



FOURTH EDITION

studying
**FOREIGN
POLICY**
comparatively

—
Cases and Analysis
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LAURA NEACK



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Cases and Analysis

FOURTH EDITION

LAURA NEACK
MIAMI UNIVERSITY

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Executive Editor: Traci Crowell
Assistant Editor: Mary Malley
Senior Marketing Manager: Amy Whitaker

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Published by Rowman & Littlefield
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB, United Kingdom

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Neack, Laura, author.

Title: Studying foreign policy comparatively : cases and analysis / Laura Neack, Miami University.

Other titles: New foreign policy


Description: Fourth Edition. | Lanham, Maryland : ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD, [2018] | Series:

New Millennium Books in International Studies | "Third edition 2014 by The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc."—T.p. verso. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018017883 (print) | LCCN 2018018769 (ebook) | ISBN 9781538109632 (ebook) | ISBN 9781538109618 (cloth : alk. paper) | ISBN 9781538109625 (paperback : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: International relations—Philosophy. | International relations—History—21st century

Classification: LCC JZ1305 (ebook) | LCC JZ1305 .N424 2018 (print) | DDC 327.101—dc23
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018017883>

™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

For Harry, Sarah, and River

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Preface

Students do not typically read the preface of a book; the preface helps instructors understand the purpose and presentation of a book. This is a book about the study of foreign policy, including but not limited to the field of foreign policy analysis. This book should help students learn to think analytically about foreign policy cases using the models, theories, and case studies presented by foreign policy scholars.

When I was a student, I had some excellent teachers who helped me learn about the world. The very best of these helped me learn how to think about the world. Learning to think does not mean learning what to think but how to approach a subject and make sense of it. Fortunately, each subject matter—each discipline in the academic sense—that we might want to learn has an existing body of knowledge that we can draw on. People have studied, developed, and created ideas that shape future studies, developments, and ideas. The best teachers show students how to take these existing understandings and use them to explore new problems. The best teachers empower their students to take existing frameworks and improve them, even sometimes by discarding them in favor of new creations.

What is foreign policy? What do we know about why states pursue certain foreign policies and not others? What factors go into the shaping and execution of foreign policy? This book answers these questions, and more, by exploring how scholars analyze foreign policy and by applying this knowledge to new foreign policy cases; this is a book of cases and analysis. Each chapter starts with a case study and then considers the models and theories that might explain the case study. Models and theories propose that when certain conditions are present, certain phenomena are likely to occur. When certain conditions in one country contribute to a particular foreign policy, then we might be able to predict something about the foreign policy of another country in which we observe the presence of the same basic conditions. When we do this—moving from an understanding of one case to another—we conduct a comparative case study.

This book enables students' critical thinking skills by demonstrating how scholars study cases. There are long case studies in each chapter, along with many quick ideas about other cases that might fit the discussion. Maybe students will want to investigate these quick ideas. Maybe the cases, long and short, will provoke students into finding similar cases that might also fit the frameworks under discussion. In doing this, students learn how to study foreign policy comparatively.

There are many ways for teachers to extend the discussion in this book toward the goal of enhancing students' analytical skills and curiosity. Take

those quick ideas and develop them into cases as term projects. Take the longer case studies and ask students to extend them in time to see if the analysis still holds; have them determine whether changes to the case over time require the addition of new variables to existing models. Take the longer case studies and have students use alternative models from other parts of the book to study the cases, emphasizing how asking questions in different ways brings us to different understandings of the cases. Extend the methodological approaches mentioned in the book. Be a role model for your students by demonstrating to them how you do research, what questions you ask, and what models and methods you prefer.

This book is the fourth edition of a book that used to be called *The New Foreign Policy*. The revised title reflects the pedagogical frame of the book, but the new foreign policy notion remains. Many of the cases used previously appear here but with revisions and updates, or they are pared down to accommodate new but similar cases. New scholarship blends in throughout the book to extend and deepen the discussion. Sometimes the “new” scholarship is older work that has a new application. Although this is a substantial revision, instructors should find that this new edition fits seamlessly into their existing courses.

My appreciation goes to the good people at Rowman & Littlefield and their commitment to this ongoing project and to the New Millennium Books in International Studies series. Thanks especially to Traci Crowell, executive acquisitions editor for political science textbooks; Mary Malley, assistant editor; and Janice Braunstein, assistant managing editor, for bringing this fourth edition to print. Thanks, too, to the people who do all the many other things behind the scenes to make this book a reality, from copyediting to shipping and everything in between. Thanks to the NMB board, many of whom are old friends whose work is so helpful to my own and whose intellectual curiosity challenges me. Thanks especially to Karen Mingst and Eric Selbin. Thanks, also, to Kelleigh Beatty, who compiled the glossary.

While I was working on this edition, I had the great fortune to attend a meeting of international studies scholars in Mexico. While there, I learned that many of them knew this book and carried its lessons into their own research and teaching. That experience was awesome and energizing. I experience that same energy every year when a new crop of Miami University students enroll in my foreign policy class and challenge and inspire me to teach them how to think. I wrote this book—in all its editions—for my students.

Finally, I thank my son Harry and my daughter-in-law Sarah, for asking about this book while I was writing it and listening to whatever new case I was developing. Their sustained interest meant I was on track. I dedicate this book to Harry, Sarah, and River.

1

Studying Foreign Policy Comparatively

In This Chapter

- Features of Foreign Policy Study
- Defining the Subject
- Levels of Analysis
- Worldviews, Theories, and Relevance
- Saying Something about the World

Major Cases Explored

- US policy toward China in the 1992 US presidential campaign
- The development of Bill Clinton's China policy
- How the government-in-exile of Tibet has "state-ness" but is not a state

What is foreign policy? What do we know about why **states** pursue certain foreign policies and not others? What factors go into the shaping and execution of foreign policy? This book answers these questions, and more, by exploring how scholars analyze foreign policy and by applying this knowledge to new foreign policy cases; this is a book of cases and analysis. Each chapter starts with a case study and then considers the models and theories that might explain the case study. Models and theories propose that when certain conditions are present, certain phenomena are likely to occur. When certain conditions in one country contribute to a particular foreign policy, then we might be able to predict something about the foreign policy of another country in which we observe the presence of the same basic conditions. When we do this—moving from an understanding of one case to another—we conduct a comparative case study.

What is foreign policy? To begin answering this question, we will start with our first case. In China in May 1989, a small student protest grew into major demonstrations in Beijing and many other cities. The demonstration took the name of the Tiananmen Square Protests. By the end of the month, the Chinese government had declared martial law and mobilized military forces to end the protests. On June 4, Chinese troops moved on the protesters with tanks and assault weapons, resulting in the deaths of hundreds or thousands and the imprisonment of many more. International condemnation rained down on the Chinese government as a result.

In the United States, **human rights** and religious rights groups called for a tough US response to the Tiananmen crackdown. The US president at the time was George H. W. Bush. Perhaps because of the president's background—he had served as the US ambassador to the United Nations and as the US envoy to China before official diplomatic relations started—Bush maintained a policy of **constructive engagement** with China. The idea was to remain engaged with China in order to encourage it to change its behavior through incentives and interaction rather than through invectives and punishments. Bush was not inclined to punish China.

A majority in the US Congress disagreed with the policy of constructive engagement and passed a tough sanctions bill on China in response to Tiananmen. Bush vetoed that bill, so congressional critics decided to place human rights conditions on the yearly renewal of China's **most favored nation (MFN)** trading status.¹ Despite disagreement between the president and Congress, constructive engagement remained the official US policy. In two years, though, the US prosanctions coalition found a champion in the 1992 US presidential campaign.

Democratic presidential candidate Bill Clinton came out in favor of attaching human rights conditions to any future granting of MFN status to China after meeting with members of Congress and **leaders** of prosanctions interest groups. Clinton announced his position: "I do not want to isolate China . . . but I believe our nation has a higher purpose than to coddle dictators and stand aside from the global movement toward **democracy**."² Clinton repeated this stand many times on the campaign trail. Upon Clinton's election, Chinese authorities signaled their unhappiness by suspending further human rights talks. In response to this and in response to a different coalition of domestic interests, the president-elect announced a moderated view on China in late November 1992: "We have a big stake in not isolating China, in seeing that China continues to develop a market economy. . . . But we also have to insist, I believe, on progress in human rights and human decency."³

As a way to prepare for his inauguration, Clinton hosted several conferences in his hometown of Little Rock, Arkansas. At an economic conference, the chief operating officer of Mattel, which manufactures toys in China, raised worries about Mattel's ability to stay on top of the world toy market if human

rights conditions were attached to renewing China's MFN status. Voices within the United States, such as the aircraft and wheat industries, and voices outside the United States, such as the governments of Japan and Hong Kong (at that time still independent of China), similarly urged Clinton to back away from his tough campaign stand on China. Additionally, at the invitation of the Chinese government, two groups of Democratic senators visited China and Tibet in December 1992 and January 1993. This Chinese effort to influence the domestic political debate within the United States—and thereby shape US foreign policy in the new administration—reaped some benefits, as several of the senators declared that it would be shortsighted to link trade and human rights. The president-elect was sympathetic to the proengagement views—particularly those of economic actors—having run a campaign based primarily on the economic discontent of voters.

A new US policy on China, announced by the new administration, attached some human rights conditions to the US-China relationship, but not on trade issues. This compromise allowed voices on both sides to be partially satisfied and partially dissatisfied (this being the nature of compromise). Farm and business groups and their supporters in Congress were glad to keep trade off the table, while human rights groups and their congressional supporters were glad to see some official pronouncement privileging human rights and democracy. Even in this age of **globalization**, where market forces seemed to drive so much foreign policy, human rights groups were satisfied that their concerns would remain central to US foreign policy. At the signing ceremony for the executive order, business leaders stood beside members of human rights groups and prodemocracy Chinese students, forming the backdrop for Clinton.⁴ Yet the president warned that the following year's renewal of China's MFN status *would* be subject to human rights conditions.

The compromise China policy and the threat for the coming year would not last. Internal divisions within the Clinton administration—reflecting divisions in American society—led to a reevaluation of policy over the following year. “On the one side were the economic agencies, Treasury, Commerce, and the National Economic Council (NEC), who favored developing ties with China and pursuing human rights concerns only secondarily. . . . On the other side were State Department officials . . . who favored continuing a tough stance on human rights.”⁵ The economic agencies gained the upper hand on the issue, with support from corporate leaders and increasing numbers of members of Congress, all of whom were interested in tapping into China's enormous potential market. This coalition was able to change the Clinton policy and avoid future threats to link MFN status with human rights issues. As Clinton explained the change in policy in May 1994, “**Linkage** has been constructive during the last year, but . . . we have reached the end of the usefulness of that policy.”⁶ Human rights groups went along with this delinking in order not to lose their leverage on the rest of the China policy.

In 1995, another event in China caused US domestic interests to put pressure on the administration for a tougher line on China. To understand this event, we briefly need to go back forty-five years earlier. In 1950, China sent troops into Tibet and set up a political and military administration there. The **leadership** of the Tibetan government and of Tibetan Buddhism was the teenage Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetans attempted to work with the Chinese, but by 1959 they feared the Chinese government intended to destroy Tibet—as a place, a culture, a religion, and a people—and so they fled to India. There the Dalai Lama set up a Tibetan government-in-exile with the agreement of the Indian government.

The leadership of the Tibetan government and religion was, at the time, determined by reincarnation. The Dalai Lama would identify the reincarnation of the second-highest lama—called the Panchen Lama—and the Panchen Lama would identify the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama when that time came. In 1995, the exiled Dalai Lama announced that the second-highest lama had reincarnated and was living as a five-year-old boy in Tibet. The Chinese government arrested that five-year-old boy and his family and “disappeared” them. Then the Chinese government picked another boy as the reincarnated Panchen Lama.

The arrest of a child and his parents prompted members of the US Congress and human rights groups to demand a policy reassessment on trade with China, bringing our discussion back to the Clinton China policy. Linking human rights to trade would force the Chinese government to honor human rights in order to maintain coveted MFN status. Yet even in the face of this pressure, the president’s policy to delink MFN status and human rights remained firm. Although the human rights problems in China might temper the climate of US-China trade talks, an administration official stated, the president remained committed to helping China gain entry into the World Trade Organization, unless Chinese leaders continued to make no progress on opening their markets. Human rights issues appeared to have fallen well down the list of administration goals.

Features of Foreign Policy Study

This case illustrates some important features of the study of foreign policy. The first is that foreign policy occurs in the complex intersection of domestic and international environments. The Clinton administration decision makers had to consider two different arenas—domestic and international. Clinton the candidate could afford to focus primarily on the domestic environment, with very little serious attention paid to the international environment. Clinton the president—like any head of state anywhere in the world—had to focus attention on both the domestic and international environments when making and implementing policy. Robert Putnam has described this situation that national

leaders find themselves in as a “**two-level game**.”⁷ Leaders cannot afford to focus exclusively on one level but must try to play both to some advantage. Sometimes a problem at one level will cause a leader to put greater emphasis there, and sometimes leaders will use an issue on one level to pursue goals in the other, but no leader can afford to ignore the reality of this **nested game**.

The second feature of our study that this case illustrates is that foreign policy often results from complicated politics involving many different domestic and international actors and groups. Analysts often use shorthand and suggest that foreign policy results from the goals and actions of a single person, but this shorthand hides complex political calculations by many actors. To come to power/office and stay in power/office, leaders need supporters, and often those supporters represent a variety of governmental and societal actors, not to mention a variety of foreign actors as well. The calculations that result in certain foreign policies reflect those interests. Leaders and their domestic coalitions cannot ignore oppositional actors and coalitions, and they often work to pull opponents in or render them irrelevant on particular policy initiatives. Then, when the environment shifts, as human rights and democracy advocates learned regarding Clinton’s China policy, actors with more bargaining resources push less-resourced actors to the margins.

The third feature of foreign policy this case illustrates is how difficult it is to draw the line between what is purely domestic and purely foreign. When outsiders expressed concerns about human rights in Tibet, China warned those outsiders to stay out of Chinese domestic affairs. China played the same game in reverse by repeatedly hosting US congressional delegations in order to garner friends in the US government.

The line between domestic politics and international politics is blurry. Issues travel across national borders, and coalitions supporting or opposing policies form and move across those same borders. Some have called this blurring of the distinction between international and domestic politics “**intermestic**,” combining the words *international* and *domestic* to indicate the combining of issues and interests. Others prefer to use the terms *transnational actors* and *transnational forces* to indicate the pursuit of interests across national lines. In the final chapter of this book, we offer the term *linkage actors* to describe the many actors that operate in this intermestic arena.

Globalization prompts some observers to suggest that the line between domestic and international politics is quickly disappearing. Globalization refers to the increasing internationalization of economics and culture. As national markets open to the global market, national cultures similarly open to the global culture. National sovereignty is eroded in terms of both control of the national economy and—perhaps more importantly—preservation of national culture. When the Clinton administration took human rights conditions off its China trade policy, the justification was that opening up China for trade would open up China for other influences, ultimately changing the behav-

ior of the Chinese government in the way that human rights and democracy groups wanted. Put another way, Clinton—like Bush before him—believed that the forces of globalization would compel changes in Chinese human rights behavior, and that US policy should facilitate those forces.

Further emphasizing intermestic politics, leaders use foreign policies to promote domestic agendas, and vice versa. In the 1992 US presidential election, then-president Bush attempted to convince American voters to reelect him—a domestic agenda—by pointing to his foreign policy accomplishments. This can go the other way: domestic actions can promote foreign policy goals. The Chinese government releases political prisoners from time to time (prisoners being a domestic concern) as a demonstration of its cooperative nature in order to win the support of other governments for Chinese foreign policy goals.

Despite any government's insistence that its domestic arena is off-limits to other governments, foreign policies often target other countries' domestic politics. Countries engage in what we might think of as normal **lobbying** and bargaining inside the domestic political realm of other countries. Japan and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) have lobbied inside the United States to garner support for their claims that Japan or Korea is the more important Asian ally of the United States. China has funded many Confucius Institutes across the United States to highlight the soft side of China and gain favorable **public** support for a pro-China foreign policy. Some of these Confucius Institutes even fund and provide language instructors for the teaching of Mandarin Chinese in US public elementary schools. These kinds of foreign policy activities are not perceived as hostile or inappropriate interference in the domestic arena.

Countries also engage in **covert actions** and more insidious tactics, such as the Russian cyberattacks against the governments of Estonia, Georgia, Ukraine, and the United States—and election hacking in the United States—for the purposes of altering those countries' foreign policies that have a direct impact on Russian interests. As another example, in 2017, a coalition of Arab states led by Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic and economic ties with Qatar in order to pursue two goals, one foreign and one domestic. First, the Saudi coalition wanted Qatar to realign its foreign policy away from Iran. Second, the Saudi coalition wanted Qatar to shut down Al Jazeera, a news channel that originates in Qatar and is funded by the Qatari government. Al Jazeera is both a foreign policy arm of the Qatar government and a widely watched news service, but some other Arab states see Al Jazeera as a facilitator of their own *domestic* instability.

We will return to these topics in this book; for now the reader should have an appreciation of the complicated nature of foreign policy study. Scholars narrow their inquiries to particular cases or particular aspects of those cases to manage the complexity. They focus their research by making use of theories and models. Before we discuss this, we should define our subject.

Defining the Subject

What is foreign policy? Charles Hermann calls foreign policy a “neglected concept.”⁸ He asserts, “This neglect has been one of the most serious obstacles to providing more adequate and comprehensive explanations of foreign policy.” Hermann thinks that part of the reason for this neglect is that “most people dealing with the subject have felt confident that they knew what foreign policy was.”⁹ To put it colloquially, we know it when we see it. Ultimately, Hermann defines foreign policy as “the discrete purposeful action that results from the political level decision of an individual or group of individuals. . . . [It is] the observable artifact of a political level decision. It is not the decision, but a product of the decision.”¹⁰ Thus, Hermann defines foreign policy as the *behavior of states*.

Hermann rejects the idea that the study of foreign policy is the study of policy, but his is a minority view. Bruce Russett, Harvey Starr, and David Kinsella take an opposite and broader view: “We can think of a policy as a program that serves as a guide to behavior intended to realize the goals an organization has set for itself. . . . Foreign policy is thus a guide to actions taken beyond the boundaries of the state to further the goals of the state.”¹¹ Although these scholars define foreign policy as a program or statement of goals, they also stress that the study of foreign policy must involve study of both the “formulation and implementation” of policy.¹²

Deborah Gerner takes foreign policy further when she defines it as “the intentions, statements, and actions of an actor—often, but not always, a state—directed toward the external world and the response of other actors to these intentions, statements and actions.”¹³ Gerner combines Hermann’s interest in behavior with Russett, Starr, and Kinsella’s emphasis on programs or guides. Note that in Gerner’s definition the emphasis is on states, but it does not have to be. Other actors—such as cause groups, businesses, religions, and so forth—in the international system formulate guidelines and goals that direct their actions toward other international actors. In this book, our study is state-centric; we do not study the external relations of **nonstate actors** since our interest is in political institutions.

This last statement needs some explication. Political scientists study political institutions. When political scientists study noninstitutional political behavior (like public opinion or interest group activity), they focus on the impact of noninstitutional behavior on political institutions. Foreign policy is a subfield of **international relations**, which itself is a subdiscipline of **political science**. In international relations, the primary unit of analysis is the state. In international politics, the state is the primary political actor, with rights, privileges, and legal standing above all other actors. Our focus is on states and their policies and actions toward other states.

There are some political actors that have a degree of “state-ness” that makes them more like states than nonstate actors. The government-in-exile of Tibet, mentioned above, is an actor that has some elements of state-ness—a government that is recognized by other governments that claims a certain territory as its proper country. What the government-in-exile of Tibet lacks, though, is actual sovereignty over that territory. Sovereignty is the ultimate decision-making and decision-enforcing authority within a territory. In the international system, states and only states are sovereign, and they notionally answer to no higher authority. The term *state* denotes the legal, political entity that has a defined territory, population, and effective government. States become states by being recognized as states by other states. The government-in-exile of Tibet is recognized by India as the representative of the Tibetan people, and India agrees with the government-in-exile’s goals—more or less—of reclaiming Tibet from China. However, China does not recognize the government-in-exile of Tibet as the government of anything, nor as the representative of the Tibetan people. China is the effective government over the territory and people of Tibet. China answers to no higher authority regarding Tibet. Despite the clear barriers preventing the government-in-exile of Tibet from being a sovereign state, it does have some political institutions that can be studied using political science tools.

One actor with a stronger claim to statehood studied later in this book is Palestine, as represented by the Palestinian Authority (PA). Palestine has many elements of “state-ness,” including established political institutions, but it does not possess the full complement of what makes a state. A majority of the members of the United Nations recognize Palestine as a state, but the boundaries of Palestinian territory are contested with Israel, and some of that territory is controlled by Israel as part of its national territory. Similarly, the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) of Iraq has some elements of “state-ness”: governmental institutions including a military, delineated and occupied territory, and a population. Other national governments work directly with the KRG—such as the United States—and even multinational corporations enter into contracts with it, much to the anger of the Iraqi national government. Those other national governments do not recognize the KRG as a state, however, since it is located within the recognized state of Iraq. The point here is that there are some state-like actors with political institutions and domestic and foreign policies that we can study using the tools we use to study the policies of states.

To sum up, our foreign policy study in this book includes processes, statements, and behaviors. We study statements and behaviors, and we explore the processes that cause states to declare those statements and embark on those behaviors.

Levels of Analysis

Foreign policy is a complicated phenomenon blurring the lines between domestic and foreign, in which multiple domestic and foreign actors coalesce or compete to set policy. This characterization might suggest that we need to study everything going on around a foreign policy case to understand that particular case. In some ways, the fuller the study, the fuller the understanding. In other ways, trying to study too much can leave us frustrated by the enormity of our task. Fortunately, scholars have ways to manage what they study. Foreign policy analysts disaggregate or break down each case into different component parts in order to study and understand select aspects. Then they study the parts that are most interesting to them using the frameworks within which they work. The knowledge generated by many such studies—studies conducted in the same way, asking the same questions, in similar and different contexts and cases—may begin to accumulate and form a body of knowledge.

Scholars use frameworks that are situated at different **levels of analysis**. These levels of analysis are tools—heuristic devices—that help us study our subject. All disciplines employ levels of analysis, although the levels vary depending on the discipline. Levels of analysis are like different lenses on a camera that can give us different views of our subject. At each level of analysis, we gain a particular perspective on or understanding of our subject. Our understanding may be quite thorough for that level but will necessarily exclude information that can only be attained using one of the other levels of analysis. When we pose our questions at a single level, we acknowledge that our understanding will be limited to that level; an analysis conducted at just one level will not yield a complete picture. Yet foreign policy scholars take the risk and emphasize a single level because they are curious about questions at that level. Choosing to frame a study at a single level helps the scholar better manage the subject matter.

The levels of analysis offer us entrance points for case studies. For example, we might want to study Bill Clinton the decision maker. Clinton maintained the Bush policy of constructive engagement with China. This might suggest that the person sitting in the presidency from one administration to the next does not matter, and so we might use the rational decision-making model and the idea of persistent national interests to understand US policy toward China. Alternatively, maybe Clinton's lack of previous national-level experience left him open to formulating a different view of China once he entered the White House. With this hypothesis, we might investigate his change in beliefs using models proposed by cognitive scholars. Maybe his change in beliefs happened because he had key policy advisors whose opinions shaped his, or maybe we could study the small-group dynamics that gave the economics-focused cabinet members greater influence over Clinton's **deci-**

sion making than the human rights groups. We could conduct a study of this case using any of these questions to guide our research. Each of these questions is posed at the individual level of analysis—a focus on individual decision makers, how they make decisions, what perceptions and misperceptions they hold, and the ways key decision makers interact in small top-level groups.

We might instead be interested in how domestic interest groups and Congress shaped the Clinton policy. We could explore how groups on the pro-human rights and protrade sides varied in their lobbying efforts. We could explore the “turf” problems, or competition between the executive and legislative branches, in defining US China policy, maybe by thinking about competition between **elites** in different branches of government. We could ask whether the US military, worried about potential Chinese military threats, lobbied the White House and Congress for a certain stand against the Chinese. We could investigate the rise and fall of the fortunes of the pro-human rights groups and the rise of the protrade groups, charting their different strategies, arguments, and overall effectiveness in shaping media coverage of and public opinion on China and human rights. These questions involve the study of foreign policy at the state or domestic level of analysis. At this level, we examine those societal (historical, cultural, religious, economic) and governmental (type of government, division of powers, policy-making rules) factors that contribute to the making of foreign policy in a particular state.

Maybe as analysts we are interested in the bigger picture. Maybe we are curious about whether changes in the overall balance of power between countries in the Asia-Pacific region were influential in shaping a US policy of accommodation toward China. We might wonder about whether policy makers decided that China might need to be enticed into being a “good international citizen” rather than coerced into such a role. Maybe US policy makers thought issues of human rights could be addressed better through multilateral channels like the United Nations. These questions about state versus state, or geostrategic concerns about regional or global power tilts, or states acting through international organizations, involve the **system level of analysis**. The system level explores bilateral (state-to-state) relations, regional issues and interactions, and global issues and multilateral interactions between states. At this international level, we also consider the role played by regional and international organizations and by nonstate actors such as transnational nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that have a direct influence on the foreign policies of states.

Foreign policy research is conducted at particular levels of analysis. This book, then, is organized using a levels-of-analysis approach. Chapters 2 and 3 focus on decision making and cognition, both individual-level approaches. Chapter 4 puts the decision maker in broader focus, including other actors, with a focus on the ultimate decision unit. The ultimate decision unit can straddle levels of analysis, from individuals and small groups to a larger group

that shares authority among different parts of a government. This leads us officially to the state level of analysis in chapter 5 with a focus on national culture and national role conception and how these influence state institutions and foreign policies. Chapter 6 continues the state-level focus with an exploration of how foreign policy results from the domestic politics competition between elites and their supporters. In chapter 7 we bring in societal actors, asking how public opinion and media influence the domestic competition set up in the previous chapter. Finally, we put a panoramic lens on our camera and move to the broadest level of analysis. In chapter 8, we study what international relations theories say about foreign policy choices and behaviors. Chapter 9 brings in nonstate linkage actors and suggests a reframing of the two-level game for future foreign policy scholars.

Worldviews, Theories, and Relevance

In some important ways, the decision to study at a particular level of analysis is related to what the individual scholar thinks is important. Every one of us holds a view of “how things work” or of “human nature.” These views might be very elaborate or very simple, but they set the stage for how we act in the world. These **worldviews** do not just apply to politics; a personal worldview might explain why your best friend did not talk to you today, how to play the stock market or pick lottery numbers (or whether to bother playing the market or picking lottery numbers at all), or why countries choose peace over war.

The study of foreign policy derives in large part from the academic discipline called international relations. International relations scholars spend a lot of time arguing over worldviews or grand theories that explain global politics. A **theory** is an explanation of how things work, or how an analyst thinks something works. A **grand theory** purports to explain why things are the way they are overall—or how things might be. In this latter sense, theories can be prescriptions for action to achieve a desired endpoint.

Theories are also used to help us tell the future, or predict. Foreign policy as a field of study is a political science subfield, as previously mentioned. Political science seeks to explain political decisions and behavior in the past with an eye to predicting political decisions and behavior in the future. Political science theories seek to explain and predict. An explanation of a single incident in the past might be interesting and worth investigating, but that single incident may not tell us anything about the future. This is a problem for scholars, but even more so for foreign policy makers. Foreign policy makers need to be able to confront new circumstances with decisive, effective responses, and they need to be able to be proactive when planning the course for their countries. Theories about how the world works can help policy makers generalize from the past to new experiences, thereby helping them know which policies to undertake and which to avoid.

When analysts apply their theories about the world to the study of particular aspects of foreign policy—such as why a country may form a military alliance or leave a trade agreement—they offer something useful to policy makers. The explanations of the world that result from focused studies on particular policies or events are called midrange theories. Midrange theories do not claim to explain everything, just selected parts of the subject under investigation. In fact, midrange theories tend to do a better job of explaining focused aspects of the world than the grand theories do in explaining the entire world. Grand theories purport to explain everything and so must gloss over many rich, human details in order to do so. Midrange theories give analysts the ability to learn a lot about the dynamics of a smaller range of phenomena. When other analysts use these same theories for studying new cases, they extend the range of the midrange theories and refine them for the future purposes of scholars and policy makers.

Good midrange theories explain the past and help predict the future. With predictive capability, policy makers can plan their own actions. Theories are of no use to analysts or policy makers if they are too particular or overly specified. Theories need to go beyond single instances; they need to generalize across cases, events, incidents, and time. In doing this, theories help develop generic knowledge.

Foreign policy is a diverse field of study. As in other fields, scholars using different theories can examine the same basic set of events and arrive at different explanations for why those events occurred and how best to deal with similar events in the future. Theories give us different answers to the puzzles of the world because they begin with different starting assumptions, stress different critical variables, and have different ideal endpoints. It is also important to note that an analyst working within a particular tradition will sometimes ignore evidence that another analyst using a different worldview would find indispensable. When a scholar comes up with an answer as to why an event occurred and whether it will occur again, we would be wise to ask about the framework used, the evidence included, and the evidence not included. What factors did this person ignore, disregard, or downplay? Will we imperil our own study—or our own country's policy—if we ignore other potentially important variables?

As students of foreign policy and potential future policy makers, we should read every study with caution—with a critical mind—remembering that each scholar's orientation has led her or him to choose some variables over others. We might learn a great deal from this scholar's work, but the things we are *not* learning might be just as important. We would be wise, then, to critically mix and match our studies, looking for scholars of different orientations to offer us competing explanations that we can assess critically on the path to a more comprehensive understanding of events.

Do actual foreign policy makers take into account foreign policy scholarship? Scholars around the world sit in foreign ministries, serve on national security councils, or hold top decision-making offices. US president Woodrow Wilson, credited for some of the intellectual ideas that formed the League of Nations and the later United Nations, was a professor of international relations and politics at Princeton University before he was president. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the president of Brazil from 1995 to 2003, was a leading international scholar of Marxist dependency theory, studying asymmetrical power relations between rich and poor countries. Michael Ignatieff, an important scholar in the liberal internationalist tradition, was the leader of the Liberal Party and a member of Parliament in Canada. Scholars serve as policy advisors in government ministries and agencies around the world, using their expertise and scholarly approach to problem solving on behalf of their governments. Sometimes scholars write influential syndicated columns for newspapers or blogs or host talk shows and podcasts heard around their countries and around the world. The work of scholars translates into the work of foreign policy makers, and that translation happens in many different ways. This is why it is imperative that foreign policy studies have something to say about the world—something tangible and practical.

Saying Something about the World

There are many cases discussed in the pages of this book. Some are set a little further back in time, some quite recent. This book presents some original case studies, while some derive from the scholarly works examined here. This book is not just a collection of foreign policy stories, though, but is instead a survey and demonstration of how foreign policy knowledge can help us understand our subject matter. The cases discussed here can be discussed using different models and different key variables—maybe instructors can help students construct their own case studies to test what appears here. The point of this book is to help students learn how to apply the knowledge of foreign policy studies toward the goal of developing an understanding of what has happened in the world, and what might happen next.

For Discussion

1. Explain the two-level game that resulted in Clinton's China policy. Which groups were more influential and which groups less influential?
2. Discuss how scholars have defined foreign policy and how foreign policy is used in this book.
3. What are the levels of analysis, and how do they help analysts focus investigations?
4. What is a theory? What is a mid-range theory?

Key Words

state

human rights

constructive engagement

most favored nation (MFN)

leaders

democracy

globalization

linkage

leadership

two-level game

nested game

intermestic

transnational actors

lobbying

public

covert actions

nonstate actor

international relations

political science

levels of analysis

decision making

elites

system level of analysis

worldview

theory

grand theory

2

Rational Actors and National Interests

In This Chapter

- National Interests
- Rational Decision Making and Realism
- Assessing Rationality
- Rationality and Nuclear Decision Making
- Poliheuristic Theory

Major Cases Explored

- Barack Obama’s response to Bashar Assad’s use of chemical weapons in Syria, 2013
- Xi Jinping and Chinese national interests
- Gamal Abdel Nasser’s decision making leading to the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six-Day War
- Donald Trump’s response to Bashar Assad’s use of chemical weapons in Syria, 2017
- US-Soviet nuclear weapons relationship and US nuclear weapons strategy, 2018
- North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and the rational first use of nuclear weapons

On August 31, 2013, US president Barack Obama stood before television cameras and announced that his administration had determined that the Syrian **regime** had used chemical weapons in Damascus. Obama declared this “an assault on human dignity” and “a serious danger” to the national security of the United States. Because of this, Obama had “decided that the United States should take military action against Syrian regime targets” to “hold the Assad regime accountable for their use of chemical weapons, deter this kind of behavior, and degrade their capacity to carry it

out.”¹ The US military had assets in place for such an action, but because the United States was the “world’s oldest constitutional democracy,” Obama was seeking congressional authorization for the use of force.

As members of the US Congress went to their favorite media outlets to debate the use of military force, US diplomats set out to discuss the next steps with allies. The British Parliament had voted against taking military action before Obama’s announcement, but the French government apparently was ready to act with the United States. Before the US Congress formally took up the authorization—within two weeks of Obama’s threat—the Russian government announced that it had reached an agreement with the Assad government about the removal and destruction of its chemical weapons stocks. Within days, the US and Russian governments had developed a plan for taking inventory of, removing, and destroying the weapons, a plan endorsed by the United Nations Security Council at the end of the month. By the start of October 2013, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and other UN inspectors arrived in Syria to implement the plan. Obama then asked Congress to postpone any formal discussions regarding the use of military force.

In the short term, Obama had succeeded in getting Assad to agree to the international inspection and removal of his chemical weapons stocks without having to fire a shot or launch a cruise missile. Russia, a steadfast defender of the Assad regime, negotiated the agreement and assisted in its implementation, against its earlier insistence that there was no truth to the claims that chemical weapons had been used. Yet “the near unanimous verdict among observers is that this episode was a failure.”² Critics pointed to a terrible decision-making process, while others said the president had undermined American resolve. The French foreign minister later claimed that Obama’s failure to carry through with the threat to use force was “a turning point, not only for the **crisis** in the Middle East, but also for Ukraine, Crimea and the world.”³ American students in my undergraduate courses—even some Obama supporters—saw the episode as a moment when the president flinched and Russia seemed to take the lead on Syria. What this case provides is both an example of what is called **rational decision making** (as will be explained shortly) and an illustration of how experts and everyday people really do not like rational decision making (which also will be explained shortly).

National Interests

Our model in this chapter is the rational decision-making model. This model is associated with the **realist** worldview that conceptualizes the state as a unitary actor pursuing long-term **national interests**. In this view, states are only distinguishable by the relative power they hold, not by their internal characteristics. Government type, history, economics, and the qualities of the indi-

viduals holding political leadership positions hold no importance in and of themselves to the analyst. The decisions taken by the leaders of the state are seen as the decisions of the state. This conflation of leader and state is possible because of the key assumption that all leaders will act in ways consistent with the long-term, persistent national interests of the country. Since the national interests do not change, changes in leadership are inconsequential.

For example, consider China and Xi Jinping. There have been five significant leaders of the People's Republic of China since 1949: Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping. In October 2017 at a meeting of China's Communist Party, Xi's name and philosophy were written into the constitution, suggesting that Xi had become a leader on par with Mao and Deng. Despite this elevation, Jeffrey Bader cautions that observers should resist the temptation

to view the evolution of China in the last few years primarily as the product of the vision and imagination of an aggressive leader. Most of the actions and trends that worry observers have been present for some time: the military build-up, the assertive behavior in the South and East China Sea, the growing gravitational pull of China's economy, and the political repression and denial of basic rights to its citizens. There are questions that deserve attention about how Xi is steering China. But the larger questions about China's direction both pre-date and will post-date Xi's tenure.⁴

Bader argues that China's material wealth and capacities have changed, giving China—under any leader—more international status and options, but persistent long-term Chinese national ambivalence toward the international order shapes the policies of all its leaders, making the general outlines of Chinese foreign policy predictable.

A classic statement regarding leaders and persistent national interests in the study of foreign policy comes from Hans Morgenthau, one of the most significant post-World War II international scholars in the realist tradition. In the statement below, note how the assumption binding leaders and national interests creates a simple model for the analyst to employ:

We assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power, and the evidence of history bears that assumption out. That assumption allows us to retrace and anticipate, as it were, the steps a statesman—past, present or future—has taken or will take on the political scene. We look over his shoulder when he writes his dispatches; we listen in on his conversation with other statesmen; we read and anticipate his very thoughts. Thinking in terms of interest defined as power, we think as he does, and as disinterested observers, we understand his thoughts and actions perhaps better than he, the actor on the political scene, does himself.

The concept of national interest defined as power imposes intellectual discipline upon the observer, infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible. On the side of the actor, it provides for rational discipline in action and creates that astounding continuity in foreign policy which makes American, British, or Russian foreign policy appear as an intelligible, rational continuum, by and large consistent with itself, regardless of the different motives, preferences, and intellectual and moral qualities of successive statesmen. A realist theory of international politics, then, will guard against two popular fallacies: the concern with motives and the concern with ideological preferences.⁵

The “concern with motives” or “ideological preferences” entails examining the characteristics of individuals or groups of individuals, or even examining the political dynamics within a country, pursuits that have no merit in the realist view. Morgenthau does allow that, in rare cases, psychological disorders in an individual leader or the emotions of mass democratic politics may cause national decisions that are out of line with national interests. Morgenthau might tell us that when we study most foreign policy decisions, we should follow the old advice given to fledgling doctors in medical school: when you hear hoofbeats, think horses, not zebras. When you see a foreign policy decision, think rational decision making and national interests, not idiosyncrasy, not individual leadership differences, not domestic political calculations. The standard expectation is the one upon which to base your diagnosis or explanation.

Although Morgenthau claims the stated goal is to impose “intellectual discipline upon the observer,” it is also the case that this model makes the analyst’s task easier. Rather than collecting evidence about particular national leaders, the analyst can collect evidence on the long-term national interests of the country and conduct some “armchair theorizing” about the policies of any given leader. This means the analyst does not need to go to a foreign capital and study any particular leader; the analyst can just impose the rigor of national interests atop her or him. This is, of course, a useful way to think about a country with secretive leadership and a closed society. Foreign policy scholars cannot gain up-close data on Kim Jong Un (or his advisors), but that data would be unnecessary in a study based on understanding the long-term national interests of North Korea.

