

CHAPTER 4

Foreign Policy



U.S. officials watch Osama bin Laden raid, 2011.

Making Foreign Policy

Models of Decision Making

The foreign policy process is a process of *decision making*. States take actions because people in governments—*decision makers*—choose those actions.¹ Decision making is a *steering* process in which adjustments are made as a result of feedback from the outside world. Decisions are carried out by actions taken to change the world, and then information from the world is monitored to evaluate the effects of these actions. These evaluations—along with information about other, independent changes in the environment—go into the next round of decisions (see Figure 4.1).

A common starting point for studying the decision-making process is the **rational model**.² In this model, decision makers set goals, evaluate their relative importance, calculate the costs and benefits of each possible course of action, then choose the one with the highest benefits and lowest costs (see Figure 4.2).

The choice may be complicated by *uncertainty* about the costs and benefits of various actions. In such cases, decision makers must attach probabilities to each possible outcome of an action. For example, will pressuring a rival state to give ground in peace talks work or backfire? Some decision makers are relatively *accepting of risk*, whereas others are *averse to risk*. These factors affect the importance that decision makers place on various alternative outcomes that could result from an action.

Of course, one may believe decision makers are rational, but not accept the realist assumption that states may be treated as unitary actors. Governments are made up of individuals, who may rationally pursue their goals. Yet, the goals of different individuals involved in making a decision may diverge, as may the goals of different state agencies. For example, the U.S. secretary of state may have a different goal than the secretary of

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Making Foreign Policy

- Models of Decision Making
- Individual Decision Makers
- Group Psychology
- Crisis Management

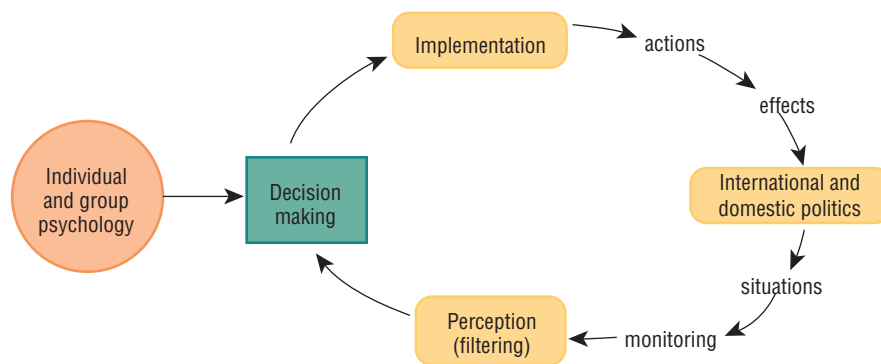
Domestic Influences

- Bureaucracies
- Interest Groups
- The Military-Industrial Complex
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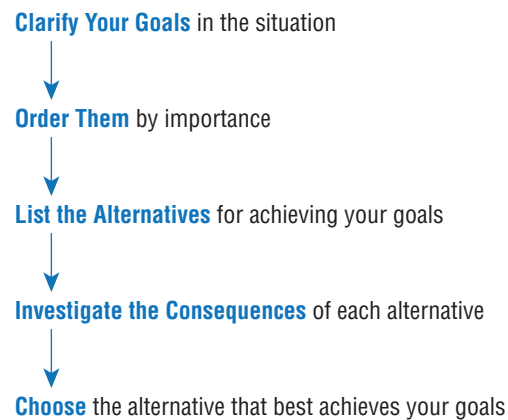
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FIGURE 4.1 Decision Making as Steering




¹ Stein, Janice Gross. Psychological Explanations of International Conflict. In Carlsnaes, Walter, Thomas Risse, and Beth A. Simmons, eds. *Handbook of International Relations*. Sage, 2002, pp. 292–308. Snyder, Richard C., H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin. *Foreign Policy Decision Making (Revisited)*. Palgrave, 2002.

² The rational model, along with the organizational process and bureaucratic politics models discussed later, derives from Graham Allison; see Allison, Graham T., and Philip Zelikow. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. 2nd ed. Longman, 1999. Bernstein, Barton J. Understanding Decisionmaking, U.S. Foreign Policy and the Cuban Missile Crisis. *International Security* 25 (1), 2000: 134–64.

FIGURE 4.2 Rational Model of Decision Making

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defense, just as the Central Intelligence Agency may view a situation differently than the National Security Council does. The rational model of decision making is somewhat complicated by uncertainty and the multiple goals of decision makers. Thus, the rational model may imply that decision making is simpler than is actually the case.

An alternative to the rational model of decision making is the **organizational process model**. In this model, foreign policy decision makers generally skip the labor-intensive process of identifying goals and alternative actions, relying instead for most decisions on standardized responses or *standard operating procedures*. For example, the U.S. State Department every day receives more than a thousand reports or inquiries from its embassies around the world and sends out more than a thousand instructions or responses to those embassies. Most of those cables are never seen by the top decision makers (the secretary of state or the president); instead, they are handled by low-level decision makers who apply general principles—or who simply try to make the least controversial, most standardized decision. These low-level decisions may not even reflect the high-level policies adopted by top leaders, but rather have a life of their own. The organizational process model implies that much of foreign policy results from “management by muddling through.”³

Another alternative to the rational model is the **government bargaining** (or *bureaucratic politics*) **model**, in which foreign policy decisions result from the bargaining process among various government agencies with somewhat divergent interests in the outcome.⁴ In 1992, the Japanese government had to decide whether to allow sushi from California to be imported—a weakening of Japan’s traditional ban on importing rice (to maintain self-sufficiency in its staple food). The Japanese Agriculture Ministry, with an interest in the well-being of Japanese farmers, opposed the imports. The Foreign Ministry, with an interest in smooth relations with the United States, wanted to allow the imports. The final decision to allow imported sushi resulted from the tug-of-war between the

³ Avant, Deborah D. *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars*. Cornell, 1995.

⁴ Welch, David A. The Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms: Retrospect and Prospect. *International Security* 17 (2), 1992: 112–46. Christiansen, Eben J., and Steven B. Redd. Bureaucrats Versus the Ballot Box in Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Experimental Analysis of the Bureaucratic Politics Model and Poliheuristic Theory. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (1), 2004: 69–90.

ministries. Thus, according to the government bargaining model, foreign policy decisions reflect (a mix of) the interests of state agencies.

Individual Decision Makers

Every international event is the result, intended or unintended, of decisions made by individuals. IR does not just happen. President Harry Truman, who decided to drop U.S. nuclear bombs on two Japanese cities in 1945, had a sign on his desk: “The buck stops here.” As leader of the world’s greatest power, he had nobody to pass the buck to. If he chose to use the bomb (as he did), more than 100,000 civilians would die. If he chose not to, the war might drag on for months with tens of thousands of U.S. casualties. Truman had to choose. Some people applaud his decision; others condemn it. But for better or worse, Truman as an individual had to decide, and to take responsibility for the consequences. Similarly, the decisions of individual citizens, although they may not seem important when taken one by one, create the great forces of world history.

The study of individual decision making revolves around the question of rationality. To what extent are national leaders (or citizens) able to make rational decisions in the national interest—if indeed such an interest can be defined—and thus to conform to a realist view of IR? Individual rationality is not equivalent to state rationality: states might filter individuals’ irrational decisions so as to arrive at rational choices, or states might distort individually rational decisions and end up with irrational state choices. But realists tend to assume that both states and individuals are rational and that the goals or interests of states correlate with those of leaders.

The most simplified rational-actor models assume that interests are the same from one actor to another. If this were so, individuals could be substituted for each other in various roles without changing history very much. And states would all behave similarly to each other (or rather, the differences between them would reflect different resources and geography, not differences in the nature of national interests). This assumption is at best a great oversimplification;⁵ individual decisions reflect the *values* and *beliefs* of the decision maker.

