opportunity for coalition building and the less likely it is that gridlock will result.

Policy Context

The presidential-congressional relationship in foreign policy does not occur in a vacuum. Real-world events and conditions matter when it comes to gridlock. Binder (1999); Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997); and Mayhew (1991) have all shown that the amount of slack resources available to government matters when it comes to enacting significant policy change. In terms of foreign and defense policy, increases in foreign aid, new weapons systems, and other important policy changes are more plausible when government is running a surplus, as opposition may not be as severe. Timing also matters, according to some authors (Edwards 1989). Policy change is more likely during the first two years of a president's administration. Successful presidents "hit the ground running" upon taking office, capitalizing on the "honeymoon" and possible electoral mandate (Edwards 1989). These two important considerations must be taken into account in any model of legislative gridlock.

Finally, world events and the policy context are likely to affect the dynamics of foreign policy gridlock. American involvement in a war might make changes to the status quo less likely, while presidential uses of force could anger congressional opposition to the detriment of presidential policy initiatives. The opposite relationship is also plausible. War and force (two separate concepts) might cause legislators to support the president in order to appear united to foreign observers (Stoll 1987). A structural change in the world situation occurred with the end of the cold war in 1991. No longer was the Soviet Union a unifying threat to the United States. Wittkopf and McCormick (1998) suspected that the end of the cold war quite possibly changed the structural relationship between the president and Congress in foreign policy. It is probably too early to make any definitive statements regarding the effects of this important change, but any model ought to include a control for the strategic situation.

The Data

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in the analysis is the degree of foreign policy gridlock during a two-year Congress. Since gridlock is defined as the inability of government to pass significant legislation, a measure of gridlock must account for legislation that fails to pass. Gridlock

might occur for a variety of reasons, as discussed above. However, to conclude that gridlock is the result of the American institutional design and certain conditions surrounding coalition building (and thus interbranch and intrabranched and party conflict), the analysis must be limited to legislation on which the president takes a position (Edwards, Barrett, and Peake 1997).

Mayhew (1991) provided a list of postwar significant legislation that passed, finding little substantive difference between conditions of party control. Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997) claimed that Mayhew's focus on passed legislation was misplaced if the concept being measured was gridlock. A more valid measure of gridlock, according to Edwards and colleagues, is a count of significant, seriously considered legislation that failed to pass.² Binder (1999) adopted a more complicated measure of gridlock that provided the total list of possible agenda items and cited which items failed to pass. Binder used policy discussions on editorial pages (specifically the *New York Times*) to represent the overall agenda and measured gridlock as the degree to which these agenda items were not enacted into law.

I adopt the failed-legislation measure used by Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997).³ Foreign policy gridlock is measured as the number of significant, seriously considered foreign and defense policy changes that failed to pass during a two-year Congress on which a presidential position could be determined.⁴ Foreign policy is operationally defined as policies affecting U.S. relations with other nations, including defense legislation related to strategic policy, diplomatic measures, treaty measures, foreign aid, and foreign trade. The analysis spans from 1947 to 1998 (the 80th through 105th Congresses).⁵ Figure 1 graphs the dependent variable *foreign policy gridlock*.

2. Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997) relied on the *Congressional Quarterly Almanac* and end of session wrap-ups in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* to identify significant, consequential, seriously considered bills that failed enactment. Their list actually included the number of policies that failed enactment since they only counted a single failure when several different bills may have been introduced related to a particular policy change. Thus, failures were not overcounted when a bill was continuously reintroduced during a two-year Congress. They counted a bill as passed if some version of the proposed policy became law by the end of the two-year Congress. Policy proposals that eventually passed within the congressional term were not included in the list of failures.

3. Unfortunately, I am unable to create a measure of foreign policy gridlock using Binder's (1999) method. The data are currently unavailable (while the Edwards, Barrett, and Peake [1997] data are). To create a subset of the original data set focusing solely on foreign policy legislation, I need the entire original data set. While a variable similar to Binder's might have more validity as a representation of gridlock, I am fairly certain that my replication and update of Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997) has greater reliability. I use the failed measure as opposed to the ratio measure because of the ease of presentation for the failed measure. Using a ratio measure in the ordinary least squares regression analysis requires transformations that create difficulty in interpretation. Models were run using both dependent variables with substantively similar results.