It is important to note here that individuals do have different traits and personalities, but “large national transformations are more often the product of historical forces than the writ of one powerful leader,” as Bader reminds us.⁶ Some analysts in this tradition, like Michael McGinnis, prefer to eschew the use of the word *individual* in favor of *regime*, precisely because *regime* takes our focus away from personalities. McGinnis argues that “any individual who attains a position of major foreign policy responsibility will have been social-

ized through education and processes of political selection to pursue some set of common goals. Individuals differ in their perception of the national interest but role expectations reinforce a sense of common interests.”⁷ Thus, individuals lose their individuality! For McGinnis, political culture and socialization matter, but not in a way that requires the study of such. Instead, culture and socialization produce regularities among the individuals who rise to national office, eliminating individual differences and any need to study those differences. Further, McGinnis’s working assumption is that “changes in foreign policy goals attributed to changes in individual leaders or ruling coalitions can be interpreted as random (but not necessarily insignificant) fluctuations around a common ‘regime interest,’ which is based on domestic support structures and geopolitical concerns which act as the primary sources of continuity in foreign policy interests.”⁸

Regime interest can be read here as national interests. The term *national interests* is used expansively by leaders seeking to justify various policies, but in the realist framework, national interests refer to persistent, long-term values associated with the entire country and identifiable over the course of the country’s history. These interests do not change, although the means for pursuing them may. George Kennan, the former US diplomat who famously warned about Soviet expansionism, explains that long-term national interests include ensuring the “military security” of the country, the “integrity of its political life, and the well-being of its people.”⁹

Rational Decision Making and Realism

In promoting and protecting the national interests, the regime or leadership operates as a rational actor. The rational actor model has its roots in basic decision-making theory. Decision making is defined as the “act of choosing among available alternatives about which uncertainty exists.”¹⁰ One of the first systematic discussions of the decision-making model in political science is from Richard Snyder, H. W. Bruck, and Burton Sapin.¹¹ In their general decision-making model, they set out the following details: Since states are unitary actors, the decisions and actions of the ultimate decision makers can be considered the same as the decisions and actions of the state. Since all states are said to pursue national interests, all states make decisions in the same way. State decision making can be portrayed as a process in which the ultimate decision makers examine the internal and external environments, define the situation at hand, consider alternate courses of action, and then select the course of action that is best suited to the pursuit of national interests. The actions are “planful”—that is, the result of strategic problem solving—and are embedded in an action-reaction cycle.

This decision-making model has often been imagined as a “black box.” We cannot see inside the box, and have no need to, since all black boxes (countries/regimes/leaders) work the same way.

In modern decision theory, the rational decision problem is reduced to a simple matter of selecting among a set of given alternatives, each of which has a given set of consequences: the agent selects the alternative whose consequences are preferred in terms of the agent’s utility function which ranks each set of consequences in order of preference.¹²

In other words, information about the problem at hand, possible courses of action, possible reactions, and estimates of the costs and the likely success for the different courses of action are entered into the box. Inside the box, a basic economic utility calculation is made: which choice of action best maximizes national goals and minimizes costs? A decision then results or comes out of the box. The environment reacts to the decision/action, and the reaction becomes part of a new set of factors that are entered into the box again.

Of course, decision makers do not live in a perfect world and so do not have before them all the relevant information upon which to make the best decision. Given the imperfect nature of the available information, leaders make the best possible choice or even select the first option that satisfies the minimal requirements of a good choice. The rational actor model does not require perfect information but recognizes instead that “rationality refers to consistent, value-maximizing choice within specific constraints.”¹³ Herbert Simon called this **bounded rationality**, or rational decision making within limits.¹⁴

In terms of the daily affairs of state, bounded rationality may not be a major detriment to sound decision making since leaders have a chance to reconsider their choices in light of the steady flow of feedback. This feedback qualifies the next choices to be made, and the reaction of other actors can be anticipated and possible counterreactions planned in advance of actual feedback. The interactive nature of decision making (where country A’s choices are dependent on country B’s choices and vice versa) is explored in game theory.

Rationality is not just bounded by the limitations of humans as decision makers but by the environment in which multiple other actors are present and acting. How does the decision maker anticipate what other actors might do? This realist foundation of the rational actor model contains assumptions about the environment and other actors that help decision makers keep their focus. As already noted, realists assume that all states are unitary actors who make cost-benefit calculations about alternative courses of action. All states make such calculations, and all states are motivated to promote and secure their interests through the acquisition and use of power. Furthermore, states

act in an international environment characterized by **anarchy**, or the lack of an overarching legal authority. Although some realists conceptualize states as power driven and aggressive, others explain that because the international system is anarchic, states make power-driven, short-term choices. This is the basic difference between classical realists (states are naturally aggressive) and **neorealists** (states are aggressive because of the dictates of anarchy).¹⁵

Whether one starts with the view that all states are motivated to arm themselves and acquire more power (classical realism) or that states must arm themselves because the international environment requires it (neorealism), all realists see states locked in an unavoidable situation called a **security dilemma**. Glenn Snyder explains the security dilemma in this way:

The term is generally used to denote the self-defeating aspect of the quest for security in an anarchic system. The theory says that even when no state has any desire to attack others, none can be sure that others' intentions are peaceful, or will remain so; hence each must accumulate power for defense. Since no state can know that the power accumulation of others is defensively motivated only, each must assume that it might be intended for attack. Consequently, each party's power increments are matched by the others, and all wind up with no more security than when the vicious cycle began, along with the costs incurred in having acquired and having to maintain their power.¹⁶

Because of anarchy, states are motivated to amass power and rely upon only themselves for protection. Because all states are so motivated and thus are locked into action-reaction cycles, conflict is the distinguishing characteristic of international politics. The rational actor constantly seeks to increase its power in reaction to these "realities." Because the rational actor is engaged in a game of many iterations (or steps), the rational actor may seek short-term gains through risky foreign policy behavior in order to secure long-term goals and power. For many realists, no state should be content with the status quo given the dynamics of international politics. Because of the circular logic of realism, discontent with the status quo drives states into unending security dilemmas that can only be "won" through short-term gains. Decision making in such circumstances can be understood as choosing between less-than-optimal alternatives and settling for the best of the worst, rather than the best of the best as envisioned by the rational actor model. This will be discussed later in this chapter when we examine nuclear **deterrence** and Kim Jong Un.

Assessing Rationality

In chapter 4 we will put leaders into decision-making units and expand our analysis, but it is necessary to remind the reader that the term *regime* helps

us keep the focus off actual individuals and on regime decision making. Zeev Maoz proposes that the nature of rationality changes when we make the conceptual move from the individual to the regime or group. Individual rationality is what is described above. But “**group-level rationality**” suggests “at least” three kinds of rationality to Maoz.¹⁷ First, there is “**procedural rationality**” in which the group process approximates the identification of options, ranking of preferences, consideration of costs and benefits, and so on. The point is that the group follows a rational process in its search for the best policy choice. Second is “**outcome rationality**” or the “extent to which group decisions yield favorable outcomes.” Here the decision “is judged in terms of its outcome, not on the basis of how it was made.”¹⁸ Third is “**preferential rationality**,” which is the “extent to which the group decision faithfully reflects the preferences of its members.”¹⁹

Ben Mor’s analysis of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser’s decision making leading to the 1967 war with Israel demonstrates procedural rationality in Mor’s telling, and even preferential rationality up to a certain point, but not outcome rationality.²⁰ Some background is in order. In 1956, Nasser sought to nationalize the Suez Canal. The canal, opened in 1865, was British built and British and French run. It was the principal maritime route between the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean, via the Red Sea, and was a strong revenue generator. Nasser did succeed in nationalizing the Suez Canal, but only after a war with Israel in which Israel—with the collusion of the British and French—managed to quickly capture the Sinai Peninsula. The end of the 1956 war saw the placement of the first official United Nations peacekeeping operation (the United Nations Emergency Force or UNEF) in Sinai to maintain a cease-fire between Egypt and Israel. Despite the recovery of Suez, the quick Egyptian losses to Israel in the war and the agreement to station foreign troops on Egyptian soil were great humiliations to Nasser and to Egypt.

According to Mor, Nasser wanted to undo the humiliations of 1956 and regain Egyptian leadership in the Arab world, especially vis-à-vis Israel, but without having to engage Israel in a war. Toward these goals, Nasser undertook a series of steps in May 1967—steps that could be interpreted as provocative in Israeli eyes. In Egyptian eyes, the steps showed strong resolve and “faithfully reflected the preferences” of the Egyptians. First, Nasser ordered the Egyptian army into the Sinai Peninsula. Second, he ordered UNEF to withdraw from the Sinai. Third, he ordered the blockading of the Straits of Tiran. The Straits of Tiran sit at the end of the Sinai Peninsula where the Gulf of Aqaba meets the Red Sea, roughly parallel to the Gulf of Suez. Blocking the Straits of Tiran effectively cut Israel off from direct access to the Red Sea via the Gulf of Aqaba. Nasser then signed a defense pact with Jordan on May 30.

To borrow Maoz’s term, Nasser’s decision-making process showed clear procedural rationality. Mor explains the rationality behind what he calls Nasser’s **escalation-de-escalation strategy**: First, Nasser assumed that Israel was

content with the status quo and would not initiate war with Egypt. Nasser could make a move and await the Israelis' reaction. As long as the Israelis made no negative countermove such as issuing a warning, initiating diplomatic discussions, or mobilizing troops, Nasser was free to continue to the next step. As soon as the Israelis signaled that Egypt had approached a "red line," Nasser would order a de-escalation. This escalation–de-escalation strategy was supremely rational: Nasser would calculate his moves based on the feedback from the environment, allowing Egypt to achieve relative gains against Israel without engaging Israel in war.

This rational decision-making process, which demonstrated great Egyptian resolve, provoked Israel into launching a preemptive war against Egypt. Israel had stated previously that any closing or attempted closing of the Straits of Tiran would be an act of war. In May 1967, Israel did not respond at the exact moment that Egypt blocked the straits, but the time frame for the whole series of steps was very small—a single month. Within days of blocking the straits, Nasser signed the defense pact with Jordan. Having seen enough and with its own security on the line, Israel launched a preemptive attack on Egypt on June 6, beginning the Six-Day War. The outcome was not what Nasser expected or wanted. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war changed the map of the Middle East in ways that are still literally fought over today. Egypt lost territory to Israel in the war, as did Syria and Jordan (including the Old City of Jerusalem, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank). Egypt was not able to claim Arab leadership, and Nasser attempted to resign from the presidency over the failure.

The case of Obama's decision making regarding Assad's use of chemical weapons is an example of outcome rationality, but apparently not procedural or preferential rationality. This case was mentioned at the start of the chapter. The Obama administration preferred to limit US involvement in the Syrian war before all else. This preference is a first-order goal, like Nasser's preference to avoid war with Israel in the example above. Obama's statement on August 31, 2013, also indicated other interests and goals: the United States, all states, and the international system itself are all safer when actors honor the prohibition on chemical weapons use. Toward the ends of defending that safer world and punishing those who would imperil it, Obama stated that the United States would take limited military action toward three goals: to "hold the Assad regime accountable for their use of chemical weapons, deter this kind of behavior, and degrade their capacity to carry it out." We can list the goals this way, with the top preference ranked first:

- Goal 1: Limit US involvement in the Syrian conflict
- Goal 2a: Hold the Assad regime accountable for using chemical weapons
- Goal 2b: Deter the use of chemical weapons by all actors
- Goal 2c: Degrade the Assad regime's capacity to use chemical weapons in the future

Goals 2a, 2b, and 2c we assume to have equal value, but all have less value than Goal 1.

Once the administration confirmed that Assad had used chemical weapons on August 21, 2013, Obama then announced that he had ordered a limited military intervention aimed at achieving the second-order goals above. Goal 1 remained prioritized at all times. The president then asked Congress to authorize the use of force, but he did not ask Congress to convene right away, leaving time for public deliberations to occur. Within nine days, the Russians announced a deal with the Assad regime. On September 12, the Syrian government announced that it would give up its chemical weapons and accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention. On September 14, American and Russian officials reached an agreement on how to catalog, remove, and destroy the Assad regime's chemical weapons stockpile. The deal thus achieved Goals 2b and 2c, as well as Goal 1. Goal 2a could be achieved in any future war crimes proceedings at the International Criminal Court or some similar tribunal. The United States did not launch a single missile, and it achieved three out of four goals, including the top-tier goal. The whole episode is a clear illustration of outcome rationality. The decision yielded the desired outcomes.

What the episode did not do for many observers is follow intentional procedural rationality. Derek Chollet, Obama's assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs, concedes that the episode was criticized as "amateurish improvisation" for its process. Chollet cautions, "This line of judgement reveals a deep—and misguided—conviction in Washington foreign policy circles that a policy must be perfectly articulated in order to be successful—that, in a sense, the means matter more than the ends."²¹ Chollet goes on to say that the redline episode "accomplished everything it set out to do—in fact, it surpassed our expectations." It was, to him, a case of **coercive diplomacy**, of "using the threat of force to achieve an outcome military power itself could not even accomplish." In a most elemental rational choice scenario, three out of four goals were achieved, with some other state—Russia—using its diplomatic energy and putting its reputation on the line if Assad were to back out of the deal.

If the decision was so rational, why did the French foreign minister say the United States had put the Western world in peril by *not* launching military retaliation for the chemical weapons use? Why did opposition media in the United States hail the strength of Russia and heap condemnation on the president for his alleged weakness? Why is it that achieving outcome rationality causes process proponents and political opponents to cry failure? Whereas Obama's preferences might have been satisfied with the achievement of three out of four goals, his preferences did not stand alone. No decision maker is the only party to any given political event; others' preferences can be superimposed on what appears to be in the most fundamental sense a foreign policy success.

This discussion—of three kinds of rationality and various others judging a decision based on their own preferences—suggests some weaknesses in the rational decision-making model. Would the critics have been willing to congratulate Obama on his “success” if he had carried through with the military action—because it would have signaled strong resolve—even if intervention resulted in a protracted military engagement in Syria, like that in Iraq and Afghanistan? George W. Bush demonstrated great resolve when ordering the invasion of Iraq but poor decision making in terms of process and particularly outcome.

As it turned out, the Assad regime had not disclosed all its chemical weapons. It carried out subsequent chemical weapon attacks—two in 2014 and two in 2016 while Obama was still president. After Donald Trump became US president, the Assad regime used chemical weapons again in early April 2017. Two days later, the US military launched a Tomahawk missile attack on the suspected launch sites. After that, Russia started vetoing every UN Security Council resolution attempting to hold the Assad regime accountable for violations of previous commitments. The strong action by the Trump administration did not stop or degrade the Assad regime’s capacity to use chemical weapons, and international inspections stopped because of Russia’s repeated vetoes. In April 2018, another round of chemical attacks was followed by another round of missile strikes. Future scholars may be able to investigate whether Trump’s decision-making *procedure* was rational, but the outcome cannot be judged a success and is unlikely to have been anyone’s preference.

Rationality and Nuclear Decision Making

We have been discussing the rational actor model and its basis in the international relations grand theory called realism. Leaders act as utility maximizers in pursuit of national interests defined foremost in terms of power. There are, though, variations in realist thought that lead to different predicted foreign policy behaviors. Classical realists believe that states are self-interested, power seeking, and predatory by nature, but *neorealists* believe that the anarchic structure of the international system requires states to act in self-interested, predatory ways. **Defensive neorealists** believe that states may be satisfied with the status quo and are inclined only to respond to materialized or actual threats to power and security. **Offensive neorealists**, conversely, believe that states must always be looking for opportunities to gain power and must remain vigilant about potential threats. In this scenario, major powers are driven to become hegemonic even in times of relative safety and security because other major powers are also seeking to become hegemonic. Indeed, the notion of relative safety and security is misleading because states are in constant competition. We will see this view expressed in the Trump administration’s 2017 National Security Strategy in chapter 8. In a world populated by states guided

by offensive neorealism, every state has incentive to acquire weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons; in a world of defensive neorealist states, most states have no reason to seek nuclear arms.

Realist assumptions about the motivations of states can lead to some peculiar decisions that might not meet a commonplace understanding of what is rational. As stated earlier in this chapter, decision making in a realist world involves choosing between less-than-optimal alternatives and settling for the best of the worst, rather than the best of the best as envisioned by the rational actor model. Nowhere is this more obvious than in hypothetical decision making about using nuclear weapons.

Realism, with its emphasis on rational choice, was the dominant grand theory of international relations throughout much of the twentieth century. Its dominance was at its peak at the close of World War II and the start of the Cold War. Realism dictated that the United States needed to pursue greater military might than the Soviet Union—indeed the United States needed to pursue global domination—lest the world be dominated by the Soviet Union.

As the Cold War deepened and both the Americans and Soviets developed massive nuclear weapons capabilities, the two countries achieved a balance of nuclear power that former British prime minister Winston Churchill called a “balance of terror.” This odious balance rested on the assumption that the nuclear arsenals of both sides were sufficient to ensure that a first nuclear attack by either side could be absorbed and matched with nuclear retaliation. The rational choice of any leader confronting a nuclear foe of similar strength would be to avoid any action that might be punishable with a nuclear reaction. In a situation in which both parties to a conflict possess nuclear arsenals of more or less similar size and destructive power, we hypothesize that both understand that aggression by either would likely result in unacceptable costs for both. Each side is deterred from using nuclear weapons, and the situation is one of mutual, “mature,” stable **nuclear deterrence**. The possibility of **mutual assured destruction (MAD)** should deter both sides from even nonnuclear military confrontation.

Given the understood costs of a nuclear war, rational leaders should not entertain the idea of using nuclear weapons in a conflict. Realists propose that nuclear weapons are not for fighting war but for deterring war. Indeed, Kenneth Waltz declares that a world of nuclear-armed states would be a more stable and peaceful one because of mutual nuclear deterrence.²² However, the real world does not always cooperate with hypotheticals. For example, US president Ronald Reagan was a committed realist in his approach to foreign affairs, and he was committed to the development of a nuclear war-fighting strategy. He was not convinced that a nuclear “holocaust” was inevitable if either side in the Cold War initiated war with the other. Instead, Reagan urged his military planners to think about what the United States needed in order to engage the Soviet Union in nuclear war and win. The Strategic Defense

Initiative was one tool to use for potentially winning a nuclear war. There is no way to understand the Reagan desire for a winnable nuclear war-fighting strategy outside a realist framework.

In 2018, the US Pentagon drafted a new nuclear weapons strategy that would expand the range of circumstances under which the United States would use nuclear weapons. The *New York Times* reported that the new strategy would threaten nuclear retaliation for “attacks on the U.S., allied, or partner civilian population or infrastructure, and attacks on U.S. or allied nuclear forces, their command and control, or warning and attack assessment capabilities.”²³ The interpretation of this is that the United States would retaliate with nuclear weapons to counter devastating *cyberattacks*. Among the concerns prompting this revised strategy was that an enemy could disable or otherwise interfere with computer launch and warning systems. The timing of this strategy revision is ironic given the false alarms of incoming North Korean missiles in both Hawaii and Japan in early 2018.

The nuclear threat in the revised US strategy paper is not new: the United States has long threatened to use nuclear weapons first, but in a “rational,” limited way. What is rational when it comes to thinking about nuclear weapons? Much of the analytical work on nuclear strategy builds on **game theory**. Game theory borrows from mathematical reasoning and the formal study of logic in order to develop mathematical models of the strategies adopted in the “games” of foreign policy, such as crisis and noncrisis **negotiations**, alliance formation, arms racing, and nuclear weapons use. James Dougherty and Robert Pfaltzgraff explain:

Game theorists say . . . : If people in a certain situation wish to win—that is, to accomplish an objective that the other party seeks to deny them—we can sort out the intellectual processes by which they calculate or reach decisions concerning what kind of action is most likely to be advantageous to them, assuming they believe their opponents also to be rational calculators like themselves, equally interested in second-guessing and trying to outwit the opponent.²⁴

All games contain common features: every player seeks to “win,” self-interest governs the behavior of players in the game, players perceive that different moves are associated with different rewards or payoffs, and all the choices made in the game are interactive. Some games are zero-sum in that when one player wins, the other loses. **Zero-sum games** reflect the most distilled version of realism: when your country increases its power, it is only because my country has lost power. In other games, the results are non-zero-sum, or mixed, in that players can register relative wins or gains over other players.

One of the most frequently discussed mixed-motive games is that of the **prisoners’ dilemma**. In this game, players attempt to “win,” but the inter-

active choices they make leave each in a position of achieving only the best of the worst situation, rather than the best possible situation for themselves as individuals. All the basic realist assumptions are in place in this game: actors are self-interested or selfish, actors have no reason to trust other actors because there is no ultimate authority to enforce justice, and actors are presented choices that involve limited information on different alternatives and their consequences. Karen Mingst describes the standard setup of this game:

The prisoners' dilemma is the story of two prisoners, each being interrogated separately for an alleged crime. The interrogator tells each prisoner that if one of them confesses and the other does not, the one who confessed will go free and the one who kept silent will get a long prison term. If both confess, both will get somewhat reduced prison terms. If neither confesses, both will receive short prison terms based on lack of evidence.²⁵

Faced with this dilemma, both prisoners confess. Both confess because each assumes that the other—acting in self-interest only—will confess. Although neither “wins” by being set completely free, neither “loses” to the other by drawing the harsher penalty. The prisoners do not achieve the best solution—no jail time—but they achieve the best of the worst: a shorter sentence and parity. Parity—ending up in the same bad situation with one's opponent, even in terms of mutual punishment—is preferred over sacrifice in a realist, self-help system.

The prisoners' dilemma illustrates the most fundamental realist problem: because no action occurs in a vacuum but instead is part of a series of interactions with other actors, actors can rarely obtain absolute security, freedom, superiority, or whatever they seek to achieve over others. Instead, actors can only hope to obtain relative security or relative freedom or relative superiority, and so forth. In the realist model, actors acknowledge this reality but still make choices that would, only under ideal circumstances, earn them the best possible result.

Akin to the prisoners' dilemma is the realist security dilemma. As we have discussed, the security dilemma is the result of choices a state makes to secure itself against sometimes unspecified but predictable outside threats. Although the initial step is only taken in self-defense, other states perceive the defensive step with suspicion and fear, and they must react to it. Ultimately, the states caught in this cycle find their environment to be more dangerous and more threatening than ever. Realists acknowledge that this dilemma is real and unfortunate, but also inevitable as a result of conflict in the international system.

The prisoners' dilemma framework applies to decisions about using nuclear weapons. Nuclear deterrence tells us that each side recognizes that it is more rational not to initiate an attack with nuclear weapons because of the

expected result, a counter nuclear attack. However, in competitive relationships as always exist in the realist world, “winning” (that is, dominating the opponent) is the best possible result and “losing” is the worst. In between winning and losing is parity with the opponent. Using the basic prisoners’ dilemma setup, the rational choice of either side in a confrontation between nuclear foes is to attack the other side first. If you attack first and your opponent does nothing, you win. However, since your opponent is also a rational actor, it also will pursue a “win” and attack. Both sides attack with nuclear weapons and both sides suffer nuclear war, but they both break even with each other! The best possible solution is not possible; the best of the worst—mutual nuclear war—is both possible and *rational*.

Now we should think about North Korea and Kim Jong Un. In 2017, North Korea demonstrated that it had the missile capability necessary to hit the United States, and many other countries. North Korea also had nuclear weapons. If North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is an irrational and hostile lunatic who possesses nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, then Japan, South Korea, the United States, and many other countries have an immediate security interest in eliminating his regime. If Kim Jong Un is better understood as a rational actor, then Japan, South Korea, the United States, and many other countries *still* have an immediate security interest in eliminating his regime given the logics discussed above. More, as a rational actor, Kim Jong Un might assess that others will judge North Korea to be a major security threat, and therefore he would have a rational incentive “to use a nuclear bomb first,”²⁶ according to nuclear strategy expert Vipin Narang.

As we have discussed, by the logic of nuclear deterrence, states refrain from using nuclear weapons because of the promise of massive retaliation in kind. This means that a state seeking to avoid “national suicide” would not use nuclear weapons. Narang proposes instead that Kim Jong Un is “brutally rational” and that Kim should be expected to “use nuclear weapons first in a way that increases his chances of survival.” The immediate threat to Kim is American military assets, specifically bombers, stationed at the US base in Guam and at other bases in Asia. Kim lacks the conventional means to eliminate the bomber threat, but a small-scale *nuclear* attack on US bombers, say in Guam, would eliminate the most immediate security threat to North Korea and raise the stakes so high that the United States would probably not respond in any significant way. The majority of North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles would still be available for use after this first attack, and these would still threaten US cities. This continued threat should deter the United States from retaliating at all for the first attack. Using the logic of “asymmetric escalation,” Narang argues, “Kim may surmise that if he doesn’t use nuclear weapons first, he is certain to lose; if he does, he may have a fighting chance of surviving.” As North Korea’s nuclear threat to others increases, others have reason to use force preventively to stop a future North Korean nuclear attack.

Realizing this, Narang concludes, the rational North Korean decision maker faces a “use-it-or-lose-it” dilemma. The same logic prior to World War I led European powers to believe that “they all had to mobilize military forces first or risk massive conventional defeat. The calculation for North Korea is the same today, except with nuclear weapons.”²⁷

It is an odd logic that proposes that the potential risk of “national suicide” is smaller than the potential benefits of signaling resolve by using a nuclear weapon first. This logic is where we must go when we follow the rational actor path set before us by realists. In an asymmetrical game, instead of rational actors being deterred by the threat of unacceptable punishment, the weaker power may be able to “disarm” the stronger power by deciding that the rational choice is to strike first.

Poliheuristic Theory

The systematic study of perceptions and misperceptions—like those that might occur in a “game” of nuclear tit-for-tat—is part of the cognitive approach to understanding why individuals decide what they decide. This approach is the topic of the next chapter. Typically, foreign policy scholars propose that the rational actor and cognitive models are incompatible. Some scholars have argued that the approaches are not necessarily incompatible but only focus on different subjects. As Jerel Rosati explains, “Those who emphasize rationality tend to focus on ‘preferences’ and ‘outcomes,’ while cognitive perspectives tend to focus on ‘beliefs’ and ‘process,’ as well as where ‘preferences come from’ and ‘how preferences are established’ among policymakers.”²⁸ Of course, the reason rational actor scholars focus on “preferences” and “outcomes” is that they believe they understand the “process” in decision making: inputs, cost-benefit calculation, outputs, feedback, and so on. To return to the ideas of Morgenthau presented at the start of this chapter, when you see a foreign policy decision, think rational choice. The decision to focus on outcomes versus process results from a bias that says we already understand the process.

A relatively new approach to studying foreign policy at the individual level contends that the rational actor and cognitive approaches are compatible and, as well, that process is important. This approach is **poliheuristic (PH) theory**. Scholars who use PH theory explain that all decisions involve a two-step process. In the first step, leaders “simplify the decision problem by the use of cognitive short-cuts.” These shortcuts involve discarding some alternatives outright.²⁹ What helps decision makers discard some alternatives in this first step? Alex Mintz, David Brulé, and others in this research program explain that **domestic political survival** is always the guiding principle. Thus, faced with a foreign policy problem, leaders rule out any course of action that might have bad consequences for them in domestic politics.³⁰ Then, the remaining alternatives are evaluated in the second step by using the “analytical calcula-

tions” of rational choice.³¹ PH scholars contend that this process describes the decision making of leaders “regardless of their nationality or ideological position” and regardless of the type of government they lead.³²

As we will see in the next chapter, this use of the term *cognitive shortcuts* is not in line with standard usage. Indeed, rather than combine rational choice and cognition in a two-step process, PH scholars just change our focus from national interests to regime interests and borrow the idea of “shortcuts” from cognitive scholars. PH theorists say that instead of selecting among alternative foreign policy actions that serve the national interests, decision makers first select among foreign policy actions that serve their own domestic political needs or that will help them survive politically. The promotion and protection of interests is still what drives decision makers in this theory, whether in the first step or the second. Rational calculations about domestic political survival drive the first step (the discarding of unacceptable courses of action), and then rational calculations are made in the second step.

PH theory may not bridge the gap between theories of the rational actor and individual cognition, but it does provide an example of how scholarship works to continually refine our understandings of our subject matter. In the next chapter, our subject matter is cognition and foreign policy decision making.

For Discussion

1. Explain why it is not necessary to know personal information about decision makers to make use of the rational decision-making model.
2. Assess the rationality of Gamal Abdel Nasser’s decision making in the month leading up to the 1967 Arab-Israeli Six-Day War using the concepts of procedural, outcome, and preferential rationality.
3. Assess the rationality of Barack Obama’s decision making in the Syrian chemical weapons case using the concepts of procedural, outcome, and preferential rationality.
4. Compare and contrast the nuclear relationships between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and between the United States and North Korea at the start of 2018.
5. Using the prisoners’ dilemma, explain how nuclear decision making always leads to a security dilemma.
6. Using realist ideas, explain why it would be rational for Kim Jong Un of North Korea to use nuclear weapons first against the United States.

Key Words

regime
crisis
rational decision making
realism
national interests
regime interests
bounded rationality
anarchy
neorealism
security dilemma
deterrence
group-level rationality
procedural rationality
outcome rationality
preferential rationality
escalation–de-escalation strategy
coercive diplomacy
defensive neorealism
offensive neorealism
nuclear deterrence
mutual assured destruction (MAD)
game theory
negotiations
zero-sum game
prisoners' dilemma
poliheuristic (PH) theory
domestic political survival

3

Cognition and Leadership Orientation

In This Chapter

- Cognition and Belief Sets
- Cognitive Structure
- Learning
- Operational Code
- Personality and Leadership Orientation
- Preliminary Case Study

Major Cases Explored

- Donald Trump’s “America First” nationalism
- Xi Jinping’s embrace of globalization
- Angela Merkel as the leader of the liberal order
- Mikhail Gorbachev views Central and Eastern Europe
- George W. Bush and the August 6, 2001, daily presidential briefing
- Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet failure in Afghanistan, and learning
- Ariel Sharon and Ehud Olmert learn while Benjamin Netanyahu does not
- Anwar Sadat’s operational code and the 1973 Arab-Israeli war
- Tony Blair’s aggressive leadership orientation and the 2003 Iraq War
- Angela Merkel’s conciliatory leadership orientation and the Eurozone debt and refugee crises

In mid-2017, reporter Evan Osnos visited North Korea. His host for the visit was Pak Song Il of the North Korean foreign ministry’s Institute for American Studies. Pak explained that his job was to analyze US politics and Donald Trump. He explained, “When [Trump] speaks, I have to figure out what he means, and what his next move will be. . . . This is very difficult.” Pak elaborated, saying that Trump “might be irrational—or too smart. . . . If he’s not driving toward a point, then what is he doing? That is our big question.”¹ This question was on the minds of many foreign policy analysts and

policy makers around the world after the surprise election of Donald Trump to the US presidency. For the North Korean government, this question had potentially existential consequences after Trump threatened North Korea with “fire and fury.”

Donald Trump’s “Make America Great Again” “America First” world-view had consequences for adversaries as well as friends. A group of German foreign policy experts issued a manifesto titled “In Spite of It All, America,” advising the German government to stick with the United States despite the actions of Trump. They warn,

The liberal world order with its foundation in **multilateralism**, its global norms and values, its open societies and markets—is in danger. It is exactly this order on which Germany’s freedom and prosperity depends. The order is being challenged from various directions and sources: rising powers strive for influence; illiberal governments and authoritarian regimes are ascending; anti-modern thinking is gaining traction and influence even within Western democracies; Russia is challenging the peaceful European order; and new technologies are disrupting old economic structures.

Lastly, the United States, inventor and—until recently—guardian of the liberal order, currently does not see itself as system guarantor. Donald Trump is the first U.S. president since World War II to fundamentally question the ideas and institutions of the liberal international order.²

Readers of this book should note how the statement above conflates the United States with the person Donald Trump—much like we saw in the previous chapter—but here the emphasis is on the individual; the “United States” means “Trump” and not vice versa. Trump with his worldview controlled the foreign policy of the United States—this is what mattered to these German foreign policy experts. Their concern was about how a single leader (and, of course, his administration) could alter the course of US foreign policy so substantially as to disrupt the international order and threaten Germany’s well-being. The Germans, like the North Koreans, wanted to know how best to understand and respond to Donald Trump because so much depended upon it.

The year 2017 was a banner year for China’s Xi Jinping. In January at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Xi gave a speech defending globalization and warning against trade protectionism. The speech was seen as a rebuke to the election of Donald Trump. This speech made some experts gush that Xi had just taken the mantle of world leadership at the same time that “America First” Trump was inaugurated.³ Whether Xi had become the champion of the **liberal international order** is very much a matter of debate, but Xi and his thought became officially enshrined in the constitution

of the Chinese Communist Party in the fall of 2017, and in 2018 his term in office—and impact on the world order—was extended indefinitely.

Meanwhile, despite the fact that some German foreign policy experts agreed that the United States was still the indispensable nation, German leader Angela Merkel was declared the antidote to Trump and the leader of the West. Her longevity in office, her practical approach to managing international crises, and her nonideological worldview set Merkel in sharp relief to both Trump and Xi, not to mention the other authoritarian in the room, Vladimir Putin. In 2017, a year in which Merriam-Webster's dictionary declared *feminism* to be the word of the year, the future of the world seemed to turn on a struggle between macho nationalism and pragmatic feminism, as depicted in these very specific and consequential individuals. We will return to Merkel at the end of this chapter. The point of all this discussion—about Trump, Xi, and Merkel—is to introduce an alternative approach to the rational actor model, one that says the particular people in key decision- and policy-making roles matter.

As noted in chapter 1, leaders are engaged in a two-level game between domestic and foreign interests. To some scholars, leaders are the critical nexus between domestic and foreign politics. Margaret Hermann and Joe D. Hagan survey the foreign policy research on leadership and conclude that

the lesson learned so far is that international constraints only have policy implications when they are perceived as such by the leaders whose positions count in dealing with a particular problem. Whether and how such leaders judge themselves constrained depends on the nature of the domestic challenges to their leadership, how the leaders are organized, and what they are like as people.⁴

Consider this example: As the last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail S. Gorbachev made active, determined policy choices that led to the relatively peaceful dissolution of communist single-party states throughout Central and Eastern Europe. When the people of the countries of the former Soviet bloc took hold of their national destinies in order to construct new political systems, Gorbachev could have reacted with pleas, promises, threats, coercion, and even military force to hold the Soviet bloc together. The leader of the weakening superpower might not have been able to hold the bloc together for long, but he could have tried—with great loss of treasure and blood. Instead, Mikhail Gorbachev decided to let the Eastern bloc go. The decision credited to this single leader no doubt saved many lives and prevented much pain and destruction.

Gorbachev saw the Soviet Union and the world in which it operated as changing in fundamental ways. Had Gorbachev been an older man with different life-shaping experiences, he might have decided to hold on to the Eastern

bloc and the former Soviet republics at all costs. Margaret Hermann and Joe Hagan explain Gorbachev's role and the importance of all leaders in this way:

Leaders define states' international and domestic constraints. Based on their perceptions and interpretations, they build expectations, plan strategies, and urge actions on their governments that conform with their judgments about what is possible and likely to maintain them in their positions. Such perceptions help frame governments' orientations to international affairs. Leaders' interpretations arise out of their experiences, goals, beliefs about the world, and sensitivity to the political context.⁵

Gorbachev scanned the international environment and concluded that the old security threats that previously made controlling the Eastern bloc so critical to the Soviet Union had changed in fundamental ways. Further, he believed that Soviet restraint in the face of the self-opening of Eastern and Central Europe might earn the Soviet Union more international credibility and friendship (both understood as **soft power**), thereby allowing Soviet leaders to turn inward to the serious crises proliferating in the domestic realm. Gorbachev decided to view the tide of anticommunism rising in the Eastern bloc as a nonthreatening phenomenon.

Trump scanned the international environment decades later and saw nothing but threats, but not the threats of a warming planet, **terrorism**, or rogue states. Instead, Trump feared that the world was taking advantage of the United States in a series of terrible trade deals, climate pacts, and many, many other international agreements. Trump rejected the obligations of global leadership that previous US presidents saw as being advantageous to US interests and promoted an "America First" strategy as a way to maintain US power and wealth. His background in real estate deals, marketing his brand, and heading his own privately held company led to a confrontational, hierarchical, and unprincipled leadership style that left North Koreans, Germans, Americans, and many others wondering what would come next.

Xi Jinping viewed the exact same international environment as Trump, using a nationalist lens just like Trump, but developed a completely different interpretation of what that environment meant for China. To Xi, the international environment was one that the Chinese would use to achieve "the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation."⁶ One leader rejected the international environment while another embraced it, both for nationalist reasons.

How leaders define the situations before them has much to do with their personal characteristics, including their social and educational backgrounds, previous experiences, ambitions, and worldviews. Xi's father was an official in the Chinese government under Mao. Xi and his family suffered through the purges and reeducation campaigns of Mao's Cultural Revolution. Through a well-orchestrated anticorruption campaign, Xi managed to eliminate domestic

competitors and to enshrine himself and his thought in the Chinese communist constitution as an equal of Mao. We should leave it to future analysts to investigate whether the suffering of the child under Mao connects to the ambitions of the man elevated to Mao's national status. Further, Xi's rise was mirrored in China's own rise as a global power "on its own terms."⁷ In this chapter we explore the models and tools that scholars employ to understand individuals in foreign policy leadership roles.

Cognition and Belief Sets

Not every foreign policy analyst has been satisfied with conceptualizing leaders as decision-making "boxes," utility maximizers, or rational actors (based on a single notion of rationality). The move toward incorporating a more thorough, scientific investigation of individuals into the study of foreign policy took off in the 1950s. In the aftermath of World War II, behavioral scientists and psychologists had begun to examine issues such as whether aggression was inherent to humans or a learned (socialized) behavior that could be unlearned. Kenneth Waltz and Jerel Rosati—writing in different times and with very different orientations—credit the peace researchers of the 1950s with bringing the insights of psychology into the study of foreign policy.⁸ The motivation of peace researchers was simple: if humans learn to make war, then they can learn to make peace. If, instead, aggression is part of human nature, perhaps it could be channeled into nonviolent pursuits. Behavioral scientists and psychologists were interested in **cognition**, defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* as "the mental process or faculty of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment." Peace researchers believed that the insights from the study of cognition could be used to shape peaceful leaders and peaceful countries.

A key starting assumption for the study of cognition is that "rationality" is context driven but knowable. Even while acknowledging that individual differences can have a huge impact on foreign policy decision making, cognitive scholars propose that it is possible to systematize our understanding of basic human thinking in order to develop insights that can be used for analyzing different individuals in a variety of settings.

In his important early work on **misperception**, Robert Jervis offers this starting point for understanding the focus of cognitive foreign policy study:

In determining how he will behave, an actor must try to predict how others will act and how their actions will affect his values. The actor must therefore develop an image of others and of their intentions. This image may, however, turn out to be an inaccurate one; the actor may for a number of reasons misperceive both others' actions and their intentions.⁹

Why might actors misperceive? What are the processes that cause this to happen?

The evidence from both psychology and history overwhelmingly supports the view . . . that decision makers tend to fit incoming information into their existing theories and images. Indeed, their theories and images play a large part in determining what they notice. In other words, actors tend to perceive what they expect.¹⁰

Is the process that Jervis proposes an example of irrational thinking? Jervis says that it is not, or rather that we need to rethink “rationality” in terms of the logic of the actor’s existing beliefs and images. Borrowing from others, Jervis asserts that there is a “psycho-logic” that structures each individual’s cognitive processes. To paraphrase Jervis, we might say that I have a logical structure to my beliefs that makes it difficult for me to understand why you look at the same world I do and draw very different conclusions about it. Indeed, I may not even be able to comprehend that you draw different conclusions; I might assume that you see a problem in the same way I do, and—worse—I might proceed to make decisions based on that mistaken assumption. Miscommunications and antagonistic foreign policy behaviors can easily result from the clash of different, often unknowable, yet internally consistent “rational” belief sets.