Individual decision makers not only have differing values and beliefs, but also have unique personalities—their personal experiences, intellectual capabilities, and personal styles of making decisions. Some IR scholars study individual psychology to understand how personality affects decision making. Psychoanalytic approaches hold that personalities reflect the subconscious influences of childhood experiences. For instance, Bill Clinton drew much criticism in his early years as president for a foreign policy that seemed to zigzag. A notable Clinton personality trait was his readiness to compromise. Clinton himself has noted that his experience of growing up with a violent, alcoholic stepfather shaped him into a “peacemaker, always trying to minimize the disruption.”⁶

Beyond individual *idiosyncrasies* in goals or decision-making processes, individual decision making diverges from the rational model in at least three *systematic* ways. First, decision makers suffer from **misperceptions** and **selective perceptions** (taking in only some kinds of information) when they compile information on the likely consequences of their choices.⁷ Decision-making processes must reduce and filter the incoming information on which a decision is based; the problem is that such filtration often is biased. **Information screens** are subconscious filters through which people put the information coming in about the world around them. Often they simply ignore any information that does not fit

⁵ Farnham, Barbara. *Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: A Study of Political Decision-Making*. Princeton, 1997.

⁶ Collins, Nancy. A Legacy of Strength and Love [interview with President Clinton]. *Good Housekeeping* 221 (5), 1995: 113–15.

⁷ Jervis, Robert. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*. Princeton, 1976.

MADMAN?

Foreign policies often deviate from rationality as a result of the misperceptions and biases of decision makers and populations. Here, South Korea's president meets the reclusive and eccentric late dictator of North Korea, Kim Jong Il, in 2007 as international negotiations seek to curtail Kim's nuclear weapons. These weapons will pose a much greater threat if Kim's son, who took over in 2011, is an irrational madman than if he turns out to be a shrewdly rational actor.

their expectations. Information is also screened out as it passes from one person to another in the decision-making process. For example, prior to the September 2001 terrorist attacks, U.S. intelligence agencies failed to adequately interpret available evidence because too few analysts were fluent in Arabic. Similarly, Soviet leaders in 1941 and Israeli leaders in 1973 ignored evidence of pending invasions of their countries.

Misperceptions can affect the implementation of policy by low-level officials as well as its formulation by high-level officials. For example, in 1988, officers on a U.S. warship in the Persian Gulf shot down a civilian Iranian jet that they believed to be a military jet attacking them. The officers were trying to carry out policies established by national leaders, but because of misperceptions their actions instead damaged their state's interests.

Second, the rationality of individual cost-benefit calculations is undermined by emotions that decision makers feel while thinking about the consequences of their actions—an effect referred to as *affective bias*. (*Positive* and *negative affect* refer to feelings of liking or disliking some-

one.) As hard as a decision maker tries to be rational in making a decision, the decision-making process is bound to be influenced by strong feelings held about the person or state toward which a decision is directed. (Affective biases also contribute to information screening, as positive information about disliked people or negative information about liked people is screened out.)

Third, *cognitive biases* are systematic distortions of rational calculations based not on emotional feelings but simply on the limitations of the human brain in making choices. The most important of these distortions seems to be the attempt to produce *cognitive balance*—or to reduce *cognitive dissonance*. These terms refer to the tendency people have to try to maintain mental models of the world that are logically consistent (this seldom succeeds entirely).⁸

One implication of cognitive balance is that decision makers place greater value on goals that they have put much effort into achieving—the *justification of effort*. This is especially true in a democracy, in which politicians must face their citizens' judgment at the

⁸ Vertzberger, Yaacov Y. I. *The World in Their Minds: Information Processing, Cognition, and Perception in Foreign Policy Decisionmaking*. Stanford, 1990. Sylvan, Donald A., and James F. Voss. *Problem Representation in Foreign Policy Decision Making*. Cambridge, 1998.

polls and so do not want to admit failures. The Vietnam War trapped U.S. decision makers in this way in the 1960s. After sending half a million troops halfway around the world, U.S. leaders found it difficult to admit to themselves that the costs of the war were greater than the benefits.

Decision makers also achieve cognitive balance through *wishful thinking*—an overestimate of the probability of a desired outcome. A variation of wishful thinking is to assume that an event with a *low probability* of occurring will *not* occur. This could be a dangerous way to think about catastrophic events such as accidental nuclear war or a terrorist attack.

Cognitive balance often leads decision makers to maintain a hardened image of an *enemy* and to interpret all of the enemy's actions in a negative light (because the idea of bad people doing good things would create cognitive dissonance).⁹ A *mirror image* refers to two sides in a conflict maintaining very similar enemy images of each other (“we are defensive, they are aggressive,” etc.). A decision maker may also experience *psychological projection* of his or her own feelings onto another actor. For instance, if (hypothetically) Indian leaders wanted to gain nuclear superiority over Pakistan but found that goal inconsistent with their image of themselves as peaceful and defensive, the resulting cognitive dissonance might be resolved by believing that Pakistan was trying to gain nuclear superiority (the example works as well with the states reversed).

Another form of cognitive bias, related to cognitive balance, is the use of *historical analogies* to structure one's thinking about a decision. This can be quite useful or quite misleading, depending on whether the analogy is appropriate.¹⁰ Because each historical situation is unique in some way, when a decision maker latches onto an analogy and uses it as a shortcut to a decision, the rational calculation of costs and benefits may be cut short as well. In particular, decision makers often assume that a solution that worked in the past will work again—without fully examining how similar the situations really are. For example, U.S. leaders used the analogy of Munich in 1938 to convince themselves that appeasement in the Vietnam War would lead to increased communist aggression in Asia. In retrospect, the differences between North Vietnam and Nazi Germany made this a poor analogy (largely because of the civil war nature of the Vietnam conflict). Vietnam itself then became a potent analogy that helped persuade U.S. leaders to avoid involvement in certain overseas conflicts, such as Bosnia; this was called the “Vietnam syndrome” in U.S. foreign policy.

All of these psychological processes—misperception, affective biases, and cognitive biases—interfere with the rational assessment of costs and benefits in making a decision.¹¹ Two specific modifications to the rational model of decision making have been proposed to accommodate psychological realities.

First, the model of *bounded rationality* takes into account the costs of seeking and processing information. Nobody thinks about every single possible course of action when making a decision. Instead of **optimizing**, or picking the very best option, people usually work on the problem until they come up with a “good enough” option that meets some minimal criteria; this is called **satisficing**, or finding a satisfactory solution.¹² The time constraints

⁹ Herrmann, Richard K., and Michael P. Fischerkeller. Beyond the Enemy Image and the Spiral Model: Cognitive-Strategic Research after the Cold War. *International Organization* 49 (3), 1995: 415–50. Mercer, Jonathan L. *Reputation and International Politics*. Cornell, 1996. O'Reilly, K. P. Perceiving Rogue States: The Use of the “Rogue State” Concept by U.S. Foreign Policy Elites. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 3 (4), 2007: 295–315.

¹⁰ Khong, Yuen Foong. *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*. Princeton, 1992. Neustadt, Richard E., and Ernest R. May. *Thinking In Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*. Free Press, 1986.

¹¹ Tuchman, Barbara W. *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*. Knopf/Random House, 1984. Parker, Richard B. *The Politics of Miscalculation in the Middle East*. Indiana, 1993. Bennett, Andrew. *Condemned to Repetition? The Rise, Fall, and Reprise of Soviet-Russian Military Interventionism, 1973–1996*. MIT, 1999.

¹² Simon, Herbert A. *Models of Bounded Rationality*. MIT, 1982.

faced by top decision makers in IR—who are constantly besieged with crises requiring their attention—generally preclude their finding the very best response to a situation. These time constraints were described by U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen in 1997: “The unrelenting flow of information, the need to digest it on a minute-by-minute basis, is quite different from anything I’ve experienced before. . . . There’s little time for contemplation; most of it is action.”¹³

Second, **prospect theory** provides an alternative explanation (rather than simple rational optimization) of decisions made under risk or uncertainty.¹⁴ According to this theory, decision makers go through two phases. In the *editing phase*, they frame the options available and the probabilities of various outcomes associated with each option. Then, in the *evaluation phase*, they assess the options and choose one. Prospect theory holds that evaluations take place by comparison with a *reference point*, which is often the status quo but might be some past or expected situation. The decision maker asks whether he or she can do better than that reference point, but the value placed on outcomes depends on how far from the reference point they are.

Individual decision making thus follows an imperfect and partial kind of rationality at best. Not only do the goals of different individuals vary, but decision makers face a series of obstacles in receiving accurate information, constructing accurate models of the world, and reaching decisions that further their own goals. The rational model is only a simplification at best and must be supplemented by an understanding of individual psychological processes that affect decision making.