4. As gridlock is defined as the inability of government to pass significant policy change, it makes sense to examine bill failures as Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997) did. What is deemed significant is clearly subjective; however, most of the bills in the study are borrowed from Edwards, Barrett, and Peake, with the additions listed in Footnote 5. Generally, the legislation must be deemed significant by contemporaries and, if passed, an important change to the status quo. Seriously considered legislation is defined as legislation that at least receives attention in Congress, with a committee hearing being the minimum level.

5. To expand the time frame to the 105th Congress, I had to collect data on both failed and passed legislation dealing with foreign policy for the 103rd through the 105th Congresses. I mirrored the approach of Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997) in collecting my set of legislation. The passed legislation includes that of the 103d Congress—the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) enactment, \$4 billion in Russian aid, the Open Skies Treaty; that of the 104th Congress—a bill including Cuban sanctions and altering policies toward Cuba; that of the 105th Congress—the Religious Persecution Freedom Act, the NATO expansion treaty, and the Chemical Weapons Convention. The failed legislation includes that of the 103rd Congress—the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Foreign Aid Reform bill; that of the 104th Congress—the Defend America Act (establishing a nationwide anti-ballistic missile [ABM] system in all fifty states by 2003), the

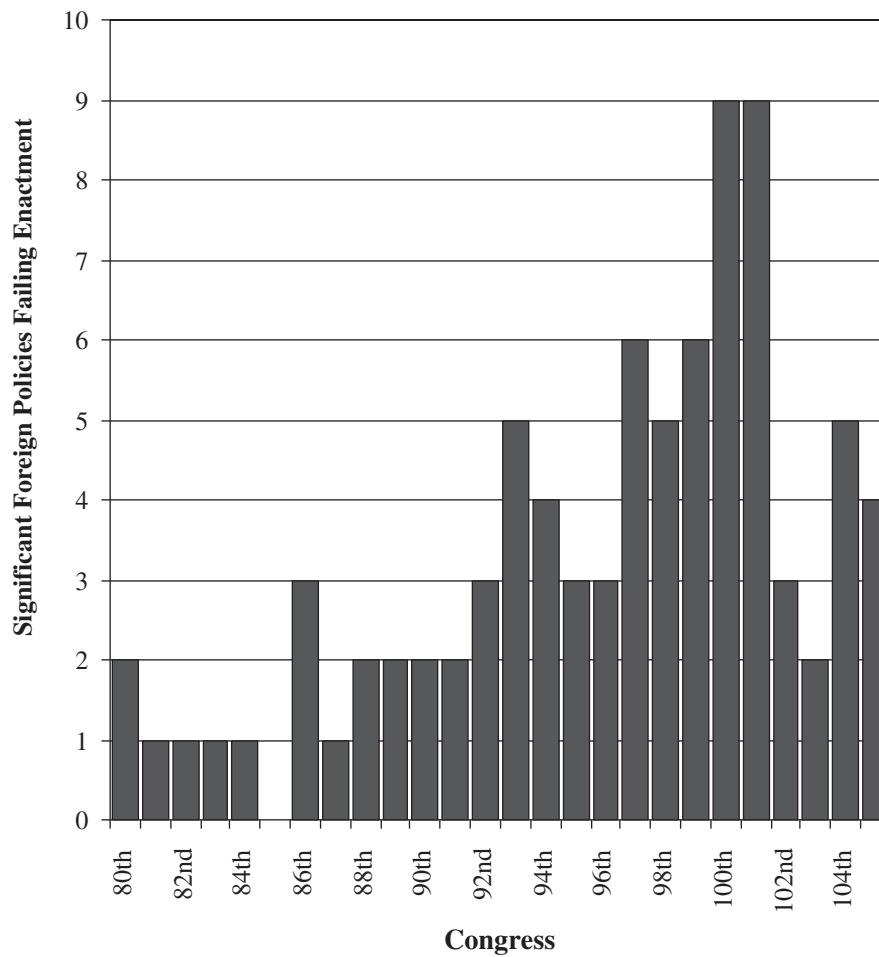


FIGURE 1. Foreign Policy Gridlock, 1947-98.