Another important early contributor to the study of cognition is Irving Janis. Janis proposes that in every situation there is a “decisional conflict” that distorts decision making.¹¹ A decisional conflict refers to the situation in which opposing tendencies within an individual interfere with what realists would call “rational” decision making. A quick example is in order. Imagine a group of top foreign policy advisors meeting in a cabinet session. Present at the meeting is a new appointee, a young “rising star.” This new member might have several personal and professional goals wrapped up in the situation. She might want to be well liked and respected by all the others in the cabinet and to have an impact on the group’s process and final decisions. During the meeting, another cabinet member—older and very influential—begins to make an argument in favor of one particular course of action. As the newest member listens to the older member explain his reasoning, the newest member begins to feel rising alarm. She believes the speaker is fundamentally wrong and could take the group and the country down the wrong path. But, as she looks around the room and notices other key cabinet members nodding in agreement, she begins to doubt her own view about what is right. Wanting to be part of the group and wanting to be respected and accepted, the newest member feels conflicted about speaking out—it would be correct to speak out, but it would jeopardize her standing in the group if so many others agree with the older speaker.

During the Lyndon Johnson administration, a similar sort of self-censorship was exercised by some conflicted members of the president's Vietnam War decision-making circle. This self-censorship was encouraged by the fairly ruthless exclusionary practice exercised by President Johnson in his so-called Tuesday lunch group. People who spoke out against the direction favored by the group were told pointedly not to return for the next group meeting. Those who wanted to stay in the group thus silenced their own concerns.

Adopting a realist view, we might conceptualize these opposing tendencies as distortions in rational decision making. These distortions might be imagined as screens or filters that alter the direction in which information or thoughts are processed. Still using a realist view, we might conclude that the presence of these filters has a limiting effect on the range, creativity, and responsiveness of the decision maker. As Jerel Rosati suggests,

Where the rational actor perspective assumes individual **open-mindedness** and adaptability to changes in the environment, a cognitive approach posits that individuals tend to be much more **closed-minded** due to their beliefs and the way they process information—thus, they tend to resist adapting to changes in the environment.¹²

Leaving realism, we encounter a different view, again as explained by Rosati:

A cognitive approach assumes a complex, and realistic, psychology about human reasoning and decision-making. It does not assume individual awareness, open-mindedness, and adaptability relative to an “objective” environment, but assumes individuals are likely to view their environment differently and operate within their own “psychological environment.”¹³

Cognitive Structure

Cognitive scholars have tried to elucidate the various kinds of screens or filters that produce what realists may call “nonrational” or irrational decisions. A number of concepts are foundational to this work, starting with the rather simple notion of a **belief set**. A belief set is a more or less integrated set of images held by an individual about a particular universe. This set of images acts as a screen, letting in information that fits the belief set and keeping out information that does not.

One illustration of a belief set is the **enemy image**. Images of other international actors can be categorized according to stereotyped views of the motivations of the subject and the behaviors that result from such.¹⁴ The “enemy” is imagined as evil by nature, with unlimited potential for committing evil acts. The enemy is also imagined as a strategic thinker and consummate chess master—establishing and carrying out a plan bent on destroying its enemies

and their way of life. When a foreign policy maker holds a fairly strong enemy image of an opponent, only those images that confirm the inherently evil and cunning nature of the opponent are stored and remembered. Images that suggest a more complicated opponent, or that suggest less capability by the opponent, are screened out. Arguably, the inability of US leadership and the intelligence community to predict the sudden and terminal collapse of the Eastern bloc and the Soviet Union can be attributed to a firmly entrenched enemy image that failed to acknowledge signs of a rapidly deteriorating Soviet empire and a differently oriented Soviet leadership. Former US president George W. Bush's active use of the idea that the terrorist enemy was always plotting and planning to attack innocent people derived from this same basic assumption that the evil enemy is more organized and proactive than the good guys. Enemy images may do more than cause an actor to miss signs of change or weakness in the enemy—the presence of strong enemy images may sustain international conflict over time. This was a prophetic conclusion drawn by Ole Holsti in the 1960s regarding American decision makers' images of Soviet leaders.¹⁵

A related concept is **cognitive consistency**. This is the idea that the images contained in a belief set must be logically connected and consistent. Cognitive theorists propose that when an individual holds conflicting beliefs, the individual experiences anxiety known as cognitive dissonance. Individuals strive to avoid this dissonance and the anxiety it produces by actively managing the information they encounter and store in their belief sets. This active management is not as energetic or as conscious as it sounds. Individuals are limited information managers—or **cognitive misers**—who rely on cognitive shortcuts to understand new information. Individuals use existing beliefs not only to screen out dissonant information but also to interpret new information. The new information is “recognized” as similar to an existing belief and so is stored and remembered as the same. Great distortion can occur in this act of interpreting and storing, but the distortion is quicker and easier than actually working through new situations, and this unconscious categorizing prevents individuals from having to confront new and potentially dissonant information.

Accepting information that is consistent with one's beliefs and rejecting or discounting information that is inconsistent can contribute to major disasters, such as the failure to read the warning signs before the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States. On August 6, 2001, President George W. Bush received a daily intelligence briefing titled “Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US.” When this was revealed in a 2004 congressional investigation into 9/11, the administration claimed that there was nothing in the August 6 briefing that could be acted upon. Administration officials claimed that the August 6 report contained background information that constituted part of the everyday “noise” generated by the intelligence community.

However, reporter Kurt Eichenwald contends that this August 6 briefing was one in a series of intelligence warnings about al-Qaeda starting around May 1, 2001—warnings that the administration refused to acknowledge as credible.¹⁶ Rather than take the warnings of the intelligence community seriously, neoconservatives in the White House believed that the CIA had been fooled by a disinformation campaign conducted in concert by al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein to distract the administration from the real threat posed by the latter. Administration officials refused to believe analysts who presented evidence that al-Qaeda and Saddam Hussein were not working together and looked with disdain on those who thought al-Qaeda posed any real threat. They were looking for anything the Iraqi leader might do—or anything they might be able to attribute to the Iraqi leader—to confirm their beliefs. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, administration officials began to plan for a major war, not against al-Qaeda, but against Saddam Hussein and Iraq. The administration also set up a special intelligence operation within the Pentagon—because it was believed that the CIA would not look for the right information—to find proof of the links between Saddam Hussein and 9/11 that the administration believed must exist.

Some scholars are interested in exploring the cognitive complexity or simplicity of decision makers' demonstrated beliefs. Allison Astorino-Courtois explains that the "cognitive complexity-simplicity construct reflects the degree to which individuals both differentiate and integrate various sources of information in considering a decision problem."¹⁷ Peter Suedfeld and colleagues elaborate: "Integrative complexity is an attribute of information processing that generally indicates the extent to which decision makers search for and monitor information, try to predict outcomes and reactions, flexibly weigh their own and other parties' options, and consider multiple potential strategies."¹⁸

The study of **integrative complexity** involves an examination of the public utterances of leaders. The utterances, or statements, are scored as to whether they demonstrate simple information processing, more complicated contingency-based reasoning, or highly complex, multicausal information processing. Scholars have found that leaders who demonstrate higher levels of complexity tend to be more cooperative in their international initiatives than those demonstrating lower levels.¹⁹ However, in situations of prolonged stress, such as the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis or the months leading up to the 1991 Persian Gulf War, measured integrative complexity decreases for all decision makers as they begin to feel that time and options are running out.

In many respects, these scholars equate cognitive complexity with more rational decision making and cognitive simplicity with decision making through the use of preexisting beliefs:

At the lower end of the complexity scale, the amount of information used in cognitive processing is limited . . . decision makers

often rely on analogs or stereotyped images, and discrepant information is either ignored or discounted. . . . Complex thinking, on the other hand, involves a broader search and use of varied information sources concerning the decision problem. Discrepant information is integrated most thoroughly at higher levels of cognitive complexity, and more flexible consideration is given to the complete set of options and outcomes relevant to a decision situation.²⁰

By equating high levels of complexity with the tasks typically associated with rational decision making, this line of research attempts to bridge the differences between rational choice and cognitive studies. It should be noted as well that scholars in this tradition link more “rational,” high levels of complexity with liberalism and good behavior like cooperation, while lower cognitive complexity is associated with the less desirable use of cognitive shortcuts, conservatism, and belligerency.

Learning

Although cognitive scholars propose that individuals tend to avoid or distort dissonant information, scholars agree that sometimes individuals may accommodate dissonant information by adding a new dimension to their belief set. That is, although beliefs tend to be rigid and unchanging, there are times when individuals can change what they believe and learn something new. Scholars who study how beliefs may change study learning. Learning involves the “development of new beliefs, skills, or procedures as a result of the observation and interpretation of experience.”²¹ Learning is possible and belief sets can change, but scholars take different views on when learning occurs.

Janice Gross Stein argues that learning—a change in held beliefs—occurs easiest with problems that are “ill structured” in the mind of the individual. An ill-structured problem is akin to an incomplete belief set. Stein uses the example of Mikhail Gorbachev to demonstrate her theory about learning. Gorbachev’s primary responsibility in government throughout his career and up until he entered the Politburo was on domestic economy issues in the Soviet Union. On topics of external security, including issues related to the United States, Stein proposes, Gorbachev held few preexisting beliefs. Stein explains that “learning is the construction of new representations of the problem”;²² new representations of a problem occur most easily when there is an underdeveloped existing representation of the problem in the mind of the individual. Gorbachev was unconstrained by well-structured existing beliefs about Soviet external security, and so he was “free” to learn. For Stein, Gorbachev was prompted to learn new ideas about Soviet security and the United States because of the failure of Soviet policy in Afghanistan and the pressing need to focus more on the domestic economy. Thus, learning requires two

elements: the lack of strongly established beliefs and some “unanticipated failures that challenge old ways of representing problems.”²³ Learning requires a prompt and a need.

Guy Ziv is interested in learning that occurs in the absence of a formative event such as a policy failure. He distinguishes between **complex learning** that manifests in an obvious change in goals and a subsequent allocation of energy and resources toward those new goals, and **simple learning** that does not manifest in any real change or allocation. Ziv argues, “Decision makers who alter their foreign policies gradually are more likely to have had a fundamental rethinking of their underlying assumptions on a core issue than those who exhibit sudden shifts in their foreign policy decisions absent a formative event.”²⁴

To test his proposition, he studied three Israeli prime ministers from the conservative Likud Party: Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert, and Benjamin Netanyahu. He picked Likud prime ministers because they all should hold hard-line views regarding Palestinian interests. One way to conduct comparative case studies is to pick cases with similar conditioning or contextual attributes and then study whether there is any variation on the dependent variable. Any variation that exists may be explained by the elements of the model one employs. For Ziv, the dependent variable is the particular prime minister’s learning—complex or simple—on the issue of the two-state solution, that is, on the issue of whether there should be a Palestinian state existing next to the Israeli state.

Ziv proposes that complex learning is gradual and should be observable in significant changes in views and actions. He traces Ariel Sharon’s learning starting in 1991 when Sharon took the hard-line view that “Jordan is Palestine”²⁵ and thus Israeli concessions to Palestinians were not necessary, through to his warnings in the late 1990s that a Palestinian state was developing in areas under Israeli “occupation,”²⁶ a word that rarely came from the lips of a member of Likud. By 2001, Sharon publicly supported a Palestinian state, a view reflecting Israeli public opinion, and in 2003 he joined the US plan for a “Road Map” to peace. In 2004 Sharon took a consequential **unilateral** step: he ordered the dismantling of Israeli settlements in Gaza and the West Bank. Finally, Sharon’s views changed so much that he quit the Likud Party to form Kadima, a conservative party committed expressly to the two-state solution. A stroke in early 2006 disabled Sharon, ending his political career. Ziv concludes that the gradual change in Sharon’s views—as demonstrated in significant policy change—made it clear that Sharon’s learning on the issue of a Palestinian state was real and “complex.” Ziv quotes Sharon himself explaining his change: “When you take on the role of prime minister, you see things you don’t see from the opposition benches.”²⁷

Ehud Olmert, Sharon’s successor, similarly changed his views on Palestinian statehood gradually, following the same path Sharon took; indeed, Olmert

and Sharon founded Kadima together. Netanyahu, however, took a different path, one that to Ziv demonstrates only simple learning. When Netanyahu became prime minister a second time in 2009, he tried to co-opt the Kadima chair into his cabinet and away from supporting Palestinian statehood, demonstrating that Netanyahu still held the old hard line on the issue. Then suddenly on June 14, 2009, Netanyahu gave a speech at Bar-Ilan University in support of the two-state solution. To Ziv, this sudden change was not the result of significant learning or of some kind of abrupt policy failure as per the Gorbachev example above, but a reaction to US president Barack Obama's "relentless pressure" on Netanyahu to change his position.²⁸ Ten days before Netanyahu's speech at Bar-Ilan, Obama had given his famous Cairo speech, which amplified the pressure he had been exerting on Netanyahu since their first official meeting. Ziv explains, "Netanyahu long had a reputation for responding to pressure."²⁹ One Israeli commentator said, "Netanyahu's speech was meant for one pair of ears—the most prominent ears in the world: the ears of Barack Obama."³⁰ Despite the Bar-Ilan speech, Netanyahu did little to alter his government's policies, and he continued to support Israeli settlements in the West Bank. By the start of 2011 and the Arab Spring, Netanyahu backed off from his earlier declaration, having done little to demonstrate real change in his beliefs or his policies. Putting Stein's study together with Ziv's, we might imagine a study of learning that starts with a policy failure that prompts the formation of a new belief set but then follows the leader in question over time to see if she executes policies that demonstrate a deep and enduring change in beliefs (learning). The discussion of Angela Merkel and the European debt crisis at the end of this chapter might be a good research project along those lines.

Operational Code

A cognitive map that details both the normative beliefs held by an individual and his or her behavioral beliefs is called an **operational code**. "Operational code analysis provides a means of testing a leader's fundamental predispositions toward political action."³¹ Alexander George is the scholar who brought the discussion of operational codes to the forefront in foreign policy study in the late 1960s. George defines the operational code as a "political leader's beliefs about the nature of politics and political conflict, his views regarding the extent to which historical developments can be shaped, and his notions of correct strategy and tactics."³² Delineating a leader's operational code involves a two-step process, as described by Stephen Walker and colleagues:

First, what are the leader's philosophical beliefs about the dynamics of world politics? Is the leader's image of the political universe a diagnosis marked by cooperation or conflict? What are the prospects for the realization of fundamental political values? What is

the predictability of others, the degree of control over historical development and the role of chance? Second, what are the leader's instrumental beliefs that indicate choice and shift propensities in the management of conflict? What is the leader's general approach to strategy and tactics and the utility of different means? How does the leader calculate, control, and manage the risks and timing of political action?³³

Operational code studies typically depend on an examination of the writings and statements of a leader from which philosophical beliefs can be extracted. Scott Crichlow explains that,

although it may be altered (e.g., by learning) or modified in specific situational environments, the operational code of a leader rests on a core set of predispositions, such that the taking of actions that contradict it is by definition out of the norm. Therefore, it is expected that such patterns of preferences in a leader's political statements are indeed largely accurate illustrations of his or her basic predispositions regarding the nature and conduct of politics.³⁴

By way of example, consider Ibrahim Karawan's explication of the operational code of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat in order to explain Sadat's decision to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979.³⁵ Anwar Sadat became the president of Egypt in 1970 upon the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser. Recall that in the last chapter we explored the rational choices made by Nasser in the events leading up to the June 1967 war between Egypt and Israel. The losses incurred by Egypt and the Arab states collectively in the 1967 war—the Old City of Jerusalem, the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights—caused Nasser to lose his leadership position in the Arab world. Although Nasser attempted to resign from the presidency after the 1967 defeat, his popularity among Egyptians remained high, and he remained as president until he had a heart attack and died in 1970.

According to Karawan, Sadat took over the Egyptian presidency committed to setting Egypt on a different foreign policy course than that pursued by Nasser. Rather than follow Nasser's pan-Arab policy, Sadat embarked on an "Egypt first" course. Karawan contends that Sadat's writings and speeches indicate that "Egypt first" was the driving philosophical belief of Sadat's operational code.³⁶ The instrumental belief that followed was that Sadat would negotiate Egypt's future without regard for the opinions and interests of the other Arab states. To illustrate Sadat's "Egypt first" operational code, Karawan points to Sadat's speeches and actions at several key junctures in the 1970s.

In 1973, Egypt and Syria launched a concerted two-prong attack on Israel. Egyptian forces managed to reclaim a small part of the Sinai Peninsula in this attack, a victory Sadat attributed to the power of Egyptian nationalism. This

was the first time an Arab leader had made battlefield gains against Israel. Following his “Egypt first” philosophy and despite the fact that he had engaged in the war alongside ally Syria, Sadat declared a unilateral cease-fire and negotiated a subsequent disengagement with Israel without consulting or even informing Syria. Similarly, Sadat pursued peace with Israel in the 1978 Camp David talks, which led to the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, in order to pursue Egypt’s national interests. Sadat’s decision to engage in peace talks with Israel occurred in the absence of any consultation with or consideration of the other Arab states. Sadat’s pursuit of Egyptian national interests constituted the behavioral manifestation of his driving philosophical belief.

Sadat’s pursuit of his “Egypt first” philosophy caused the other Arab states to turn their backs on Egypt. His decision to negotiate peace and normal relations with Israel ultimately gave incentive to some Egyptian Islamic fundamentalists to assassinate him in 1981. The elaboration of Sadat’s operational code explains the foreign policy he followed; that is, the elaboration of Sadat’s cognitive map points out the course he set for Egypt.

Personality and Leadership Orientation

When operational code scholars propose that a leader’s core set of philosophical beliefs makes it unlikely that the leader will act in ways inconsistent with this norm, these scholars link operational code to cognitive studies. When operational code scholars explain that they ultimately are establishing a leader’s fundamental behavioral predisposition, they link operational code to the study of personality.

Margaret Hermann is the pioneering scholar in this area of study. Hermann’s research reveals that six personality traits are related to specific foreign policy behaviors. These traits are the need for power, the need for affiliation, the level of cognitive complexity, the degree of trust in others, nationalism, and the belief that one has some control over events.³⁷ Other studies have added an additional trait: task orientation.³⁸ Two basic leadership types and expected foreign policy behaviors arise out of certain configurations of these traits, as Hermann explains:

If we examine the dynamics of the traits associated with the **aggressive leader**, we find a need to manipulate and control others, little ability to consider a range of alternatives, suspiciousness of others’ motives, a high interest in maintaining national identity and sovereignty, and a distinct willingness to initiate action. . . . [Such leaders] urge their governments to be suspicious of the motives of leaders of other nations. When interaction is necessary, they expect it to be on their nation’s terms.³⁹

The personal characteristics of the **conciliatory leader** indicate a need to establish and maintain friendly relationships with others, an ability to consider a wide range of alternatives, little suspiciousness of others' motives, no overriding concern with the maintenance of national identity and sovereignty, and little interest in initiating action. These dynamics suggest a more participatory foreign policy. . . . [Conciliatory leaders] will probably keep attuned to what is going on in international relations, being sensitive and responsive to this environment.⁴⁰

Based on her research and that of her colleagues, Hermann developed a leadership trait analysis (LTA) system. Vaughn Shannon and Jonathan Keller use LTA to study the inner circle of the Bush 2 administration. Shannon and Keller's specific question is whether the personality traits evidenced in the Bush 2 inner circle made the administration more or less likely to invade Iraq and thereby violate the international norm against the use of preventive force. With some slight exceptions, they found that Bush administration officials demonstrated traits that made them more likely to engage in aggressive behavior. Their conclusion was that a "belief in ability to control events, need for power, ingroup bias, and especially distrust may be particularly important predictors of one's willingness to violate international norms."⁴¹ In 1999, Hermann drew conclusions from her own LTA work that aptly described the Bush administration's foreign policy more than a decade later. Herman writes that for leaders with high distrust and in-group bias, "international politics is centered around a set of adversaries that are viewed as 'evil' and intent on spreading their ideology or extending their power at the expense of others; leaders perceive that they have a moral imperative to confront these adversaries; as a result, they are likely to take risks and to engage in highly aggressive and assertive behavior."⁴²

Another recent study of the Iraq War makes use of Hermann's LTA system. Former British prime minister Tony Blair was a committed partner to US president George W. Bush in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. Although the United Kingdom and the United States have what is called a "special relationship" or partnership, Blair's ardent support for the Iraq War was not seen as an outcome of this relationship but instead as a product of Blair's personality. "Reflecting upon the decision to attack Iraq, a senior British cabinet minister commented that 'had anyone else been leader, we would not have fought alongside Bush.'"⁴³ Stephen Dyson recounts that Blair had opportunities to step away from Bush's war plans, especially in the face of growing British public opposition to the war and serious dissent within his own party, but Blair remained steadfast. Dyson concludes that Britain's participation in the Iraq War can be understood by assessing Blair's personality traits, traits that predisposed him to take Britain firmly and resolutely into the war.⁴⁴

Dyson uses LTA to compare Tony Blair to fifty-one other world leaders and twelve previous British prime ministers.⁴⁵ Using Blair's answers to parliamentary questions from 1997 to the day that the Iraq invasion began, Dyson concludes that Blair scored far above the average on his belief in his ability to control events, well below the average on cognitive complexity, and far above the average on the need for power.⁴⁶ That is, Dyson finds that Blair fits Hermann's depiction of an aggressive leader.

Putting these two studies together, we might say that there was a "perfect storm" for war with Iraq because the leaders of the United States and the United Kingdom were both predisposed to view other actors in the world with suspicion. They also believed themselves to have a high ability to control world events, and they were generally insensitive to international norms, views, or information that would have moderated their actions.

Preliminary Case Study

If Trump was pulling the United States out of the West in 2017, then German chancellor Angela Merkel seemed ready to stand in the middle and hold it together. In the next pages, we will try to use some of the models discussed in this chapter to develop a systematic framework for understanding the person called the leader of the West after the abdication of the US president. Feminist scholars might find the contrast of the pragmatic woman versus the nationalist man and the fortune of the liberal international order worth examining.

In 2005, Angela Merkel became the first woman elected chancellor of Germany. She was born in the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) in 1954 and earned a doctorate in quantum chemistry. Merkel entered politics at the end of the communist era in East Germany and served briefly in the democratically elected government there. Upon German unification, she was elected to the Bundestag (lower house) of the German national legislature as a member of the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party. She served in two cabinets led by CDU chancellor Helmut Kohl but broke publicly with Kohl over a financial corruption scandal. This break with the CDU leadership left her in the strong political position to take control of the party when Kohl and his successor were forced out of politics. Merkel was elected chancellor four times and in 2018 was the longest-serving leader of any EU country.

The aim in this section is to try to use the tools of cognitive scholars to understand Merkel's actions regarding the **Eurozone** debt from 2009 through 2012 and her response to the refugee crisis of 2015. A full analysis would require, at the very least, a much more thorough study of Merkel's public utterances (speeches, press conferences, interviews) and writings. We would also need to analyze her foreign policy statements and policy decisions regarding the crises in exhaustive detail. Our starting point would be to take

some of the models proposed in this chapter and think about all the various implications of the models to construct a full set of expectations against which to examine the evidence. Then, in a method known as process tracing, we would gather the data and “test” it against what the models propose. Here our analysis will be only preliminary and somewhat exploratory.

Werner Reutter notes that Merkel had a strong “will to power and is a most adept political strategist. She learned quickly, never repeated a mistake, and was able to adjust easily to new circumstances.”⁴⁷ Further, he claims that Merkel was not a person “driven by ideology,” that she showed no emotion in public, and that she learned “to keep private things to herself and not to tell openly what she really thinks.” Merkel approached politics rationally, as her science background would suggest.⁴⁸ George Packer agrees, describing how “Merkel learned to approach problems methodically, drawing comparisons, running scenarios, weighing risks, anticipating reactions, and then, even after making a decision, letting it sit for a while before acting.”⁴⁹

Sarah Elise Wiliarty attributes Merkel’s rise both to CDU party dynamics and Merkel’s own leadership style.⁵⁰ Wiliarty tells us that the CDU is a “catch-all” party that attempts to attract voters by “using bland appeals to notions like democracy or prosperity.” But, the CDU is also a “corporatist catchall party” in which “important societal interest groups are organized and represented within the party.”⁵¹ Merkel learned politics in the CDU corporatist structure in which “internal party losers may be more willing to support party policies they disagree with if they feel that they had a chance to air their concerns.”⁵² Wiliarty argues that Merkel was “a master of the party manager approach.” This approach “involves balancing these internal groups so that no group becomes too strong and no group is eliminated.” This balance creates a situation in which “all internal groups believe the party manager represents their interests.”⁵³ Plus, Merkel was “known for her tendency to avoid commitment to a particular policy direction until the last possible moment,”⁵⁴ a tendency that kept losers and winners aboard when a decision was made. Packer reports that Merkel told students once, “I am a permanent delayer sometimes, but I think it is essential and extremely important to take people along and really listen to them in political talks.”⁵⁵

In a 2009 speech given by Merkel at the American Academy of Berlin, Merkel declared, “I have not been spared some disappointments as regards the subject of rational explanations for everything that happens in this Federal Republic. But the political rules that are most widely accepted—of this I am still convinced today—are those that can be explained by reference to common sense.”⁵⁶ Governing by common sense is a good rule for national as well as international society, and the problems of globalization—such as the 2008 world financial crisis—demonstrate the need for international society to give “globalization a political dimension.”⁵⁷ Further, rational people fix problems when they arise, and the community of states should do the same, acknowl-

edging that: “We all agree that it is no longer possible for any country in the world to solve the problems on its own. For this reason international rules will follow.”⁵⁸ The global financial crisis resulted from “market excesses combined with insufficient regulation. We therefore have to draw the right lessons from this. In other words, freedom always requires action by the state to provide a framework within which all may live in freedom.”⁵⁹ Individual freedom “must be exercised responsibly,” which “entails a mutual give and take. This can ultimately only really happen on the basis of dialogue and tolerance, be it in society in general or politics in particular, be it at [the] national or international level.”⁶⁰

The evidence so far suggests that Merkel fits Hermann’s description of a conciliatory leader. Merkel’s leadership style involved withholding her opinion in order to hear from all the stakeholders before bringing them together behind a common policy decision. Merkel saw the need to maintain friendly relations and consider a wide range of alternatives. She also patiently played the long game. Additionally, to use Hermann’s description of the conciliatory leader, Merkel seemed to show “little interest in initiating action”⁶¹ lest she be identified with a particular position and alienate those with different views. This leadership profile is completed by the description of Merkel as nonideological and pragmatic, as these attributes might suggest that she would be less concerned with maintaining national identity in a traditional sense that evokes notions of nationalistic “Germany First” (as in “America First” or the “Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation”). On the issue of key values, one German politician opined that Merkel “has a strong value of freedom, and everything else is negotiable.”⁶²

We can offer a preliminary sketch of Merkel’s philosophical and operational beliefs that form at least part of her operational code. The operational beliefs are stated after the philosophical beliefs in each item below:

1. The best societies (national and international) are inclusive and diverse. Governments (and all social organizations such as political parties) should encourage and facilitate inclusion and diversity.
2. Rules of governance and public policy are best when they result from a process in which all stakeholders are heard. Leaders should take into account the opinions of as many stakeholders as practical when formulating policy.
3. Government leaders should not follow ideological principles too rigidly. The best policies and rules are those based on common sense, incrementalism, and tried and proven methods.
4. Individuals in national societies and states in international society should be free to pursue their own interests, but they also must be responsible

actors who are held accountable for their actions. Governments exist, in part, to establish frameworks to facilitate freedom and responsibility.

Now we will explore whether this preliminary sketch of Angela Merkel's operational code might be useful for understanding her reactions to the Eurozone debt crisis from 2009 to 2012 and the Syrian refugee crisis that peaked in 2015. In 1999, a majority of European Union countries formed a monetary union that adopted a single currency, the euro; thus, the Eurozone came into being. In time, seventeen countries became members. Part of the criteria for joining the Eurozone involved agreements to keep government deficits and debt within certain parameters. When the global financial crisis hit in August 2008, the resulting global economic downturn exposed the dangerously large deficits and government debt of several Eurozone members. In 2009, the Eurozone crisis began when the Greek government admitted that its debts doubled the Eurozone limit of 60 percent of gross domestic product, causing immediate speculation and fear that Greece would default on its debts.

By the spring of 2010, Greece was no longer able to borrow on the open market, resulting in a bailout organized by the European Union (EU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the European Central Bank (ECB). By the end of the year, Ireland was in a banking crisis after its housing bubble popped; Ireland received a bailout in November. At the end of 2010, Merkel declared continued German support for the Eurozone idea and her belief that the euro would survive the crisis, but she was reluctant to support any collective response.⁶³ Instead, she advised that individual countries and their national banks absorb the costs of the debts that they had incurred. In May 2011, Portugal became the third country needing a bailout. In July, new funds were approved for Greece as news came that Italy and Spain were on the verge of crisis. The ECB was urging collective intervention that Merkel thought was not necessary.

In August 2011, Merkel met with French president Nicolas Sarkozy. Together they announced their plan for closer political and economic union for the countries of the Eurozone and that each member should make changes to its constitution requiring balanced budgets and debt reduction—in essence, members should deepen their resolve to commitments already made in a more united European framework. Greater fiscal responsibility was the theme of their plan, with more strictly delineated national responsibilities. Trying to rally her party in support of the Eurozone, Merkel said Europe was in its toughest hour since World War II.⁶⁴ Growth in the Eurozone continued to decline, and Germany's growth flatlined. By the end of the year, investors were pulling their money out of Spanish and Italian banks and moving it to safer German banks.

Europe went into a second recession in 2012, with Greece and Spain facing record unemployment and budget deficits. Against Merkel's wishes, the

EU, IMF, and ECB together established a framework for a safe default on Greek private banking debt. Meanwhile, Merkel attempted to inject herself into the French presidential election by rebuking Sarkozy's opponent on his promise to renegotiate the Eurozone pact in order to focus less on **austerity** and more on growth.⁶⁵ That opponent, François Hollande, won the French presidency in the voters' own rebuke of Sarkozy's austerity policies. Greeks, too, elected a left-leaning government in disgust over crippling austerity measures. In June, ECB head Mario Draghi called for Eurozone-wide deposit insurance and bank regulation. Merkel responded not by denouncing Draghi and the others but by announcing that Germany would support pooling the growing Eurozone debt and favor creating a eurobond market, an idea she had dismissed the year before. That same summer, Spain received a bailout. Finally, in December 2012, Eurozone heads met and agreed to form a banking union that would have a common banking supervisor located in the ECB, a sharing of bailout costs, a common bailout resolution framework, and common deposit insurance for individual investors. In response, a BBC commentator concluded that Germany had used the crisis as a way to relaunch the European project.⁶⁶

Now we will fit Merkel's views on and actions during the crisis into the operational code constructed above. Early in the crisis in 2009, Merkel stayed rather quiet on the crisis and did not assert a German "answer" or opinion that would diverge from existing practice. As the crisis moved into 2010 and 2011, Merkel proposed that austerity measures and public and private responsibility were the appropriate responses to the crisis—a view that would have summed up the prominent German voices she was hearing from on the crisis as well as the opinion of French president Sarkozy. Packer asserts that Merkel was hoping to hear the views of US president Barack Obama during this period, but the phone never rang.⁶⁷

Outside of Germany, Merkel became the face of indifference to the human costs of the crisis and the austerity solutions. By 2012, the crowds in the streets of Greece and Spain, along with other important voices like the ECB's Draghi and finally Barack Obama, began calling for less austerity and more growth-based solutions to the debt problem. Further, views were coalescing around collectivizing the debt problem as the best common approach. It was, after all, a problem that no single country in the Eurozone could solve on its own, to paraphrase Merkel's thoughts from years earlier.

Meanwhile, as voters in France and Greece demonstrated their views, Draghi's actions worked to stabilize markets at critical times. As Merkel heard from a larger number of stakeholders, as public sentiment began demanding a change in policy and greater German commitment to the collective, *and* as Draghi's interventionist policies appeared to work where austerity policies had not, Merkel changed her position and agreed to stabilize the Eurozone with an agreement on a banking union. Throughout the crisis, she had been gath-

ering different views and working to put in place a commonsense, rational solution that would keep as many stakeholders happy as possible.

Despite the dismay over Merkel's slow response, she did what we would expect her to do given the operational code we assembled above (albeit this analysis rests on thin evidence). Merkel was not rigidly wedded to austerity policies, but they reflected the prevailing wisdom in her primary community. As the community seeking action from her grew, she gathered in many more views and looked for methods that would work, without worrying about grand ideological visions or previously held stands. She even prepared her own party in November 2011 for the coming policy change in 2012, an inclusive move that we would expect her to make.

Now we will briefly examine Merkel's response to the 2015 refugee crisis. In 2014, fewer than three hundred thousand undocumented migrants entered Europe. In 2015, a massive wave of human migration hit Europe, with people fleeing from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Albania, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iran, and Ukraine, according to the International Organization for Migration.⁶⁸ More than one million undocumented migrants entered Germany alone in 2015. The refugees were primarily entering Europe through Greece and Italy. Both of these countries were still recovering from the debt crisis, and government officials just let the majority of migrants pass through their countries rather than assuming national responsibility for them.

The European Union has a Common European Asylum System (CEAS) to regulate asylum. Asylum seekers can only register in one EU country, and under the Dublin procedures, individuals should register in the first EU country they enter. When an individual submits an asylum application, the country must determine if the person is properly registering in the first country of arrival. If not, the person is transferred to the appropriate country. By the summer of 2015, German officials suspended the Dublin procedure in order to speed up the registration process. German officials thought the crisis was too large and acute to go through the process of returning people to the country of first arrival—a practical solution to the immediate problem was to process the applications of whoever made it to Germany as if they arrived there first.

When the news spread, migrants started moving en masse to Germany, traveling through Serbia (not an EU country), Hungary, and Austria. The mass movement angered and overwhelmed these countries. The leaders of these and other EU states accused Germany of single-handedly destabilizing Europe. Merkel responded by reminding others of the need to share the burden of the refugees: "If Europe fails on the question of refugees," she said, "then it won't be the Europe we wished for."⁶⁹ Public disagreement on the refugees erupted in the German ruling coalition, and EU states argued about quotas and fairness and fears of terrorists among the refugees. In October, Merkel and Hollande appealed for "more Europe" as a way to resolve the

crisis and share the burden equitably. By the start of November, the German government revised its policy: refugees would be permitted only one year of protected status without an extension to their families. Then German officials reinstated the Dublin procedures. This could be seen as an about-face, or it could reflect Merkel's own preference not to cling to a position that did not have widespread support and did not appear to be working.

The November 13, 2015, terrorist attacks in Paris put into play a common EU desire to stanch the massive flow of undocumented migrants into Europe. Merkel and other EU leaders negotiated a series of deals with Turkey in which Turkey would stop migrant outflows in exchange for funding from the EU. During the summer, Merkel was celebrated by some as a humanitarian hero for the suspension of the Dublin procedures, and then in November some of those same voices criticized her for selling out the refugees. With our sketch of Merkel's operational code, we might caution observers about attaching any ideological labels to Merkel. She does not cling to positions but listens for the consensus and waits to see what works to solve any given problem, or at least this is what our preliminary investigation suggests.

In chapter 2 and again in this chapter, we examined individual-level models for understanding foreign policy making. Of course, leaders, no matter how powerful, do not work alone. They work in small and large groups, in informal and formal institutional structures. Thus, this is the point where we broaden our level of analysis and move to the next chapter.

For Discussion

1. Explain the importance of leaders in the two-level game.
2. Compare and contrast the world-views of Donald Trump, Xi Jinping, and Angela Merkel.
3. What is the difference between complex and simple learning? Answer with reference to the examples of Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu concerning a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.
4. How do scholars conduct an operational code analysis?
5. Explain Angela Merkel's responses to the Eurozone debt crisis with reference to her operational code and leadership orientation.
6. Explain Angela Merkel's re-sponses to the refugee crisis with reference to her operational code and leadership orientation.

Key Words

multilateralism
liberal international order
soft power
terrorism
cognition
misperception
open-mindedness
closed-mindedness
belief set
enemy image
cognitive consistency

cognitive miser
integrative complexity
complex learning
simple learning
unilateral
operational code
aggressive leader
conciliatory leader
Eurozone
austerity

4

Ultimate Decision Units

In This Chapter

- Single Group Decision-Making Processes
- Bureaucratic Politics
- Multiple Autonomous Groups

Major Cases Explored

- Ali Khamenei's inner circle and nuclear negotiations with the West, 2007 and 2013
- Iran's obligations under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)
- Barack Obama's decision to order a troop surge in Afghanistan, 2009
- Turkey's decision to intervene in Cyprus, 1974
- War powers between the US executive and legislative branches
- How the US Congress abdicated responsibility for Vietnam and the war on terror

Who speaks for Iran? Who makes the decisions that put Iran on a course of confrontation with other states over its possible acquisition of nuclear weapons? Which voice coming from Iran counts the most when leaders and analysts in other countries try to predict what Iranian motivations and intentions are on the nuclear issue? Realists would answer that there are persistent Iranian national interests—say, to become a great power or to dominate the politics of the Middle East—and that individual persons sitting in particular positions in the Iranian government are all committed to those national interests. Cognitive scholars might want to use the speeches and actions of the Iranian supreme leader, the Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to construct an operational code that would help outsiders understand Iran's pursuit of nuclear technology. These same scholars might want to take into account the beliefs of others in the government as well. Khamenei and other top political figures in Iran might have the same basic objective to make Iran a great power, but they might hold different opinions about how best to achieve that objective. Can the analyst safely conclude that the supreme leader's opinion is the one that matters? What if Khamenei prefers to stay silent on certain foreign policy issues, deferring to his advisors to make policy?

If the foreign policy analyst hears different voices and opinions coming from Iran, the rational decision-making model is not suitable for explaining those differences. Similarly, the cognitive approach cannot tell the analyst whose worldview among many different worldviews controls Iranian foreign policy. A different approach seems in order here, one that can accommodate potentially disparate views and interests. In this chapter, we examine models that can accommodate such disparities, all of which start with the notion of the ultimate decision unit.

As Margaret Hermann and Charles Hermann explain,

[Recognizing] that numerous domestic and international factors can and do influence foreign policy behavior, these influences must be channeled through the political structure of a government that identifies, decides, and implements foreign policy. Within this structure is a set of authorities with the ability to commit the resources of the society and, with respect to a particular problem, the authority to make a decision that cannot be readily reversed. We call this set of authorities the “ultimate decision unit,” even though in reality the unit may consist of multiple separate bodies rather than a single entity. It is our contention that the configuration and dynamics of such an ultimate decision unit help shape the substance of foreign policy behavior.¹

Who speaks for Iran? Who is the ultimate decision unit? Decision-making authority—or power—is distributed among different leadership roles and elected and nonelected groups. If we can understand the configuration of the ultimate decision unit in Iran and the decision-making rules governing conflict within that unit, we can understand Iranian foreign policy. Of course, we need to avoid the mistake of assuming that foreign policy decision making in other countries occurs in the same institutional frame as our own. In Robert Jervis’s article “Hypotheses on Misperception,” he cautions that the decision maker can make this fundamental and easy error because “experience with his own system will partly determine what the actor is familiar with and what he is apt to perceive in others.”² As foreign policy analysts, we need to avoid this mistake and not assume that since our government works in a certain way, other governments work in the same way.