Group Psychology

What are the implications of group psychology for foreign policy decision making? In one respect, groups promote rationality by balancing out the blind spots and biases of any individual. Advisors or legislative committees may force a state leader to reconsider a rash decision. And the interactions of different individuals in a group may result in the formulation of goals that more closely reflect state interests rather than individual idiosyncrasies. However, group dynamics also introduce new sources of irrationality into the decision-making process.

Groupthink refers to the tendency for groups to reach decisions without accurately assessing their consequences, because individual members tend to go along with ideas they think the others support.¹⁵ The basic phenomenon is illustrated by a simple psychology experiment. A group of six people is asked to compare the lengths of two lines projected onto a screen. When five of the people are secretly instructed to say that line A is longer—even though anyone can see that line B is actually longer—the sixth person is likely to agree with the group rather than believe his or her own eyes.

Unlike individuals, groups tend to be overly optimistic about the chances of success and are thus more willing to take risks. Participants suppress their doubts about dubious undertakings because everyone else seems to think an idea will work. Also, because the group diffuses responsibility from individuals, nobody feels accountable for actions.

¹³ *Washington Post*, March 5, 1997: A22.

¹⁴ Davis, James W. *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence*. Johns Hopkins, 2000.

McDermott, Rose. *Risk-Taking in International Politics: Prospect Theory in American Foreign Policy*. Michigan, 1998. Levy, Jack. Prospect Theory, Rational Choice, and International Relations. *International Studies Quarterly* 41 (1), 1997: 87–112.

¹⁵ Janis, Irving L. *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*. Houghton Mifflin, 1972. Hart, Paul, Eric K. Stern, and Bengt Sundelius, eds. *Beyond Groupthink: Political Group Dynamics and Foreign Policy-Making*. Michigan, 1997.

In a spectacular case of groupthink, President Ronald Reagan's close friend and director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) bypassed his own agency and ran covert operations spanning three continents using the National Security Council (NSC) staff in the White House basement. The NSC sold weapons to Iran in exchange for the freedom of U.S. hostages held in Lebanon, and then used the Iranian payments to illegally fund Nicaraguan Contra rebels. The *Iran-Contra scandal* resulted when these operations, managed by an obscure NSC aide named Oliver North, became public.

The U.S. war in Iraq may also provide cautionary examples to future generations about the risks of misinformation, misperception, wishful thinking, and groupthink in managing a major foreign policy initiative.¹⁶ Some of the problems of individual and group psychology in the policy process—be they in Vietnam, Bosnia, or Iraq—are illustrated in Figure 4.3.

The *structure of a decision-making process*—the rules for who is involved in making the decision, how voting is conducted, and so forth—can affect the outcome, especially when no single alternative appeals to a majority of participants. Experienced participants in foreign policy formation are familiar with the techniques for manipulating decision-making processes to favor outcomes they prefer. A common technique is to control a group's formal *decision rules*. These rules include the items of business the group discusses and the order in which proposals are considered (especially important when participants are satisficing). Probably most important is the ability to *control the agenda* and thereby structure the terms of debate.

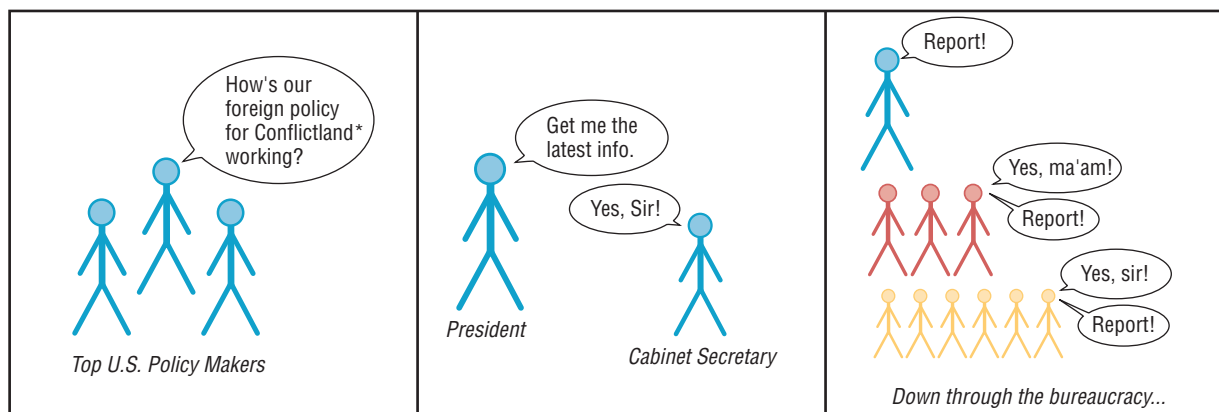
State leaders often rely on an inner circle of advisors in making foreign policy decisions. The composition and operation of the inner circle vary across governments. For instance, President Lyndon Johnson had "Tuesday lunches" to discuss national security policy with top national security officials. Some groups depend heavily on *informal* consultations in addition to formal meetings. Some leaders create a "kitchen cabinet"—a trusted group of friends who discuss policy issues with the leader even though they have no formal positions in government. For instance, Israel's Golda Meir held many such discussions at her home, sometimes literally in the kitchen. Russian president Boris Yeltsin relied on the advice of his bodyguard, who was a trusted friend.

WISFUL THINKING



Both individual misperception and group psychology encourage overconfidence and excessive optimism among decision makers. This general tendency in every government especially marked the period of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Here, President Bush declares victory on an aircraft carrier, May 2003.

¹⁶ Woodward, Bob. *State of Denial: Bush at War III*. Simon & Schuster, 2006.

FIGURE 4.3 Some Psychological Pitfalls of Decision Making

*Note: Conflictland could be Vietnam in 1968, Bosnia in 1994, or Iraq in 2006.

Crisis Management

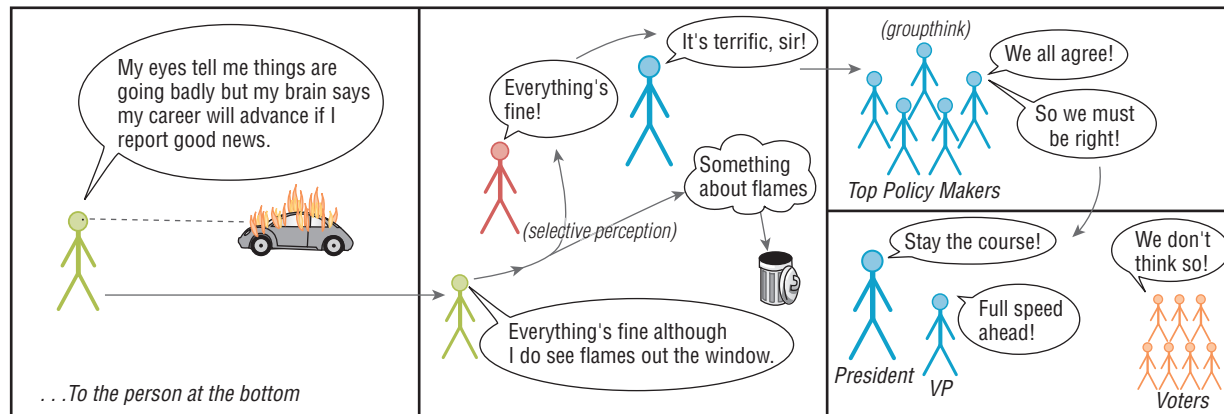
The difficulties in reaching rational decisions, both for individuals and for groups, are heightened during a crisis.¹⁷ Crises are foreign policy situations in which outcomes are very important and time frames are compressed. Crisis decision making is harder to understand and predict than is normal foreign policy making.

In a crisis, decision makers operate under tremendous time constraints. The normal checks on unwise decisions may not operate. Communications become shorter and more stereotyped, and information that does not fit a decision maker's expectations is more likely to be discarded, simply because there is no time to consider it. In framing options decision makers tend to restrict the choices, again to save time, and tend to overlook creative options while focusing on the most obvious ones. (In the United States, shifting time constraints are measurable in a doubling or tripling in pizza deliveries to government agencies, as decision makers work through mealtimes.)

Groupthink occurs easily during crises. During the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, President John F. Kennedy created a small, closed group of advisors who worked together intensively for days on end, cut off from outside contact and discussion. Even the president's communication with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev was rerouted through Kennedy's brother Robert and the Soviet ambassador, cutting out the State Department. Recognizing the danger of groupthink, Kennedy left the room from time to time—removing the authority figure from the group—to encourage free discussion. Through this and other means, the group managed to identify an option (a naval blockade) between their first two choices (bombing the missile sites or doing nothing). Sometimes leaders purposefully designate someone in the group (known as a *devil's advocate*) to object to ideas.