The most striking feature of Figure 1 is the substantial increase in foreign policy gridlock in the post-Vietnam era. Of the forty-five total significant foreign-policy related bills seriously considered by Congress prior to the Ninety-third Congress (1973-74), twenty-one (47 percent) failed to pass. Failures have been more common since the Ninety-third Congress, with sixty-four failures out of the eighty-three significant bills (77 percent). It is also worth noting that most of the post-Vietnam era has had divided government and corresponds with increased partisanship in Congress. At first glance, the presence of divided government is important. Since 1947, the mean number of failures under divided government is

Chemical Weapons Convention, a bill to terminate the U.S. arms embargo on Bosnia (vetoed), a bill to consolidate foreign affairs agencies and terminate several (vetoed), and an omnibus bill to limit placement of U.S. forces under foreign command tied to UN funding, NATO expansion, and war powers modifications; that of the 105th Congress—fast-track trade authority for reciprocal trade agreements, a bill to sanction Russian companies that give technical support to Iran nuclear projects (vetoed), UN debt payment (killed by abortion rider, which forced veto), the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. The complete list of all foreign policy legislation is available from the author via e-mail: jpeake@bgnet.bgsu.edu.

4.2. Under unified government, the mean is 1.8 failures. The differences between party situations are most clear in the post-Vietnam era, during which the mean number of failures under divided government increased to 5.6. While failures have increased, the amount of successful legislation has remained relatively unchanged across time.

A cursory examination of the data indicates that foreign policy gridlock increases with divided government, and the increase is particularly apparent since the end of the Vietnam War. Further examining the data broken down by presidential position shows that presidents have significantly increased their opposition to foreign policy legislation since Vietnam, particularly during divided government. Assuming that the list of failed and passed bills represent the legislative agenda (Edwards and Barrett 2000), I find that the president opposed 22 percent of the foreign policy legislative agenda prior to 1973 and 53 percent of the agenda since 1973. While presidents may often be considered entrepreneurs who build coalitions, they also play the role of opposing legislation and stopping significant policy change in its tracks. Recent presidents have opposed significant foreign policy bills emanating from the legislature at a greater rate than their predecessors.

Independent Variables

The party-centric, institutional, and contextual hypotheses discussed above cannot be assessed by a cursory glance at the data across time. To attain an accurate picture of foreign policy gridlock, we must take into account the variety of causes of gridlock discussed above. *Divided government* is measured as a dummy variable and is coded 1 when there is split-party control of the presidency and one or both chambers of Congress (0 otherwise). The *interparty distance* variable represents the party ideological-distinctiveness hypothesis. The variable is operationalized using DW-NOMINATE (Poole and Rosenthal 1997; Poole 2000) scores for the House that represent the ideological (first dimension, liberal to conservative) absolute distance between the median Democrat and the median Republican. The variable accounts for the degree of partisanship due to ideological differences between the two parties based on roll-call behavior over time. The measure is highest during the most recent Congresses (103rd-105th) and in the 80th Congress and is lowest during the period of the late '50s through 1980.

Bicameral distance is measured in the same manner as Binder (1999, Table 2) and represents the ideological distance between the median House member and median Senator, based on first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores. The expected relationship between bicameral distance and gridlock is positive. Another important institutional factor that may contribute to gridlock in foreign policy is the filibuster and cloture in the Senate, a rule that requires a super-majority (sixty votes) to continue debate on a bill (Brady and Volden 1998; Coleman 1999). I account for the ability of the majority party to invoke cloture using Coleman's (1999) approach. The *Senate super-majority* variable is coded 1 when the majority party in the Senate has sixty or more members and 0 otherwise. A negative relationship is expected.