According to Hermann and Hermann and others who have elaborated on the approach, there are three basic decision units: the single **predominant leader**, the single group, and the **multiple autonomous groups**. The predominant leader is a “single individual [who] has the power to make the choice and to stifle opposition.”³ Not all single, predominant leaders are the same, however, and so it is important to know whether “a leader’s orientation to foreign affairs leads him [or her] to be relatively sensitive or insensitive to information from the political environment.”⁴ A sensitive predominant leader

is likely to use diplomacy and cooperation, taking an incremental approach to action in order to stay tuned to feedback from the environment. An insensitive leader is not open to external influence, and so knowledge of his or her personality or operational code is important. Drawing upon cognitive studies, Hermann and Hermann explain, “If a leader’s orientation suggests that he has a strongly held view of the world and uses his view as a lens through which to select and interpret incoming information, the leader is likely to be looking only for cues that confirm his beliefs when making foreign policy decisions. As a result, he will be relatively insensitive to discrepant advice and data.”⁵ The previous chapter investigated the single leader.

Single-Group Decision-Making Processes

The single group is a “set of individuals, all of whom are members of a single body, [who] collectively select a course of action in face-to-face interaction.”⁶ This group may be as small as two people or “as large as a parliament of hundreds, so long as there is a collective, interactive decision process in which all the members who are needed to make authoritative commitments participate.” The individuals in this single group must be able to “form or change their positions on a problem without outside consultation,” and they do not need to defend the single group’s decisions elsewhere.⁷ For instance, the group might be assembled from heads of departments, but the group members do not represent their departments and do not need to answer to their departments for the decisions made.

Although members do not need to report back to or consult with their departments, members of the single group may be open to external influences, especially information that is relevant to the group’s decision. However, the single group may also be self-contained—that is, not open to outside information—and quick to reach **consensus**. Crucial to understanding decision making in the single group is uncovering and analyzing the “techniques used for managing conflict in the group” and the degree to which group loyalty is required.⁸ Closed single groups that privilege group loyalty and suppress dissent are associated with the notion of **groupthink**.

Groupthink is a process described by Irving Janis.⁹ Generally, we associate groupthink with a distorted and failed policy process. It is important to note that this process develops out of certain group dynamics and is not a conscious process. A process is not a technique! Groups do not decide to use groupthink. Analysts who study groupthink do think there are ways for groups to consciously avoid groupthink. The small group that falls into the groupthink snare is one that puts the maintenance of the group and the loyalty of its members to the group at the center of its purpose, rather than focusing on the problem to be solved. The group self-monitors or self-polices to suppress nonconforming views from within and discounts information from outside

sources that might challenge the group's judgment and inherent morality. Janis offers a list of ten antecedents that suggest when a situation of groupthink might arise; of these, scholars think one antecedent is most important. As Janis explains, "only when a group of policymakers is moderately or highly cohesive can we expect the groupthink syndrome to emerge."¹⁰ Groupthink is typically associated with policy failure because the decision-making group fails to critically assess all the relevant information on the problem at hand, settling on the perceived policy preference of the dominant leader in the group. The classic case of groupthink in American foreign policy study is the failed decision making around the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

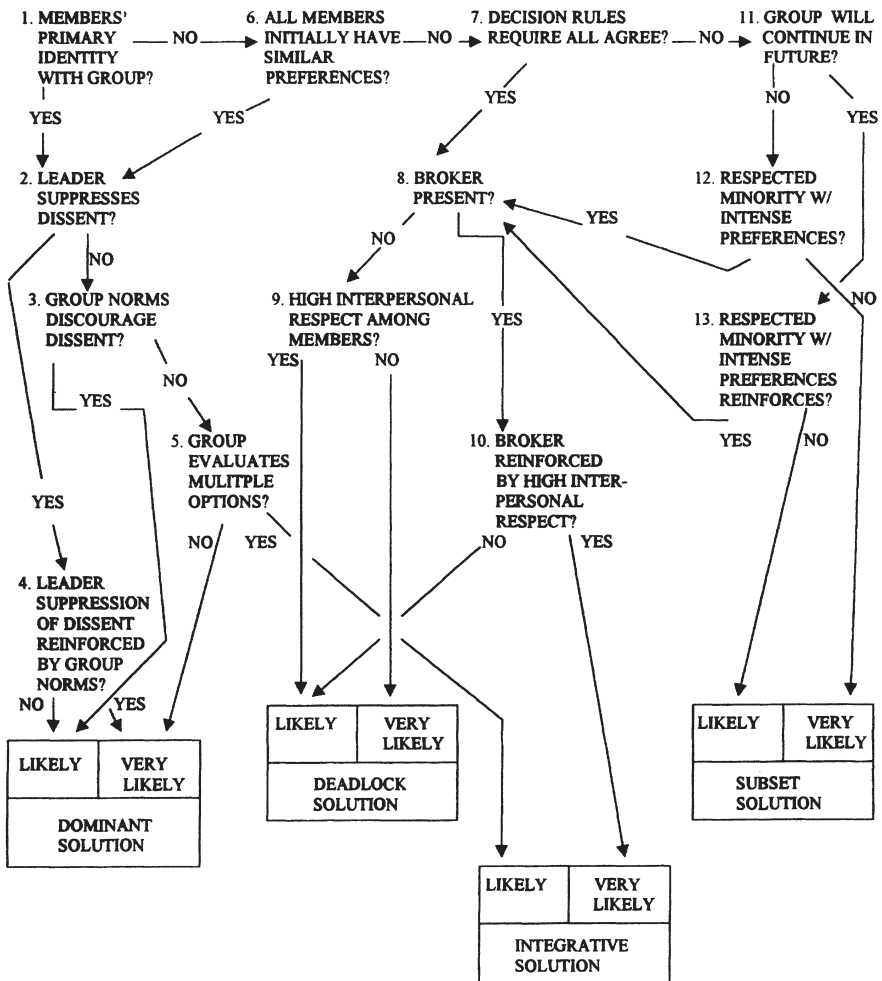
Mark Schafer and Scott Crichlow agree that group cohesiveness is a critical antecedent to groupthink, but they find that leadership style and group procedures that privilege group cohesiveness are the most damaging preconditions for failed group decision making. The key to better decision making, they advise, is to focus on eliminating the adverse antecedents prior to the time the group meets, because "by the time the group engages in information processing, it is generally too late to avoid faulty decision making."¹¹ The Trump administration's decision to enact a religion-based ban on immigration might have resulted from groupthink and would be a case for the readers of this book to probe. Trump declared what the endgame of his immigration policy should be and then told a small insular group of loyal advisors to make it happen.

Charles Hermann, Janice Gross Stein, Bengt Sundelius, and Stephen Walker propose that groupthink is less a "syndrome" (with its negative implications) than a "premature closure around an initially advocated course of action."¹² "A group experiences premature closure when it accepts the option prominently presented, usually by an authoritative member, early in its deliberations without engaging in a serious evaluation of its potential limitations or understanding a careful comparison of it with any other possible alternatives."¹³ To continue the Trump travel ban example from above, federal courts ruled aspects of the first several iterations of the travel ban unconstitutional, noting various and obvious legal problems in the ban that apparently had not been considered in the small-group deliberations.

Hermann, Stein, Sundelius, and Walker see groupthink as a dynamic that produces a tendency to avoid group conflict and moves the group to quick concurrence. Some small-group processes, however, do not lead to concurrence but instead lead to unanimity (total agreement, which means full resolution of group conflict or disagreement) or plurality (partial agreement, which means some group conflict or disagreement remains). Group identity, rather than group cohesiveness, is the crucial variable for this research team in their study of small groups. A primary consideration is whether group members have their primary identities in the small group or in their "home" departments or agencies.

Hermann, Stein, Sundelius, and Walker create a decision tree that takes the analyst through different branches or permutations exploring the role of leaders, group members, and group decision-making norms. These branches lead to four possible decision types: the adoption of the **dominant solution**, a **deadlocked solution**, an **integrative solution**, or a **subset solution**. This decision tree is presented in figure 4.1. The reader will find it handy to consult figure 4.1 frequently in the following discussion.

Figure 4.1. Decision Tree



Source: This figure originally appeared as figure 2 in Charles F. Hermann et al., "Resolve, Accept, or Avoid: Effects of Group Conflict on Foreign Policy Decisions," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 146. Used with permission of Wiley-Blackwell Publishers.

The first point in the decision tree is to ask whether the members' primary identities are with the group. If yes, then the second question is whether the leader suppresses dissent. If the answer is yes, the next question is whether group norms reinforce the leader's suppression of dissent. If the answer is yes, it is very likely that the dominant solution advocated by the leader will be selected. Alternatively, the answer to the second question—does the leader suppress dissent?—could be no. Then the researcher asks whether group norms discourage dissent. If the answer is no, then we ask whether the group evaluates multiple options regarding the problem at hand. If no, then the dominant solution advocated by the leader is very likely chosen. If the group does evaluate multiple options, then it is likely that the group will choose an integrative solution.

If the answer to the first question is no—the members' primary identities are not with the group—then we take different branches in the tree. Following figure 4.1, the next question is whether all members have the same initial preferences. If not, then we ask whether the decision rules require that all members agree. If the answer is no, then we ask whether the group is expected to meet again on other issues and continue as a group. If the answer to this is no, then the question is whether there is a respected minority within the group that expresses intense preferences. If not, then it is likely that the solution will be one that reflects a subset of the group members' preferences. A case study can help us evaluate the model's usefulness.

Now we can return to the problem posed at the start of this chapter: Who speaks for Iran? We can rephrase this inquiry to ask who makes foreign policy decisions for Iran, and how. First, consider some background to establish our case. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the UN agency responsible for ensuring countries' compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT essentially says that countries with nuclear weapons technology agree not to transfer that technology, and countries without nuclear weapons technology agree not to acquire it. Iran is a signatory to the NPT and so has obligations under it. In 1983, the IAEA acknowledged that Iran had a right to acquire nuclear technology for civilian energy use, and Iran agreed to suspend its enrichment of uranium and allow IAEA verification inspections.

Jumping ahead two decades, the George W. Bush administration was convinced for various reasons that Iran was pursuing nuclear weapons technology; in the international commotion over the issue, Iran removed IAEA seals from its research plants. In 2006, Iranian leaders claimed that Iran had succeeded in enriching uranium, and the Iranian president stated that Iran had a sovereign right to produce nuclear weapons. In response, the UN Security Council passed two resolutions calling on Iran to stop its enrichment activities and return to compliance with IAEA agreements. Limited sanctions were imposed to back these resolutions.

Iranian negotiators continued to talk with European Union (EU) negotiators during these tense years, but mutually acceptable agreements proved elusive. Despite the sanctions, Iranian leaders appeared prepared to compromise with the IAEA and the West until the summer of 2006. By the end of 2006, the Iranian position seemed to harden, making compromise unlikely.

Although it took longer than the Bush administration might have wanted, the Security Council passed another resolution in March 2007 (Resolution 1747) condemning Iran for its noncompliance with earlier resolutions and placing economic and other sanctions on Iran. By fall 2007, an apparent shake-up occurred in the top Iranian leadership, which included the resignation of the lead nuclear negotiator. Meanwhile, the Bush administration kept beating the drums of war against Iran for its nuclear weapons ambitions and for its alleged support for insurgents in Iraq.

Did the hardening of the Iranian negotiating position suggest something about who was making foreign policy decisions? Can we even begin to understand what might be happening at the highest decision-making levels with only news accounts and a couple of expert analyses? We can try! Before we do this, though, we should have a quick primer on the structure of and the personalities in the Iranian government circa 2007.

According to the Iranian constitution, there are elected and nonelected institutions in the government. The most powerful post is the unelected position of supreme leader. The supreme leader is chosen by the Assembly of Experts, an elected body composed of eighty-six religious officials. The Assembly of Experts has the power to monitor the supreme leader's performance, but generally the position is held for life (there have only been two supreme leaders since the Islamic Republic of Iran was founded in 1979). In the fall of 2007, the supreme leader was Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The supreme leader controls the armed forces and all decision making on security, defense, and major foreign policy issues. The supreme leader also appoints half of the unelected Guardian Council, a body that must approve all legislation and must approve all candidates for the presidency and Parliament. Khamenei was a hard-line conservative who completely supported the hard-line conservative president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2007, but Khamenei had also appointed political opponents of Ahmadinejad to critical governmental and advisory posts. The International Crisis Group, a nongovernmental organization that monitors conflict in the world, calls Khamenei a balancer among different factions in the leadership.¹⁴ Ray Takeyh, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, takes a different view, declaring Khamenei indecisive and hindered by weak religious credentials that made him dependent on reactionaries like Ahmadinejad for support.¹⁵ The discussion below accommodates both of these views.

The second most important position in the Iranian government is the elected presidency. In 2007, the president was Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a former mayor of Tehran who was not a cleric and who held hard-line conserva-

tive views. He was elected to the presidency in 2005. Ahmadinejad was known for his threatening rhetoric, especially against Israel. Inside Iran, Ahmadinejad appeared to be close to Khamenei and the ultraconservative chair of the Guardian Council, Ayatollah Ahmad Janati. Additionally, Ahmadinejad had the support of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and awarded lucrative government contracts and positions to its officers to win and maintain their support. In terms of the nuclear issue, Ahmadinejad opposed any compromise with the IAEA or the EU negotiators. In December 2006, elections for municipal councils and the Assembly of Experts went against Ahmadinejad's faction in favor of the faction headed by the man who ran against Ahmadinejad for president in 2005.

The unelected institutions—the supreme leader, armed forces, judiciary, Expediency Council, and Guardian Council—have more power than the elected institutions: the presidency, cabinet, and Parliament. The exception is the elected body of the Assembly of Experts. In September 2007, the Assembly of Experts elected as its chair former Iranian president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the man who lost the 2005 presidential elections to Ahmadinejad. Right after the 2005 elections, Khamenei appointed Rafsanjani as the chair of the Expediency Council to check Ahmadinejad's power. When Rafsanjani was president of Iran (1989–1997), he had favored good-faith negotiations with the West. He and his chief negotiator, Hassan Rouhani, were vocal critics of Ahmadinejad's uncompromising position regarding the West.¹⁶ The position of chair of the Assembly of Experts is an extremely influential post, since the assembly chooses the supreme leader. A key ally of Rafsanjani and a protégé of Khamenei was Ali Larijani, the head of the Supreme National Security Council and an outspoken opponent of Ahmadinejad. Until October 2007, Larijani was the chief nuclear negotiator for Iran, but he resigned and was replaced with a hard-line, relatively unknown supporter of Ahmadinejad's.

In this discussion so far, some of the key members of Khamenei's inner circle (presumably the decision-making circle) have been named: Ahmadinejad, Janati, Rafsanjani, and Larijani. Using open-source news reports, we might also include Ali Akbar Velayati, Khamenei's advisor on foreign affairs, who had made it clear that Ahmadinejad's rhetoric did not always represent the official government view. We might also include in the inner circle Rafsanjani's former nuclear negotiator Hassan Rouhani; General Mohammed Ali Jafari, the newly named head of the Revolutionary Guard (in September 2007); and Kamal Kharrazi, the foreign minister under Rafsanjani.

For the most part, this list merely reflects news reports that mention key officeholders and advisors rather than any authoritative list. The top Iranian leadership was an opaque body. However, analysts agree that the most important leaders were in strong agreement on critical Iranian national interests and that they differed on how best to pursue these interests. Takeyh says that Iranian politics was dominated by the “new right.”¹⁷ The new right was

split between two primary factions: the hard-line conservatives represented by Ahmadinejad and the pragmatic conservatives represented by Rafsanjani. The new right believed that Iran was destined to be a great power, while the United States was a declining great power. The new right disagreed about how best to facilitate Iran's rise: should Iran take a hard-line approach to the failing United States and West or should it compromise and find some satisfactory coexistence?¹⁸ These two factions of the new right were inside Khamenei's inner decision-making circle in 2007.

What was the position of the inner decision-making circle on the issue of nuclear negotiations with the IAEA and the West? If all we had to base our guess on was the October 2007 resignation of chief negotiator Larijani, we might conclude that the pragmatists had fallen out of favor and the hard-liners controlled the policy. But the election of Rafsanjani to the chair of the Assembly of Experts suggests that the pragmatists were in an excellent power position. Perhaps the resignation of the pragmatist negotiator Larijani was Khamenei's way to give Ahmadinejad enough rope to hang himself (as the expression goes) since Ahmadinejad blamed Larijani for failed negotiations. This would suggest that the hard-liners were falling out of favor. Alternatively, the situation might have been in a kind of stalemate. The Western states concluded that the hard-line Iranian regime (as embodied by Ahmadinejad) refused to negotiate, but it might have been more accurate to conclude that the regime was deadlocked. Hermann, Stein, Sundelius, and Walker's decision tree can be a very useful tool for examining this situation as of late 2007.

Using the decision tree in figure 4.1, we start our analysis with question 1: Do all the members of the small inner circle have their primary identity with the group? Although they were all conservatives, they were conservatives with very different views about how best to pursue Iranian national interests, and they came from different political factions. Thus, the answer is no.

This takes us to question 6: Do all members initially have similar preferences on how to conduct nuclear negotiations? The answer is emphatically no. Question 7 then asks, do the decision rules of the group require that they all agree? From the speculations above, we would be safe to conclude that there were not rules that required unanimity. Indeed, if Khamenei imagined himself to be a balancer among different factions (and he did act as such with his appointments), then this suggests the absence of unanimity rules. The answer to question 7 is no. This takes us to question 11: Will the group continue into the future? There appear to have been significant power shifts in the top leadership, with some important reshuffling at the next highest level of leadership in different institutions. This particular group would likely not continue into the future.

This takes us to question 12: Is there a respected minority with intense preferences in the group? Although close to Khamenei, Ahmadinejad's position was closer to a minority in the changing inner group. Gareth Smyth notes

that in 2006 when the inner circle was willing to make greater compromises on the nuclear negotiations, Ahmadinejad already was in a minority position among the top leaders.¹⁹ The municipal losses and the rise of Rafsanjani also point to Ahmadinejad's minority position. Yet his preferences regarding negotiating with the West were well known, and he still had the "respect" that came with powerful allies elsewhere in the government (such as the Revolutionary Guard). The answer to question 12 would be yes, taking us to question 8.

Is there a broker present who can mediate between views? On this question, a yes is just as plausible as a no, and either answer will eventually take us to the same place. Following the "yes" branch, we can say that Khamenei served as a broker. This takes us to question 10: Is the broker reinforced by high interpersonal respect? The answer here is no, since key members of the top decision-making circle publicly criticized each other's stances. A no here means that a deadlock solution was likely.

Going back to question 8, which again could be answered yes or no, let's follow the "no" branch—no, there was no broker because Khamenei was unable to balance the interests of the main factions. This takes us to question 9, which asks again whether there is high interpersonal respect among members of the group, and the answer here remains no. This leads to the conclusion that deadlock was very likely.

Using what we have surmised about Iran's highest decision-making group, the facts surrounding Iran's negotiations with the West on its nuclear program, and the small-group decision tree in figure 4.1, we arrive at the conclusion that the top Iranian decision makers were deadlocked on how to proceed with the nuclear negotiations. From the outside, this may have looked like defiance, and for some external actors a cause for war. However, a more judicious reading of this situation might be to understand the deadlock that Khamenei had set in place. If this assessment is correct, the United States might have attempted to strengthen the position of the pragmatists by offering some relief from the sanctions in order to reward the view that compromise and coexistence were the best foreign policy paths to follow.²⁰

There was no compromise struck between the West and Iran during the Bush administration, nor during the first administration of Barack Obama. In his first inaugural address, Obama sent a message to countries like Iran about his administration's willingness to talk: "We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist." The Iranian government appeared to take a harder turn in the summer of 2009 when irregularities surrounding the Iranian national election brought protestors to the streets as part of the Green Movement. No talks resumed, and the United States and the European Union intensified their crippling sanctions on Iran. By October 2012, Iranian oil production was reduced to a thirty-two-year low and the value of the currency had dropped more than 50 percent.²¹ In this same period, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu was pressuring the Obama administration to

issue a red line to the Iranian government, thereby turning up the pressure on the regime. Republicans in the United States reinforced this demand by frequently invoking the image of hard-liner Ahmadinejad and the unnamed extremist “mullahs” in Iran. What these observers could not explain were the contemporaneous reports of Iranian offers to begin one-on-one talks with the United States on nuclear matters.²²

What changes might have occurred within the top Iranian decision-making circle surrounding Khamenei? According to a Congressional Research Service report by Kenneth Katzman, the inner circle appeared to have changed dramatically after the 2009 uprisings. Khamenei himself assumed a more direct role over key decisions.²³ The changes culminated when Ahmadinejad’s political faction suffered enormous electoral losses in the March 2012 Majles (legislative) elections. “Following the Majles elections, many experts concluded that the Supreme Leader had consolidated his authority and rendered Ahmadinejad virtually irrelevant in his final year in office.”²⁴ The pragmatists appeared to be fully in charge. Two of these pragmatists, Ali Larijani, the speaker of the strongly pro-Khamenei Majles, and Ali Akbar Velayati, Khamenei’s foreign policy advisor, were particularly elevated in the inner circle, and in the fall of 2012 both were seen as likely 2013 presidential candidates. At the time, Katzman proposed that “some speculate that Velayati would be able to garner Khamenei’s backing for a nuclear compromise with the international community were he to become president.”²⁵ Katzman was not far off the mark; the pragmatist in the inner circle who became president in 2013 was Hassan Rouhani, former president Rafsanjani’s chief nuclear negotiator.

Returning to the decision tree and figure 4.1, we can begin to understand why media reporting in the fall of 2012 about proposed Iranian-American talks was not surprising at all. The first question in the tree asks if the people in the single group identify with the group. The answer would be yes because Khamenei had driven out the hard-liners in favor of conservative pragmatists who were his strongest supporters. Question 2 asks, does the leader suppress dissent? A safe answer (and one in line with the 2007 assessment) would be no, so the next question is, do group norms discourage dissent, to which we could again answer no. (Again, this is in line with the assessment regarding the 2007 inner circle.) This takes us to question 5: Does the group evaluate multiple options? Khamenei was still opposed to talking to the West and suspicious of all things Western, but he surrounded himself with pragmatists who saw no harm in talking with the West and who might convince Khamenei to agree to a nuclear compromise in time. This suggests that the group must have been open to a discussion of different options or no one would be able to convince Khamenei of anything. Thus, the answer to 5 is yes. This answer takes us to a likely integrative solution. Using the decision tree, we deduce that the Iranian inner circle of late 2012 was receptive to talking to the United States and the international community about nuclear matters. Indeed, such

talks commenced in Kazakhstan in late February 2013 and concluded with an agreement signed in July 2015.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed by Iran on one side and the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China on the other side came into effect in January 2016 upon IAEA certification. “The IAEA certified that Iran had met preliminary requirements, including taking thousands of centrifuges offline, rendering the core of the Arak heavy-water reactor inoperable, and selling excess low-enriched uranium to Russia.”²⁶ The agreement imposed restrictions on Iran’s ability to enrich uranium—extending the “breakout time” for when Iran might have working nuclear weapons—and permitted the IAEA “unprecedented” access to Iran’s nuclear facilities for monitoring and verification purposes.²⁷ In return, Iran got relief from all sanctions imposed on it for its nuclear program. In 2017, Philip Gordon and Richard Nephew concluded that the deal was “doing what [it] was supposed to do: prevent Iran from acquiring enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon, demonstrate to the Iranian public the benefits of cooperation with the international community, and buy time for potential changes in Iranian politics and foreign policy.”²⁸

Republicans in the US Congress opposed the JCPOA, which is why Congress passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act in May 2015. This act required the president to recertify Iranian compliance every ninety days. US president Donald Trump also opposed the JCPOA, calling the deal (and almost every international agreement to which the United States was a partner) the “worst deal ever.” In October 2017 and again in January 2018, Trump refused to recertify Iran’s compliance. In January, Trump threatened that he would end the deal in May if Congress and the other countries involved did not write a better agreement.

Let’s conclude our study of the Iranian “ultimate decision unit.” Rouhani’s negotiation of the JCPOA and the lifting of sanctions helped him win a strong reelection mandate in 2017. Voters had hoped for economic relief and more progressive social policies. Khamenei’s inner circle, however, still contained hard-liners, and their power was flexed when they arrested Rouhani’s brother on corruption charges just two months after Rouhani’s landslide reelection.²⁹ Readers of this book might consider whether Iranian compliance with the JCPOA can withstand the hard-liners in the inner circle—especially as the Trump administration attempts to undermine the JCPOA. Other Iranian foreign policy behaviors—such as support for the Assad regime in Syria or the Houthi rebels in Yemen in a proxy war against Saudi-backed forces—can be explained by examining the tug-of-war between hard-liners and pragmatists in Khamenei’s inner circle. These other Iranian foreign policies caused trouble for pragmatists in US politics who urged continued US support for the JCPOA.

Bureaucratic Politics

Now we should return to the decision tree framework and think about the first question on the tree: are the members' identities primarily in the decision group? When we think about administrations or cabinets, it is obvious that the members will have some sense of affiliation with the group since they are, in fact, a group. But the people in the group are not in the group simply because they are in it: they represent different interests from which the leader wishes to hear ideas, or from which the leader is constitutionally required to hear ideas. The people in the decision group represent interests, and these interests are usually defined by their organizational affiliations.

Analysts make an assumption about motivations based on organizational affiliations: members of the decision-making group are motivated to protect the interests of the organizations they represent. There is a foreign policy analysis model that starts with this assumption called the **bureaucratic politics model**. Graham Allison proposed three foreign policy decision-making models: the rational actor model, the organizational process model, and the bureaucratic politics model.³⁰ The rational actor model was discussed in chapter 2; the organizational process model focuses on how agencies within governments process problems according to **standard operating procedures**.

Allison and Philip Zelikow explain the bureaucratic politics model in this way:

Because most players participate in policymaking by virtue of their role, for example as secretary of the Treasury or the ambassador to the United Nations, it is quite natural that each feels special responsibility to call attention to the ramifications of an issue for his or her domain. . . . Because their preferences and beliefs are related to the different organizations they represent, their analyses yield conflicting recommendations.³¹

In such a system dominated by parochial interests, “government decisions and actions result from a political process.”³² The political process is dominated by a competition for resources and leverage among actors engaged in “pulling and hauling,” or, simply, politics. The competition is “won” by the actor or coalition of actors that dominates the discussion of policy choices in favor of its parochial interests. In order to dominate others and win, actors deploy their resources or **bargaining advantages**. “Bargaining advantages stem from control of implementation, control over information that enables one to define the problem and identify the available options, persuasiveness with other players (including players outside the bureaucracy), and the ability to affect other players’ objectives in other games, including domestic political games.”³³

Winning this bureaucratic competition can become more important than solving the problem at hand; for foreign policy making, this means that “the

domestic objectives of bureaucrats may be more significant than the international objectives of governments.”³⁴ For the chief executive who awaits policy recommendations percolating up from different bureaucracies or coalitions of actors, he or she may find that the recommendations are skewed because they result from political compromises reached among competing agencies to suit their own bureaucratic needs or ambitions. The chief executive may be the ultimate decision unit, but the information and options from which she or he chooses result from bureaucratic competition.

Kevin Marsh uses the bureaucratic politics model to understand US president Barack Obama’s 2009 announcement of a surge of thirty thousand US combat troops to Afghanistan.³⁵ Obama had pledged during his campaign for president to remove US troops from Iraq and to put emphasis on fighting the “right war” in Afghanistan. Upon entering office, Obama ordered a strategy review of US military efforts in Afghanistan; Marsh depicts the review as a case study in the “pulling and hauling” of prosurge versus antisurge advocates. The Obama surge resulted from the partial victory of the prosurge coalition—partial because this coalition wanted a larger surge than the president ultimately decided upon, but the final policy called for a surge nonetheless.

During the strategy review process, the surge opponents included some administration insiders who were quite close to Obama: Vice President Joseph Biden, the chief of staff, the US ambassador to Afghanistan, and the National Security Council. The proximity of these people to the president gave them considerable bargaining advantages. The surge advocates included the military commanders in Afghanistan and the Pentagon, along with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.³⁶ The prosurge advocates, with one exception, represented bureaucratic interests who were inclined to see Afghanistan as a military problem to be solved using military means. The exception was Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who acted contrary to the interests of the bureaucracy she managed, the US State Department.³⁷ The prosurge side won the competition, Marsh concludes, because this side had greater bargaining advantages. These advantages included more than the bureaucratic power they wielded. Gates, a Republican from the Bush administration, had strong support in Congress and in the public, and Clinton “was the second most powerful Democrat in the room”³⁸ when Obama convened his foreign policy team. However, the surge advocates did not win a full victory, since they argued for a much larger troop deployment than the thirty thousand troops announced.

Obama’s preferences were not imposed on the actors involved in the strategy review process, but he was involved in the process and his views were known.

Yet, despite his considerable level of direct involvement and imposition of a timetable for withdrawal and a smaller surge of 30,000 troops, Obama found himself largely ordering what the military

and other pro-surge advocates had pressured him to do. The final decision, while a political compromise, closely reflected the preferences of surge advocates.³⁹

Marsh concludes, “Obama made the final decision, but his decision was constrained by the menu of choices presented to him by his advisers. This menu of choices was in itself the product of bureaucratic politics.”⁴⁰

Multiple Autonomous Groups

The third decision unit in the framework proposed by Hermann and Hermann is a collection of multiple autonomous actors who must work together to form a decision. In this unit, the “necessary actors are separate individuals, groups, or coalitions which, if some or all concur, can act for the government, but no one of which has the ability to decide and force compliance on the others; moreover, no overarching authoritative body exists in which all the necessary parties are members.”⁴¹ Within this unit,

one actor can block another’s initiatives by (1) using a formal, sometimes constitutionally defined, veto power; (2) threatening to terminate a ruling coalition by withdrawing from it or overthrowing it with force; (3) withholding part of the resources necessary for action or the approval needed for their use; or (4) initiating countermeasures that can seriously harm the other actors or their objectives.⁴²

Complicating interactions within this decision unit is the problem that members of the coalition are representatives of their home units and thus “have no authority except as agents of their respective entities.”⁴³

In the multiple autonomous actors decision-making unit, the chief executive is one of many actors involved in the bargaining process that eventually results in a decision. Drawing from the single-group discussion above, we know that chief executives and others may play the role of broker among different interests in order to try to put together an integrative or subset solution. But of course at times the process may also tend to stalemate and deadlock. “Deadlocks result because (by definition) no entity has the capacity to act alone on behalf of the regime.”⁴⁴

An example of how this works would be useful here. Esra Çuhadar-Gürkaynak and Binnur Özkeçeci-Taner have used the decision unit framework to analyze Turkish foreign policy decision making during the Cyprus crisis of 1974.⁴⁵ Cyprus is a country that contains people of Turkish and Greek origin. When Cyprus became an independent country in 1960, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Greece signed the Treaty of Guarantee giving one or all the right to intervene should anyone threaten the independence of Cyprus. Upon independence, former Greek nationalists who had fought the United Kingdom

for Cypriot independence turned their attention to Turkish Cypriots. Inter-communal violence broke out, and eventually a UN peacekeeping force was deployed to Cyprus in late 1964 to establish a buffer zone between the communities. Nationalist Greek Cypriots, encouraged by Greece, continued to push for Cypriot unification (enosis) with Greece. In 1974, those committed to enosis conducted a coup against the Cypriot power-sharing government and then announced that they would proceed to unification. The Turkish government had to decide whether and how to respond.

Çuhadar-Gürkaynak and Özkeçeci-Taner explain that three responses were considered by the Turkish leadership: (1) unilateral military intervention to stop the coup under the authority of the Treaty of Guarantee, (2) bilateral military intervention with the British under the Treaty of Guarantee, or (3) no military action out of concern for Greek or American reaction.⁴⁶ What was the nature of the decision unit grappling with this problem? Çuhadar-Gürkaynak and Özkeçeci-Taner rule out the single predominant leader. Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit “had neither the sole authority to commit the resources of the government during any occasion for decision, except at the implementation stage, nor were his decisions irreversible by another entity within the Turkish political system.”⁴⁷ Further, no single group qualified as the authoritative decision unit since any decision to use the military had to be approved by the Turkish senate and agreed to by the National Security Council representing the military. Thus, the decision unit was a coalition of multiple autonomous actors.⁴⁸

Having identified the decision unit, the analyst must determine the decision rules within the unit. By the Turkish constitution established in 1974 and by established rules and practice, a majority decision was permitted.⁴⁹ Members of the coalition held different views about the proper response to the Cypriot coup. Prime Minister Ecevit had a strong preference for bilateral military intervention working with the United Kingdom. If Britain would not act, then Ecevit preferred unilateral intervention. Çuhadar-Gürkaynak and Özkeçeci-Taner conclude that Ecevit convinced the military and other members of the coalition that a military response could be successful, thereby brokering a majority of actors in favor of intervention. In the coalition, there may be several actors engaging in the broker role; in this case, the foreign minister also worked to create a majority in favor of Ecevit’s preferences. Ultimately, Britain refused to intervene, and so Turkey intervened unilaterally. This caused the Cypriot coup to fail. Turkish forces remained in Cyprus, in time assisting in the creation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus that no state recognized except Turkey.

Under the constitutional arrangement in Turkey in 1974, the National Security Council was not quite an equal member in the multiple autonomous groups decision unit. The National Security Council held virtual veto power over all other political actors. Constitutional reforms made in 2003 modi-

fied this power by making the National Security Council a largely consultative body whose membership was altered to include more civilian and fewer military voices. The European Union drove this change when it declared that Turkey could not begin EU membership discussions while the military held virtual veto power over the civilian government.

The 2003 demotion of the Turkish military (the loss of the veto) meant that the prime minister and the senate constituted the members of the multiple autonomous groups decision-making unit on the issue of deploying military forces. This framework might be useful for tracing the steps taken in 2007–2008 when the Turkish military launched a military strike across the border into Iraq. An internal opponent of the Turkish government, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), had taken up positions in Kurd-controlled northern Iraq. In 2007, Turkey claimed that PKK forces were attacking Turkish military forces across the border. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan sought and won the permission of the senate to use force against the PKK in Iraq in a 507–19 vote. It would be interesting to investigate what produced this lopsided vote—real debate and actual concurrence between the president and the senate, or just senate submission to the increasingly authoritarian Erdogan.

Just because the members of a multiple autonomous groups decision unit are equal does not mean that one or more groups will not try to dominate the other(s). Similarly, one or more groups in the decision unit might cede power to a domineering member, in an effort, perhaps, to evade political responsibility. In the US Constitution, the power to declare war, to raise and support an army and naval forces to fight that war, and to tax in order to fund the war is held by Congress, while the president is given the power of commander in chief of the armed forces. This division of powers over the use of force should mean that military intervention cannot be conducted without proper consultation between Congress and the president. However, despite the constitutional arrangement, the use of force generally has not been a shared activity of Congress and the president. As the *New York Times* reported in 2012, “Presidents have dispatched forces abroad between 120 and 200 times, but Congress has only formally declared war on five occasions: the War of 1812, the Spanish-American War, the Mexican-American War and the two World Wars.”⁵⁰ The number of times the president has ordered US troops abroad since that 2012 report has greatly increased, yet there have been no declarations of war.

Should we, then, understand that the US president acts unconstitutionally when using force abroad? There are plenty of observers who would say yes, but Congress can still exercise its power within the ultimate decision unit by “withholding part of the resources necessary for action”⁵¹ should Congress decide that the president has overstepped his or her authority. Sometimes Congress offers the president the authority to conduct what is for all practical purposes a war without a declaration of war, but in doing this there is

the implicit acknowledgment that Congress may change its mind and reassert its authority. In August 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which gave the president the authority to take all necessary measures to defend US forces and to assist state members of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty. This resolution was used as the basis for full-scale US military action in Vietnam. The war in Vietnam was always controversial, and Congress began trying to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution within a few years of its passage. In 1971, Congress repealed the resolution, but President Richard Nixon determined that he was the ultimate decision maker acting as commander in chief to protect US troops in Southeast Asia. Congress responded with the War Powers Act of 1973, an act that was sustained even in the face of a presidential veto.

The War Powers Act was designed to limit the presidential use of forces abroad by putting a time limit on such use without congressional approval. The president can deploy US forces abroad into combat for sixty days, but then Congress must authorize the continued use of those forces. If Congress does not authorize the continued use of force, the president may use the troops for thirty more days, but then the troops must be withdrawn from the combat area. Nixon and every president since have argued that the War Powers Act is an unconstitutional restriction on presidential authority as commander in chief. Whether one agrees with this or not, Congress may still provide the president with nearly unlimited authority for the use of force abroad if it so chooses. Two days after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, Congress passed the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), granting the president authority to use force against those responsible for the September 11 attacks and any “associated forces.” Using the AUMF, presidents (Bush, Obama, and Trump) have authorized the use of US military force in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, and at least eight countries in Africa: Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Libya, Mali, Niger, Somalia, and Uganda. The US Congress only seems interested in reasserting its equal authority on the use of force when it is controlled by a party that does not hold the White House, and even then the effort is mostly for domestic political purposes and rarely sincere. Chapter 6 investigates domestic political explanations of foreign policy.

For Discussion

1. Describe the group dynamics that can lead to groupthink. What fails to happen during groupthink?
2. Explain how small-group dynamics might have led to a stalemate or deadlock in the Iranian inner circle in 2007 on the issue of whether to negotiate on nuclear issues with the West.
3. Explain what appears to have been different in the Iranian circle in 2013 that might have led to the signing of the JCPOA.
4. Use the bureaucratic politics model to describe how Obama's 2009 surge in Afghanistan came about. Be sure to delineate the different sides and their bargaining advantages.
5. Explain the group decision process behind Turkey's intervention in Cyprus in 1974.
6. Discuss who should make decisions on the use of force in the US government and who actually makes those decisions.

Key Words

ultimate decision unit
 predominant leader
 multiple autonomous groups
 consensus
 groupthink
 dominant solution

deadlocked solution
 integrative solution
 subset solution
 bureaucratic politics model
 standard operating procedures
 bargaining advantages

5

National Culture, Roles, and Institutions

In This Chapter

- State Type and Foreign Policy
- National Self-Image and Role Conception
- Political Culture and Foreign Policy Institutions
- The Democratic Peace

Major Cases Explored

- The Brexit vote, the European refugee crisis, and the implications for a United Kingdom
- How democracies are more peaceful, according to the Global Peace Index
- How positive American self-image impedes critical citizenship
- Yugoslavia, Serbs, and siege mentality
- Israeli conscription, siege mentality, and hawkish right-wing parties
- Switzerland's neutrality policy and nonprovocative defense
- Tensions between nationalist elites and Japanese antimilitaristic culture
- The changing definition of anti-militarism in German culture and foreign policy

The refugee crisis that hit Europe in 2015 did not cause the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom the following year, but the crisis was depicted as a “breaking point” in the lead-up to the voting. The June 2016 referendum was on whether Britain should remain in the European Union (EU) or exit—Brexit. A pro-Brexit politician unveiled a poster with the words “Breaking Point: The EU has failed us all” splashed across a picture depicting a large number of Middle Eastern refugees (mostly men) walking along a road, presumably toward the United Kingdom. The people in the picture were, in fact, refugees walking into Slovenia—a long way off from Britain. The message, though, was clear: These people are coming to take away what is ours—our jobs, our health care, our place in the world—and the European Union and the global elite are forcing this down our throats.