Participants in crisis decision making not only are rushed, but experience severe psychological *stress*, amplifying the biases just discussed. Decision makers tend to

¹⁷ Brecher, Michael, and Jonathan Wilkenfeld. *A Study of Crisis*. Michigan, 2000. Houghton, David. *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*. Cambridge, 2001. Gelpi, Christopher. *The Power of Legitimacy: Assessing the Role of Norms in International Crisis Bargaining*. Princeton, 2003.



overestimate the hostility of adversaries and to underestimate their own hostility toward those adversaries. Dislike easily turns to hatred, and anxiety to fear. More and more information is screened out in order to come to terms with decisions being made and to restore cognitive balance. Crisis decision making also leads to physical exhaustion. *Sleep deprivation* sets in within days as decision makers use every hour to stay on top of the crisis. Unless decision makers are careful about getting enough sleep, they may make vital foreign policy decisions under shifting perceptual and mood changes.

Because of the importance of sound decision making during crises, voters pay great attention to the psychological stability of their leaders. Before Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin won election in 1992, he faced charges that he had suffered a one-day nervous breakdown when he headed the armed forces just before the 1967 war. Not so, he responded; he was just smart enough to realize that the crisis had caused both exhaustion and acute nicotine poisoning, and he needed to rest up for a day in order to go on and make good decisions.

Whether in crisis mode or normal routines, individual decision makers do not operate alone. Their decisions are shaped by the government and society in which they work. Foreign policy is constrained and shaped by substate actors such as government agencies, political interest groups, and industries.

WORKING UNDER STRESS



Crisis management takes a high toll psychologically and physiologically. President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia seems to show this strain in 1992—just the beginning of years of civil war and perpetual crisis in that country. Shevardnadze, formerly a Soviet foreign minister, had returned to lead his native Georgia when the Soviet Union dissolved. He left office in 2003 after a popular uprising against corruption.



Domestic Influences

The remainder of this chapter considers other liberal theoretical approaches that, like the democratic peace, operate at the domestic level of analysis. These approaches, in contrast to realism, see international outcomes as the result of processes within states rather than just those among states. The actions of a state in the international arena result from individual human choices—by citizenry, political leaders, diplomats, and bureaucrats—aggregated through the state's internal structures. The rest of this chapter looks at the state from the inside out, trying to understand the processes and structures *within* states that make them behave as they do.

Bureaucracies

Of the many substate actors that influence states' actions in the international arena, those closest to the action are the bureaucratic agencies that states maintain for developing and carrying out foreign policy. Different states maintain different foreign policy bureaucracies but share some common elements.

Diplomats Virtually all states maintain a *diplomatic corps*, or *foreign service*, of diplomats working in *embassies* in foreign capitals (and in *consulates* located in noncapital foreign cities), as well as diplomats who remain at home to help coordinate foreign policy. States appoint *ambassadors* as their official representatives to other states and to international organizations. Diplomatic activities are organized through a *foreign ministry* or the equivalent (for example, the U.S. State Department).

In many democracies, some diplomats are *political appointees* who come and go with changes in government leaders (often as patronage for past political support). Others are *career diplomats* who come up through the ranks of the foreign service and tend to outlast changes in administration.

Diplomats provide much of the information that goes into making foreign policies, but their main role is to carry out rather than create policies. Nonetheless, foreign ministry bureaucrats often make foreign relations so routine that top leaders and political appointees can come and go without greatly altering the country's relations. The national interest is served, the bureaucrats believe, by the stability of overall national goals and positions in international affairs.

Tension is common between state leaders and foreign policy bureaucrats. Career diplomats try to orient new leaders and their appointees, and to control the flow of information they receive (creating information screens). Politicians struggle to exercise power over the formal bureaucratic agencies because the latter can be too "bureaucratic" (cumbersome, routinized, conservative) to easily control. Also, these agencies are often staffed (at lower levels) mostly by career officials who may not owe loyalty to political leaders.

Size alone does not guarantee power for a bureaucracy. For example, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and the National Security Council (NSC) each have staffs of only about 200 people, compared with 5,000 people with responsibilities for similar matters in the Commerce and State Departments. The power of these agencies is their proximity to the U.S. president. The NSC chief traditionally briefs the president every morning on international security issues.

Sometimes state leaders appoint a close friend or key advisor to manage the foreign policy bureaucracy. President George W. Bush did this in his second term with his former NSC chief and confidante Condoleezza Rice. Chinese leader Mao Zedong put his loyal ally Zhou Enlai in charge of foreign policy. At other times, state leaders may appoint rivals with differing views of foreign policy—as President Barack Obama did with his former political rival Hillary Clinton.

At times, frustration with the bureaucracy leads politicians to bypass normal channels of diplomacy. For example, during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, President Kennedy demanded to be put in direct contact with military personnel in the Caribbean overseeing the blockade of Cuba, bypassing the secretary of defense and high-ranking officers.

Interagency Tensions *Interagency* tension also affects the formulation of foreign policy. Certain agencies traditionally clash, and an endless tug-of-war shapes the foreign policies that emerge. In an extreme example of interagency rivalry, the U.S. State Department and the CIA backed opposite sides in a civil war in Laos in 1960. In the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the defense ministry was usually more hawkish (favoring military strength) and the foreign ministry or State Department more dovish (favoring diplomacy), with the president or premier holding the balance.

In general, bureaucracies promote policies under which their own capabilities will be effective and their power will increase. There is a saying that “where you stand” on an issue “depends on where you sit” (in the bureaucratic structure). One can often predict just from the job titles of participants how they will argue on a policy issue. The government bargaining model (see p. 128) pays special attention to the interagency negotiations that result from conflicts of interest between agencies of the same government. For example, after Americans were taken hostage in Iran in 1979, military and CIA officials pushed President Carter to attempt a military rescue, while the State Department vehemently opposed such a mission. After days of debate, the president decided to go ahead with the rescue mission (which proved disastrous), but did not invite the secretary of state to the meeting where the final decisions were made.

Although representatives of bureaucratic agencies usually promote the interests of their own bureaucracies, sometimes heads of agencies try to appear loyal to the state leader by forgoing the interests of their own agencies. Also, the preferences of leaders of bureaucratic agencies cannot always be predicted given the goal of their institution. For example, in the Cuban Missile Crisis, defense officials were hesitant to commit to a military solution to the crisis, while some diplomatic officials favored a preemptive military strike.

Units within agencies have similar tensions. In many countries, the different military services (army, navy, air force) pull in somewhat different directions, even if they ultimately unite to battle the foreign ministry. Bureaucrats working in particular units or projects become attached to them. Officials responsible for a new weapon system lose bureaucratic turf, and perhaps their jobs, if the weapon’s development is canceled.

Of special concern in many poor states is the institutional interest that military officers have in maintaining a strong military. If civilian state leaders allow officers’ salaries to fall or the size of the military forces to be cut, they may well face institutional resistance from the military—in the extreme case, a military takeover of the government (see pp. 224–225). These issues were factors in attempted military coups in the Philippines, Venezuela, and Paraguay in the 1990s.¹⁸

In general, bureaucratic rivalry as an influence on foreign policy challenges the notion of states as unitary actors in the international system. Such rivalries suggest that a state does not have any single set of goals—a national interest—but that its actions may result from the bargaining of subunits, each with its own set of goals.¹⁹ Furthermore, such a perspective extends far beyond bureaucratic agencies because other substate actors have their own goals, which they seek to advance by influencing foreign policy.

¹⁸ Feaver, Peter D., and Christopher Gelpi. *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. Princeton, 2004.

¹⁹ Kaarbo, Juliet. Power Politics in Foreign Policy: The Influence of Bureaucratic Minorities. *European Journal of International Relations* 4 (1), 1998: 67–97.