Interparty factionalism. Building bipartisan coalitions requires drawing support for a proposal from members of the opposing party. When the parties are more factional, the

chances that a president or other entrepreneur could draw support from the opposition increases. I account for intraparty factionalism in several ways. Included in the following analyses are four measures of factionalism, one for the Republicans and Democrats and an alternative measure that is based on minority- and majority-party status. Since these variables exhibit high multicollinearity, they cannot be included in the same analysis. To explore the various plausible intraparty situations, I ran several analyses including the different measures.

The measures are constructed using first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 1997). The measures indicate the weighted mean ideological distance between fellow party members (Coleman 1999). As the number increases, the party is more factional, so the expectation is a negative relationship between factionalism and gridlock. As the parties become more factional, it is likely that the distinctiveness of the parties will decrease. In fact, the *interparty distance* variable negatively correlates with three of the four factionalism measures, so care must be taken when introducing these variables into the same analysis to avoid multicollinearity problems.

Control variables. Several control variables are introduced into the analysis to account for the effects of the policy context and international environment. I adopt Mayhew's (1991) measure of *slack resources* to account for the fiscal situation faced by Congress. The measure constitutes the degree of budget surplus (positive value) or deficit (negative value) experienced by the current Congress in the time series (averaged across two-year budgetary figures). *Start of term* is coded 1 for the first Congress of a presidential administration and 0 for the final Congress of an administration. The analysis includes three controls to account for the international situation. *War* accounts for the American involvement in a foreign war (specifically Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War) and receives a code of 1 during war and 0 otherwise. *Presidential force* is a count of the number of presidential uses of force during each Congress as listed in Grimmett's Congressional Research Service data set (1999). The list includes a comprehensive listing of presidential uses of force (noncovert) since the nation's birth (DeRouen 2000).⁶ Finally, *cold war* accounts for the strategic position of the United States in relation to the Soviet Union. The variable receives a code of 1 during the cold war years (1947-90, 80th to 101st Congresses) and 0 otherwise.

Analysis

To test the above hypotheses, I turn to multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) time-series regression.⁷ Table 1 presents the results testing all of the above hypotheses except

6. War and presidential force are two distinct concepts (DeRouen 2000) analyzed separately by international relations scholars. The presence of war has, however, been included in models seeking to explain presidential force (see DeRouen for a review of this literature), with the idea that the presence of war provides a disincentive for presidents to use force abroad. The two measures used here have a Pearson's r of $-.255$ ($p = .209$), indicating an insignificant negative relationship.

7. Several diagnostic tests were run to check for standard problems using the classical ordinary least squares (OLS) approach. The dependent variable in the analysis is not normally distributed, which is a common problem in econometric analysis. To address this concern, I transformed the dependent variable by squaring each value, result-

TABLE 1
Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Determinants of Foreign Policy Gridlock, 1947-98: Interparty Difference Model

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B (SE)</i>		<i>Standardized B^a</i>	<i>t-statistic (p)</i>	
Divided government	2.32	(0.77)	.492	3.03	(.008)
Interparty distance	32.32	(9.61)	.904	3.37	(.004)
Bicameral distance	10.29	(3.71)	.470	2.78	(.013)
Senate super-majority	0.61	(0.89)	.117	0.68	(.507)
Controls					
Slack resources	-0.19	(0.04)	-.858	-5.17	(.000)
Start of term	0.19	(0.60)	.041	0.31	(.761)
War	-0.12	(0.74)	-.026	-0.17	(.869)
Presidential force	-0.16	(0.10)	-.235	-1.59	(.131)
Cold war	2.88	(0.64)	.671	3.60	(.002)
Constant	-26.18	(7.99)		-3.28	(.005)

Adjusted $R^2 = .62$

F -test (p) = 5.51 (.002)

SE of estimate = 1.45

$N = 26$

Note: The model was estimated using the linear regression command in SPSS for Windows, version 9.

a. Standardized coefficients are shown to determine the relative impact of the interval independent variables. They represent the number of standard deviation shifts in the dependent variable in response to a standard deviation increase in the explanatory variable, controlling for the effects of the other variables. Given the range of the DW-NOMINATE score variables (interval from -1 to 1), it is much more useful to compare standardized B s rather than unstandardized B s. Standard deviations are as follows: gridlock: 2.34, interparty difference: 0.066, bicameral difference: 0.107, slack budgetary resources: 10.70, presidential force: 3.45.

the intraparty factionalism hypothesis, which is addressed in Table 2. The results correspond well with the divided-government hypothesis. During divided government, about 2.3 more foreign policy changes fail enactment in comparison to times of unified government. The mean of the dependent variable is 3.27 failures, so the 2.3 increase is substantively important. The coefficient is statistically significant and in the positive direction as hypothesized.