As one seventy-two-year-old male Brexit supporter told the *Financial Times*, “There’s a proper people and a proper economy going on in this country that David Cameron doesn’t know about.”¹ That man’s vote to leave the European Union was a vote to save Britain, at least according to him and his tribe. The vote to leave the European Union “crystallized a stark divide running through a nation—between two tribes of old and young, rural and urban, traditional and metropolitan, and above all those fearful of globalization, and its beneficiaries.”²

The term **tribal politics** has been used increasingly to discuss politics in parts of Europe and the United States in the second decade of the new millennium. *Tribal* depicts a gut-level feeling about one’s group that defies facts, or asserts “alternative facts” about a different, more insular kind of reality. The use of the word *tribe* suggests something antiglobal and nonmodern. The tribe requires loyalty even when the politics and policies of the tribe might actually hurt the people in it. This is a term used disapprovingly by those who question this resentment-filled rejection of a globalized world—or by those in the other, globalist tribe.

The notion of a tribe or nation or country that must make its way in a dangerous world is not one that is new to foreign policy. The realist worldview suggests the same scenario, but without the emotional appeal to group identity. In this chapter, we leave the individual level of analysis behind to think about state-level sources of foreign policy, including what we will call national self-image and culture.

Leaving the European Union was a momentous foreign policy decision driven by a desperation to save Britain. It did not matter to those who voted to “Brexit” the European Union that leaving could potentially cost the United Kingdom and individual Britons financially and impair the country’s international reputation. It apparently did not matter that the United Kingdom itself might not stay united. In 2014, Scotland had held a referendum on independence from Britain; the vote was 55 percent for staying in the UK, 45 percent for declaring independence. Scottish leaders warned that Scotland stayed in Britain only as long as Britain stayed in the European Union. In the Brexit vote, Scotland voted by 62 percent to remain in the European Union. After that vote, Scottish politicians raised the specter of another independence referendum.

Scottish grievances intensified after Northern Ireland appeared to receive preferential treatment in Brexit negotiations between the United Kingdom and the European Union. Northern Ireland voted by 56 percent to remain in the European Union. Some of the people of Northern Ireland worried that Brexit would result in the reimposition of a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (an EU member) and threaten the 1998 peace agreement. In December 2017, during UK-EU negotiations over the terms of Britain’s departure, the British government and EU officials reached

a deal that preserved the soft border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. As CNN reports, the deal was that “in the absence of agreed solutions, the UK will maintain full alignment with those rules of the internal market and the customs union which, now or in the future, support North-South cooperation, the all-island economy and the protection of the 1998 agreement.”³ That Northern Ireland would remain under EU rules and get EU advantages while Scotland likely would not should fuel Scottish independence dreams again. These measurable costs of Brexit—impairing the well-being of and threatening the very unity of the United Kingdom—did not matter to those who voted for the nonmeasurable idea of restoring British sovereignty. In this chapter, we will attempt to understand the impact of nonmeasurables like national self-image and culture on a country’s foreign policy.

Foreign policy study that proceeds from the state level of analysis involves examining different features of a country to see which of those factors shape its foreign policy. At this level of analysis, we do not disregard leadership, but elites are just one factor to consider in the country-specific context. This level of analysis is the one that most directly borrows from the insights of American politics, comparative politics, and regional area specialists. The focus here and in the next two chapters is that what goes on within states has an impact on what goes on between states.

There are two broad categories of factors examined at the state level of analysis: governmental and societal. Governmental factors include the type of political system and its constitutional framework, the type of regime that sits atop the government, how decisions are made in different parts of the government from the highest levels to the basic bureaucratic level, the division of powers and authority between government institutions, bureaucratic infighting among government agencies, and the size and institutionalization of bureaucracies. Societal factors include the type of economic system; the history of the people(s) in the country; the ethnic, racial, and religious mix of the people; the number and activities of interest groups and political parties; and the role of the media in setting the public agenda. These two categories are not exclusive; for instance, it would prove informative in some cases to study state-society relations, the lobbying of government officeholders by interest groups, and the mobilization of citizens by national leaders and opposition elites through appeals to group identities.

In this chapter, we focus on state type and foreign policy. State type is defined by measurable attributes like type of political system and nonmeasurable attributes like national culture and identity. In the next chapter, we turn to questions of how domestic politics has an impact on foreign policy. Then the subsequent chapter focuses on whether and how public opinion and media have an influence on foreign policy.

To return to our starting point in this chapter—the Brexit vote—the “David Cameron” mentioned in the quote about the “proper people” was

the British prime minister from the Conservative Party who had promised to hold a referendum on remaining in or leaving the European Union. Cameron made this promise as part of his effort to seek support in the 2015 elections, although Cameron himself was against leaving the European Union. In fact, when the “leave” vote won in 2016, Cameron resigned, leaving it to others in his party to negotiate the terms of Brexit. Cameron did not just engage in a shortsighted bid to win the 2015 elections, however; there was a part of the British public that had always been skeptical of European politics and related unions with European countries. Cameron tapped into the same sense of national reluctance to join with Europe that the “leave” campaigners tapped into when they used the “Breaking Point” poster. Cameron, though, clearly did not imagine that this reluctance was substantial and organized enough—or real enough—to result in an actual win for Brexit.

This national reluctance—or, more accurately, this subnational reluctance—was captured to some extent in public opinion polls and in the rhetoric of “fringe” parties and politicians, but it was not seen as tangible enough to change the course of British participation in the EU project and globalization itself. This sense of uneasiness, this rhetoric on the fringe, was perceived as not modern enough and therefore not realistic enough to amount to a tangible and powerful political force, at least to the politicians and academic experts and media consultants viewing the chances of a “leave” victory.

In the same way, mainstream foreign policy scholars eschew the study of topics such as national culture or identity because these are not measurable or testable. **Nationalism**/groupism/tribalism is emotional and amorphous and does not lend itself well to the hegemonic positivist canon of social science theorizing and testing. The field of “foreign policy analysis” sits squarely within positivistic inquiry that insists on studying only those aspects of political life that can be measured and tested. Anything that is untestable is left to alternative “fringe” theories better suited to the humanities or popular media. Because of this, foreign policy scholars prefer to ignore the study of national culture in favor of the study of whatever they can measure and test. Rather than finding a way to study this important topic, foreign policy analysis scholars dismiss the subject matter as nonscientific—and therefore not worth studying or studyable—because national culture does not fit their preferred ontology/methodology. These scholars study things in a certain way, and only those things that fit the way they study should be studied. Of course, this circular, insular thinking made foreign policy observers get Brexit wrong.

This chapter, then, contains a bit of a conceptual tug-of-war between measurable phenomena (that are acceptable to foreign policy analysis) and nonmeasurable phenomena about human collectives. (Your own professor may not even want to cover some of this; it might be interesting to learn which tribe she or he identifies with.) When I was first out of graduate school, I presented my research findings at the annual meeting of the International

Studies Association. In my presentation, I explained how I used different sources of data (all from reputable databases) and different kinds of statistical analytical techniques (all taught in quantitative methods classes) to develop three groups of states—great, middle, and small. My aim was to demonstrate that the countries that called themselves **middle powers** were not in the middle at all. The positivist analytical techniques I used demonstrated that Canada and the other so-called middle powers were in fact in the “great states” group. One of the premier middle power scholars—and a Canadian—congratulated me on my research and then said something like this: You will need to redo your analysis to put Canada back in the middle power group, because *we know Canada is a middle power*.

At the time, I was reluctant to embrace this idea; my analysis was accurate and it met the requirements of American political science research. Canada clearly was not a middle power; the whole claim was a political charade! Over the years as I taught foreign policy classes and as I studied Canadian foreign policy, however, I could not find a positivist way to accommodate Canadian middle power foreign policy. I came to the place where I could say that “we *know* Canada is a middle power.” This example puts the essential problem in clear focus: If we (whoever we are: Canadian middle power scholars, the left-behind Britons who want to defend Britain against the know-it-all globalists, and so on) know that our country is a certain kind of country, it does not matter if elitist scholars cannot find a way to “test” what we know. As people who study foreign policy, we have to accommodate how people know things or feel things to be; we must find a way to include these phenomena in our studies or we will miss the big stories and render ourselves irrelevant to understanding the world. Keep this in mind as we continue this chapter!

State Type and Foreign Policy

Canada is a middle power and so Canada pursues a middle power foreign policy. We need to explore this idea in its general form: do certain kinds of countries have certain foreign policies and foreign policy behaviors? We begin with positivist studies. Attempts to develop midrange positivist theories of foreign policy at the state level of analysis go back to the beginning of the field.

In his foundational work, James Rosenau hypothesized that three national attributes taken together influence foreign policy choice and behavior: size (large or small as measured by population), economic system (developed or underdeveloped as measured by gross national product), and political system (open or closed as measured by whether the country is democratic or not). Rosenau proposed that these factors be grouped into eight configurations or “ideal **nation-types**”⁴ and that each nation-type should be studied using particular levels of analysis and not others. He did not know whether these proposed nation-types were accurate, nor did he know whether his hypotheses

would be useful. Hypotheses are guesses about reality based on the analyst's existing understanding of that reality. After hypotheses are constructed, the analyst then explores the evidence to find proof that the hypotheses might be correct or might not be correct. Rosenau hypothesized, or guessed, that countries could be categorized by size, economic system, and political system, but he did not know this to be the case. He hypothesized, or guessed, that some levels of analysis were more important than others for studying particular categories of countries. In making these proposals, he sounded a call to other scholars about where they might begin to engage in a broad and collaborative research effort.

With Rosenau's hypotheses as launching pads, some scholars began a systematic search for pieces of knowledge that could ground future research and begin to build a generalized theory around which the scientific study of comparative foreign policy could coalesce. As Maurice East and Charles Hermann explain, "The concept of nation-type [made] it unnecessary to examine individual nations in considering the certain types of foreign policy activity. To this extent, [scholars could] move away from analysis of discrete objects and concentrate on classes of objects and the different patterns of foreign policy associated with each."⁵ That is, ideal nation-types were conceived as tools for facilitating the development of general statements linking state type and foreign policy behavior. If we knew that a country was a certain type of state, then we would benefit from previous research that had connected certain kinds of foreign policy behavior with that type of state. The more evidence generated that a country of type A was most likely to engage in behavior B under certain conditions, the more certain we could be that we had discovered a "law" of foreign policy.

East and Hermann were among a group of scholars directly inspired by Rosenau. They constructed and used the Comparative Research on the Events of Nations (CREON) data set to test twenty-seven bivariate hypotheses linking size, economic development, and political accountability with nine foreign policy behaviors. Of the single indicators, East and Hermann concluded that physical size best accounted for behavior. The next most important indicator was political accountability, especially when combined with economic development.⁶ On the other hand, they were unable to find much support for Rosenau's ideal nation-types. That is, "large, developed, open" states did not engage in foreign policy behaviors that were distinctive from, say, the behaviors of "small, developed, open" or "small, underdeveloped, closed" states. Indeed, researchers found little evidence that Rosenau's ideal nation-types were useful categories at all.

The idea that particular kinds of states engaged in particular foreign policies was not put to rest. For example, consider the Global Peace Index (GPI). The GPI is the product of a collaboration of the independent Institute for Economics and Peace and *The Economist* Intelligence Unit. The first GPI was

released in 2007. The 2017 index is a measure of the peacefulness of 163 states based on twenty-three measurable qualitative and quantitative indicators. The indicators measure societal safety and security, ongoing domestic and international conflict, and the degree of militarization.⁷ The use of twenty-three indicators from multiple databases makes the GPI much more sophisticated than Rosenau's nation-types, but Rosenau proposed his typology at a time when there was much less available and reliable data on a large number of states.

According to the 2017 GPI, the five most peaceful states were Iceland, New Zealand, Portugal, Austria, and Denmark, while the five least peaceful states were Yemen (no. 159), South Sudan (160), Iraq (161), Afghanistan (162), and Syria (163). The countries most responsible for international peace and security—the permanent five of the UN Security Council—had mixed peacefulness rankings: the United Kingdom (no. 41), France (51), the United States (114), China (166), and Russia (151). North America was the region with the largest deterioration in peacefulness because of the United States, whose peacefulness rating dropped because of an increase in the “level of perceived criminality in society and the intensity of organized internal conflict.”⁸

Among the top twenty countries on the 2017 GPI were nineteen democracies and one constitutional monarchy (Bhutan). There were thirty-eight democracies in the top forty (Qatar was #30). This finding supports one of the more enduring research hypotheses linking state type and foreign policy behavior: the democratic peace theory. The democratic peace theory proposes that a democratic country's culture and the resulting political institutions make the country more likely than not to engage in peaceful foreign policy behaviors, especially toward other democratic countries. To get to this theory (discussed at the end of this chapter and at the beginning of chapter 6), we first need to consider the impact of a country's self-image and culture on its foreign policy.

National Self-Image and Role Conception

National self-images “consist, at least in part, of idealized stereotypes of the ‘in-nation’ which are culturally shared and perpetuated.”⁹ A national self-image is basically the story a people in a country tell about who they are as a people, who their country “is” in the world, and what their country does in the world. The national story—or dominant national narrative—can be found in the official history of the country as spread by schools and religious institutions and supported by national holidays, is present in the national culture as seen and reinforced by media of all sorts, and can be discerned by public opinion polling, among other methods.

The notion of national self-image used here is similar to role theory and the study of **national role conceptions**. Role theory, for K. J. Holsti,

describes how individuals hold positions in social systems that determine their behavior. “The concept of position connotes a behavioral ‘setting’ with more or less well-defined functions, duties, rights, and privileges. It may also indicate a regularized set of activities associated with formal organizations.”¹⁰ The individual’s role conception is influenced by her own “perceptions, values, and attitudes” about the position and its attendant interpersonal associations, norms, and expectations.¹¹ The individual then plays the role, or performs the role, in the social system.

When role theory is applied to international politics and states, **sovereignty** becomes a critical force reshaping the notion. The interpersonal element in social role theory is absent when considering sovereign states, and “the expectations of other governments, international legal norms, or ‘world opinion’ explain few aspects of national behavior, particularly in conflict situations.”¹² That is, Holsti argues that foreign policy behavior results from domestic politics or sources, not from the expectations of other states in international “society.” Holsti alters role theory to fit sovereign states: “In international politics, then, the fact of sovereignty implies that foreign policy decisions and actions (role performances) derive *primarily* from policymakers’ role conceptions, domestic needs and demands, and critical events or trends in the external environment.”¹³ Having altered role theory to fit states, Holsti explains,

A *national role conception* includes the policymakers’ own definitions of the general kinds of decisions, commitments, rules and actions suitable to their state, and of the functions, if any, their state should perform on a continuing basis in the international system or in subordinate regional systems. It is their “image” of the appropriate orientations or functions of their state toward, or in, the external environment. Typical national role conceptions would be *regional defender*, with the function of protecting other states in a defined area, or *mediator*, with the continuing function of assisting in international conflict resolution.¹⁴

The “image” of the middle power, to use an example mentioned above, carries with it particular orientations and functions (to be discussed elsewhere in this book). The Canadian middle power scholar who insisted that I put Canada back into the middle powers was defending a particular national role conception.

Holsti says that national role conceptions spring from the minds of policy makers. Recent scholarship by Cristian Cantir and Juliet Kaarbo notes how conceptually problematic this claim is; they wonder why “foreign policy elites can stand for the entire country with regard to its role conceptions.”¹⁵ Cantir and Kaarbo also concede how problematic it is when role theorists do not focus on policy makers and instead make “a series of assumptions about the

existence of consensus [in a national society] surrounding roles without providing clear evidence in this regard.”¹⁶ Ultimately, Cantir and Kaarbo make a strong case for studying the contestation of national roles—rather than the presumed consensus around national roles—by elites, parties, and interest groups in domestic politics. This is a topic examined in chapter 6.

When we use the concept of a dominant **national narrative**, we imply that alternative or **subnational narratives** may also exist in a country. Subnational narratives tell a different story about the subnational group’s struggle against the dominant group and its narrative, just as the dominant group may “other-ize” subnational groups. Indeed, arguments over what the “nation” is, or who composes the nation, are linked to disagreements about the story of the nation and how other people might or might not fit into that story.

Whether the in-group is comprised of the people within a country and out-groups are the people in other countries, or there is an internal divide between the dominant and subordinate groups within a single country, the development of a positive in-group self-image depends upon this in-and-out dichotomy. A group is not a group unless it has boundaries that set it apart from other groups. Whether in domestic politics or in foreign affairs, this means that competition is integral to the promotion of group identity.¹⁷ In the domestic political realm, my group must compete against yours for limited resources. In the international system, this competition pits my state against your state. Further, the in-group/out-group distinction is replete with subjective claims about the goodness of the in-group and the badness of the out-group to distinguish why the in-group deserves the limited resources more than the out-group does.

A country without subnational competition over who gets to define the “nation” and in which a significant number of people share and support a positive national self-image should be a country with significant societal stability and tranquility. Positive national self-image, thus understood, can contribute to stable governance. As Matthew Hirshberg writes,

The maintenance of a positive national self-image is crucial to continued public acquiescence and support for government, and thus to the smooth, on-going functioning of the state. . . . This allows government to go about its business, safe from significant internal dissension, and to expect a healthy level of public support in times of crisis.¹⁸

Positive national self-image may also impair the ability of the people to hold their government accountable. Recall from the discussion of cognition in chapter 3 that belief sets function as screens to keep out information that is incongruent with established beliefs. National self-image can be understood as a national belief set, and the national belief set may screen out information that is incompatible with a positive national self-image. Hirshberg argues that

a positive, patriotic self-image interferes with Americans' ability to keep watch over the government's foreign policy behaviors. Hirshberg conducted experiments using American college students to test their ability to recall details of fictional news stories that featured the United States engaging in good and bad foreign policy behaviors. The students had trouble recollecting the details when the stories featured the US government doing bad foreign policy behaviors. Hirshberg claims that his findings show that "Americans rarely interpret or remember things in . . . ways that threaten their patriotic self-image." As a result, he concludes,

Even if American news consisted equally of information consistent and inconsistent with this [patriotic American] stereotype, Americans would, at least in the short term, tend to find its confirmation in the news. The stereotype interferes with information otherwise capable of cuing alternative perspectives. This increases popular support for military interventions that are or can be viewed as instances of a benevolent America protecting freedom and democracy from a perceived threat, such as communism. It also allows politicians and officials to elicit such support by promoting the application of the stereotype to specific conflicts.¹⁹

The danger in this, Hirshberg warns, is that "in the end, citizens' abilities to critically monitor and evaluate American foreign policy [are] impaired, and the ability of government to pursue unsavory policies with impunity is enhanced."²⁰

National self-image contains a subjective message (implicit or explicit) about those outside the nation: our nation is good; other nations are not (as) good. This mirror image is usually accompanied by what we call an **attribution bias**: our country does good things because we are good people, but if we do bad things it is because we were forced to do so. Conversely, a bad country does bad things because it is in its nature to be bad. Given this understanding of "us" and "them," we need to be constantly vigilant about outsiders and their intentions. Studies of **siege mentality**, such as Daniel Bar-Tal and Dikla Antebi's study of Israeli siege mentality, suggest that governments are given permission to conduct aggressive, preemptive foreign policies in order to protect the good nation from the actions of evil nations. Bar-Tal and Antebi define siege mentality as "a mental state in which members of a group hold a central belief that the rest of the world has highly negative behavioral intentions toward them." This culturally shared and perpetuated belief is complemented by the belief that the group is alone in the world, that it cannot expect help from anyone else in times of crisis, and thus "all means are justified for group defense."²¹ Siege mentality is not a group-shared paranoia; paranoia is an unfounded fear of others, whereas a historical, evidentiary basis exists for siege mentality.

Yugoslavia in the postcommunist era is an excellent example of a country manifesting strong elements of siege mentality. The former Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic manipulated historical examples of Croatian and Turkish (or Muslim) attacks on the Serbian nation to foster a strong and particularly aggressive modern Serbian nationalism. Milosevic used this nationalism to wage war on Croatia and then Bosnia in the early 1990s toward the goal of creating a greater Serbia. When Milosevic turned Serbian nationalism on the ethnic Albanian people of the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo in early 1998, his Serbian forces managed to displace or kill a third of the total population in a matter of weeks. This prompted nearly two months of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes against Serbia, which only reinforced Serbian siege mentality and nationalism. These air strikes came on the heels of nearly a decade of international economic sanctions against Yugoslavia. Ultimately Milosevic was forced from power through elections and a “people’s revolution,” but the new Serbian leaders demonstrated the same suspicion of the intentions of the outside world. Countries exhibiting high degrees of siege mentality require careful handling by the outside world in order not to cue automatic distrust and noncooperation. Bringing Yugoslavia back into the community of states has required time and patience given the intensity of Serbian nationalism and siege mentality during the 1990s.

Political Culture and Foreign Policy Institutions

A culturally maintained national self-image should establish the norms and expectations underpinning the political institutions built by the in-group to promote its interests. It should be intuitive to say that a people’s culture will influence the shape and type of its political structures when that people is self-governing. For example, once we have found that a nation exhibits high degrees of siege mentality, it should come as no surprise to find mandatory, universal military **conscription**. The urgent need to protect the in-group results in the practical need for a strong and ready military. The need for a strong military necessitates conscription.

In Israel, Jews (and Druse) must serve in the military—men for thirty-six months and women for twenty-one months. The state of Israel was founded to protect and promote the Jewish nation, and the “people’s army” with its mandatory military service was seen as critical to this end. However, not all Jews have been required to serve in the military. Since its founding, Israel has exempted ultra-Orthodox Jews studying the Torah from the draft. Ultra-Orthodox political parties formed in order to promote and maintain this exemption and other advantages. These parties also tend to be hawks on national security. In 2012, the Israeli Supreme Court invalidated the religious exemption to the draft, and a law was passed to phase out the exemption. The ultra-Orthodox parties were not in the coalition that wrote this law. By 2015,

they were back in the ruling coalition and scrapped the new law, effectively exempting Torah students again. A legal challenge resulted in a September 2017 Supreme Court ruling against the exemption, and the government was given a year to write new legislation. Thus, although most Israeli Jews share the belief that there is an urgent need to protect Israel as a Jewish nation and state necessitating conscription, the Israeli Jews with the strongest attitudes about the need to protect the Jewish nation seek continued exemption from the “people’s army.” Ironically, the issue of mandatory national military service has become a significant problem for Israeli national identity.

Switzerland’s well-known image as a neutral country contains similar elements of distrust of out-groups. **Neutrality** is the policy stance that a country will not take sides in international disputes or form military alliances of any sort. Switzerland’s neutrality policy does not come out of a peaceful orientation to the world, just a clear preference not to take sides in an often war-torn and divided Europe. Indeed, we might argue that Switzerland is neutral because the Swiss hold a generalized lack of trust in outsiders, and this belief results in a shared and long-standing agreement among the Swiss about the need for maintaining defense preparations even in the absence of external threats. Thus, Swiss men must perform mandatory military training and reservist service from age nineteen to thirty-four.

Neutral Switzerland is a country with a **nonprovocative defense** posture. Military arsenals that are for defensive purposes can also serve offensive purposes. A “defensive defense” or nonprovocative defense posture is based on military arsenals and preparations that can only be used to protect national territory or can only be converted into offensive capabilities with much difficulty. The transparency of one’s nonprovocative capabilities is critical for reassuring other countries. The idea is that if others know—can see and verify—that you cannot attack them, they will not attack you.

Geoffrey Wiseman describes Switzerland’s nonprovocative defense policy as “deterrence by denial,” by which Switzerland would “deter attack by setting a high price for invasion.”²² Wiseman explains,

In the event of an external armed attack, the armed forces would assume the major role in defending the country. . . . Should large parts of Switzerland become occupied, citizens would carry out activities ranging from guerrilla warfare to sabotage and civil disobedience. No form of retaliation or punitive action against the adversary’s population is planned. Switzerland would rely heavily on passive defenses, such as obstacles against tanks, anti-aircraft missiles, and early-warning radar systems.

Undoubtedly, these military preparations are manifestly defensive. Switzerland seeks only to defend its territory, it does not threaten others, and will not fight unless attacked.²³

Israel and Switzerland both use military conscription for the same reason—distrust of out-groups—but in starkly different configurations and defense postures. Their national cultures inform the framework of their defense policies and institutions.

Institutions can also inform the shape of a national political culture; that is, the relationship can be inverted. After World War II, as a price for losing the war, Japan and Germany adopted nonprovocative defense postures; both adopted legal restraints on their militaries and on their use of military force, reflecting defensive defense.²⁴ These legal institutional changes paved the way for the adoption of antimilitaristic national norms. Antimilitaristic national cultures reinforced the institutional restraints on the use of military force. **Constructivists** would say that the culture and institutions were mutually reinforcing.

In Japan and Germany over the last few decades, some elites have pushed for the loosening of constitutional restraints on the use of military force. This loosening is perceived as a prerequisite for each country to assert a more “normal” great power position in global politics. Although some loosening has occurred in both countries, the routes they have taken have been different, and not without causing controversy in the national culture.

Japanese national defense perches on three pillars: its military alliance with the United States, its membership in the United Nations, and its Peace Constitution. Chapter II, Article 9, of the Japanese Peace Constitution reads,

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

Japanese nationalism since 1945 until the present has been channeled into the pursuit of economic security, especially the goal of reducing reliance on imported raw materials through the development of “technological autonomy.”²⁵ Two dominant cultural norms—antimilitarism and economic nationalism—informed and reinforced the institutions of governance as well as defined what the Japanese perceived as appropriate foreign policy behavior. For instance, on the issue of human rights, the Japanese believed that they were in no position to preach to others given their militaristic past, opting instead to pursue straightforward, nonpolitical economic goals in bilateral relations, especially in Asia.²⁶

As might be expected, the Japanese government agencies in charge of pursuing economic security were given more power and authority than those

tasked with military defense. What is surprising is the degree to which this was the case. The three most powerful state institutions—and the ones with essential control of national security policy—were the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and International Trade and Industry.²⁷ Conversely, the Japanese Defense Agency (JDA) did not have cabinet-level status until 2006. Peter J. Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara describe the civilian staff of the JDA as “colonized” by civil servants from other ministries. They note that the JDA lacked a mobilization plan, an emergency civil defense system, and rules for engaging the enemy.²⁸ There was agreement in the society and government that two systems of restraint—cultural and institutional—on the military were appropriate, and these systems kept military ambitions in check.

In the new millennium, Japanese cultural and institutional antimilitarism collided with internal and external forces pushing Japan toward militarization. US pressure on Japan to commit greater resources toward its defense, international pressure on Japan to play a more significant role in global affairs (especially UN peacekeeping), and certain Japanese elite aspirations about restoring Japan’s status in the world aligned to force a change in Japan’s antimilitarist culture and institutions.

The first overtly nationalistic leader to push for this change was Junichiro Koizumi, who served as Japanese prime minister from 2001 to 2006. Koizumi viewed the 2003 Iraq War as “a major opportunity” to pursue Japanese interests. Koizumi hoped that Japanese participation in the war would reinforce the US-Japan alliance, help Japan recover a stake in Iraqi oil lost in the 1991 Gulf War, and earn Japan greater international respect. More, Japanese participation in the war would help to “reshape national norms in a way more favorable to Japan’s remilitarization and hence mark a major step in redressing its lopsided strategic profile as an economic giant without commensurate military capabilities and hence global political clout.”²⁹ Although Koizumi was able to get the Cabinet Legislation Bureau (CLB)—the government agency that serves as “the guardian of national norms in policy making”³⁰—to approve the deployment of Japanese troops to Iraq, the CLB limited the troops to non-combat roles. Further, Koizumi’s efforts to deploy the Japanese military in support of US-led wars resulted in a precipitous loss of support for Koizumi in public opinion polls.

Koizumi’s successor as premier, Shinzo Abe, continued pushing against Japanese antimilitarist national culture. For example, Abe supported issuing revised history textbooks that would eliminate references to Japanese wartime human rights abuses abroad, such as those committed against so-called comfort women, who were in fact Korean women held as sex slaves. Controlling what appears in school textbooks—that is, controlling the official history—is a powerful tool for shaping the attitudes of future citizens. In late 2006, Abe pushed two laws through the Japanese parliament to start the rewriting of the Peace Constitution.³¹ At the same time, on Abe’s urging, the Japanese

parliament “broke two postwar taboos” by passing legislation that upgraded the status of the JDA to ministry level and required schools to teach lessons in patriotism.³² School boards supported the new education requirements, but Japanese teachers were strongly opposed to them. They viewed the requirements as too reminiscent of Japan’s war-era education system that encouraged support for imperialism and the military. The public was outraged and resistant to these changes.

The governing party’s nationalist turn and its inability to overcome persistent economic problems caused the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to lose the upper house of parliament in July 2007. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) won the upper house by focusing on domestic issues, although its opposition to Abe’s nationalist goals and the deployment of troops to Iraq was well known. With the lower house in the hands of the LDP and the upper house in the hands of the DPJ, parliamentary paralysis resulted. This paralysis ultimately contributed to the resignation of Abe and haunted the next LDP prime minister, Yasuo Fukuda, as well.

In the new millennium, while Japanese political parties argued over what the constitution and the culture would allow, the Japanese military increased its regional profile. Japan participated in naval military training drills with Australia in 2009 and then with the countries of Southeast Asia and India in 2012. Japan also extended military aid to Cambodia and East Timor for training in disaster relief and reconstruction. The Japanese cabinet approved a military alliance with South Korea in 2012, but opposition in South Korea put the alliance on hold. Then, in December 2012, the LDP and the nationalistic Shinzo Abe regained control of the government in late-year elections.

The return of Abe and the LDP did not mean that the nationalists had won the debate over whether Japan’s self-image and constitution should change so that Japan might acquire “normal” great power status. Instead, economic problems continued to haunt Japan, creating turbulent domestic politics. However, the nationalist elites might eventually get what they desire because of a seemingly intractable external problem: North Korea. In 2017, North Korean missile tests over Japanese sovereign territory and waters added fuel to the nationalists’ cause. The *New York Times* reports that Abe used the missile tests to promote his agenda; he called for the acquisition of cruise missiles that could be used preemptively against North Korea under Japan’s right to self-defense. The *Times* also reports that the Japanese nation resisted this militarization: “In polls, about half those surveyed say they would oppose Japan’s acquiring missiles to be used in pre-emptive strikes.”³³ Because of this, the Abe government avoided use of the term *preemptive strike*, using instead language that would “not alarm the public.”

In Japan, ruling elites seek to loosen the institutional and cultural restrictions on the use of force for the purposes of pursuing global ambitions. The national culture has been more resistant than the institutions to this change.

In Germany, the legal and cultural restraints on the use of military force have loosened considerably, but in ways that have reinforced a strong moral conviction about when force should be used and when it should be avoided. The institutions and national culture have changed together over time, but both still tilt against a militarized foreign policy.

As in Japan, the German national self-image and the Basic Law were founded on antimilitarism after World War II. Ruth Wittlinger and Martin Larose explain that Germany's national culture and foreign policy since 1945 conform to the "collective memory" of Germany, a notion that works well in our discussion of national self-image. The collective memory of Germany has three strands: a call to remember the lessons of the Holocaust, a reminder of the dangers of aggressive nationalism and war, and a solidarity with the United States and NATO for their support of Germany through the Cold War.³⁴ At the baseline, this translated into a "no more war" foreign policy.

After the end of the Cold War, German political leaders felt constrained by Germany's constitutional prohibitions against contributing to international military operations, particularly broad-based operations such as the 1991 Gulf War and the UN peacekeeping operations in Somalia. In 1994, the Federal Constitutional Court gave German leaders more freedom to contribute to international peace and security by ruling that German military forces could participate in missions outside of Europe when conducted in a multilateral framework and approved by the legislature. These remain the constitutional requirements for the use of military force by Germany. Because of this change, Germany was able to participate in the 1998 NATO air campaign against the Yugoslavian government in response to the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, based on an expanded view of the collective memory that "Germany has a particular moral responsibility to use military means to avoid dictatorships and/or genocide going on elsewhere."³⁵

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, the German elite called upon the collective memory to warn against the dangers of "going it alone." Since the United States and NATO had stood with Germany during the Cold War, Germany had an obligation to assist the United States in Afghanistan.³⁶ However, standing with one's ally was a limited obligation and did not extend to an ally's self-interested wars; the German government refused to follow the United States into Iraq in 2003. The "German Way" was to oppose preemptive wars, which hearkened back to the collective memory of the dangers of aggressive nationalism.³⁷ It is important to note, though, that the lessons of the collective memory—or the understanding of Germany in the world in the dominant national narrative—were being reinterpreted and expanded, allowing Germany to perform a more "emancipated" international role.³⁸ The expansion, however, was still limited by the dominant culture; Kai Oppermann notes that German public opinion continued to reflect "a foreign policy culture that emphasizes the country's reflexive commitment

to multilateral cooperation and is deeply skeptical of the use of military force in international affairs.”³⁹

The political ambitions of Japanese and German leaders have pushed their respective national cultures and domestic institutions to change, but in quite different ways. For the Japanese nationalists led by Koizumi and now Abe, reclaiming “**normal power**” status meant breaking with the antimilitarist national culture and institutional restraints; a “normal power” was a normal great power, free to use military force to pursue its global ambitions. For German leaders, and particularly for German governments led by Angela Merkel since 2005, being a “normal country” did not necessarily mean leaving behind antimilitarism but instead meant performing a role conception in which it is “appropriate to conduct German foreign policy in the name of explicitly stated and narrowly defined national interests.” As Oppermann notes, “The self-conception as a normal country reduces the inhibitions of decision-makers against disappointing the expectations of Germany’s partners.”⁴⁰ This evolving national narrative can explain Germany’s response to the Eurozone crisis and its abstention from full participation in the NATO intervention in Libya in 2011. German national interests and the domestic side of the “two-level game,” specifically the desire of the ruling party to stay in office, drove German decisions on each. This domestic political game is the subject of the next chapter.

The Democratic Peace

The notion that culture and institutions shape foreign policy is central to the idea of the **democratic peace**. This research finds its intellectual roots in philosopher Immanuel Kant’s proposition that democracies are peace-loving countries.⁴¹ In the first modern variation on this idea, it was asserted that democracies are less likely to go to war than nondemocratic states. In a later version, the idea was refined to the proposition that democracies do not fight wars with other democracies. More recently, the notion is that democracies engage in less conflictual foreign policies overall than do nondemocracies. If true, a world of democracies would be a world freed from conflict.

There are two explanations for why democracies are or should be more peaceful than nondemocracies—the first explanation emphasizes the culture of democracies, and the second emphasizes domestic institutional structures. The national cultural explanation proposes that “liberal democracies are more peace loving than other states because of the norms regarding appropriate methods of conflict resolution that develop within society.”⁴² Further, “leaders choose to employ the standards and rules of conduct which have been successful and acceptable at home in their international interaction.”⁴³ However, leaders of democracies are not constrained by peaceful cultural standards when dealing with nondemocracies, since nondemocracies are not similarly

constrained. The second explanation stresses the institutional limitations on foreign policy decision makers. The division of and checks on power within democratic governments and the ultimate restraint of officeholders having to face voters in regular elections prohibit violent (and costly) foreign policy behaviors.⁴⁴

The idea of the democratic peace has generated much research and much criticism. Proponents declare that the proposition of the democratic peace is so robust that it amounts to the only “law” in the study of international relations.⁴⁵ Research programs have flourished fleshing out the nuances of the proposition. Evidence for the democratic peace comes from the Global Peace Index discussed earlier in this chapter. Critics suggest that the democratic peace idea is another justification for Western imperialism.⁴⁶ This criticism is that Western states claim moral cause to impose their political and economic structures on other peoples in the name of creating a more peaceful world. The most interesting thing about the democratic peace idea—and the offshoot theory about democratization and war—is the dynamic relationship it describes between elites, parties, and mobilized publics. This topic is the one we turn to next in chapter 6.

For Discussion

1. Discuss how competing notions about nations appear to have put the United Kingdom’s existence in question. Add to this a discussion of tribalism versus globalism.
2. Describe research efforts to link state type with foreign policy behavior.
3. Discuss how a positive national self-image is constructed against out-groups.
4. How do similar negative views about outsiders result in different military postures in Switzerland and Israel? What else might be going on in these cases?
5. Explain the tensions between nationalist elites and the antimilitarist culture in Japan.
6. Explain the changes that have occurred in how Germans define antimilitarism and how this shapes Germany’s military operations.
7. Explain the theory of the democratic peace.

Key Words

tribal politics
nationalism
middle power
nation-type
national self-image
national role conception
sovereignty
national narrative
subnational narrative

attribution bias
siege mentality
conscription
neutrality
nonprovocative defense
constructivism
normal power
democratic peace

6

Domestic Politics

In This Chapter

- Domestic Political Survival
- Managing Political Competition
- The Unstable Dynamics of Democratization

Major Cases Explored

- How the leader of an Indian coalition government would be willing to sacrifice an advantageous nuclear treaty to keep the coalition together
- Germany's emergence as a normal power and the rise of domestic politics
- How winning new voters gave the Democratic Party of Japan a victory and foreign policy deadlock
- The impact of the refugee crisis on the 2017 Dutch national elections and governing coalition
- How the Dutch government used a diplomatic crisis with Turkey to win the 2017 national elections
- How competition with Hamas made Fatah more risky in its policies toward Israel
- How Hamas used war with Israel to claim legitimacy among Palestinians
- Ehud Barak, Ariel Sharon, and stable democratic institutions
- Incomplete democratization and Turkey's 1974 decision to intervene in Cyprus to "save democracy" in Turkey

In 2004, the Indian National Congress Party, led by Sonia Gandhi, formed an alliance with four communist parties to govern India. The coalition was called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The Congress Party leadership selected Manmohan Singh to be the prime minister. In August 2007, the leader of the largest communist party threatened to bring down the **coalition government** on a critical foreign policy agreement with the United States. The main opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), also opposed this agreement and might have benefited if the communists pulled their support from the UPA and caused the government to collapse. The agreement at issue did not require Parliament's approval, but the Congress Party–UPA

needed the communist parties to stay in the coalition in order to get any legislation passed.

The Singh government found itself in a potentially embarrassing foreign policy situation because of Indian domestic politics. Although the Indian prime minister did not offer to resign over the intracoalitional dispute, he almost let the agreement with the United States collapse in order to keep the communists in the UPA and thereby keep the UPA in power. This was no standard-issue agreement for India, yet Singh and the Congress Party apparently were willing to see it die rather than lose political power.

The agreement at issue was a nuclear treaty signed between India and the United States in 2005. India never signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Indian leaders have stated that until the world is nuclear weapons free, India would retain its sovereign right to arm and defend itself in whatever way it can. In 1974, India successfully tested a nuclear weapon. Since then, India had been prohibited from buying civilian nuclear fuel and technology. Despite this ban, India's nuclear weapons program continued, as did Pakistan's in response. In 1998, India and Pakistan engaged in tit-for-tat nuclear weapons tests. The following year, India and Pakistan fought a war in India's Kargil region.¹ US sanctions were put in place against both countries in response to the nuclear weapons tests, but these sanctions were altered after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States and the start of the US global war on terror.