Interest Groups

Foreign policy makers operate not in a political vacuum but in the context of the political debates in their society. In all states, societal pressures influence foreign policy, although these are aggregated and made effective through different channels in different societies. In pluralistic democracies, interested parties influence foreign policy through interest groups and political parties. In dictatorships, similar influences occur but less visibly. Thus foreign policies adopted by states generally reflect some kind of process of domestic coalition formation.²⁰ Of course, international factors also have strong effects on domestic politics.²¹

Interest groups are coalitions of people who share a common interest in the outcome of some political issue and who organize themselves to try to influence the outcome. For instance, French farmers have a big stake in international negotiations in the European Community (which subsidizes agriculture) and in world trade talks (which set agricultural tariffs). The farmers exert political pressure on the French government through long-established and politically sophisticated associations and organizations. They lobby for desired legislation and contribute to politicians' campaigns. More dramatically, when their interests have been threatened—as during a U.S.-European trade dispute in 1992—French farmers have turned out in large numbers across the country to block roads, stage violent street demonstrations, and threaten to grind the national economy to a halt unless the government adopts their position. Similarly (but often less dramatically), interest groups form around businesses, labor unions, churches, veterans, senior citizens, members of an occupation, or citizens concerned about an issue such as the environment.

Lobbying is the process of talking with legislators or officials to influence their decisions on some set of issues. Three important elements that go into successful lobbying are the ability to gain a hearing with busy officials, the ability to present cogent arguments for one's case, and the ability to trade favors in return for positive action on an issue. These favors—legal and illegal—range from campaign contributions to dinners at nice restaurants, trips to golf resorts, securing illicit sexual liaisons, and paying bribes. In many states, corruption is a major problem in governmental decision making (see pp. 475–476), and interest groups may induce government officials by illegal means to take certain actions.

Ethnic groups within one state often become interest groups concerned about their ancestral nation outside that state. Many members of ethnic groups feel strong emotional ties to their relatives in other countries; because the rest of the population generally does not care about such issues one way or the other, even a small ethnic group can have considerable influence on policy toward a particular country. Such ethnic ties are emerging as a powerful foreign policy influence in various ethnic conflicts in poor regions. The effect is especially strong in the United States, which is ethnically mixed and has a pluralistic form of democracy. For example, Cuban Americans organize to influence U.S. policy toward Cuba, as do Greek Americans on Greece, Jewish Americans on Israel, and African Americans on Africa. In a 1996 U.S. Senate election in South Dakota, one candidate raised large contributions from the Pakistani-American community and the other candidate from the rival Indian-American community. But whether or not a foreign country has a large constituency of ethnic nationals within another country, it can lobby that country's government.²²

²⁰ Solingen, Etel. *Regional Orders at Century's Dawn: Global and Domestic Influences on Grand Strategy*. Princeton, 1998.

Snyder, Jack. *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*. Cornell, 1991.

²¹ Gourevitch, Peter. The Second Image Reversed: International Sources of Domestic Politics. *International Organization* 32 (4), 1978: 881–911. Rogowski, Ronald. *Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments*. Princeton, 1989.

²² Smith, Tony. *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy*. Harvard, 2000. Paul, David M., and Rachel A. Paul. *Ethnic Lobbies and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Rienner, 2008.

Clearly, interest groups have goals and interests that may or may not coincide with the national interest as a whole (if indeed such an interest can be identified). As with bureaucratic agencies, the view of the state as a unitary actor can be questioned. Defenders of interest-group politics argue that various interest groups tend to push and pull in different directions, with the ultimate decisions generally reflecting the interests of society as a whole. But according to *Marxist* theories of international relations, the key domestic influences on foreign policy in capitalist countries are rich owners of big businesses. For instance, European imperialism benefited banks and big business, which made huge profits from exploiting cheap labor and resources in overseas colonies. This is the official view (if not always the operative one) of the Chinese government toward Western industrialized states. During the Cold War, Marxists argued that Western foreign policies were driven by the profit motive of arms manufacturers.²³

DOMESTIC BREW



Foreign policies are affected by the pulling and tugging of various domestic interest groups. Legislatures respond to these groups, constituencies, lobbyists, and media. These interested parties pack a U.S. Senate hearing as an administration official argues that the War Powers Act does not apply to Libyan bombing, 2011.

The Military-Industrial Complex

A **military-industrial complex** refers to a huge interlocking network of governmental agencies, industrial corporations, and research institutes, working together to supply a nation's military forces. The military-industrial complex was a response to the growing importance of technology (nuclear weapons, electronics, and others) and of logistics in Cold War military planning. Because of the domestic political clout of these actors, the complex was a powerful influence on foreign policy in both the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

States at war have long harnessed their economic and technological might for the war effort. But during the Cold War, military procurement occurred on a massive scale in "peacetime," as the superpowers raced to develop new high-technology weapons. This race created a special role for scientists and engineers in addition to the more traditional role of industries that produce war materials. In response to the Soviet satellite *Sputnik* in 1957, the United States increased spending on research and development and created new science education programs. By 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower warned in

²³ Konobeyev, V. The Capitalist Economy and the Arms Race. *International Affairs* [Moscow] 8, 1982: 28–48.

his farewell speech that the military-industrial complex (a term he coined) was gaining “unwarranted influence” in U.S. society and that militarization could erode democracy in the United States. The size of the complex gave it more political clout than ordinary citizens could muster. Yet its interest in the arms race conflicted with the interest of ordinary citizens in peace.

The complex encompasses a variety of constituencies, each of which has an interest in military spending. *Corporations* that produce goods for the military profit from government contracts. So do military *officers* whose careers advance by building bureaucratic empires around new weapons systems. And so do universities and scientific institutes that receive military research contracts—a major source of funding for scientists in Russia and the United States.

Subcontractors and parts suppliers for big U.S. weapons projects are usually spread around many states and congressional districts, so that local citizens and politicians join the list of constituents benefiting from military spending. Early funding for the Strategic Defense Initiative (or Star Wars) was given to each military service branch, the Department of Energy, NASA, and hundreds of private contractors. Recently, a similar phenomenon has emerged in the European Community, where weapons development programs have been parceled out to several European states. A new fighter jet is less likely to be canceled if one country gets the contract for the wings, another for the engines, and so forth.

Executives in military industries, who best understand their industries, are often appointed as government officials responsible for military procurement decisions and then return to their companies again—a practice called the *revolving door*. In democracies, military industries also influence public opinion through advertising that ties their products to patriotic themes. U.S. military industries also give generous campaign contributions to

SEEKING THE COLLECTIVE GOOD

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Talks

COLLECTIVE GOOD: An End to 60+ Years of Violent Conflict

BACKGROUND: Since the founding of Israel in 1948 in the wake of World War II, Jews and Arab Palestinians have been fighting over the land. After several destructive wars, Israel and its main neighbors, Egypt and Jordan, arrived at a durable (though cold) peace. The Israelis and Palestinians, however, have yet to reach a peace agreement based on a Palestinian state in lands occupied by Israel in the 1967 war—the West Bank and the Gaza Strip—and Palestinian recognition of Israel’s right to exist.

In many rounds of negotiations over the years, the two sides have gotten closer. At the end of 2000, negotiators nearly reached agreement on the parameters for a Palestinian state side by side with Israel. The effort fell short, however; new governments took power in both Israel and America, and a new wave of vio-

lence ensued. Israeli-Palestinian peace is a collective good that would benefit each side regardless of whether it or the other side made the concessions that led to an agreement.

CHALLENGE: In 2010, the U.S. administration launched a new round of Israeli-Palestinian talks to try to reach a comprehensive agreement within a year. These talks faced great challenges as a result of the domestic politics on each side. In Israel, the parliamentary ruling coalition included parties opposed to concessions toward Palestine, so the Israeli government lacked maneuvering room to make concessions even if it wanted to. In



DOMINANCE



RECIPROCITY

national politicians who vote on military budgets, and sometimes bribes to Pentagon officials as well.²⁴

Public Opinion

Many domestic actors seek to influence **public opinion**—the range of views on foreign policy issues held by the citizens of a state. Public opinion has greater influence on foreign policy in democracies than in authoritarian governments. But even dictators must pay attention to what citizens think. No government can rule by force alone: it needs legitimacy to survive. It must persuade people to accept (if not to like) its policies, because in the end, policies are carried out by ordinary people—soldiers, workers, and bureaucrats.

Because of the need for public support, even authoritarian governments spend great effort on *propaganda*—the public promotion of their official line—to win support for foreign policies. States use television, newspapers, and other information media in this effort. In many countries, the state owns or controls major mass media such as television and newspapers, mediating the flow of information to its citizens; however, new information technologies with multiple channels make this harder to do.