While interbranch conflict (caused by divided government) is important, it is not the most important influence on foreign policy gridlock. Partisan differences internal to Congress play a more important role. When the two political parties are ideologically distinct (or polarized), gridlock is more common in foreign policy. The interparty distance variable has a significant positive impact on the number of failed foreign policy bills in each Congress.

ing in values that are normally distributed. I reran the OLS models and found similar results (similar signs and significance levels). Only estimates of the nonnormalized data are reported because interpretation of squared values is problematic. Tests for heteroskedasticity were run using the residual plotting approach discussed in Kennedy (1992), indicating no patterns indicative of the problem. Given the temporal dynamic of the dependent series, it is prudent to test for serial correlation as well. Durbin-Watson statistics were attained using the approach described by Kennedy, the highest being 2.33 ($p = .436$), indicating that serial correlation is not a problem. The stationarity of the dependent variable is also a concern in time-series analysis. Dickey-Fuller tests (Enders 1995) were run to test for a unit root. No unit root was found, indicating that the series is stationary. Multicollinearity becomes a problem when both interparty and intraparty variables are included in the same model (assessed using the Auxiliary R^2 as well as running a correlation matrix). Several models were run to test the significance of the various intraparty variables described above.

Using the standardized coefficients (presented in Table 1), we can calculate the relative impact of interparty distance with the other interval variables in the analysis. Such a comparison suggests that as the ideological preferences (measured by first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores) of the two parties diverge, gridlock increases. A one standard deviation increase in the interparty distance variable leads to nearly a one standard deviation increase in gridlock.⁸

Institutional effects contribute to foreign policy gridlock as well, particularly the bicameral design of the legislature. As expected, when the ideological distance between the median members of the Senate and House increases, foreign policy gridlock increases. The bicameral distance variable is positive and statistically significant. Increasing bicameral distance by one standard deviation (equivalent to the change between the 101st and 102nd Congresses) leads to a corresponding increase in gridlock of about half a standard deviation (or 1.2 bill failures). Whether the Senate majority party holds a filibuster-proof majority does not seem to matter when other relationships are taken into account.

Of the control variables, only budgetary resources and the strategic situation during the cold war are significant determinants of foreign policy gridlock. As expected, when fewer resources are available to government, competition among policy entrepreneurs for limited resources increases, contributing to gridlock. The slack resources variable is negatively related to foreign policy gridlock, supporting this hypothesis. Interestingly, the period of the cold war meant greater gridlock in foreign policy. Once other factors were accounted for, cold war Congresses averaged nearly three more failed policy changes. Data from non-cold war years only cover four Congresses, so we must be cautious of this finding.

Testing Party Factionalism

To test the intraparty factionalism hypothesis, I include variables representing the average ideological within-party distance (based on first-dimension DW-NOMINATE scores) of the House Democrats and Republicans in Table 2. I exclude the interparty distance variable from the specific party models due to collinearity problems (see Footnote 6). Each intraparty factionalism variable has a separate model due to collinearity concerns.⁹ Intraparty factionalism among the House Democrats (Democratic distance) appears more important in contributing to gridlock than factionalism among the Republicans. The Democratic model (reported in the left column) results are consistent with the analysis reported in Table 1, in that divided government and bicameral distance contribute to foreign policy gridlock. Democratic distance is negatively related to foreign policy gridlock, as hypothesized above. A one standard deviation increase in Democratic distance (similar increase from Ninety-sixth to Ninety-seventh Congresses) leads to nearly a one standard deviation decrease in foreign policy bill failures (about two failures per Congress).