According to the terms of the 2005 treaty, India still would not sign the NPT, but it would be given the right to buy civilian nuclear fuel and technology. In return, India would allow inspections of its designated civilian nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Its military nuclear facilities would be separated from its civilian facilities and not subject to IAEA (or any other) inspection. India also bargained for and won the right to reprocess nuclear fuel for energy generation—and potentially for building more nuclear weapons. The treaty validated India's position as a nuclear weapons power, and the treaty would help its booming economy. For the United States, the treaty would open the door for US companies to build nuclear reactors in India and put US-India relations on a different footing. Before the treaty came into effect, India would ask for “India-specific” exemptions and safeguards from the IAEA and then seek the approval of the **Nuclear Suppliers Group** (a coalition of forty-five countries that export nuclear material to coalition-approved countries). On the American side, Congress needed to approve the treaty in its final form.

The Indian communist parties—coalition partners in the same government that negotiated the treaty—objected to the treaty because it might lead to a closer relationship between India and the United States. In August 2007, the communist parties threatened to leave the government unless the Congress Party rewrote the treaty. If the communists withdrew from the coalition,

early elections would be called, with no guarantee that the Congress Party could win enough seats and coalition partners to retain control of the government. In mid-October, Prime Minister Singh said he would not risk a general election for the sake of the treaty. That is, holding on to power at home was more important than consolidating a treaty that was a win-win situation for India, diplomatically, militarily, and economically.

Political fortunes change, however, and the strength of coalition members can also change. A few weeks after the Congress Party capitulated to the communist parties, the communist parties removed their objections to the treaty process because of their own local political tribulations. In mid-November, the Indian government began its negotiations with the IAEA for the “India-specific” safeguards. Attempting to reassert their position, the communist parties warned that all they had agreed to were negotiations, not a final deal.

The leaders of the UPA coalition in India found themselves in a classic two-level game. On the other side of the deal, the George W. Bush administration had to move the treaty through a less-than-enthusiastic US Congress in late 2006 and early 2007 and would need to take the treaty back through Congress in 2008 right before national elections in the fall. For the Bush administration, however, the **dual game** was less threatening since Bush was prohibited from seeking a third term in office. Congress did approve the treaty in October 2008, despite concerns about the treaty undermining nuclear nonproliferation efforts.

The two-level game, as discussed in chapter 1, is one in which national leaders find themselves working between domestic and international politics, generally putting domestic goals ahead of international ones. As Peter Trumbore and Mark Boyer explain, “At the national level, domestic groups pressure the government to adopt policies they favor, while politicians seek power by building coalitions among these constituents.” Meanwhile, at “the international level, governments seek to satisfy domestic pressures while limiting the harmful impact of foreign developments.”² At both levels, the “game” is political survival and well-being—for the country at the international level and for the particular officeholders at the domestic level. Leaders of all types of governments must pay attention to the domestic political game. “No leader, no matter how **autocratic**, is completely immune from domestic pressure, whether that takes the form of rival political parties seeking partisan advantage, as in a democratic setting, or rival factions jockeying for influence and power in a bureaucratic-authoritarian system.”³

In the last chapter, we considered how national culture sets the terms for foreign policy and how post-World War II German national culture and foreign policy were dominated by a strong prohibition against the use of military force and a strong sense of international obligation to allies. With unification at the end of the Cold War, German decision makers felt growing confidence to follow more narrowly defined *national* interests and were less concerned

with “disappointing the expectations of Germany’s partners.”⁴ German leaders, according to Kai Oppermann, could give “more room to the intricacies of domestic politics. This domestic context of German foreign policy, in turn, has generally become more demanding.”⁵ Without the same sense of external constraints, the definition and meaning of German “national interests” and foreign policy became more “politicized and contested in the domestic arena.”⁶ That is, Germans felt free to disagree over national interests and foreign policy in their domestic politics, elections, and governance.

Realists who insist that national interests are persistent regardless of officeholders could not explain why Singh would be willing to put an excellent nuclear deal on hold to keep junior coalition partners in line. Nor could realists explain why a stronger Germany—stronger because unification made Germany a much more important international actor—would be subject to lesser, not greater, international pressure, nor why the leaders of a unified Germany would argue over national interests and foreign policy.

In chapter 3 we reviewed how scholars think about the impact of leaders on foreign policy. In chapter 4, we put leaders into their informal and formal decision-making contexts when we discussed the ultimate decision units. Recall that each ultimate decision unit was influenced by its own “culture” about conflict resolution and by any institutional requirements regarding the same. Then we set this more complicated decision-making scenario into a national culture and the concomitant national institutions in chapter 5. In this chapter, we make everything more complex—messier, if you will—by bringing in domestic politics. Leaders may sit at the nexus of the international and national, as Hermann and Hagan tell us,⁷ but they do not sit above national politics. Instead, they are submerged in national politics as they struggle against other elites and their supporters for domestic survival and well-being.

Domestic Political Survival

The kind of government a country has matters. When we know what kind of government a country has, we know which political actors and resources are technically legitimate and the formal processes by which policy decisions are made. Regardless of government type, we can expect that officeholders seek to ensure their own **domestic political survival**—that is, once in office/power, they want to stay in office/power. Those who are not in power wish to get it, and then they wish to keep it. Getting in office and staying in office are baseline activities for political actors. Beyond that, officeholders wish to enact some kind of policy agenda that will satisfy them and their supporters. Even totalitarian leaders must keep some supporters happy in order to stay on top. We can safely assume that in every country political actors seek to ensure their domestic survival through getting in office, staying in office, and providing well-being to themselves and their constituents. This seems an easy formula,

but sometimes the first goal of getting in office can distort the third goal of providing for constituents. When an actor fails to provide for his or her constituents, the actor's domestic survivability becomes threatened. Politics always involves trade-offs!

This is what the members of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) learned when the DPJ won control of the Japanese lower house in 2009. In the last chapter, we considered whether the antimilitaristic national culture of Japan is changing. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has held control of the Japanese government for most of the post-1945 period. At the start of the new millennium, a strong nationalist LDP leader, Junichiro Koizumi, became prime minister. After he served three terms, Shinzo Abe—also from the LDP and also a nationalist—became prime minister. He served just a year, and then two more LDP prime ministers followed, each of them serving only a year. The DPJ managed to win control of the government in the elections of September 2009, in part because of the LDP's inability to manage the economy and in part because of the LDP's increasingly nationalistic foreign policy in support of the US global war on terror.

Hironi Sasada explains that the DPJ victory in 2009 was the result of a broadened voting constituency. The DPJ was typically an urban party that supported free trade and wanted free trade agreements (FTAs), while the LDP was more associated with rural voters and protectionist trade policies. The LDP's **protectionism** was particularly strong when it came to the agricultural industry and the farm vote. Sasada reports that only 5.1 percent of the population and 1.4 percent of the gross domestic product was represented by the agricultural industry,⁸ but these rural businesses and voters formed an "iron triangle" with the LDP and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery. The rural vote was also overrepresented in the Diet.⁹ Japan experienced considerable government instability from September 2006 through September 2009. LDP governments had serious problems managing the economy and decided to make unpopular budget cuts. Farmers were not immune to the LDP's cutbacks, and their dissatisfaction led them to consider switching their votes to the DPJ.

The DPJ sensed an opportunity before the 2009 elections to pick off dissatisfied rural voters. The DPJ's protrade stance, particularly its support for ending agricultural price supports and using income supports for farmers, had not been popular with the agricultural bloc, but that bloc was unhappy with the ruling LDP. The DPJ went after rural voters, and as Sasada explains, "Despite the overall preference for free trade policies, the DPJ [leadership] . . . intentionally portrayed the income support system for farmers as an additional source of subsidies for farmers without adequately discussing the possibility of trade liberalization."¹⁰ After the budget cutting of the LDP, the DPJ *seemed* to be offering an additional source of income to rural voters, so they switched.

However, the 2009 electoral victory for the DPJ created a deadlock between the new rural DPJ voters and the traditional urban DPJ voters over the issue of **trade liberalization**,¹¹ the very issue with which the DPJ was most associated. The DPJ held power for the next three years—but under three different prime ministers, a sure sign of dysfunction. During these three years, “The party failed to put their proposed policies into practice.”¹² As Sasada notes, “The DPJ-led government concluded only two FTAs (with India and Peru), and *the negotiations for those FTAs were initiated by the LDP.*”¹³ The expanded voting constituency of the DPJ helped it take control of government but then tied its hands on the DPJ’s premier foreign policy goal. The DPJ lost control of the government in the 2012 elections. The LDP returned to the government with the same mixed base that the DPJ used in 2009, but in 2012 the LDP also had the now-popular Abe as its leader.¹⁴

The DPJ thought it could court rural voters and still pursue its urban-approved free trade agenda. In its defense, the DPJ did not appear to change its policy stance to please its new voters at the expense of the old voters, but the deadlock did no good for either group. To use an old American expression, the DPJ tried to talk the talk to woo rural voters, but it was not prepared to walk the walk—it did not adopt the anti-free trade sentiments of its new voters.

A somewhat similar dilemma faced the sitting Dutch prime minister and his party in the 2017 national elections. These elections came in the wake of the country-first **populism** that had caused Britain to vote for Brexit in 2015 and the US Electoral College to elect Donald Trump as president in 2016. The 2017 Dutch elections, like the Brexit referendum, were influenced by the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe. In 2015, sixty thousand refugees entered the Netherlands. The Netherlands traditionally accepted a large number of submitted refugee applications, as it did in the first half of 2015, suggesting that the Netherlands was welcoming to refugees. Despite this, since 2008 refugees in the Netherlands have been required to work and to pay 75 percent of the costs of their food and housing to the government once settled.¹⁵ Public opinion in the Netherlands reflected this mix of welcome and pragmatic caution about refugees. In the Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey by the Pew Research Center, only 17 percent of the Dutch thought “diversity makes their country a better place to live,” while 36 percent said diversity made it “a worse place to live.” Additionally, and somewhat paradoxically, only 36 percent of the Dutch saw Syrian and Iraqi refugees as a major threat, while 61 percent were concerned that refugees would “increase the likelihood of terrorism” in the Netherlands.

The sitting Dutch prime minister before the 2017 elections was Mark Rutte, the leader of the liberal-conservative People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy. Rutte had led two coalition governments before the 2017 election, one with a far-right, anti-Islam, anti-immigration partner and another with a center-left partner. The far-right, anti-Islam, anti-immigration Party

for Freedom, led by Geert Wilders, was also anti-European Union. Wilders rode the wave of country-first populism, and in March 2017 his party won the second-largest number of seats in Parliament; Rutte's party lost seats while still claiming the most of any party in the election. After the longest negotiations in modern Dutch history, Rutte put together a coalition government, and the four-party coalition he put together included a rightist party that was opposed to abortion, same-sex marriage, euthanasia, and the Eurozone and a leftist party that was pro-choice, pro-LGBT rights, pro-euthanasia, and pro-European Union.¹⁶ To make this coalition—with its one-vote margin over the opposition—come together, Rutte adopted and promised to promote some reforms for which the far right had campaigned. One of the coalition party leaders had warned that without reform, “Brexit might not be the last exit from the E.U.”¹⁷ As the *New York Times* summed it up, “The hard-fought defeat of the extreme right in Dutch parliamentary elections last spring has led one of the most progressive countries in Europe to embrace more conservative policies on immigration and national identity, as a way to fend off challenges from the right and force a governing coalition.”¹⁸ Despite these concessions to the far right, the coalition reaffirmed that the Netherlands remained committed to the European Union. Readers of this book will be able to say whether this coalition managed to stay in power and enact some kind of policy agenda and whether the Netherlands stayed in the European Union.

Managing Political Competition

Getting into office, staying in office, and getting something done to improve the well-being of one's constituents is difficult in a coalition government; even in a simpler system like that in the United States, it can be hard to wrangle together different interests within the same party. National leaders cannot just focus on who is in their government, of course, since the opposition remains part of the domestic political mix. Rutte had to gain support from voters and coalition partners in the face of the “Dutch Trump” Geert Wilders's country-first, anti-immigration, anti-Islam appeals. Of course, Wilders did not fade from the political scene after the Dutch government coalition formed in October 2017. He remained a member of Parliament with a strong bloc and, like Trump, he had a constant Twitter presence. In December 2017, he met with other far-right nationalists from across Europe to call on Europe to adopt “Donald Trump-style travel bans,” enact a policy like Australia's of stopping migrant boats at sea, and build border walls.¹⁹ Wilders claimed that the Rutte government was out of touch with what was needed to protect the Netherlands.

Wilders was essentially challenging the authority and **legitimacy** of the Dutch government. The challenge is of the most basic form: those in power do not protect and serve the interests of this nation and thus they have no

right to be in power—so choose someone who will defend this country, like me. How government leaders respond to this challenge is the next topic for our consideration. Rutte’s government had met this challenge prior to the March 2017 elections by using a timely foreign policy crisis.

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan had called for a referendum in Turkey for April 2017. An affirmative vote in the referendum would be one in favor of changing Turkey from a parliamentary to a presidential republic with sweeping grants of power given to the president. Erdogan’s government decided it was important to reach out to Turks living in Europe so that they could vote for his referendum. The government had done this in previous elections, with Erdogan campaigning in Germany in 2008, 2011, and 2014 to court Turkish voters. Germany was home to 1.5 million Turks.²⁰ In 2017, Turkish government ministers were dispatched to European cities to hold rallies in support of the referendum. German officials, in an ongoing diplomatic row with Turkey over its imprisonment of a German-Turkish journalist, claimed Turkey wanted to take advantage of free speech in Germany in order to close it down at home. In early March, German officials canceled the planned rallies, causing Erdogan to accuse Germany of using Nazi tactics and fascism (a standard refrain from Erdogan). Within a week, Swiss and Dutch authorities had also canceled proreferendum rallies.

The Dutch government led by Mark Rutte even stopped Turkish officials from flying into the Netherlands to hold rallies to court the four hundred thousand Turks living there. Erdogan, in turn, called the Dutch “Nazi remnants” and threatened sanctions against the Netherlands.²¹ Anti-Dutch crowds gathered outside the Dutch consulate in Istanbul and outside a Turkish consulate in Rotterdam. Dutch officials used antiriot police to break up that demonstration. The *New York Times* reported that Dutch media gave constant coverage to the dispute, showing Rutte on television standing up to Turkey and defending the Dutch nation—with the Dutch elections just days away. Erdogan saw how his own referendum was being used in Dutch domestic politics when he declared, “Holland, if you are sacrificing Turkey-Holland relations because of the election on Wednesday, you will pay the price.”²² However, in the two-level game, foreign policy interests are not the ones that drive government policies: domestic politics matter more. Turkey presented Rutte with a golden opportunity to demonstrate how he was actively defending the Dutch nation against foreigners, while the anti-immigrant Wilders just talked a lot.

Erdogan suggested that the Netherlands would pay a price for its actions, which means that the domestic political game can create external dynamics that might come back to cause the country or its interests some harm. That is, using foreign policy to manipulate domestic politics can be potentially risky. Despite the risk, leaders often choose to engage in **risky foreign policy** behaviors in the face of a vocal domestic opponent in order to “win” the

domestic political game and undercut the opponent. (In the next chapter, we will examine a counterargument to this with a focus on media and public opinion.) One popular version of this tactic is the **diversionary theory of war**, in which leaders commit military forces abroad in order to distract from problems in domestic politics.

Joe Hagan proposes that in domestic political arguments over foreign policy issues when the legitimacy of the leadership is challenged, leaders may resort to increasingly risky political strategies to manage the challenge posed by the **domestic opposition**. One strategy is to try to insulate the preferred foreign policy option by ignoring or attempting to suppress the opposition. Another is to accommodate the opposition by using its rhetoric while attempting to avoid the controversial foreign policy option. The third strategy Hagan proposes is to mobilize one's own supporters behind the preferred foreign policy option.²³ Of course, we know that no political event is isolated in time, so we will be mindful that a particular strategy adopted at one point in time may limit the strategies available at subsequent points. We will blend Hagan's ideas with some other models in the discussion that follows.

If the **insulation strategy** is successful, the government can pursue its preferred foreign policy as long as the government can suppress the opposition. The **accommodation strategy**, though, can lead to unintended consequences, some of which we have already discussed. As part of an accommodation strategy, the leadership might invite the opposition into the government and adopt the opposition's rhetoric to show unity. This is similar to what Gary Wynia calls **additive political change** in the Latin American context.²⁴ Additive political change is when an opponent has demonstrated sufficient power to cause the ruling regime harm, prompting the regime to invite the opponent into the government. The opponent must agree not to use its power as the price of admission. The regime thus co-opts the leadership of the opposition, thereby quenching the opposition's thirst for power—and hopefully muzzling it. It is, however, just as likely that the opposition gains power disproportionate to its size when it joins the ruling coalition, as we saw in our discussion of Orthodox Jewish political parties in Israel (in chapter 5). Another unintended scenario is that the expanded ruling coalition will end up in a policy deadlock as we saw when the Japanese DPJ government courted protectionist voters, stopping the DPJ from accomplishing its goals on free trade. Because of these dangers, leaders may choose a low-cost accommodation and simply mimic the rhetoric of the opponent, hoping that this will be sufficient to weaken its challenge. Even adopting the opposition's rhetoric, however, can be fraught with danger because the government may become identified with the rhetoric and have its next actions judged by this new standard.

The **mobilization strategy** involves the manipulation of foreign policy to one's own political advantage, usually through greater risk taking. Leaders assert their legitimacy by confronting the opposition through appeals to

nationalism or imperialism or by **scapegoating** foreigners. Leaders claim that they—and not their domestic opponents—have a special capacity to maintain the country’s security and status abroad. This strategy, however, goes beyond nationalistic claims and rhetoric, as the leaders initiate foreign policy actions that demonstrate their special capacity. The best kinds of demonstrations are those like military strikes or the deployment of troops—behaviors that foreign policy scholars label “risky” (for good reason). Moreover, and more to the point of this strategy, the leaders put their own supporters on the streets (sometimes literally) in defense of the nation as defined by the leaders. A mobilized people marches in defense of something, leaving it little time to pay attention to other issues. When successful, this strategy works by “diverting attention from divisive domestic problems.”²⁵ This is the classic version of the diversionary theory of war, but it does not just apply to war. Rutte engaged in a modified version of this when he blocked the Turkish ministers from entering the Netherlands to stage rallies for Erdogan. Rutte took a risk with foreign policy as a gambit to undercut Wilders’s support among those Dutch voters who were distrustful of foreigners, especially Muslim foreigners.

Now we will use these strategies in two case studies—two sides of a single foreign policy event—to see the dynamics at play. In 1996, Yasir Arafat was elected president of the Palestinian National Authority (shortened here to the Palestinian Authority, or PA), the governing body of the Palestinian people living in the West Bank and Gaza. Arafat was also the leader of Fatah, one of several Palestinian organizations under the umbrella framework known as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Arafat served as chairman of the PLO in its long struggle to (re)claim territory subsumed by the state of Israel in its 1948 unilateral declaration of independence and in subsequent wars with Arab states. In the 1967 war, Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza from Jordan and Egypt, respectively.

The government of Israel and the PLO signed a peace treaty in 1993. This treaty set in place mechanisms for future negotiations regarding the transfer of authority and land in the West Bank and Gaza to the PA. The amount of territory to be transferred to the PA, the enumeration of details regarding whether the PA was to be partially or fully independent of Israel, the rights of displaced Palestinians, and the resolution of competing claims to Jerusalem (especially the Old City) were left to subsequent negotiations. Additional issues to resolve involved the status of claims of Israeli settlers in Palestinian-claimed lands and the control of fresh water.

In 1996, Benjamin Netanyahu was elected prime minister of Israel in a landslide election, defeating sitting Labor prime minister Shimon Peres. (This is the first time Netanyahu was prime minister. In chapter 3 we considered the second time Netanyahu was prime minister.) Although a hard-liner by reputation and the leader of the conservative Likud Party, Netanyahu began the transfer of some territory to the PA as part of the continuing peace pro-

cess. After a series of deadly suicide attacks against Israelis, Netanyahu stopped some troop withdrawals and lifted a freeze on Jewish settlements in the disputed territory in contravention of the peace process. Despite this, in October 1998, more negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians resulted in a three-stage agreement for the transfer of more lands. Netanyahu completed the first stage of this transfer and then was defeated in Israeli elections by Ehud Barak in 1999.

Barak led a coalition called One Israel to a landslide victory over Netanyahu and Likud. One Israel was a fragile coalition of divergent parties, including Barak's own Labor Party. In a demonstration of the fragility of Barak's coalition and hold on power, the Knesset (the legislature) elected a Likud Party leader to the powerful role of speaker. Barak and Yasir Arafat signed the Wye River Agreement under the mediation of US president Bill Clinton in September 1999. Barak transferred land and released two hundred political prisoners in the second part of the three-stage peace process. In July 2000, President Clinton sponsored another series of talks at Camp David to initiate the third stage of the peace process. These talks failed to produce an agreement, and both Barak and Arafat indicated that the position of their respective sides had hardened. Arafat threatened that the Palestinians would make a unilateral declaration of independence in September absent further agreement with the Israeli government.

Although Arafat postponed the unilateral declaration, events in late September 2000 brought the peace process to a deadly halt. Ariel Sharon, one of the leaders of the opposition Likud Party, and a group of followers and Israeli troops went to a disputed site in the Old City of Jerusalem, a place the Jews call the Temple Mount and the Muslims call Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary). Sharon's goal was to demonstrate Israeli commitment to maintaining full control of the Old City. His very public display on a Friday, a day of special religious observation for Muslims, prompted a Palestinian crowd to form in protest. Rocks were thrown and bullets were fired—the rocks from the Palestinian side, the bullets from the Israeli side—and months and years of active low-intensity conflict began. Over the next twelve years, the low-level conflict ignited into a Palestinian civil war and three Israeli-Palestinian wars.

On the Palestinian side, Arafat governed with the assistance of a small council of appointees from his political party, Fatah. Arafat had a major domestic opponent in the person of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the spiritual leader of Hamas. Hamas was formed in 1987 at the start of the **intifada**, or Palestinian uprising, in Gaza and the West Bank. While the leaders of Fatah and the PLO spent decades outside the disputed territories, Hamas and its leaders experienced the occupation and conflict and wore this as a badge of authenticity. Hamas's purpose was twofold—to provide humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territory and to coordinate military/terrorist activities against Israelis. Sheikh Yassin declared that Israel was attempting to

destroy Islam, and because of this, loyal Muslims had a religious obligation to destroy Israel. Arafat and the PLO had also been committed to the elimination of the state of Israel, but they reversed their position in 1989—the same year that Yassin began an eight-year imprisonment in an Israeli jail. Yassin and Hamas opposed the subsequent agreements made between Arafat/Fatah and the Israeli government.

In the first week after the September 2000 Sharon visit to Haram al-Sharif, seventy Palestinians were killed in the streets while confronting Israeli security forces. During that week, the Israeli government demanded that Arafat reestablish order in the West Bank. Arafat made no move to deploy an effective Palestinian police presence to quell the uprising. As Israeli leaders demanded that Arafat assert control, his leadership was called into question: either Arafat could not control the uprising or he would not control it. The former suggested that the political balance had shifted in favor of a dangerous element in the Palestinian community; the latter suggested that Arafat condoned the use of violence to force Israeli concessions in negotiations. Neither explanation meant good things for the peace process.

Political power *had* shifted in the Palestinian community, putting into doubt Arafat's ability to retain political control, much less to stay engaged in discussions with Israel. After the first week of conflict, Hamas declared that Fridays would be "days of rage" against Israeli rule. The first day of rage witnessed a mass outpouring in the West Bank and Gaza, with more Palestinians killed and injured. Significantly, Arafat's Fatah issued support for this day of rage *after* it was under way.

Arafat's hard line toward Israel had started months before at the Camp David talks. Arafat's approach to Camp David and his later threat to declare the independence of Palestine might have been manifestations of his decision to employ a mobilization strategy. Perhaps Arafat calculated that in the face of growing opposition by Hamas and his own public opinion trouble, he needed to assert a hard line toward the Israelis. This hard line would demonstrate his continued commitment to the Palestinian people and his special capacity to lead them to statehood. Taking a tough negotiating stance with the Israelis might slow down the peace process in the short term—and thus it was risky—but reinvigorating his political authority over his domestic opposition and retaining political power were probably Arafat's priorities. Arafat's initial refusal to order an effective Palestinian police presence to stem the riots might have been a continuation of this risky behavior. There was a symbolic Palestinian police presence in the streets, but Arafat insisted that the uprising was a spontaneous response of the people that would only stop when the Israelis stopped using violence and conceded to a multinational investigation into the causes of the most recent conflict.

Arafat's mobilization strategy manifested in the failed summer negotiations worked greatly to his disadvantage. He had put his credibility on the

line against the Israelis at Camp David to win political advantage over Hamas. Then Hamas forced Arafat's hand in calling for the days of rage. Arafat had to adopt a *more* belligerent stance toward Israel or risk being seen as unsupportive of the Palestinians' right to defend themselves against Israeli aggression.

On the Israeli side of this foreign policy event, Arafat's support for the Second Intifada provided evidence to many Israelis of his true intentions and untrustworthiness. Barak's One Israel coalition was fragile back in the summer at the time of the Camp David talks. By late November, after two months of violence in the West Bank and Gaza, Barak had issued ultimatums to Arafat, approved significant escalations in the use of military force, and desperately courted Ariel Sharon to join a new emergency government. This attempt to woo Sharon was an accommodation move that failed. Meanwhile, peace with the Palestinians—still Barak's long-term foreign policy goal—seemed more unattainable with each passing day. In the face of mounting domestic political criticism and the unremitting intifada, Barak had to act. His earlier deployment of troops to deal with the intifada was not a mobilization strategy, since the troops were not a ploy for domestic political purposes to undercut his critics. The security situation had worsened, and the need for increased security measures was obvious. After failing to bring Sharon into an emergency government, Barak could have mobilized more of the Israel Defense Forces in a massive show of force to demonstrate that his government could still defend the national interests. Instead, Barak realized that support for his premiership had declined, and so he called for an early election for prime minister (for a few years and at this time, Israel had separate elections for the Knesset and prime minister). This result does not fit the diversionary theory of war! This case demonstrates something about democracies in general, and parliamentary democracies in particular.

Parliamentary democratic systems have regularly scheduled elections, just like presidential democracies. When the governing party or coalition is in trouble politically in a parliamentary system, the government might face a “no confidence” vote in parliament that would force an early election. Similarly, the government could call for an early election in acknowledgment of its lack of support. Sometimes, though, governments call for early elections because they calculate that they will improve their strength in the new parliament that results from the elections.

After the Brexit referendum resulted in a win for the “leave” side, the British conservative prime minister resigned. The Conservative Party still retained a majority of the seats in the lower house of Parliament and thus still controlled the government. The party convened and picked a new leader who then became the new prime minister. In this case, Theresa May became party leader and the new prime minister in 2016. Her biggest tasks were negotiating the terms of Britain's divorce from the European Union and dealing with domestic terrorist attacks. May and the other party leaders calculated that a snap election

might gain the party more seats in Parliament, and so the Brexit negotiations could proceed with a strengthened British government. The snap election was called for in May and conducted in June. The Conservative Party lost its majority in a massive political miscalculation. Conservatives retained control as a minority government with the backing of the ultraconservative Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) from Northern Ireland. The DUP almost sank the early Brexit negotiations over Northern Ireland mentioned in chapter 5.

When Ehud Barak called for an early election for prime minister, he probably did not expect that he would be reelected. Barak did what we expect political actors to do in stable democracies: respect the rules. Barak and his supporters, Sharon and his supporters, and all the many other political parties in Israel work in a democratic political system with established and strong institutions designed to manage political disputes peacefully, even heated disputes. The institutions are capable of containing the conflict peacefully. The political actors in that system respect the rules and the institutions and conform their behavior accordingly. That is, they conduct themselves peacefully within the rules. In September 2000, Ariel Sharon took his supporters to the Temple Mount intending to cause political trouble for Barak—and he succeeded. Ariel Sharon did not take his supporters and their militias out to overthrow the Barak government. Ehud Barak *could have* attempted a mobilization strategy by ordering a large-scale deployment of troops to the West Bank and Gaza—and he would have won some political support for such a move—but instead he called for an election. The election would set the tone for whatever actions the government of Israel would take regarding the intifada and all other matters. This process is important to keep in mind as we move through the next section.

Ariel Sharon won election as prime minister in February 2001. Sharon served as Israeli prime minister from this point until he was debilitated by a stroke in January 2006. His successor, Ehud Olmert, facing his own difficulties retaining political power for his Likud government, brought members of Labor into his cabinet. In mid-2007, Barak returned to the cabinet as defense minister and head of the Labor Party, threatening to pull Labor out of the coalition if Olmert and Likud did not comply with Labor's demands regarding an investigation into Israel's 2006 war with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The Unstable Dynamics of Democratization

The Hamas-Fatah political struggle continued in the Palestinian territories, sometimes eclipsing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In January 2005, elections were held for the Palestinian presidency (the rest of the government remained unelected). Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah was elected to the presidency in an election that Hamas supporters boycotted. Then the US George W. Bush administration decided to push for legislative elections in order to demonstrate its

commitment to **democracy promotion** in Arab lands—and as a counter to the belligerent “democracy promotion” of the raging Iraq War. Israeli and Fatah officials had misgivings about holding the elections²⁶; afterward, Bush administration officials came to the same conclusion.²⁷

In January 2006, elections were held for a Palestinian legislature. Hamas won 76 seats in the 132-seat body; Fatah won only 43. At the start of 2006, the new government was sworn in. In April, the United States and the European Union cut financial assistance to the PA, and Israel suspended payment of tax and customs receipts that it collected for the PA. In late June, Hamas gunmen from Gaza launched a raid into Israel and took a young Israeli soldier hostage. Three days after that, Israel invaded Gaza. Within a few more days, Hezbollah rocket strikes into Israel from Lebanon provoked Israel into invading Lebanon. This war in Lebanon continued for another month. In November 2006, Israel declared a cease-fire in Gaza and withdrew its troops.

In the meantime, the Bush administration was dismayed about Hamas’s electoral victory and conspired with Fatah to get rid of the Hamas government. The plan involved two parts: Abbas would find a way to dismiss the Hamas government, and then when violence erupted in protest, Fatah security forces would overrun and destroy Hamas. Fatah would do this using covert military aid given to it by the Bush administration.²⁸ The chief Middle East advisor to the US vice president later described what happened as “an attempted coup by Fatah that was pre-empted before it could happen” by Hamas.²⁹ In the middle of June 2007 in a series of pitched battles, Hamas took control of Gaza, leaving only the West Bank under the control of Fatah. That June marked the period now called the Palestinian civil war, but armed confrontations between Hamas and Fatah forces continued afterward, albeit at a less intense level. Various efforts to reconcile the two sides were attempted and failed. Israel and Hamas continued their own hostilities, and these escalated into two more Gaza wars, in December 2007–January 2008 and November 2012. At the cease-fire that ended the November 2012 Israeli-Hamas/Palestinian war, Hamas and Fatah attempted a reconciliation. We can leave this case study at this point in order to bring in the conceptual material.

Fatah’s Abbas tried to form unity governments with Hamas even as Fatah’s security personnel were arming against Hamas. Had Abbas’s accommodation efforts succeeded, Hamas might have been co-opted and the civil war averted. This unity government might have been deadlocked on the matter of Israel since Hamas still rejected Israel’s right to exist. Worse, it might have turned more confrontational with Israel if Fatah adopted Hamas’s hard-line stance. At the same time, there was a slight chance that accommodation might have limited Hamas’s hostile actions against Israel, thereby avoiding the 2008 Gaza war, if not the 2012 war. But accommodation failed, and Hamas’s own mobilization strategy—which involved provoking the Israelis into three wars—kept Fatah’s legitimacy in constant question as Hamas demonstrated

how much it would sacrifice to defend Palestinians against Israel. Meanwhile, scheduled Palestinian national elections were suspended amid the conflict. No further national elections for president or legislature have happened.

The democratic peace theory—that democracies are less conflictual in their foreign policies than nondemocracies—rests on two pillars: first, strong, stable institutions restrain chief executives from engaging in external wars, and second, political actors socialized in peaceful norms on conflict resolution will attempt to comply with those norms in foreign policy. These two pillars require time; democratic institutions have to be developed and the **rule of law** established, and political leaders and their supporters must learn to live within the rules even when they may lose particular political contests. Getting to this stable point may involve a difficult transition period in which threatened old elites and their supporters and rising new elites and their supporters clash, at a time when the new and not yet consolidated institutions are unable to contain the conflict. The transition to democracy may be a period in which a state is more likely, not less, to go to war with other states.

An instructive study on the dangers of the **democratic transition** comes from Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder. Building on the work of other scholars, they conceptualize **democratization** as a process in which the power and authority of the national government is decreased through decentralization; open and competitive elections are held to fill governmental positions, especially the head of government; and citizens are freed to participate in politics through elections and organizing. Their study of countries that have undergone democratization reveals some disturbing trends. Mansfield and Snyder find that “an increase in the openness of the selection process for the chief executive doubled the likelihood of war.” Increasing “the competitiveness of political participation” increased the chances of war by 90 percent, and increasing the “constraints on a country’s chief executive” increased the chances of war by 35 percent. Overall, states moving from full autocracy to full democracy “were on average about two-thirds more likely to become involved in any type of war.”³⁰ Their percentages matter less than the dynamics they describe. These dynamics fit well with our overall discussion.

Transitions involve phases, and countries can get stuck in a phase; or the process may even get reversed as the country returns to autocracy. Mansfield and Snyder conclude that states “stuck” in the first phase of democratization, “during which elites threatened by the transition are often still powerful and the institutions needed to regulate mass political participation tend to be very weak,” are especially bellicose.³¹ This would describe the Palestinian situation since the legislative elections of 2006.

What accounts for these findings? When citizens participate in politics through political party and interest group activities, they make demands on government. Newly empowered citizens feel emboldened in the demands they make. Old elites and new elites align with their respective supporters to

push these demands. Meanwhile, the central government's power diminishes as part of the democratization process—yet the demands continue. The new institutions are too weak to contain these demands, and the citizens and elites have not yet internalized the norms of democracy that would make them respect the new and developing institutions. The dynamics of democratization combine to form an unstable mix of “social change, institutional weakness, and threatened interests.”³² For the ruling regime, “one of the simplest but riskiest strategies for a hard-pressed regime in a democratizing country is to shore up its prestige at home by seeking victories abroad.”³³

Democratization is a process in which a society acquires liberal norms and identity. At the same time, the society experiences institutional change, including the “establishment of stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law, civil rights, a free and effective press, and representative government.”³⁴ The relationship between democratic culture and institutions is of course weak in this period, but each is critical to the deepening of the other. The transition can be completed—democratic norms and institutions can be consolidated—without war. But sometimes the transition period so threatens elites that they attempt to retain control by substituting populist or nationalist norms for liberal democratic norms in order to win the support of mass publics and stay atop the political game. To the extent that elites can get mass publics to buy into a populist and/or nationalist ideology, they may be able to suspend the process toward fuller democratization.³⁵

How does this lead to international military disputes? Mansfield and Snyder offer three “related mechanisms” that are similar in process and result to Hagan’s strategies discussed above. First, Mansfield and Snyder say that elites may engage in “nationalist outbidding: both old and new elites may bid for popular favor by advancing bold proposals to deal forcefully with threats to the nation, claiming their domestic political opponents will not vigorously defend the national interests.”³⁶ This should sound similar to Hagan’s mobilization strategy in which elites attempt to stay in power by claiming a special ability to defend the national interests as they mobilize their supporters.

Next, Mansfield and Snyder offer a second mechanism that they call “blowback from nationalist ideology: nationalists may find themselves trapped by rhetoric that emphasizes combating threats to the national interest because both the politicians and their supporters have internalized this worldview.”³⁷ This blowback is similar to what happens in Hagan’s accommodation strategy when elites attempt to accommodate the nationalist rhetoric of opponents only to become trapped into limited policy choices by their own talk.

Finally, Mansfield and Snyder say that elites may engage in “**logrolling**.” In this, various elites form a nationalist coalition weakly held together by a protracted external problem, usually military engagement abroad. Here, we might consider Hagan’s insulation strategy with a twist: a coalition of elites agree that they wish to stay in power, but the only way they can do so is if they

create an external situation that diverts attention from them, insulating them from critical domestic opponents and popular demands. Protracted military conflict becomes the method by which elites “logroll” and put off further steps toward the consolidation of democracy. My students think this scenario sounds similar to the “forever war” that remains a constant background presence in the 1949 novel by George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

No Palestinian political actors fully respected democratic norms when the first Palestinian legislative elections were held in 2006. When Hamas won a majority of the seats, external actors cut financial assistance to the whole Palestinian National Authority. Power was already split between old elites (Fatah and the executive branch) and new elites (Hamas and the legislative branch), and the ability of these groups to respond to the demands of their supporters was diminished by this divided power and by the cutting of external financial assistance. Without money, no government can perform at a basic level, much less satisfy the demands of an energized public. The best way to divert the attention of hungry supporters is to point the finger of blame elsewhere and fight a “forever war,” which excuses one’s own shortcomings and requires one’s followers to make constant sacrifices. In the case of the Palestinians, democracy is as much a victim of this as the people themselves.

Fiona Adamson provides a case in which the external war was seen as necessary to sustain a new democracy in the face of internal threats. Adamson is interested in how the democratic peace and the democratization and war propositions play out in the events surrounding the 1974 Turkish intervention in Cyprus.³⁸ The case to follow presents a different view of the events discussed in chapter 4—that is, the case that follows applies a different model to the same set of circumstances. Turkey was founded as a secular, Western-leaning republic in 1923. To preserve its secular nature and its Western lean, the Turkish military was given extraordinary power to intervene in civilian politics. The military exercised its veto power many times—sometimes directly through coups, sometimes indirectly through virtual coups that redirected misguided civilian governments. In this, Turkey experienced a cycle of democratically elected civilian governments, then military **juntas**, then civilian governments, and so on.

A foreign policy issue at the heart of all Turkish governments was the status of Turks in the neighboring country of Cyprus. In 1960, the United Kingdom granted Cyprus independence, and the British signed an agreement with Greece and Turkey to guarantee Cypriot independence. This was necessary because Cyprus had an unstable mix of people of Greek and Turkish descent, and many Greek Cypriots intended to make Cyprus part of Greece. Intracommunal conflict between the two Cypriot communities in 1967 caused the Turkish public to demand that Turkey intervene to protect Turkish Cypriots. The Turkish government instead listened to the preferences of the United States and sought a diplomatic resolution of the 1967 Cypriot conflict.

Popular dissatisfaction and widespread criticism of the Turkish government followed, leading to national disarray and contestation, which persuaded the military to suspend the civilian government and install a military junta in 1971. The junta proceeded to fracture the political parties and organized interests in the civilian society, imprisoning foes and breaking up factions in order to force political realignment and keep the old parties out of power.³⁹ As Adamson describes, the military permitted new elections to be held in 1973 on top of a new, splintered political party system. The result was a coalition government formed with a center-left party led by the new prime minister, Bülent Ecevit, and an Islamist party led by Necmettin Erbakan. Adamson tells us that this coalition was united only in its anti-Americanism.