Journalists serve as the gatekeepers of information passing from foreign policy elites to the public. The media and government often conflict because of the traditional role of the

²⁴ Der Derian, James. *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network*. Westview, 2001. Jones, Christopher M. Roles, Politics, and the Survival of the V-22 Osprey. *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 29 (1), 2001: 46–72.

Palestine, the militant armed group Hamas controlled Gaza, leaving the Israelis negotiating with a Palestinian Authority that did not fully control the territory it hoped to claim as a state. In these ways, foreign policy processes even in democracies can constrain each side's ability to make peace.

SOLUTION: Reciprocity, a strong norm in Israeli-Palestinian relations over the decades, is basic to the negotiation of peace agreements. Yet it has not sufficed, in part because domestic constraints make it harder for governments to have cooperation based on reciprocity.

To get around these domestic constraints, the dominance principle helps. Most analysts agree that the peace talks can succeed only if the United States applies strong leadership (including pressure and inducements) to get the two parties to make concessions. Opponents on each side can then blame the United States rather than their own leaders, who thus gain maneuvering room to compromise. If an



Israeli and Palestinian leaders with U.S. Secretary of State in Washington, 2010.

Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement is ever to occur, American leadership of the process will likely play a key role in reaching it.

press as a watchdog and critic of government actions and powers. The media try to uncover and publicize what the government wants to hide. Foreign policy decision makers also rely on the media for information about foreign affairs.

Yet the media also depend on government for information; the size and resources of the foreign policy bureaucracies dwarf those of the press. These advantages give the government great power to *manipulate* journalists by feeding them information in order to shape the news and influence public opinion. Government decision makers can create dramatic stories in foreign relations—through summit meetings, crises, actions, and so forth. Bureaucrats can also *leak* secret information to the press in order to support their own point of view and win bureaucratic battles. Finally, the military and the press have a running battle about journalists' access to military operations, but both sides gained from the open access given to journalists "embedded" with U.S. forces in Iraq in 2003.

In democracies, where governments must stand for election, an unpopular war can force a leader or party from office, as happened to U.S. president Lyndon Johnson in 1968 during the Vietnam War. Or a popular war can help secure a government's mandate to continue in power, as happened to Margaret Thatcher in Britain after the 1982 Falkland Islands War. A key influence on public opinion is the content of scenes appearing on television: U.S. soldiers were sent to Somalia to assist in relief efforts in 1992 after TV news showed the heartrending results of civil war and famine there. But after TV news showed an American soldier's body being dragged through the streets by members of a Somali faction after a deadly firefight that killed 18 U.S. soldiers, public opinion shifted quickly against the Somalia operation. During the war in Bosnia, officials in the U.S. State Department said privately that the main goal of U.S. policy was often just to keep the conflict there off of the front pages of U.S. newspapers (an elusive goal, as it turned out).

Occasionally a foreign policy issue is decided directly by a referendum of the entire citizenry (the United States lacks such a tradition, which is strong in Switzerland and Denmark, for example).²⁵ In 2005, referendums in France and the Netherlands rejected a proposed constitution for the European Union, despite the support of major political leaders for the change (see pp. 368–369).

Even in the most open democracies, states do not merely *respond* to public opinion. Decision makers enjoy some autonomy to make their own choices, and they are pulled in various directions by bureaucracies and interest groups, whose views often conflict with the direction favored by public opinion at large. Furthermore, public opinion is seldom unified on any policy, and sophisticated polling can show that particular segments of the population (regions of the country, genders, income groups, races, etc.) often differ in their perceptions of foreign policy issues. So a politician may respond to the opinion of one constituency rather than the whole population. Public opinion varies considerably over time on many foreign policy issues. States use propaganda (in dictatorships) or try to manipulate the media (in democracies) to keep public opinion from diverging too much from state policies.

In democracies, public opinion generally has less effect on foreign policy than on domestic policy. National leaders traditionally have additional latitude to make decisions in the international realm. This derives from the special need of states to act in a unified way to function effectively in the international system, as well as from the traditions of secrecy and diplomacy that remove IR from the realm of ordinary domestic politics.

²⁵Rourke, John T., Richard P. Hiskes, and Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh. *Direct Democracy and International Politics: Deciding International Issues through Referendums*. Rienner, 1992.

POLICY PERSPECTIVES

Prime Minister of Japan, Yoshihiko Noda

PROBLEM *How do you decide what foreign policy tools best balance domestic and international concerns?*

BACKGROUND Imagine that you are the prime minister of Japan. Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, relations with your neighbor to the west, North Korea, have been tense. Military tensions have persisted as North Korea has made and then broken several agreements regarding its nuclear program. North Korea tested a nuclear weapon in 2006 and 2009, and it has also test-fired its short-range and long-range ballistic missiles directly over Japan in an effort to intimidate your country. Most analysts believe North Korea does possess the ability to produce at least a few nuclear weapons.

For its part, North Korea has long demanded reparations for Japan's 35-year colonization of the Korean peninsula and for actions taken by Japan in Korea during World War II. Japan has refused such reparations in the past, but has provided limited aid in an attempt to encourage North Korea to denuclearize. You have held talks with North Korea in the past two years, but no agreements on any political or economic issues have been reached.

In the summer of 2008, the United States removed North Korea from its list of states that sponsor terrorism. This angered many in your country, who saw this removal as giving in to North Korean demands for more aid in exchange for giving up its nuclear program. Your government vehemently protested this move by the United States, which the Japanese finance minister called "extremely regrettable."

DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS Public opinion in Japan is very sensitive to relations with North Korea. In 2002, North Korea admitted to secretly abducting Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s, transporting them to North Korea, and using them to train North Korean spies. North Korea claims that all 13 abductees have either returned to Japan or died, but many in Japan are skeptical of this claim. Many in Japan suspect more than 13 were abducted and



have even demanded that North Korea return the bodies of the deceased. These abductions are an extremely sensitive issue in Japanese public opinion, and past Japanese governments have demanded a resolution to the abduction issue before opening formal diplomatic relations with North Korea.

SCENARIO Now imagine that the United States is negotiating a new nuclear weapons agreement with North Korea. The United States asks that Japan contribute extensive foreign aid to North Korea to help ensure that a deal is reached. In return, North Korea will agree to allow increased inspections of all key nuclear sites and will rejoin the Non-Proliferation Treaty (see p. 217). The United States is placing extensive pressure on your government to provide what it feels is critical aid.

CHOOSE YOUR POLICY How do you respond to U.S. pressure for more foreign aid? Do you risk a backlash from your public by increasing aid without having the abduction issue resolved? Do you resist pressure from the United States, your most important ally, and withhold the requested aid? Can you trust the North Korean government to hold up its end of the bargain after you give the economic aid? How do you balance a sensitive domestic political issue with a delicate set of international negotiations?

However, In the case of Japan, public opinion is a major political force restraining the military spending of the government, its commitment of military forces beyond Japan's borders, and especially the development of nuclear weapons (which is within Japan's technical abilities). The ruling party—under pressure from the United States to share the burden of defense and to shoulder its responsibilities as a great power—has slowly but steadily pushed to increase Japan's military spending and allow Japanese military forces to expand their role modestly (in the 1980s, to patrol Asian sea lanes vital to Japanese trade; in the 1990s, to participate in UN peacekeeping operations). Repeatedly, these efforts have been slowed or rebuffed by strong public opinion against the military. In Japan, people remember the horrible consequences of militarism in the 1930s and World War II, culminating in the nuclear bombings of 1945. They are thus suspicious of any increase in the size or role of military forces, and are set against Japan's having nuclear weapons. In this case, public opinion constrains the state's conduct of foreign policy and has slowed the pace of change.