8. Using the standard deviations provided at the bottom of Table 1, we can calculate the substantive impact of interparty ideological distance. If interparty distance is increased by 0.066 (about the amount of change between 1979 and 1984), the number of foreign policy bills failing enactment each Congress increases by about 2.

9. I also ran a model including both intraparty variables and found similar results in terms of significance and direction. I report the separate models because collinearity may cause biased estimators. Models including variables based on majority/minority party distinction (instead of party names) were run as well with similar results (negative relationships, significant for the majority party).

TABLE 2
Ordinary Least Squares Regression of the Determinants of Foreign Policy Gridlock, 1947-98: Intraparty Factionalism Models

Variable	Democratic Party			Republican Party		
	B (SE)	Standardized B ^a	t-statistic (p)	B (SE)	Standardized B ^a	t-statistic (p)
Divided government	1.64 (0.67)	.347	2.45 (.003)	2.20 (0.81)	.467	2.20 (.043)
Bicameral distance	7.55 (3.04)	.345	2.49 (.024)	6.91 (4.48)	.315	1.54 (.143)
Senate super-majority	-1.05 (0.72)	-.203	-1.45 (.166)	-0.71 (0.99)	-.137	-0.72 (.485)
Intraparty factionalism						
Democratic distance	-78.11 (18.56)	-.954	-4.21 (.001)	-48.54 (36.78)	-.292	-1.32 (.206)
Republican distance						
Controls						
Slack resources	-0.104 (0.03)	-.473	-3.85 (.001)	-0.124 (0.04)	-.565	-3.33 (.004)
Start of term	-0.391 (0.542)	-.085	-0.72 (.481)	-0.041 (0.59)	-.009	-0.055 (.957)
War	0.19 (0.68)	.041	0.29 (.778)	-0.999 (0.85)	-.207	-1.18 (.256)
Presidential force	-0.17 (0.09)	-.257	-1.93 (.072)	-0.099 (0.13)	-.146	-0.80 (.438)
Cold war	3.41 (0.78)	.603	4.01 (.001)	3.05 (0.63)	.584	3.79 (.002)
Constant	22.69 (5.53)		4.10 (.001)	10.66 (8.18)		1.30 (.211)
Adjusted R ²		.69			.41	
F-test (p)		7.27 (.000)			2.95 (.028)	
SE of estimate		1.30			1.79	
N		26			26	

Note: The models were estimated using the linear regression command in SPSS for Windows, version 9.

a. See Table 1 for definition of standardized coefficients. Standard deviations for intraparty factionalism variables are as follows: Democratic distance: 0.029, Republican distance: 0.014.

Republican factionalism is not an important contributing factor to foreign policy gridlock according to the results reported in Table 2 (right column). While negative, as hypothesized, intraparty distance among House Republicans (Republican distance) is statistically insignificant. This negative finding of Republican factionalism alleviating gridlock is consistent with Bond and Fleisher (1990). They found that Republican presidents receive greater foreign policy support from Democrats in Congress than Democratic presidents do from congressional Republicans. Bond and Fleisher concluded that the "two presidencies" only exist for Republican occupants of the White House.

The Republican Party was particularly cohesive during the postwar era, even on foreign and defense issues. Even as a majority party, Republicans in the House have been more ideologically cohesive than their Democratic counterparts. Republican presidents have benefited from Democratic factionalism, enabling minority Republican executives to build bipartisan coalitions between congressional Republicans and conservative to moderate Democrats. This was particularly the case during the Eisenhower, Nixon, and first Reagan administrations, when Democratic factionalism was at its greatest. Since recent electoral forces have made the Democratic Party more homogeneous (Rhode 1991), bipartisan coalition building in foreign policy by Republican presidents may become more difficult. The George H. W. Bush administration experienced difficulty garnering Democratic support in many areas of policy. It remains to be seen whether President George W. Bush will be successful at forging bipartisan coalitions given the recent trend of party polarization in Washington (Fleisher and Bond 2000).