This new democratic government was an “unstable coalition of opposites that was to be confronted with a severe crisis on the island of Cyprus in the summer of 1974.”⁴⁰ The governing coalition was on the verge of collapse when Greek Cypriots launched a coup in Cyprus, declaring their intention that Cyprus become part of Greece. Ecevit sought a diplomatic solution with the United Kingdom and flew to London, while “the public, opposition parties, and the press all called for military action. Newspaper headlines asked why military intervention had not yet occurred, with one newspaper boldly asserting that Turkey would soon land on Cyprus.”⁴¹ The British refused a joint intervention, so Turkey launched its own in July 1974. The intervention created a patriotic fervor in Turkey, and Ecevit was celebrated far and wide. Ecevit even proclaimed that the military intervention was proof that democracy could work. The intervention showed, as Adamson recounts, that “diverse parties could work together in a time of national crisis, and proved that a democratic regime posed no obstacle to dealing with external threats or other countries.”⁴²

The Greek military government fell in response to the Cypriot crisis. A cease-fire put in place at the end of July caused the Turkish coalition to return to its infighting. Moreover, the prime minister found that he was limited in his ability to negotiate with Greece about Cyprus because Turkish nationalism was running high. Adamson explains the quandary for the government: “Ecevit’s tough stance on Cyprus bolstered his popularity, but the initial intervention created such a wave of national fervor in Turkey that Ecevit found himself severely restricted in his ability to reach a peaceful resolution to the crisis in negotiations with Greece.”⁴³ The Turkish public, the opposition, and even the military were “dizzy” with the success of the intervention. Diplomatic talks broke down, and so in August, Turkey launched a second military intervention; Turkish troops remain in northern Cyprus still. Cyprus became a sort of “forever war” useful for the purposes of inciting support for the government.

Ecevit claimed that military intervention in Cyprus saved democracy in Turkey. Actually, the next military coup was only six years away. Adamson

warns that the lesson of Turkey in 1974 is not simply that democratization creates an unstable mix of old and new elites and their supporters putting demands on immature democratic institutions. She believes that we should be cautious regarding democratic societies, new and consolidated. Adamson argues that multiparty elections and a free press—features of a democracy that are perceived to be inherently good—can be manipulated by elites for nationalist, aggressive purposes.⁴⁴ Public opinion and media are critical resources used by elites for domestic political survival. This is the subject of the next chapter.

For Discussion

1. Explain how political survival is the most important part of the two-level game for any type of political leader.
2. How did electoral victory for the Democratic Party of Japan doom its efforts to achieve cherished foreign policy goals?
3. Describe how and why the sitting Dutch government used a risky diplomatic crisis with Turkey for electoral purposes in 2017.
4. How did incomplete democratization in Palestine and stable democracy in Israel cause the leaders of each to adopt different strategies to manage political opponents?
5. What purpose does a “forever war” serve for elites confronting domestic challengers? Explain how this describes the Turkish intervention in Cyprus and Hamas’s constant provocations toward Israel.

Key Words

coalition government
 Nuclear Suppliers Group
 dual game
 autocratic
 domestic political survival
 protectionism
 trade liberalization
 populism
 legitimacy
 risky foreign policy
 diversionary theory of war
 domestic opposition

insulation strategy
 accommodation strategy
 additive political change
 mobilization strategy
 scapegoating
 intifada
 democracy promotion
 rule of law
 democratic transition
 democratization
 logrolling
 junta

7

Public Opinion and Media

In This Chapter

- Different Understandings of Public Opinion
- Elite Perceptions
- Bringing In Media
- Setting and Controlling the Frame

Major Cases Explored

- Russian media efforts aimed at shaping public opinion before the 2016 US national elections
- How the leaders of NATO countries contributed to the Afghanistan War and ignored public opinion
- How both George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton assessed public attentiveness before deploying troops in Somalia
- How the British government homogenized British press coverage of the Soviet Union after World War II
- Al Jazeera's unusual place as both independent media and foreign policy tool of the Qatari government
- The framing of foreign policy events in the United States to fit a positive national self-image
- The tribal frame used by supporters of Donald Trump and manipulated by Russian influence operations before the 2016 US national elections

Public opinion matters. If public opinion did not matter, why would corporations, cause groups, political parties, and many other entities, including national governments, buy so much media time to reach publics all over the world? Why would the Russian government finance Russia Today (RT), a media outlet that, according to the 2017 US Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA), was the “most-watched foreign news channel in the UK”?¹ Russian **influence operations** were significant in the campaigning in favor of the Brexit referendum in 2015; no doubt, many pro-Brexit voters found their views given voice on RT.

If US public opinion does not matter, why would the Russian government start RT America TV, a platform designed for reaching out and priming

parts of the American public?² As the ICA reports, the chief editor of RT explained the idea behind its international outreach this way:

It is important to have a channel that people get used to, and then, when needed, you show them what you need to show. In some sense, not having our own foreign broadcasting is the same as not having a ministry of defense. When there is no war, it looks like we don't need it. However, when there is a war, it is critical.³

Moreover, RT was not the only method the Russian government employed to reach publics in many different countries. In at least the six months leading up to the 2016 US national elections, “platoons of Russian-backed automated ‘bots’ and human trolls were working online to amplify racial divisions and anti-government conspiracy theories.”⁴ Facebook groups run out of Russia organized rallies by identity groups and counterrallies against those groups. For example, one Russian-based Facebook group called itself the Heart of Texas. It organized and promoted a “Stop Islamization of Texas” rally at an Islamic center in Houston in May 2016. As the *Business Insider* reports, “another Russian-linked account, United Muslims of America, organized a counterprotest—a ‘Save Islamic Knowledge’ rally.”⁵ The Heart of Texas group “advertised a ‘Texit [*sic*] statewide rally’ in October and a series of anti-immigrant, anti-Hillary Clinton rallies across the state three days before the election.”⁶ Russian trolls tried to bring out crowds for an “anti-immigrant, anti-crime, secure our borders” protest in Twin Falls, Idaho.⁷ Even after the election, a Russian government troll used Facebook to organize a “BlackMattersUS” protest against Trump as a way to push racial tensions in the United States. Between five thousand and ten thousand protestors showed up outside Trump Tower as a result of this effort.⁸

Facebook admitted that the Russian Internet Research Agency bought more than three thousand political ads and operated 470 accounts during the 2016 election (and after the election, apparently).⁹ Twitter finally admitted that fifty thousand Russian bots had spread messages to shape American views before the election. In January 2018, Twitter notified 677,775 people that they had followed, retweeted, or liked Russian fake Twitter accounts in the days before the election.¹⁰ The ICA reported that this use of Facebook, Twitter, RT, and other media platforms was part of a larger campaign:

Moscow’s influence campaign followed a Russian messaging strategy that blends covert intelligence operations—such as cyber activity—with overt efforts by Russian Government agencies, state-funded media, third-party intermediaries, and paid social media users or “trolls.” Russia, like its Soviet predecessor, has a history of conducting covert influence campaigns focused on US presidential elections that have used intelligence officers and agents and press

placements to disparage candidates perceived as hostile to the Kremlin.¹¹

The ICA concluded that these Russian efforts were “the most recent expression of Moscow’s longstanding desire to undermine the US-led liberal democratic order.” Russia aimed to “undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.” Further, the “Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.”¹²

Public opinion matters to Russia, and media are an effective tool for manipulating and summoning it. Russian social media campaigns brought Americans into the streets to defend themselves and their identities against other Americans who came out into the streets to defend themselves and their identities. Did the campaigns sway the votes of the 2016 election? That determination is not as clear—in the same way that we do not really know whether public opinion or media influence foreign policy making and behavior. Public opinion matters, and media can manipulate and mobilize the public, but the research does not suggest a direct line from public opinion and media to foreign policy making. Decision makers may reference public opinion polls and media pressure, or they may manipulate both, or fear both. What is clear—from the examples above and others to follow—is that elites can manipulate both public opinion and media and use both as important political resources in their contests with other elites. Moreover, as the Brexit referendum and the 2016 US elections demonstrate, it is important to recognize that the competition over manipulating public opinion in any given society often involves actors from outside that society.

In this chapter, we examine some of the scholarship on whether public opinion matters in foreign policy making and how, and what is meant by the idea of the media effect on foreign policy making. These two phenomena—public opinion and media—are often twinned in analyses, and so we will explore studies of both here. Keep in mind that our interest is whether and what kinds of impact these have on foreign policy. Does public opinion have an autonomous impact on the decisions made by foreign policy makers? Do media act autonomously driving the foreign policy agenda? We investigate these questions in this chapter. Our focus is not on public opinion itself, or media themselves, but on how each may influence foreign policy making.

Different Understandings of Public Opinion

There are essentially three categories of studies on public opinion and foreign policy. First is the “Almond-Lippmann consensus,” which says that the public does not hold a structured or informed view of public opinion and so can be disregarded by decision makers.¹³ The public in this view is “moody and emotional,” as Doug Foyle and others point out.¹⁴ Joshua D. Kertzer and

Thomas Zeitzoff explain that this view matches the expectations of foreign policy realists. In this view, even public opinion in democracies has no impact on foreign policy.

This last point is contentious for some analysts. We often assume that leaders have incentives to follow public opinion because to do otherwise would create electoral costs for them. If a politician wants to get in office and stay in office, and the way to stay in office is through elections, then that politician needs to pay attention to voters' views. Because of the fear of **electoral punishment**, leaders pay attention to public opinion, following a more or less "bottom-up" democratic model. Indeed, this is one of the elements of the democratic peace theory.

A recent study by Sarah Kreps demolishes this bottom-up view and reinforces the "pessimistic" realist view. Kreps examines the relationship between public opinion and troop deployments to Afghanistan for twelve NATO countries and the United States. Kreps asks, "Are leaders responsive to public opinion when they make decisions about war? Does variation in public opinion within a multilateral coalition—in which the publics of some coalition members are more supportive of war than others—affect alliance cohesion?"¹⁵ The major troop contributors investigated by Kreps were all democracies. Kreps notes that these countries all increased their troop commitments to the Afghan War from 2006 to 2009, even while in all of them (except the United States) mean public support for participation in the war was below a majority. These are the countries, listed by mean public support from 2006 to 2009: Denmark (49 percent), Norway (43 percent), the Netherlands (43 percent), Canada (40 percent), the Czech Republic (40 percent), Germany (39 percent), Italy (34 percent), France (33 percent), Spain (33 percent), the United Kingdom (32 percent), Poland (21 percent), and Turkey (18 percent).¹⁶

Kreps's examination of the internal elite-level discussions in these countries reveals that "in almost all major troop-contributing countries, the major political parties have had little daylight on their views on whether to maintain their country's commitments to NATO-led operations."¹⁷ Kreps concludes that this elite consensus in these countries "had the effect of inoculating the leadership from electoral punishment." The leaders in these democracies could ignore public opinion against the deployment of troops to a war—normally a very contentious issue. This conclusion adds cross-national evidence to foreign policy realists who argue that leaders should only follow persistent national interests in their foreign policies. Similar evidence comes from Foyle's analysis of a volume examining twelve countries involved in the 2003 Iraq War; he concludes that the cases reveal that leaders were "relatively free from public limitations" and that "limited prospects exist for electoral punishment from problematic foreign policy."¹⁸ Participation in the 2003 Iraq War was directly counter to existing public opinion in most contributing countries; but public opinion did not matter.

The second category of studies concludes that the public has structured and stable views on foreign policy.¹⁹ This scholarship is not very interested in whether the public's views *matter* in foreign policy making. Beyond identifying the structure and stability over time of public opinion, recent studies here are interested in to whom the public listens when forming views on foreign policy. For example, Kertzer and Zeitzoff argue that although the American public does take cues from elites when formulating views on foreign policy, members of the public are as likely to take cues from social peers. James Druckman, Erik Peterson, and Rune Slothus, studying general American public opinion and not just foreign policy views, argue that as elites have become more polarized, the public becomes more polarized because different publics take their cues from different elites.²⁰ This research might be useful for exploring why Russian influence operations against Americans worked to shape their views.

However, the Russian government did not create fake Facebook personas and groups to cue public opinion in order *just* to shape it; the Russian government wanted to mobilize Americans to act in ways that would disrupt American politics and society. The shaping of public opinion was a means to an end. We need to understand more about what happens after public opinion is shaped by social or elite cues.

The third group of scholarship focuses on our primary interest: does public opinion have any influence on foreign policy making, and if so, what kind of influence?²¹ This scholarship complements some models we have already considered. In chapter 5, we assumed that national culture or national role conception was a projection of the dominant nation in a country. This “dominant nation” is another way of referring to the public, and we can discern what the dominant nation thinks by studying public opinion polls. In chapter 6, we explored complex models of domestic politics shaping foreign policy. In these models, we thought about the contestation between different elites and their supporters or publics. In that discussion, the public takes cues from the leaders they follow about when to march, go on strike, vote, riot, or even take up arms. We did see, though, that this notion of the public as resource holds problems for elites. Fiona Adamson's interpretation of events in Turkey before and during the 1974 Cyprus crisis is a cautionary tale. Adamson notes that, in one sense, the mobilized Turkish public strengthened the new democracy by increasing public support for the elected government. In another sense, the mobilized Turkish public limited the ability of the government to negotiate an end to the crisis, leading to a second invasion and a permanent Turkish troop presence in Cyprus.²² Maybe the public can be mobilized by elites, like some kind of monster brought to life by Doctor Frankenstein, but the monster—once up and thrashing—is quickly out of control, causing problems for Frankenstein's very existence.

Beyond this model of elite manipulation, is there any clear causal link between public opinion and policy formation (domestic or foreign)? Later in

this chapter when we discuss the CNN/media effect, we will see that some scholars and policy makers think that constant news coverage of a foreign policy event elicits an emotional response in the public, and the public then demands action by their leaders. This media effect argument requires public opinion to matter in foreign policy making. Again, scholars do not really have much evidence that this happens. A standard scholarly reply to this is that the public does have influence because leaders take public opinion into account when making policy. A study that is typical of this stance is one by Timothy Hildebrandt, Courtney Hillebrecht, Peter Hom, and Jon Pevehouse on the factors influencing US congressional support for **humanitarian intervention**. These authors provide evidence that members of Congress are influenced by their constituents' views on humanitarian intervention, but they are also influenced by their own partisanship and ideology.²³ Research results are mixed here; in a cross-national study on five cases of humanitarian intervention, Peter Viggo Jakobsen found that public opinion and the CNN effect did not influence the decision to participate in humanitarian interventions. Policy makers who wanted to intervene did so, and those who did not want to did not, regardless of public demands and media coverage.²⁴

Elite Perceptions

What is more persuasive is that public opinion matters when policy makers think it matters. Public opinion itself does not influence foreign policy decision making or execution, but the perception of public opinion does. For example, Ole Holsti proposes that US policy makers tend to be more inclined to **internationalism** than the American public, but policy makers are restrained by their own beliefs about what the public will tolerate. Policy makers believe the public is harder to convince about internationalist policies—especially policies that involve international cooperation and/or the possible deployment of US troops abroad—and that the lack of public support could jeopardize any such undertaking.²⁵ Because of this, policy makers hold back. Holsti concludes that there is no direct linkage between public opinion and policy formation, but policy makers' perceptions of public opinion—in the immediate and future sense—set the parameters for foreign policy behavior.

Surveying their own public opinion polling, Steven Kull and Clay Ramsay document this same phenomenon and describe it as the “myth of the reactive public.”²⁶ Policy makers—particularly in democracies—believe that their publics are risk averse, and so leaders are limited in their ability to send forces abroad in multinational peace operations. The myth of the reactive public puts elites in the position of fathoming public sentiment prior to engaging in foreign policy actions. This makes sense if public policy is supposed to represent the interests of the public. However, this model suggests that there is a degree of separation between the public and public policy because elite per-

ception seems to be more important than actual public views. Elite perception of public opinion may distort actual public opinion in the way that human perception always distorts an accurate reading of any phenomenon.

The idea that policy makers operate on the assumption that they are limited in conducting foreign policy because of (their own perceptions of) what the public will allow takes us to a different conclusion than the mobilization model discussed in chapter 6. In that model, policy makers use risky foreign policies to mobilize their supporters against their domestic opponents. The mobilization model requires the public to be alert and ready to march. But in his study of US military involvement in Somalia, Matthew Baum argues that it is risky for elites to bet that they can control public opinion because they cannot even be sure they can arouse the public in the first place. As Baum explains, “Regardless of their rhetorical strategies, presidents cannot unilaterally command public opinion, including the extent of public interest.”²⁷ Thus, a policy that requires strong public support may be primed to fail because that support cannot be generated in the first place. And, as we discussed above, public scrutiny is limiting: “All else equal, a policy fashioned under intense public scrutiny reduces the president’s freedom to develop an optimal foreign policy, free from domestic pressures to compromise.”²⁸ Because of these two factors, Baum argues that leaders avoid doing anything in foreign policy that might arouse public attention, even avoiding talking about the foreign policy issue in order to keep **public attentiveness** on the issue low.²⁹

US military intervention in Somalia today is justified as being part of the war on terror. US military intervention in Somalia in 1992 and 1993 was not linked to terrorism and national security but to humanitarian concerns. The assumption of policy makers when national interests are not at stake is that the public will be less inclined to support such interventions. Humanitarian interventions are the kind of events that do not have much domestic upside for presidents beyond moral considerations. The fear of domestic backlash against a humanitarian intervention constrains policy options. Baum concedes as well that the fear of what political opponents will make of such an intervention also limits the leader’s consideration of such options.³⁰ Based on these assumptions, Baum hypothesizes that there was “an inverse relationship between public attentiveness and the scale of US involvement in Somalia, with increases (decreases) in public interest preceding decreases (increases) in US military involvement.”³¹ He further proposes that “we should only observe minimal public discussion of Somalia by Presidents Bush and Clinton in periods *preceding* major escalations of US involvement.” The minimal public discussion is intended to minimize media coverage and public attentiveness, thereby helping the president keep control of the policy.

Somalia collapsed into civil war in 1991, and war has continued to rage off and on there ever since. The civil war happened at the same time as a countrywide famine. This humanitarian disaster was intensified when armed

factions started hijacking the supplies of humanitarian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). In April 1991, the United States began a UN-approved multinational military intervention to stop a humanitarian disaster in northern Iraq. Humanitarian groups saw this as a precedent and called for a similar military assist in Somalia. The United Nations responded by authorizing a **peacekeeping** operation for Somalia that same month.

Here we will bring in Baum's analysis. Baum conducted interviews with Bush administration officials about the events of 1992 and Clinton administration officials about the events of 1993 regarding Somalia. He reports that in the summer of 1992, Bush military advisors assessed that the use of force to assist humanitarian groups would have a high probability of success. Meanwhile, the US Congress had passed a joint resolution supporting the UN peacekeeping operation, and editorial pages were urging Bush to do something for Somalia. Yet Bush limited US involvement to military assistance for an August airlift of humanitarian supplies.³² In this period of high public attention, the administration engaged in limited military action. After Bush lost the election in November, he decided to launch a major military intervention into Somalia. Baum concludes that the "decision to intervene appears to have been reached in an environment characterized by only moderate media, congressional, and hence, public interest in the Somali famine."³³ The humanitarian crisis had not diminished in Somalia and the UN peacekeeping mission had never fully launched, but people in the United States had moved on to other topics. At this point, with low public attentiveness, Bush ordered twenty-six thousand US troops to Somalia as part of a UN-approved enforcement operation.

The Clinton administration inherited the intervention. The US-led **peace enforcement operation** continued through the end of March 1993. In this period, media coverage of Somalia became a "nonevent," according to a military official interviewed by Baum. Media coverage had fallen dramatically. Baum explains, "Like his predecessor, President Clinton did little to encourage the media to focus on Somalia," and he nearly dropped the subject from his public statements even while public approval of his handling of Somalia was strong.³⁴ The US military officially handed off the operation to a new UN peacekeeping operation, but US troops remained in the operation at the same strength. In June, Somali factions renewed their attacks on peacekeepers, and so the UN Security Council authorized the use of force by UN peacekeepers. At this point, the US military began active enforcement operations against Somali factions. These stepped-up operations began in what Baum calls a "permissive" environment in which the public and media were not paying much attention. When media and public interest peaked in October after the televised "Black Hawk Down" incident, Clinton ordered the US military mission in Somalia to end.

Baum offers persuasive evidence that two different US presidents preferred to do little to provoke public attention on matters related to Somalia and only ordered military escalations when public/media attention had fallen. Bush and Clinton were sensitive to arousing public opinion and so modified their foreign policy decisions to keep the public unaroused and unaware.

The scholarship is not definitive on whether public opinion matters in foreign policy making, but it is safe to infer that policy makers *think* public opinion matters. Further, elites make use of public opinion to justify their actions or even to threaten their political opponents—although we now know that both may be risky following Baum’s conclusions. In Thomas Risse-Kappen’s examination of the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy making in France, the United States, Japan, and other democracies, he concludes that “mass public opinion mattered” in each case, in that it “set broad and unspecified limits to the foreign policy choices.”³⁵ Risse-Kappen also argues, “For both the political elites and societal actors, mass public opinion proves to be a resource for strengthening one’s position in the coalition-building process.”³⁶ This is a good place to bring in the other twin, media.

Bringing In Media

As stated earlier, public opinion and media are twinned in most discussions about how one or the other influences foreign policy making. Media have a special place in any society because they transmit powerful images and project frames. These images and frames reinforce national and subnational, and even tribe-based beliefs, and like public opinion, they set parameters for political action. In this sense, media’s impact on foreign policy making is like the impact of public opinion. In another sense, even in a vast and diverse media environment, there is more agency associated with media than with the public. The media represent interests—media corporations, government public information offices, public relations firms representing individuals, cause groups, foreign governments, bloggers, YouTube independent channel owners, and the list goes on—of diverse entities whose interests and agendas create the images and frames that surround human beings.

The questions for us to consider are similar to those about public opinion: Do media have an impact on foreign policy making? If so, what kind of impact? Scholars from many fields of study are interested in media and politics. This section of the chapter does not purport to review media studies—that field is too large to discuss here. Instead, we just review what some scholars say about that place where media and foreign policy making seem to intersect. Another very important note to add is that our focus here will be on the news media, not on the wide variety of media that exist.

Analysts suggest four basic relationships between news media and policy makers: First, media act autonomously to drive policy in the so-called CNN

effect or **media effect**. Second, media and policy makers work jointly to produce news that frames the public debate and agenda. Third, policy makers control what is news—and therefore the public debate and agenda—and media just disseminate what policy makers give them. Fourth, policy makers can control news and public debate if they stay in front of events; but other elites, including media, can take control of the news and public debate in the absence of proactive policy makers.

Political scientist and former US assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs Joseph Nye explains the CNN/media effect in this way:

The free flow of broadcast information in open societies has always had an impact on public opinion and the formation of foreign policy, but now the flows have increased and shortened news cycles have reduced the time for deliberation. By focusing on certain conflicts and human rights problems, broadcasts pressure politicians to respond to some foreign problems and not others. The so-called CNN effect makes it harder to keep some items off the top of the public agenda that might otherwise warrant a lower priority.³⁷

Nye sees the CNN effect as real and potentially harmful to reasoned policy making. Because the news broadcasts “24/7,” media force issues onto the public policy agenda, issues that policy makers would be happier to keep off. This in turn lessens deliberation time and the search for the best policy response.

Those who believe that the media effect is real propose that it makes use of public opinion. Once media broadcast images of mass starvation, ethnic conflict, or some other sort of mass suffering, the images arouse strong emotions in the public. The public then turn to their elected officials and demand a strong response. That is, the public, aroused by images of suffering portrayed in the media, demand that officials “do something.” Elected officials, wanting to stay in the public’s favor for all sorts of obvious reasons, respond with whatever action they think will satisfy the demands in the immediate term.

Is there a CNN effect? In his study of how George H. W. Bush avoided doing much in Somalia in order to avoid incurring public scrutiny and potential political costs during his 1992 reelection campaign, Baum reports that some administration officials insisted that media played an important role in forcing administration policy on Somalia.³⁸ At the same time, other administration officials said that media showed little interest in Somalia until after ground troops had deployed there, and thus media had no impact on policy making.³⁹ Rather than media driving public opinion and thereby driving foreign policy, the policy brought media and the public around to the story. Similarly, after studying the impact of public opinion and the CNN effect on the decision to launch humanitarian interventions, Jakobsen concludes that leaders followed not the public or media but their own sense of the national interests when deciding to intervene.⁴⁰ Jakobsen argues that even heavy media

coverage and intense public interest cannot drive a foreign policy action that officials do not want to do.

If there is no media effect, what is the nature of the relationship between media and foreign policy making? Jonathan Mermin proposes that “American journalists turn to politicians and government officials for guidance in deciding what constitutes news.”⁴¹ American journalists—and arguably journalists from around the world on issues of global importance—take their cues from Washington for practical reasons. First, given limited budgets and staff, reporters are assigned to newsworthy places—Washington, DC, would rank among the top newsworthy places on almost anyone’s list. Second, on foreign policy issues, Washington generates a plethora of information every day. Third, “considerations of the need to establish the legitimacy of information reported and the need for protection against the liability for inaccurate reports also encourage the use of official sources.”⁴²

At the same time that Washington—or any national capital—makes practical sense as a location for budget- and personnel-strapped media outlets, Washington also produces far too much news for the media to cover. As Mermin puts it, “Far more stories are pitched to reporters than end up making the news.”⁴³ Members of the media, then, do exercise some independent judgment about which stories to cover. “The news agenda in this view is a joint production of sources and journalists.”⁴⁴ This is the third proposed relationship between media and foreign policy making.

When considering the “joint” agenda setting between government officials and news media, can we say the balance of influence leans more toward one side or the other? We might conclude with some degree of certainty that the “power” tilts in favor of those with information, the government officials. Tony Shaw examines the British popular press coverage of the early Cold War period in order to learn how the press contributed to the eventual consensus that developed between policy makers and the British public. At the immediate conclusion of World War II, Shaw notes, the British press were diverse in terms of political ideologies and portrayals of the Soviet Union, the United States, and the United Nations.⁴⁵ In 1947, the British press exhibited widely different views on the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and the presence of Soviet troops in Eastern and Central European countries.

The British government had a different opinion regarding the Soviet Union and the United States, and it decided that the press would need to be brought around to the correct view:

All heads of Foreign Office political departments were instructed on ways to make “subtler use of our publicity machine” to ensure the publication of anti-Soviet material, including various ways of leaking information to friendly diplomatic correspondents and inspiring questions that the Foreign Office could pretend it did not want to answer.⁴⁶

Similarly, the Foreign Office orchestrated a pro–United States, pro–Marshall Plan campaign aimed at changing press views. The acuity of the government’s view regarding the Soviet Union was “demonstrated” by the Soviet-inspired communist takeover of Czechoslovakia in 1948. By 1949—just two years into a concerted government effort to manage the press message on the Cold War—the British press was unified in its portrayal of the emerging Cold War, and this portrayal was in line with the government’s view. That is, the joint production became state controlled in terms of message, even as news media remained autonomous.

Direct state control of news media exists in many countries in the world and as such is not suitable for our probe into what type of influence autonomous news media have on foreign policy making. Al Jazeera presents a unique case study of news media that is state owned yet claims to have an autonomous editorial and journalistic voice. Al Jazeera started in 1996 as an initiative of the new Qatari emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani. “Al Jazeera was launched as satellite dishes proliferated throughout the Middle East and North Africa, enabling Arab publics to circumvent state controls on television.”⁴⁷ Zachary Laub explains that Al Jazeera “broke ground in Arab media by airing Israeli and Iranian points of view while also giving a platform to anti-Semitic and anti-Shia rhetoric.”⁴⁸ Al Jazeera branched off into multiple languages and markets, giving it a global audience (in broadcast and social media) that equals CNN/CNN International and the BBC.

Al Jazeera exists as both a face of the Qatari regime and an independent news source, a dual role that became muddled with the Arab Spring protests of 2011. When the 2011 protests started, Al Jazeera Arabic (AJA) took a strongly favorable view of the protestors and gave them extensive coverage. Gregg Carlstrom, a journalist who worked for Al Jazeera English, explains:

At the start of the Arab Spring, both the emirate and the network shifted gears. They initially backed the uprisings, then narrowed their focus, throwing their support behind the Islamist groups that tried to fill the vacuum. It was a risky bet for Qatar, one that quickly backfired. Within two years, the Islamists had either provoked a backlash in Tunisia and Egypt or found themselves embroiled in ruinous civil wars in Libya, Syria, and Yemen.⁴⁹

As AJA took this antiestablishment position in the Arab countries, it became a more prominent promoter of Qatar’s foreign policy rather than an independent voice.

AJA had caused Qatar diplomatic problems with Saudi Arabia in the past for its news coverage. After 2011, these diplomatic problems intensified, especially after AJA supported the presidency of Mohamed Morsi, a Muslim Brotherhood leader in Egypt. Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Bahrain blocked Al Jazeera’s website in May 2017 and then put a full

blockade on Qatar in June 2017. The Saudi bloc claimed that Al Jazeera was inciting terrorism, a claim mirrored by Israel in August as it began the process of shutting down Al Jazeera. Laub explains that

some experts see the Saudi-led bloc's recent demands as less about terrorism than about rolling back what remains of the democratic gains achieved by the Arab uprisings. Emboldened by supportive messages by U.S. President Donald J. Trump, they are trying to consolidate a counterrevolution across the region.⁵⁰

Trump's support for the blockade on Qatar, like many of his positions, was confusing, since Qatar is the regional headquarters of the US Central Command.

The Saudi bloc presented a list of thirteen demands that Qatar had to meet in order for the blockade to be lifted. These included closing Al Jazeera and stopping all interactions with Iran. Qatar claimed that the demands really were for Qatar to change its foreign policy and become subservient to Saudi Arabia,⁵¹ a view supported by independent analysts.⁵² Using its media expertise, Qatar launched a website to explain its position and the damage caused by the blockade.⁵³ The blockade was ongoing as of this writing, and Al Jazeera still exists as well.

As suggested earlier, policy makers can ignore events covered by independent news media when those policy makers have already decided not to "do something." Encouraged by humanitarian nongovernmental organizations on the scene, news media did not ignore the unfolding genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Despite news media attention, no major power called for intervention, and in fact the major powers worked within the UN Security Council to cut the presence of UN peacekeepers within weeks of the start of the genocide. Media coverage of Rwanda in that horrible year of 1994 made no difference because policy makers in important countries had decided that intervention did not serve their interests.

Similarly, international news media coverage of Russian human rights violations in Chechnya during the First and Second Chechen Wars evoked little formal condemnation (and no action) by the United States. US humanitarian aid workers attempted to cajole or shame the American government into a more forceful stand on Chechnya, but US policy makers had determined already that they would not jeopardize US-Russia relations on behalf of the people of Chechnya.

According to journalist Warren Strobel, the role media play in setting the public agenda is determined primarily by the conditions created by officials themselves.⁵⁴ Strobel examines the impact of news media on US participation in peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations, operations to which media have freer access and thus might be able to generate more pressure among publics for the government to act. Strobel proposes that push-and-pull factors might be at play: news media might push governments into launching

peace operations, or media might pull governments away from certain courses of action. From his study, Strobel concludes that

images and written accounts of the horrors of the post–Cold War world that stream into the offices of government officials do not dictate policy outcomes. Sometimes they suggest policy choices, but there is ample reason to believe that officials can reject those choices if they feel it necessary. At other times, media reports become an ally for an entire administration, or individual members of it, seeking to pursue new policies.⁵⁵

Media, like other societal actors, can take control of a government’s policy only when that government loses control:

If officials let others dominate the policy debate, if they do not closely monitor the progress and results of their own policies, if they fail to build and maintain popular and congressional support for a course of action, if they step beyond the bounds of their public mandate or fail to anticipate problems, they may suddenly seem driven by the news media and its agenda.⁵⁶

This discussion is not meant to suggest that news media have no power to mobilize opinion against a government’s policy and cause some change to occur to that policy. US news media played a crucial role in mobilizing antiwar sentiment in the United States during the Vietnam War by offering interpretations of events that did not fit the official presentation. Russian news media and interest groups were instrumental in forcing the Russian government to end the First Chechen War. However, the Second Chechen War is instructive here: news media access was tightly controlled by the Russian government. Russian officials had learned from the first war, and limited access meant that news media and public views of the Second Chechen War tended to stay in line with the official view. The lesson seems to be that leaders, once set on or against a policy action, can usually control or ignore the news media when they stay in full control of the process. The use of “embedded” journalists in the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 limited news coverage to producing those images that fit the government’s depiction of events, at least in the initial stage of the war.

Setting and Controlling the Frame

We can expand this last insight to other political actors. We will use as our primary model Robert Entman’s discussion of **framing**. Later, we will add our own case study, returning to the Russian influence operations in the United States. Our beginning point is Entman’s insight that “in practice, the relationship between governing elites and news organizations is less distant and more cooperative than the ideal envisions, especially in foreign affairs.”⁵⁷

When a foreign policy problem arises, someone attempts to explain the problem and its solution. That someone might be the governing elite, the opposition elite, or even news media acting autonomously. Explaining a problem and proposing a solution to it is called framing. Sometimes the governing/ruling elite get out in front of a problem and frame it in such a way as to deny others the ability to offer a competing frame. When this happens, the opposition elite and media often choose to support and reinforce the frame. The single frame then “cascades” down to the public in a recognizable package. The public hears from multiple sources that the problem can be understood in a single way, and—since we are all cognitive misers and prefer to spend little time thinking about things—the public is content to buy the single frame and support it.⁵⁸

Framing is not as easy as this suggests, and it is in the framing that governing elites may lose control of an issue, opening the door to competing frames from someone else. Framing is the act of “selecting and highlighting some facets of events and issues and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution.”⁵⁹ Frames that work best are those that have cultural resonance, that is, frames that evoke words and images that are “noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged” in the dominant political culture.⁶⁰

Successful frames depend on the stimulus: when the foreign policy event is recognizable and congruent with the political culture, Entman says, the national response is based on habit. If the governing elite have successfully matched the event with a habitual schema, it requires “almost no cognitive effort [by the public] to make the connections promoted by the administration’s frame of the event.”⁶¹ In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, the Bush administration framed the problem as a surprise terrorist attack on innocent US civilians. The terrorists were evil and irrational. Those who responded to the attacks were brave heroes. The images in this frame were so easily acceptable to the American public that other elites stayed silent or echoed the administration’s frame, and news media also repeated the frame. Because Entman assumes that all elites and members of the media are motivated by self-interest and survival, few would dare to offer competing frames for 9/11 (for example, a frame that conceded that American foreign policy might incite individuals to take extreme actions). Commentators who sought to understand the reasons behind the attacks were marginalized and shunned as unpatriotic.

When an event is totally incongruent with national self-image and habitual response, the public’s response is to block information about the event. Elites who get out in front of the framing can capture the public’s support by offering an explanation that evokes images that are more reconcilable with the national self-image. Entman proposes that the governing elite’s control of the

frame is greatest in situations in which the event is totally congruent or totally incongruent with the political culture. Two of his examples are compelling.

In the first case, a Soviet fighter jet shot down Korean Air Lines (KAL) flight 007, killing all 269 people onboard. This occurred in September 1983. In the second case, in July 1988, a US Navy ship shot down Iran Air flight 655, killing 290 people. “In both cases, military officials misidentified a passenger plane as a hostile target; in both cases, the perpetrating nation’s officials claimed that circumstances justified the attacks.”⁶² In the first case, Reagan administration officials got out in front of the story, depicting the events in a “murder” frame. The story of evil Soviets (from the habitual Cold War schema) murdering innocent civilians was not hard for the American public to accept. Political survival for opposition elites and sales for news media meant that the frame was never questioned, just repeated and magnified.

In the second case, the events did not fit any habitual schema and indeed were “thoroughly at odds with Americans’ national self-image.” This incongruent event blocked thinking about the event, allowing the Reagan administration’s explanation to dominate the public’s understanding. The administration said that the shoot down occurred because of a technical glitch.⁶³ Standard expectations about opposition elite and the media hold in this case: both simply supported and maintained the administration’s frame. Indeed, news media devoted more print pages and broadcast time to discussing the “murder” frame involving the shoot down of KAL 007 than they did to the “technical glitch” frame involving Iran Air 655.⁶⁴

Clearly, Entman is proposing what some of the scholars above contend: a government can control its own response to a foreign policy event when it stays on top of the event, framing and explaining the event and the appropriate response to it. When policy makers let others—political opponents, media—define the event, policy makers lose control of the public discussion of the event. Ultimately, the regime that loses control of the frame loses control of the policy.

When a foreign policy event is ambiguous and the dominant culture has no immediate, habitual response, opposition elites and media may be able to offer alternative frames that win critical support among parts of the public. Entman warns that the governing elite tread dangerous waters here and may mismanage and lose control of a foreign policy event (that is, let others frame the situation and the solution), “especially if it cannot find compelling schemas that support its line.”⁶⁵

In chapter 5, we discussed the notion of tribal politics, or politics based not on a set of political ideas but upon an emotional loyalty to a group. For example, right-wing conservative Christians supported Donald Trump unquestioningly despite the fact that his entire adult life, both public and personal, seemed to disregard the values that were fundamental to them. These

supporters, part of Trump's base, remained loyal to him. This is tribalism: an emotional tie that does not need any link to values, self-interest, or reason.

We discussed tribalism in relation to nationalism and the national narrative. Recall that the dominant national narrative is the story the dominant people in a country tell about themselves and their country in the world. The Trump tribe's narrative did not reflect the dominant American narrative. Instead, Trump supporters believed in a subnational narrative—the use of *sub-* is not pejorative; it just means a group below the national unit. The United States, like many countries, has a diverse population that comprises many subnational groups telling different stories about themselves and their country. In many places, the subnational narratives fit within the dominant national narrative. Not all subnational groups operate as a “tribe,” but many would if threatened. In-group identity mobilizes in the face of threats.

Elections anywhere involve candidates attempting to set frames that will resonate with a majority of voters. Some of the frames may be about foreign policy issues, more often they are about domestic policy issues, and most often they appeal to the fears and hopes of particular segments of the public. The most appealing frames for media are those that are sensational and controversial. The frames of different candidates and their various supporters—elites, interest groups, media, political parties, foreign interests—compete to dominate the country by winning the election. The competition is over setting or resetting the dominant national narrative once the government is captured in the electoral contest.

Frames, as we know from Entman and others, work best when they tell people what they already know, or look like something they already know. Entman calls this resonance. In an election, the frame must resonate with the subnational cultures of particular groups that candidates wish to court. Entman also says that frames must be repetitive and frequent—successful frames say the same thing over and over again. We can say that national elections involve a competition of frames resonating with different voting groups, and broadcasting frequently and repetitively. Tribal politics have become part of the political landscape in many Western countries, including the United States. Tribal loyalties should be easy to manipulate with the right frames since they are emotional and do not need facts. Indeed, members of tribes may be receptive to “alternative facts” that fit what their guts tell them.