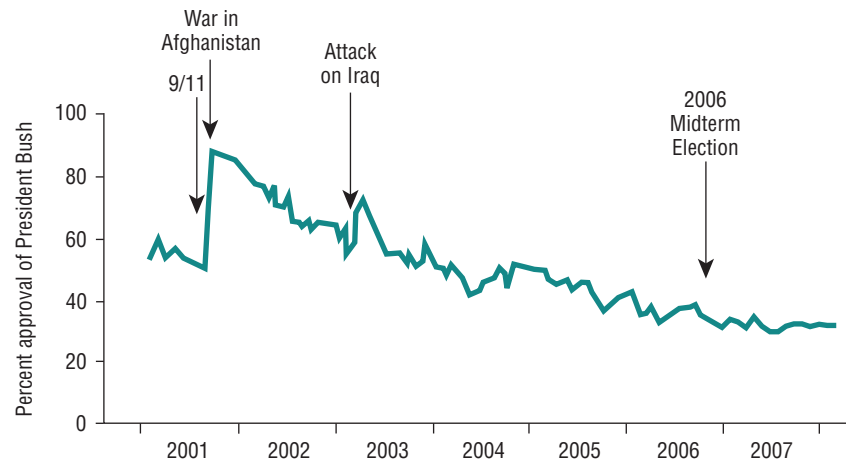
The *attentive public* in a democracy is the minority of the population that stays informed about international issues. This segment varies somewhat from one issue to another, but there is also a core of people who care in general about foreign affairs and follow them closely. The most active members of the attentive public on foreign affairs constitute a foreign policy *elite*—people with power and influence who affect foreign policy. This elite includes people within governments as well as outsiders such as businesspeople, journalists, lobbyists, and professors of political science. Public opinion polls show that elite opinions sometimes (but not always) differ considerably from those of the general population, and sometimes from those of the government as well.²⁶

Governments sometimes adopt foreign policies for the specific purpose of generating public approval and hence gaining domestic legitimacy.²⁷ This is the case when a government undertakes a war or foreign military intervention at a time of domestic difficulty, to distract attention and gain public support—taking advantage of the “**rally 'round the flag**” **syndrome** (the public's increased support for government leaders during wartime, at least in the short term). Citizens who would readily criticize their government's policies on education or health care often refrain from criticism when the government is at war and the lives of the nation's soldiers are on the line. Policies of this sort are often labeled **diversionary foreign policy**. Unfortunately, it is always difficult to tell whether a state adopts a foreign policy to distract the public, because leaders would never admit to trying to divert public attention.

However, wars that go on too long or are not successful can turn public opinion against the government and even lead to a popular uprising to overthrow the government. In Argentina, the military government in 1982 led the country into war with Britain over the Falkland Islands. At first Argentineans rallied around the flag, but after losing the war they rallied around the cause of getting rid of the military government, and they replaced it with a new civilian government that prosecuted the former leaders. In 2006, President Bush's popularity, which had soared early in the Iraq War, deflated as the war dragged on (see Figure 4.4), and voters threw his party out of

²⁶ Page, Benjamin I., and Marshall M. Bouton. *The Foreign Policy Disconnect*. Chicago, 2006. Jacobs, Lawrence R., and Benjamin I. Page. Who Influences U.S. Foreign Policy? *American Political Science Review* 99 (1), 2005: 107–23. Sobel, Richard. *The Impact of Public Opinion on U.S. Foreign Policy Since Vietnam*. Oxford, 2001. Holsti, Ole R. *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*. Rev. ed. Michigan, 2004.

²⁷ Baum, Matthew. The Constituent Foundations of the Rally-Round-the-Flag Phenomenon. *International Studies Quarterly* 46 (2), 2002: 263–98. Eichenberg, Richard C. Victory Has Many Friends: U.S. Public Opinion and the Use of Military Force, 1981–2005. *International Security* 30 (1), 2005: 140–77.

FIGURE 4.4 The “Rally ‘Round the Flag” Syndrome

President Bush’s approval rating demonstrates the “rally ‘round the flag” syndrome, in which war triggers a short-term boost in public approval.

Source: Gallup Poll.

power in Congress. By the 2008 elections, his party had lost control of the Senate, House, and presidency—all of which the Republicans had held at the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003.

Legislatures

One conduit through which interest groups and public opinion may wield influence is legislatures. Some democracies, such as the United States, have presidential systems, in which legislative bodies are elected apart from the president (also referred to as *executives*). In these systems, legislatures play a direct role in making foreign policy by passing budgets, regulating bureaucratic rules, creating trade law, even controlling immigration policy. Although executives may attend summits and talks, any agreement they sign must be approved by their domestic legislature.²⁸

Although few would argue that legislatures in presidential democracies do not influence foreign policy generally, different rules may apply to the use of military force. Some contend that legislatures, like public opinion, rally around the flag during times of international crises. For example, three days after the September 11, 2001, attacks, the U.S. Congress voted to give President Bush full authority to prosecute a war in Afghanistan. In October 2002, Congress passed a resolution authorizing the use of force in Iraq. Thus, legislatures rarely if ever challenge an executive on important military matters.

Others point to a different dynamic in which legislatures do stand up to executive power regarding military force. For example, because legislatures hold the “purse strings” (the ability to approve or reject new spending), they have the ability to stop a war in its tracks. In

²⁸ Milner, Helen. *Interests, Institutions, and Information: Domestic Politics and International Relations*. Princeton, 1997. Evans, Peter B., Harold K. Jacobson, and Robert D. Putnam, eds. *Double-Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics*. California, 1993.

the United States, the War Powers Act, enacted during the close of the Vietnam War, requires the president to notify Congress when U.S. troops are deployed for combat. After this notification, the president has 60 days (plus a possible 30-day extension) to recall the troops unless Congress explicitly approves the military action. During the 2011 Libya air campaign, the Obama administration claimed that the War Powers Act did not apply because the action was not a war. Some in Congress disputed this claim but could not prevail. Finally, some evidence from the United States suggests that presidents are more likely to use military force when their own political party is in power in Congress, suggesting that politics does not stop “at the water’s edge.”²⁹

In parliamentary systems, such as Great Britain, executives (for example, prime ministers) are chosen by the political parties that hold a dominant position in the legislative bodies. Often parliamentary executives do not need to submit treaties or policies for formal approval by the legislature. Yet legislatures in parliamentary systems still hold power regarding foreign policy. In Great Britain, for example, Parliament is not required to vote on international agreements negotiated by the prime minister, but it must approve any change to British laws that such agreements entail. Because most international agreements do involve these types of changes, Parliament effectively exercises a right of ratification over international agreements.

In many parliamentary systems, if a policy is particularly controversial, parties that do not have a majority in the legislature can attempt to call elections—meaning that the country votes again on which parties will hold seats in the legislature. If a different group of parties wins a majority of seats, a new executive is appointed. Thus, in parliamentary systems, legislatures play a key role in designing and implementing foreign policy.

Making Foreign Policy

Foreign policies are the strategies governments use to guide their actions in the international arena. Foreign policies spell out the objectives state leaders have decided to pursue in a given relationship or situation. But in general, IR scholars are less interested in specific policies than in the **foreign policy process**—how policies are arrived at and implemented.³⁰

States establish various organizational structures and functional relationships to create and carry out foreign policies. IR scholars are especially interested in exploring whether certain kinds of policy processes lead to certain kinds of decisions—whether certain processes produce better outcomes (for the state’s self-defined interests) than do others.

Comparative foreign policy is the study of foreign policy in various states in order to discover whether similar types of societies or governments consistently have similar types of foreign policies (comparing across states or across different time periods for a single state). Such studies have focused on three characteristics: size, wealth, and extent of democratic participation in government.³¹ Unfortunately, no simple rule has been found to predict a state’s warlike tendencies based on these attributes. States vary greatly among each other and even within a single state over time. For example, both

²⁹ Howell, Will, and Jon C. Pevehouse. *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*. Princeton, 2007.

³⁰ Neack, Laura. *The New Foreign Policy: U.S. and Comparative Foreign Policy in the 21st Century*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. Snow, Donald M. *United States Foreign Policy: Politics Beyond the Water’s Edge*. Longman, 2003.

³¹ Hook, Steven W. *Comparative Foreign Policy*. Prentice Hall, 2002. Beasley, Ryan K., et al., eds. *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior*. CQ Press, 2002.

capitalist and communist states have proven capable of naked aggression or peaceful behavior, depending on circumstances.

Some political scientists have tried to interpret particular states' foreign policies in terms of each one's *political culture and history*. For example, the Soviet Union (Russia) experienced repeated, devastating land invasions over the centuries (culminating in World War II) while the United States experienced two centuries of safety behind great oceans. Thus the military might of the Soviet Union, and its control of buffer states in Eastern Europe, seemed defensive in nature to Soviet leaders but appeared aggressive to U.S. leaders.

Foreign policy outcomes result from multiple forces at various levels of analysis. The outcomes depend on individual decision makers, on the type of society and government they are working within, and on the international and global context of their actions. The study of foreign policy processes runs counter to realism's assumption of a unitary state actor. Because the study of foreign policy concentrates on forces within the state, its main emphasis is on the individual and domestic levels of analysis.