Conclusion

In the American system of separate institutions sharing power, cooperation between the political branches and the political parties is key to successful policy change, particularly when the changes are significant and consequential. Given the undisciplined nature of American political parties, partisan differences between the political branches, while important, do not explain all of the gridlock apparent in the inefficient American system. Coalition building is key to successfully changing the status quo in modern American politics. Because American political parties are generally undisciplined (in comparison to parties in other democracies), policy entrepreneurs seeking change must look across the partisan divide to build winning coalitions. This is the case in foreign policy, where presidents, the clearest of policy entrepreneurs, supposedly dominate the legislature.

In examining foreign policy gridlock, or the inability of government to enact significant policy change, I have found that political parties matter. Party helps bridge the gap between executive and legislature in foreign policy. When the two branches are controlled by opposing parties, gridlock increases. When government is divided, presidents are forced to oppose a greater number of foreign policy bills initiated by Congress. The findings reported above fit well with the established paradigm that presidents share power with Congress, even in policy areas traditionally considered the realm of the executive (Bond and Fleisher 1990; Edwards 1989; Jones 1994). Interbranch conflict is somewhat alleviated when

the president and Congress are of the same political party, as the two branches' legislative agendas are more similar (Edwards and Barrett 2000).

While important, interbranch conflict does not explain all of the gridlock apparent in foreign policy. Political parties play a role in organizing coalitions of support and opposition within Congress. When the two parties are closer ideologically, policy entrepreneurs, including the president, can draw from the other party for support as their policy preferences are likely to be closer. Gridlock may then be alleviated. The analysis reported above supports this expectation.

Of course, as the two parties move further apart ideologically, it is likely that each party exhibits greater loyalty and ideological cohesiveness on a bounded, two-dimensional scale. This would make coalition building more difficult, as the president's policy preferences are unlikely to draw enough support from an ideologically homogeneous opposition party. When Democrats in the House are ideologically heterogeneous, Republican policy entrepreneurs can draw support from the Democrats, increasing the chances for cooperation and decreasing gridlock. This is important theoretically because supporters of the party approach to studying the productivity of government implicitly suggest that a cohesive majority party in a unified government is most efficient and responsible. Because absolute party discipline is unlikely in the American setting, the opposite relationship actually holds, at least in relation to foreign policy legislation.

The results suggest that the legislative option in foreign policy for minority presidents is less viable than research on the "two presidencies" hypothesis (Wildavsky 1966) indicates. Successful enactment of significant foreign policy legislation is quite difficult, particularly when the president faces a Congress controlled by the opposing party. Certain conditions related to coalition building might decrease gridlock even in times of divided government. Less polarized and less cohesive parties provided the answer during the less partisan era of the 1960s and 1970s, decades that were quite productive legislatively (Mayhew 1991). Given today's partisan and ideologically distinct environment, coalition building is certainly a challenge for any president.

To be sure, the legislative process only touches on a relatively small portion of U.S. foreign policy, so the results discussed above are qualified. Limiting the examination of executive-congressional relations solely to the legislative process truncates our view of foreign policy. Presidents issue executive orders, receive ambassadors, sign executive agreements, order troops abroad, broker peace accords, and attend summit meetings, all without the need for legislation. In such instances, the will of the executive in all likelihood will prevail.¹⁰ However, when foreign policy change requires coalition building, as in the case of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1999, the seemingly ever-apparent gridlock of American politics makes such change extremely problematic.

10. As Hinckley (1994) has shown, congressional challenges to the president in foreign policy are often mixed with a great deal of congressional concession, posturing, parliamentary gimmickry, and symbolic action. Also, presidents historically have done an end run around Congress when support was not forthcoming. However, ignoring congressional concerns carries important consequences in terms of the president's political capital needed for other priorities. President George H. W. Bush, in taking the Gulf War decision to Congress (albeit late and with the indication that he would act without congressional approval if his vote failed), took great political risk to present a unified front. Presidents may also lose control of the agenda if an important foreign policy issue becomes a subject of partisan debate on the Hill (Peake 2001).

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