The differences in the foreign policy process from one state to another are also influenced by a state's type of government, such as military dictatorship, communist party rule, one-party (noncommunist) rule, and various forms of multiparty democracy. Relatively democratic states tend to share values and interests, and hence to get along better with each other than with nondemocracies (see "The Democratic Peace," pp. 94–96). In practice, most states lie along a spectrum with some mix of democratic and authoritarian elements.

The attempt to explain foreign policy in a general and *theoretical* way has met only limited success. This is one reason why realists continue to find simple unitary-actor models of the state useful; the domestic and individual elements of the foreign policy process add much complexity and unpredictability. One area of foreign policy in which knowledge stands on a somewhat firmer basis is the *descriptive* effort to understand how particular mechanisms of foreign policy formation operate in various states. Such approaches belong to the field of comparative politics.

To summarize, foreign policy is a complex outcome of a complex process. It results from the struggle of competing themes, competing domestic interests, and competing government agencies. No single individual, agency, or guiding principle determines the outcome. Yet foreign policy does achieve a certain overall coherence. States form foreign policy on an issue or toward a region; it is not just an incoherent collection of decisions and actions taken from time to time. Out of the turbulent internal processes of foreign policy formation come relatively coherent interests and policies that states pursue.

FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT



Foreign policy outcomes result from processes at several levels of analysis, including the roles of individuals. All these levels were in play in 2011 as Greek leaders sought an outside bailout to deal with massive debt. The Greek government's negotiations with European officials played out as domestic protesters vented their rage at spending cuts demanded by the EU.

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CHAPTER REVIEW

SUMMARY

- Foreign policies are strategies governments use to guide their actions toward other states. The foreign policy process is the set of procedures and structures that states use to arrive at foreign policy decisions and to implement them.
- In the rational model of decision making, officials choose the action whose consequences best help meet the state's established goals. By contrast, in the organizational process model, decisions result from routine administrative procedures; in the government bargaining (or bureaucratic politics) model, decisions result from negotiations among governmental agencies with different interests in the outcome.
- The actions of individual decision makers are influenced by their personalities, values, and beliefs as well as by common psychological factors that diverge from rationality. These factors include misperception, selective perception, emotional biases, and cognitive biases (including the effort to reduce cognitive dissonance).
- Foreign policy decisions are also influenced by the psychology of groups (including *groupthink*), the procedures used to reach decisions, and the roles of participants. During crises, the potentials for misperception and error are amplified.
- Struggles over the direction of foreign policy are common between professional bureaucrats and politicians, as well as between different government agencies.
- Domestic constituencies (interest groups) have distinct interests in foreign policies and often organize politically to promote those interests.
- Prominent among domestic constituencies—especially in the United States and Russia, and especially during the Cold War—have been military-industrial complexes consisting of military industries and others with an interest in high military spending.
- Public opinion influences governments' foreign policy decisions (more so in democracies than in authoritarian states), but governments also manipulate public opinion.
- Legislatures can provide a conduit for public opinion and interests groups to influence foreign policy. Executives and legislators may differ on how to best achieve a state's national interest.

KEY TERMS

rational model	127	information screens	129	public opinion	141
organizational process model	128	optimizing	131	“rally ’round the flag” syndrome	144
government bargaining model	128	satisficing	131	diversionary foreign policy	144
misperceptions, selective perceptions	129	prospect theory	132	foreign policy process	146
		groupthink	132		
		interest groups	138		
		military-industrial complex	139		

CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

1. Uncertainty about costs and benefits of an action can complicate foreign policy decision making. What are the sources of uncertainty in IR? Can decision makers take steps to reduce that uncertainty?
2. Consider an event in IR that you are familiar with. Thinking about the actors involved in making a decision concerning that event, how would that event be explained by the rational-actor model? Might it be better explained by considering standard operating procedures or bureaucratic politics?
3. Sometimes aggressive international actions are attributed to a “madman” such as Iraq’s Saddam Hussein or Nazi Germany’s Adolf Hitler. Do you agree that such leaders (each of whose actions severely damaged his state’s well-being) must be “mad”? What other factors could account for their actions? How do you think such people achieve and maintain national leadership?
4. India and Pakistan are neighbors and enemies. Given the problems of misperception and bias in foreign policy decision making, what steps could you propose that each government adopt to keep these problems from interfering in the rational pursuit of national interests?
5. Traditionally, foreign policy elites have faced only sporadic pressure from mass public opinion. Is the role of television and the Internet changing this relationship? If you were a top foreign policy maker, what steps could you take to keep TV news and blogs from shaping the foreign policy agenda before you could define your own goals and directions?

LET'S DEBATE THE ISSUE

Should Legislatures Play a Role in Deciding Whether to Use Military Force?

ARGUMENT 1

Overview

In nearly all democracies, there are debates about the best way to conduct foreign policy. One particularly controversial issue involves using military force—for example, initiating a war. Executives (presidents or prime ministers) usually claim the right to initiate the use of force as commanders of their militaries. Yet legislatures (Congress or parliaments) may object that they should have a say in whether a country goes to war.

In the United States, the president is the Commander in Chief of the military and thus has the power to order the deployment of American military forces. Yet Congress has the exclusive power to declare war. This has led to extensive debates in the United States about who has the ultimate authority to undertake military action. While the president has extensive advantages in terms of military intelligence and analysis (because the foreign policy bureaucracy reports to the president, not Congress), Congress must authorize funds to pay for military action. And although American presidents often seek congressional approval before taking military action, there have been important exceptions (for example, the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989).

What is the proper relationship between a legislature and the executive regarding the use of military force? Should initiating military force be invested only in the executive, or should legislatures also have a say in when and where a country's military is put in harm's way?

Legislatures Should Not Play a Role in Deciding Whether to Use Military Force

Legislatures are slow to act in times of crisis. Because legislatures are made up of hundreds of members, it is difficult to get agreement among all members on what constitutes a threat to national security. Discussions over whether to use military force can thus be long, drawn-out affairs, which can limit the ability of a country to respond to dangers. Executives also have faster access to information at their disposal.

Internal debates can show division to enemies. Debates over the appropriateness of military force show open divisions within a country that can encourage adversaries to remain stubborn in bargaining. If an adversary feels a country is too divided to use military force against it, it will not treat threats to use force as credible.

Most legislators know little about foreign affairs. Most legislators are elected to serve local constituent interests rather than invest their time and energy in foreign affairs. Legislators have little incentive to become highly knowledgeable about foreign affairs, thus making their decisions about whether to engage in military force less informed.

ARGUMENT 2

Legislatures Should Play a Role in Deciding Whether to Use Military Force

More input regarding military force leads to more careful policy. Having an effective legislative debate over the potential use of military force can lead to better policy, avoiding some of the psychological pitfalls associated with small-group decision making such as groupthink.

Legislators are more directly accountable to constituents. Because a state's citizens will bear the brunt of the costs of war, it is appropriate that their representative bodies have a say in whether the country's men and women should be sent to fight. Open debates in a legislature better allow the public's voice to be heard.

Executives need checks and balances, especially with regard to decisions about war. Because of the weight of a decision to initiate military conflict, it is important to have a checks and balances system to stop hasty wars. In the United States, the Constitution specifically grants Congress the power to declare war for this reason.

Questions

- Should legislatures play a role in the decision to use military force? Are there some circumstances that are better or worse for a society to have open debates about potential military action?
- Short of military action, should legislatures play a significant role in other foreign policy areas such as economic sanctions, immigration, or military alliances? How are these foreign policy issues similar to or different from questions of using military force?
- Do you think potential adversaries pay attention to debates within a country contemplating military force? Do potential adversaries use this information to their advantage? Should this be a concern for a country contemplating the use of military force?

For Further Reading

- Hamilton, Lee H., and Jordan Tama. *A Creative Tension: The Foreign Policy Roles of the President and Congress*. Woodrow Wilson Center, 2002.
- Howell, William G., and Jon C. Pevehouse. *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers*. Princeton, 2007.
- Feaver, Peter D., and Christopher Gelpi. *Choosing Your Battles: American Civil-Military Relations and the Use of Force*. Princeton, 2003.
- Fisher, Louis. *Presidential War Power*. 2nd ed. Rev. Kansas, 2004.