According to the January 2017 Intelligence Community Assessment (ICA), Russian influence operations aimed at the 2016 US national elections were intended to disrupt the United States, sow public discord, put doubt into the legitimacy of the election, make it difficult for the presumed next president Hillary Clinton to govern, and support the candidacy of Donald Trump. The Kremlin, its media outlets, its army of trolls and bots active on Facebook and Twitter and YouTube, and its collaborators, such as WikiLeaks, conservative media, and people associated with the Trump campaign, engaged

in an organized, well-crafted framing campaign to disrupt the elections. Each mimicked the other in terms of the simple messages being pushed, such as that Clinton was too ill or too “crooked” to be president, or that immigrants were committing horrible crimes and other acts of terrorism inside the United States. These stories were repeated in multiple media outlets, with little variation or confusing details, and they cascaded down to US news and other media outlets that reported many of them as straight “facts.” Trump himself repeated many of them on the campaign trail. When the emails of the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign were hacked and stolen, they were framed as being linked to the “missing emails” and the private Clinton email server controversy. The targeted publics did not need to read the hacked emails—they heard “emails” and they remembered “missing emails” because Trump kept yelling about them at campaign events. They put two and two together and believed that the email dumps by WikiLeaks were proof that Clinton was “crooked.” The stories were crafted to be believable frames because they spoke to the unexamined beliefs of certain segments of the voting public, and they were impermeable to facts. Even the frame about “rigged elections” had been set and disseminated to undermine what was expected to be a Clinton victory.

We do not know whether the Russian influence operations in the 2016 US elections changed the course of those elections. We do not know whether public opinion or media really influence foreign policy making. What we can conclude is that Russia achieved some of its goals. Russia achieved its goals of sowing discord in the United States and deepening Americans’ distrust of the US political system. Further, the election of “America First” Donald Trump and his nationalist foreign policy have disrupted the US-led liberal international order. This, too, was a much desired goal of the Kremlin and has been since the start of that international order. The liberal international order is one topic that will be covered in the next chapter.

For Discussion

1. Explain what scholars say about the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy.
2. Explain elite or social cuing.
3. What is the myth of the reactive public? How did the fear of public scrutiny shape Bush’s and Clinton’s policies in Somalia in 1992 and 1993?
4. Explain the CNN or media effect. Is it real?
5. What is the relationship between news media and foreign policy making?
6. How did Al Jazeera put Qatar in a diplomatic mess with other Arab states?
7. Discuss the 2016 US national elections in terms of a competition over frames. Describe Russian efforts in this competition.

Key Words

public opinion
influence operations
electoral punishment
humanitarian intervention
internationalism

public attentiveness
peacekeeping
peace enforcement operation
CNN effect/media effect
framing

8

International Relations Theories and Foreign Policy

In This Chapter

- The International System Level of Analysis
- Neorealism
- Liberal Institutionalism
- Alternative Theories

Major Cases Explored

- China's One Belt, One Road Initiative
- Contrasts in the depictions of China in the National Security Strategies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump
- The Cold War as a working international system
- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as a working regional system
- The post-World War II liberal international order as a negotiated order
- Russian efforts to disrupt the liberal international order
- The lack of hard balancing against US preponderant power
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the BRICS as strategic balancing against US preponderant power
- How post-Cold War US grand strategy fits the neorealist model
- How the United States built the liberal international order and why
- Discontent among China's partners over the Belt and Road Initiative
- German foreign policy experts on the future of the liberal international order
- The Gulf War of 1991 as a war to maintain the core against threats from the periphery
- The G20 as a manifestation of the core
- The Bandung Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement as anti-core resistance

In 2013, China launched the One Belt, One Road Initiative. The plan was to invest \$1 trillion in transportation infrastructure to re-create the ancient Silk Road from Asia to Europe. The Belt and Road Initiative envisioned

a massive land route using high-speed rail and highways and a maritime route using a series of ports connecting China to Central, South, and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. Sixty-eight countries signed on to the initiative, representing 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product. China was attempting to “create a new kind of **globalization** that will dispense with the rules of the aging Western-dominated institutions. The goal [was] to refashion the global economic order, drawing countries and companies more tightly into China's orbit.”¹

The China Development Bank designated some nine hundred projects as part of this initiative.² One major project was a seven-thousand-mile rail line connecting Chinese manufacturing centers to European cities.³ The Chinese constructed a “port” and trade hub on this rail line in the western city of Khorghos. This city sits “just 100 miles from the Eurasian pole of inaccessibility—the farthest point of earth from any ocean.”⁴ Projects also included power plants and an upgraded highway system in Pakistan and a \$6 billion rail line in Laos, a country with a \$12 billion *annual* national output.⁵ Other projects included a Chinese-owned port in Greece and a port in Sri Lanka. Setting a frame to accompany these ventures, Xi Jinping addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2017, calling for countries to resist **protectionism** and deepen the benefits of globalization. Meanwhile, Chinese construction of military infrastructure in the Spratly and Paracel Islands in the disputed South China Sea continued apace.

Foreign policy analysts should ask, what are China's global ambitions and what does it intend as its endgame? Should any other country or countries be worried about China's activities? If so, what should that country or those countries do? Alternatively, should other countries see China's actions as good for the global system and work with it to deepen economic interdependence? Infrastructure, after all, is a pressing need in cash-strapped developing countries, so China seems to be providing much-needed assistance. The answers to these questions depend on one's worldview. For international relations (IR) scholars, the answers depend on one's ontological preference; that is, the answers depend on the international relations grand theory one utilizes.

In this chapter, we study how some international relations theories offer models for understanding states' foreign policy motivations and behavior. IR theories do not give a lot of guidance for understanding foreign policy. The theories, at best, set parameters for how states may act. They are, in many respects, prescriptive about what states should be doing under certain conditions, and often descriptive. Most IR theories are not useful in foreign policy study because they focus on global, cultural, sociological, and historical trends and patterns that are not reducible to state-centric foreign policy considerations.

Under the presidency of Barack Obama, the official US policy regarding a rising China was to partner with it, with some caution. In the introduction to the 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS), Obama writes about the

US “rebalance” to Asia and the Pacific and the potential of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) between countries responsible for 40 percent of global trade. The TPP was, in some respects, a counterbalance to China’s expanding interests. Despite this, Obama notes as well the unprecedented level of cooperation with China, hailing a “groundbreaking” and “landmark” agreement with China on global warming. The Obama administration said, “The United States welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China.” The 2015 NSS continues,

We seek to develop a constructive relationship with China that delivers benefits for our two peoples and promotes security and prosperity in Asia and around the world. We seek cooperation on shared regional and global challenges such as climate change, public health, economic growth, and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. While there will be competition, we reject the inevitability of confrontation. At the same time, we will manage competition from a position of strength while insisting that China uphold international rules and norms on issues ranging from maritime security to trade and human rights. We will closely monitor China’s military modernization and expanding presence in Asia, while seeking ways to reduce the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation. On cybersecurity, we will take necessary actions to protect our businesses and defend our networks against cyber-theft of trade secrets for commercial gain whether by private actors or the Chinese government.⁶

This long statement from the 2015 NSS is included here because it summarizes many of the kinds of issues that one would study using liberal institutional IR theory, issues best addressed through cooperation. This statement serves here as an introduction—we will examine how **liberal institutionalism** speaks to foreign policy study in more detail later in this chapter.

In contrast to Obama’s perspective, the 2017 National Security Strategy of the United States produced by the Trump administration demonstrates a **neorealist** take on foreign policy, specifically a view called **offensive neorealism**. This is another IR theory we will examine in more detail. In Trump’s introduction, he evokes the ideas of making America great again and sets the tone for his “America First” foreign policy that focuses on defending the United States against a world that exploits it, but will not exploit it any longer. In this view, the world is at its core competitive, and the primary competition involves the United States, China, and Russia. Throughout the 2017 NSS, “China and Russia” are presented together as threats. “China and Russia challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity,” the 2017 NSS intones.⁷ Despite the threats posed by North Korea and Iran, “great power competition” has returned,⁸ and

the United States must prepare for this type of competition. China, Russia, and other state and nonstate actors recognize that the United States often views the world in binary terms, with states being either “at peace” or “at war,” when it is actually an arena of continuous competition. Our adversaries will not fight us on our terms. We will raise our competitive game to meet that challenge, to protect American interests, and to advance our values.⁹

The view of China is stark in the 2017 NSS: China steals US intellectual property, tries to steal US partners in the “Indo-Pacific” region, threatens sealand and sovereignty, pushes into Europe using its unfair trade practices, and in Latin America “seeks to pull the region into its orbit through state-led investments and loans.”¹⁰ In all, the 2017 NSS mentions China as a threat and competitor almost a dozen times. The only time the 2017 NSS speaks about China in nonthreatening terms is the single time when it reassures China and Russia that plans to enhance the US missile defense system are “not intended to undermine strategic stability or disrupt longstanding strategic relationships with Russia or China.”¹¹

The Obama and Trump strategy statements are two dramatically different views of what the United States should do about a rising China. Readers might want to go back to chapter 3 to think about these differences in terms of these two particular leaders. In this chapter, however, we can use these dissimilar policy stands to illustrate how different international relations theories help us understand foreign policy at the system level of analysis. Our primary focus in this chapter is on neorealism and liberal institutionalism, but we will consider alternative theories at the end. Neorealism and liberal institutionalism are the dominant IR theories, and they also have the most to say about foreign policy.

The International System Level of Analysis

When we use the notion of system-level analysis, we propose to speak about global politics as a working system. A system has these elements: boundaries between the system and things external to the system, a beginning point when the system starts, an ending point at which it ceases to exist, component parts, and operating rules. The **international system** has as its boundaries the physical earth and those places on earth that are under political control. When scholars use the term *international system*, they usually do not mean the generic notion of world politics but a more specific term connoting particular international political systems. For example, from roughly the end of World War II to 1989–1991, the international system was bipolar. States in this system primarily gravitated around two power centers, or poles, the United States and the Soviet Union. International military organizations represented the two sides—the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw

Treaty Organization (WTO) and various other military arrangements. There were other states in this system that disavowed the **bipolar international system** and sought a third way—the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** arose as a large and often contentious group that sought international politics outside the bipolar system. So, too, were there international organizations—particularly the United Nations—that purported to be about global interests but often were subject to the politics of bipolarity.

The rules of the bipolar system were intense. Both poles were committed to the destruction of the other, both armed themselves with large militaries and nuclear weapons, and both competed for influence in nonaligned countries by supplying weapons to local conflicts that grew into international struggles between the poles. The list of these wars was long because one rule of the nuclearized bipolar system was that neither lead country would fight each other directly because of the threat of global nuclear devastation. This did not stop them from taking sides in and promoting “smaller” conflicts (no conflict is really “small” if you and your people are in it).

This discussion of global politics as an international system should make sense to the reader. Systems can also exist on a regional level. The presence of an international system does not stop regional systems from forming and operating. For example, there is a regional system in Western Africa composed of fifteen states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The system manifests in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The basic purpose and boundaries of ECOWAS are explained on its website. The countries of ECOWAS

have both cultural and geopolitical ties and shared common economic interest. The region of West Africa is located west of north-south axis lying close to 10° east longitude. The Atlantic Ocean forms the western as well as the southern borders of the West African region. The northern border is the Sahara Desert, with the Ranishanu Bend generally considered the northernmost part of the region. The eastern border lies between the Benue Trough, and a line running from Mount Cameroon to Lake Chad.

Colonial boundaries are still reflected in the modern boundaries between contemporary West African states, cutting across ethnic and cultural lines, often dividing single ethnic groups between two or more states.¹²

West Africa is composed of many different people and languages, yet the region acts as a system in terms of economic patterns and political currents. In recognition of this, and to strengthen the region, the Treaty of Lagos was signed in Nigeria in 1975 launching ECOWAS. Economic cooperation among these states turned to political and military cooperation, as demon-

strated in the deployment of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to conduct peace enforcement operations in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea-Bissau. Nigeria has served as the lead country in ECOWAS, hosting its headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria's capital; serving as the primary financier of its operations; and sending the most troops on its military operations.

International and regional systems have institutional frameworks and purposes. Historically, colonial and imperial systems were organized under the institutional framework of the colonial administration, which was a part of the government of the colonial state. The purpose of the system was to provide for the material wealth of the colonizer, not the colonized. Since 1945 and the founding of the United Nations, most colonies have become self-governing states, although some post-UN relationships between sovereign states remain dominated by institutional frameworks that provided for the interests of a single state rather than the collective.

The institutional arrangements that frame interactions in the global system and in regional systems may have some elements of **governance** in them, but they do not constitute a government. The most important components of the international system—all international and regional systems as well—are sovereign states. State **sovereignty**, the idea that states are the ultimate decision makers and decision enforcers within their own territories, sets the terms for the international system and politics. States do not willingly give up their sovereignty to any **supranational** unit. Even in the European Union, an international organization that exceeds all others in its jurisdiction, member states remain sovereign on essential matters. Because state sovereignty is paramount in the international system, authority in the system is fragmented. Each state retains authority, and none (technically) has authority over any other state. This brings us to the situation IR theorists called **anarchy**.

Anarchy connotes the absence of any overarching authority over states. Anarchy is a condition of the international system to which states must adapt with their foreign policies. Neorealists and liberal institutionalists agree that anarchy is a foundation of international politics, but they take us in different directions regarding the question of what states can do about anarchy. Their answers involve different views of international order.

What is international order? Here we can draw on the work of neorealist Randall Schweller, who says “a system exhibits ‘order’ when the set of discrete objects that comprise the system are related to one another according to some pattern; that is, their relationship is not miscellaneous or haphazard but accords with some discernible principle.”¹³ The discrete objects in this statement refer mostly to states, but it could mean other international actors. “Order prevails when things display a high degree of predictability, when there are regularities, when there are patterns that follow some understandable and consistent logic.”¹⁴ To refine this to our purposes, international

orders arise as the result of some states' foreign policies and behaviors, and, once established, the particular international order guides the foreign policy choices and behaviors of states within it. States conform to the established pattern; they act in predictable ways.

International orders can exist at the same time. The order imposed by the Soviet Union on the countries of Eastern and Central Europe existed at the same time as the global order led by the United States. This statement is explained in more detail later in this chapter. Schweller proposes that "there are essentially three types of international order." We will take these out of the order he offers. First, there is a "spontaneously generated order," which is the "unintended consequence of actors seeking only to maximize their interests and power."¹⁵ As an example, he gives the eighteenth-century European balance of power system. Because this order is the unintended consequence of power-seeking behaviors by **great powers**, we can categorize this as a realist construct. Second, Schweller offers the "imposed order," which is a "non-voluntary order among unequal actors purposefully designed and ruled by a malign (despotic) hegemon, whose power is unchecked. The Soviet satellite system is an exemplar of this type of order."¹⁶ Clearly, this is a realist order as well, with one state dominating the others for its own interests, chief of which is to maintain its **primacy** over the others while pursuing global domination.

The third order is the "negotiated order." This is the kind of order encompassed in the notion of Pax Americana, the order from 1945 to the present.¹⁷ Schweller is a neorealist, so he frames this order in terms of great powers and dominance; he says this is "a rule-based order that is the result of a grand bargain voluntarily struck among the major actors who, therefore, view the order as legitimate and beneficial."¹⁸ Although Schweller explains this order's origins in terms of great power foreign policies, this order can serve the interests of other countries as well, as liberal institutional theorists explain. With this introduction to the international system in mind, we turn now to the dominant IR theories to understand what they have to say about foreign policy.

Neorealism

There are classical realists and there are neorealists. There are offensive neorealists and defensive neorealists. There are also neoclassical realists. Some of these were discussed in chapter 2. Suffice it to say that this section will not develop the nuances and disagreements between these realists but will stick to the basics so we can keep our focus on foreign policy. For neorealists, international anarchy dictates the behaviors of states. Since there is no central authority protecting the interests of individual states, states must be always watchful for encroachments on their security and power, and for opportunities to advance their security and power. The offensive/defensive debate is important

to note here for later use in this section. Offensive neorealists worry about potential threats to state power and propose that states must stay constantly on guard and look for ways to increase their own power over others. **Defensive neorealists** worry about actual threats and can be content with the status quo in the absence of realized threats.

Realists and neorealists place their primary emphasis on the study of powerful states or great powers. Great powers can shape the international system, creating international orders that suit their interests. Great powers can disrupt the prevailing international order in order to revise it to better suit their interests. Great powers may also be **reversionist states**, seeking to create their own international order. Smaller powers are of interest in terms of what they can do for the great powers and what leverage they may have over great powers. Smaller powers can also act as rogues or spoilers, causing bothersome disruptions in the system. Otherwise, smaller countries are not of interest because they have no potential systemic impact. In this way, realist and neorealist IR theories do not help us understand the foreign policies of most states in the world.

Putin's Russia is a country that appears to be intent on disrupting the international order. Its influence operations and military intervention in post-Soviet states seek to re-create the Soviet-imposed international order of the past, while its influence operations in Western democracies seek to undermine the Western-led order. Russia has not hesitated to provoke wars with other countries, such as the wars in Georgia and Ukraine (which resulted in the annexation of Crimea and the simmering war in Eastern Ukraine). Russia has intervened in other countries' domestic affairs in a variety of ways, including shutting down Estonia's internet in 2007 and Ukraine's in 2015¹⁹ and providing weapons to minority nationalist groups in Georgia. In these and other ways, Russia flouts international norms on respecting the territorial integrity of sovereign states. Further, Russia militarily defended the Assad regime in Syria against jihadists and rebels, even as Assad used chemical weapons in that war (more flouting of international norms), and assisted North Korea's evasion of international sanctions. Although Russia has not managed to build its alternative international order, it has managed to be a spoiler in the US-built international order.

Because great powers are global actors with global interests, realists explain that they develop and employ **grand strategies**. Only great powers have grand strategies that guide their foreign policies. Robert Art expounds that "a grand strategy tells a nation's leaders what goals they should aim for and how best they can use their country's military power to attain these goals."²⁰ The primary goal for any great power is to become hegemonic. A **hegemon** is a preponderant power defined in terms of military and economic power. The hegemon, John G. Ruggie explains, "will seek to construct an international order in some form, presumably along lines that are compatible with its own international objectives and domestic structures."²¹ This order

may be to the liking of other great powers in the short term, but realists and neorealists say that these great powers can never be satisfied with it, as it does not reflect their own choices, first of which is to be the hegemon.

Because all great powers seek to become hegemonic, all great powers must act to prevent any one great power from becoming hegemonic. The primary way that states attempt to prevent another state from becoming hegemonic is through the **balance of power** system. States balance against the state (or group of states) attempting to become the hegemon. Schweller explains that “**balancing** means the creation or aggregation of military power through either internal mobilization or the forging of alliances to prevent or deter the occupation and domination of the state by a foreign power or coalition.”²² States in this system join the weaker side of a conflict to stop the accumulation of power by the stronger side, and any alliances they form are only for the immediate circumstances, since formal alliances limit the ability of states to form future balances. For the successful balance of power to work, states must be constantly vigilant and must constantly prepare for war. A balance of power system is a war system; the method for maintaining the balance of power is war.

The balance of power is what realists and neorealists predict, but it is not a guarantee. As Schweller concedes, balancing behavior is not necessarily to be expected:

In an era of mass politics, the decision to check unbalanced power by means of arms and allies—and to go to war if these deterrent measures fail—is very much a political act made by political actors. . . . [P]olitical elites must weigh the likely domestic costs of balancing behavior against the alternative means available to them and the expected benefits of a restored balance of power. Leaders are rarely, if ever, compelled by structural imperatives to adopt certain policies rather than others.²³

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, US power was not checked or balanced by any other state or group of states. This era of preponderant US power is a **unipolar international system**. In the unipolar system, there has been no hard military balancing activity by states attempting to form a counterweight against US military power, but there have been other kinds of balancing attempted. Defensive neorealists claim that this lack of hard military balancing against the United States is explained by the fact that states do not balance against power but against threat. Stephen Walt explains that in the unipolar era, the United States has not posed a significant enough threat to potential balancers to make the effort worthwhile:

The relative dearth of **hard balancing** is consistent with the view that alliances form not in response to power alone but in response to the level of threat. States will not want to incur the various costs

of balancing (increased military spending, loss of autonomy, punishment by the unipole, and so on) unless they believe doing so is truly necessary. In particular, states will not engage in hard balancing against the unipole if its power is not perceived as posing an imminent threat to their security.²⁴

In the absence of a clear military threat, other great powers in a unipolar system act as status quo powers. This does not mean that the other great powers simply follow the leader. Neorealists speak about many types of balancing beyond hard military balancing: internal balancing, strategic balancing, and soft balancing. **Internal balancing** happens within countries and is best explained as an arms buildup. Chinese efforts to modernize and expand their military are a form of internal balancing. Internal balancing improves China's military capabilities when compared to those of the United States.

Strategic balancing is not well defined by neorealists, but we can roughly use it to describe formal and informal groupings of states not for military hard balancing, but for political posturing against another group of states, or in the case of unipolarity, against the United States. For example, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) might be strategic balancing. In 2001, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan formed the SCO; since that time, other countries, such as India and Pakistan, have gained observer status with pending membership. The US Bush administration applied for observer status but was turned down, indicating that the SCO was drawing a line between itself and the United States. However, despite what appears to be strategic balancing against the United States, the SCO's mission statement is not a challenge to the United States. Instead, the SCO's mission is to address three immediate security threats to each member state: terrorism, extremism, and separatism. SCO joint military exercises give the impression of strategic balancing, and it is possible that the SCO could transform into a hard balance against the United States under the right circumstances. The right conditions would be some threatening action aimed at it by the United States. However, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are all members of NATO's Partnership for Peace program, complicating the potential for the SCO to serve as a vehicle for future hard balancing against the United States.

Another example of what might be an effort to form a strategic balance against the United States is the group called the BRICS. The BRICS is a loose summit group made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. This group started meeting formally—but not frequently—in 2009. The BRICS, though, is not an intentional group but one first conceived by an executive at Goldman Sachs in 2001. The initial acronym used by that financial advisor was BRIC—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—and he used it to call attention to four countries with dynamic economies worth investing in. In 2008, the BRIC group began to think of itself as a loose group; then

in 2010, China suggested adding South Africa to the group. Some of the rhetoric of the BRICS is anti-Western, but not in the form of being a strategic balance against the United States and its Western allies.²⁵ As in the case of the SCO, the “diplomatic practice” of meeting together as a group could facilitate hard balancing by the group should it be necessary in the future. As Andrew Cooper argues, “the loose club style allows the BRICS to project a confidence about its rise, with a considerable degree of sustainability. Biding their time and focusing on converging interests and values, BRICS members have channeled their long-standing sense of frustrated ambitions into a collective mechanism.”²⁶

Soft balancing is an effort to block or change the international policies advocated by the **unipole**. Walt explains, “Soft balancing accepts the current balance of power but seeks to obtain better outcomes within it, by assembling countervailing coalitions designed to thwart or impede specific policies.”²⁷ In 2002 and 2003, the soft balancing of France, Germany, and Russia in the UN Security Council stopped the Bush 2 administration from getting UN approval for the Iraq War.²⁸ This soft balance did not stop the United States from invading Iraq, but it did cause the United States diplomatic problems. In 2011, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom were able to procure a UN Security Council “**civilian protection**” mandate for Libya that resulted in the overthrow of the Qaddafi regime. Germany opposed the use of force in Libya, and its public disagreement with its NATO allies was a soft-balance demonstration. The same event caused Brazil, India, and South Africa to declare their intention to work as a bloc within the United Nations to stop future “civilian protection” mandates that were in reality political excuses for Western military regime change in **Global South** countries.

Neorealists describe another potential foreign policy behavior that is nearly the opposite of balancing: **bandwagoning**. Rather than balancing to prepare for a coming conflict, states may join with the side of the conflict that they perceive to be stronger. Many former Soviet allies and many former Soviet republics have joined NATO or the NATO Partnership for Peace. Russian leader Vladimir Putin’s public unhappiness about the loss of the Soviet empire and his willingness to intervene in other countries overtly and covertly have given these countries ample reason to consider a resurgent Russia a clear and present security threat. Bandwagoning with NATO in the face of a disruptive Russia—particularly after the Russian taking of Crimea from Ukraine—seems a wise foreign policy choice.

What about the foreign policy of the unipole? When the United States found itself the last superpower standing, some American realists advocated a proactive foreign policy aimed at maintaining US predominant power and unipolarity. Maintaining unipolarity is compatible with offensive neorealism. Other Americans advocated that the United States would be better able to hold its top position if it allowed other great powers to rise and a **multipolar**

international system to form. Multipolarity would not be a threat to the United States because the United States could still be more powerful than the other great powers; but multipolarity would mean that the United States could shift the burden of system maintenance onto others. This position is compatible with defensive neorealism or with liberal institutionalism, the subject of the next section.

The grand strategies of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama can be read as defensive neorealist strategies. All of these presidents perceived rising competitors as potential partners and not necessarily as immediate threats. Multipolarity provided opportunities for other countries to pay or share the costs of systemic threats. By insisting on and supporting multilateral responses to international security problems, US resources could be preserved until such a time as actual threats to the United States and its position in the international order materialized. Until such time, the United States could welcome rising powers and watch and wait.

The United States was not passive in these administrations. The George H. W. Bush administration gathered a multinational coalition to fight the 1991 Gulf War and initiated an era of multilateral humanitarian intervention. The Clinton administration was a period of vast US military expansion with frequent use of US military force. Josef Joffe depicts Clinton's grand strategy as one based not on "intermittent intervention, but permanent entanglement,"²⁹ designed to make the United States the good friend and partner of many major and rising powers. The Obama administration inherited two major military operations from Bush 2 (discussed below and out of chronological order) and worked to wind these conflicts down while expanding support activities for other major powers and coalitions. This strategy involved "**forward partnering**," a strategy to make others share the costs of international peace and security. The neorealist grand strategies of these administrations involved selective engagement (that is, military intervention) around the world, prioritizing US responses to deal with immediate threats to essential US interests over threats to others elsewhere.

The George W. Bush grand strategy started in this defensive neorealist posture. The pre-September 11 Bush 2 administration appeared to be following a stay-at-home and go-it-alone strategy. After 9/11, Bush adopted a "you're with us or you're with the terrorists" or a "my way or the highway" policy of primacy or a global dominance grand strategy based on straight-forward offensive neorealism. The administration adopted the view that unipolarity, or American primacy, could be maintained indefinitely and that the US military was the proper means by which to ensure this. The real-world results of this offensive neorealist grand strategy involved protracted wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, constant threats of a "World War III" with Iran over its nuclear weapons program, a global war on terrorism with no endpoint, and economic turmoil. The Obama administration that followed was confronted

with a global financial crisis that started under the Bush administration and a severely weakened US economy. A defensive neorealist posture made more sense in this context.

The Trump administration embraced an offensive neorealist foreign policy aimed at protecting “America First.” This policy involved walking away from collective efforts to address international problems, such as the Paris Climate Treaty and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreement between the United States, Iran, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and China. The 2017 NSS even declared China to be a serious threat to US interests, as discussed at the start of this chapter. In response to the 2017 NSS, the Chinese government admonished the Trump administration to “stop deliberately distorting China’s strategic intentions and abandon a Cold War mentality. . . . Otherwise it will injure others and damage itself.”³⁰

Liberal Institutionalism

Liberalism and its primary international relations variants start with the condition of anarchy, like the realists and neorealists, and they even throw in a hegemon and self-interested sovereign states, but they arrive at a much different kind of order. The liberal institutional order is one in which self-interested, sovereign states decide to work together through international institutions. These institutions mediate conflict (of all sorts, not just military) between states and help them achieve together what few could achieve alone. The liberal vision is explained by Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s stag hunt allegory. Two persons out hunting together could together catch a stag, while each individually could catch a rabbit. The rabbit would be a doable, short-term win for each hunter acting alone, but the stag is the larger prize that would have longer-term benefits for both hunters. The best choice in terms of self-interest is to cooperate and catch the stag.

Liberalism that focuses on self-interest and the benefits of cooperation is called liberal institutionalism. Sometimes this school of thought is called neoliberalism, but neoliberalism is better associated with an ideology that privileges open markets and advocates for reduced government intervention in the domestic political economy. States in a condition of anarchy have no recourse if another state is a bad actor. The realist prescription is to trust no one and stay alert and prepared for war. The liberal institutionalist prescription for the problems of anarchy is to form international institutions to regulate and make predictable the behavior of states. Liberals believe that cooperation is possible; institutionalists see that cooperation as guaranteed by formalized frameworks. International institutions based on **reciprocity** guarantee benefits as well as provide mechanisms for punishing states that cheat and break the rules. In the context of international institutions, the issue of trust is removed from states’ calculations and anarchy is overcome. Acting within institutions that reward

good behavior and punish bad, states can achieve long-term interests together that none could achieve alone.

Clean air and water, a safe and predictable system of international aviation, a common response to disease and viruses, more or less open trade, secure sea-lanes, and the general condition of international peace all derive from collective action through institutional frameworks. This statement is a short list of the many kinds of public goods that collective action produces. Over time, the states in this system develop shared interests and common values—typically about the importance of cooperation and negotiation. These shared values deepen the cooperation and extend it to other issue areas.

The international order since World War II is a **liberal international order**. This order has a two-part emphasis on institutions to regulate political conflict and avoid major power war, and institutions to liberalize trade between countries and construct a liberal or capitalist world economy. The word *liberal* refers both to liberal political systems based on the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, and to a liberal world economy based on free market, capitalist economics. The liberal international order is the product of the United States acting as hegemon, so it is correct to call it a **hegemonic order**.

After World War II, the United States was the world's preponderant power, and acting in hegemonic form it constructed an international order that suited its interests. Earlier in this chapter we heard Ruggie explain that a hegemonic power "will seek to construct an international order in some form, presumably along lines that are compatible with its own international objectives and domestic structures."³¹ Anne-Marie Burley agrees and proposes that the relative foreign policy inexperience of American planners led them to construct a world order from a liberal domestic analogy. The Europeans, conversely, had "centuries of diplomatic interaction [that] impelled leaders to view the international world as distinct and separate from the domestic one."³² The Europeans were skeptical of applying liberal ideas beyond their national borders, while American planners were convinced that since the liberal model worked at home to govern a diverse population with complex problems, it would work for the US-built international order.

When American planners began to think about fixing the world, they decided to project outward the liberal polity that was the US domestic order. Burley explains,

Just as the New Deal government increasingly took active responsibility for the welfare of the nation, US foreign policy planners took increased responsibility for the welfare of the world. It was widely believed that they had little choice. The United States was going to be a world power by default. It could not insulate itself from the world's problems. As at home, moreover, it could not neatly pick and choose among those problems, distinguishing politics from economic, security from prosperity, defense from welfare.

In the lexicon of the New Deal, taking responsibility meant government intervention on a grand scale.³³

The United States would construct an international order modeled on its own domestic order, and this would require US intervention “on a grand scale,” building, funding, and protecting that order. Protecting that order would sometimes require the use of military force against enemies of the order. The expectation was that over time the order would be sustained by the development of good and proper democratic politics within other states that would honor and sustain cooperation between states.³⁴

The United States acting as hegemon, then, conceived of a particular kind of international order and put US economic, political, and military weight behind building and defending that order. At about the same time that the United States started building the liberal international order, the Cold War started. It is useful to think about the Cold War as a story within a story. The overarching story of the international system after World War II is about how the United States built a liberal international order that continues today, while the story within a story is about the United States protecting that liberal international order from its most significant threat in the form of the Soviet Union and its allies. The struggle between the two superpowers was based on two different versions of international order. After the Soviet Union fell, the United States continued to defend the liberal international order. The first threat to that order came right before the Soviet collapse when Iraq invaded Kuwait. Piracy and terrorism are recent threats to the liberal international order. Putin’s Russia also now poses a threat to that order, according to Western intelligence agencies and analysts. Whether China is also a threat to the liberal international order is very much a topic of debate.

The dominant operating mode for the liberal international order is **multilateralism**. Liberal institutionalists define multilateralism as the “international governance of the ‘many.’”³⁵ Multilateralism helps many self-interested actors achieve the benefits of cooperation by institutionalizing diffuse reciprocity for good behavior and punishment for bad behavior. Since rewards and punishments are integrated into institutional arrangements, states do not need to worry about whether other states are trustworthy. Trust in the benefits of the system (not necessarily trust in other states) is achieved over time as experience demonstrates that the institutional arrangements benefit all good actors without discrimination and compel all actors to be good partners most of the time. Moreover, over time, actors expect that all kinds of international problems can be solved through multilateralism, and thus multilateralism becomes the “deep organizing principle of international life.”³⁶

Multilateralism was a way to vest the other major powers in the new order. Earlier in this chapter, we quoted Schweller, who calls the liberal international order a negotiated order, or a “rule-based order that is the result of a grand bargain voluntarily struck among the major actors who, therefore, view

the order as legitimate and beneficial.”³⁷ American planners wanted the participation of major countries who would find that the benefits of the US-led, rule-based order were more predictable than the previous orders. A rule-based order premised on the idea that all could benefit, not just the hegemon, would reassure the other major powers and buy them into the project. The United States also sought the end of colonialism, and giving the major powers a stake in (and profits in) the new order would be a compensation for this loss of empire.

Scholars of different sorts seem to agree that the American hegemon’s decision to use multilateralism as the overarching framework for the postwar world was a distinctly American decision. Ruggie proposes that “to the extent it is possible to know such things, other leading powers would have pursued very different world order designs.”³⁸ Had Germany come out of World War II as the new hegemon, it would have constructed a world order of “imperial design.” The Soviet Union as hegemon would have extended its political control through a Comintern, using “administered economic relations among its subject economies.” A British hegemon would have continued its established practice of colonialism and discriminatory trade practices.³⁹

The ostensible equality embedded in the US-led order was reflected in the primary military alliance that would protect the order, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). NATO was a mutual defense arrangement, with its initial goal being the protection of free Western Europe from the Soviet threat. The Soviet analogy—and counter—to NATO was the Warsaw Treaty Organization, a “coercive and extractive” and imposed order designed for the power and security of the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

NATO, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the World Trade Organization are chief components of the American hegemonic order, but this is not an exhaustive list. All these institutions work on the notion of multilateralism. Countries are bound by rules but can also expect to benefit from the rule-based system, and this applies to small powers as much as to major powers and even to the hegemonic power, the United States. It is a fact that the post–World War II multilateral institutions have benefited some states more than they have benefited others, and it is also a fact that the United States has not been completely bound by the rules. However, it is also true that most states have derived some benefit from these institutions, and *most of the time* the United States has played within the rules, or at least used the rules to justify its own foreign policy behaviors. Moreover, although many of the contemporary rising powers (China, India, Indonesia, and South Africa) did not have a voice in the construction of the liberal international order, these rising powers do not seem interested in creating an alternative order. The liberal international order is enduring because it serves more than the interests of

the hegemon, or at least the order has endured on these terms. Its future is in some doubt in 2018.

We gave a neorealist interpretation of different US administrations above. Liberal institutionalism works to describe the foreign policy of every US president since World War II; all US presidents until Trump were committed to the liberal international order. Even the Bush 2 administration justified its wars in terms of protecting the order and more or less stayed within it. The Obama administration continued this commitment at the same time that it needed to do a course correction because of the 2008 global financial crisis and the Great Recession in the United States. To Obama, the costs of the liberal international order had become too great for the United States to manage alone, and the other great powers would need to do more to sustain and manage the liberal order in partnership with the United States.

When the Chinese warned Trump that his National Security Strategy “will injure others and damage itself,” the warning was about the Trump administration abandoning the liberal international order. The Chinese learned to operate with great success in the US-led order, and there was no reason yet for China to seek an alternative order, not even one of its own design.

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in many ways emulates US leadership of the present order and results in a deepening of multilateralism and globalization. June Teufel Dreyer notes that a persistent feature of China’s relations with the West is Chinese appropriation of and spinning of Western ideas to reflect a better Chinese version.⁴¹ The BRI is a Chinese variation on the Marshall Plan to reconstruct Europe after the Second World War. The Marshall Plan combined state and private enterprise backed with US funding and military protection to rebuild Europe. This won the United States lasting allies and deep “soft power.” The Chinese BRI is a larger version of the Marshall Plan in terms of financing and scope, and in the Chinese view the BRI is a better version because it does not depend on the partners’ acquiescence to Chinese political values. Further, the BRI also bypasses the messiness of working with nongovernmental entities such as corporations and private banks, since it is all about state-led development. The planning and execution are ostensibly cooperative, with benefits accruing to China and its partners.

There are, however, signs of discontent with this Chinese order coming from China’s partners; this discontent is similar to that felt by developing countries when dealing with Western-led global institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. In Laos, there was fear that the government would not be able to pay for its share of the \$6 billion rail line project with China. The total annual economic output of Laos was only \$12 billion a year, as noted earlier, and “a feasibility study by a Chinese company said the railway would lose money for the first 11 years.”⁴² Sri Lanka owed Chinese state firms \$8 billion. In late 2017, in order to begin to repay the Chinese, Sri Lanka gave China a ninety-nine-year lease to control a major port.⁴³ These

and other BRI projects make China's partners dependent on China in ways that threaten their sovereignty, but China is also dependent on these countries and the trade that it needs to continue its rise. The benefits—which accrue to China and its partners differently—still outweigh the costs to all, and economic interdependence continues to deepen.

When calculating the long-term prospects for the present international order, liberal theorists will need to allow for the possibility that the founder of that order may intentionally undermine it, abetting the activities of the spoiler Russia. Or at least this seems a possibility in the Trump administration. Other countries, however, are also invested in the liberal order and probably can be counted on to continue engaging in and supporting it. In 2017, a group of German foreign policy experts wrote a manifesto to the German government urging it to continue to work with the United States despite the Trump administration. They warned that the liberal order was under threat from the Trump administration and many other illiberal, antimodern voices. However, they declared that the United States “remains indispensable” to the world order *and to Germany*, and so the German government should work around the Trump administration, finding trusted partners in other parts of the US government and society to survive this time of threat and defend the liberal international order.⁴⁴

What the German foreign policy experts suggest is that Germany should help the United States maintain its central role in order to maintain the liberal international order. From the perspective of some liberal institutionalists, though, the liberal international order should be able to continue even in the absence of the hegemon because the liberal order works so well for so many states that themselves are willing to work together to maintain it. Robert Keohane made this argument in 1984: the liberal international order had a life after hegemony.⁴⁵ Keohane thought this was the case even while the Soviet Union existed and was actively opposed to the capitalist world order.

Many states have internalized multilateralism as part of their foreign policy identity. **Middle powers** are such states. “Middle power” is a national role conception adopted by diplomats and scholars in Canada, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and South Korea. Other countries get the middle power label sometimes, but “middle power” is best understood as a national role conception, as discussed in chapter 5. That is, rather than being a category in which countries are placed, it is better to understand middle powers as those countries that perform the behaviors associated with the middle power role that they constructed. The foreign policy behavior is called **middle power diplomacy**.

Middle powers have portrayed themselves as “middle,” but this means between the great powers and all others. During the Cold War, this in-between status was linked to mediation aimed at preserving the world from superpower nuclear war. At the same time, middle power diplomacy was iden-

tified with facilitating dialogue between the **Global North** and the Global South. Middle power diplomacy is defined as the “tendency to pursue multilateral solutions to international problems, tendency to embrace compromise positions in international disputes, and tendency to embrace notions of ‘good international citizenship.’”⁴⁶ Middle powers claim to be the coalition builders, the mediators and go-betweens, and the peacekeepers of the world.

Middle powers, according to the diplomats and scholars from these states, perform internationalist activities because of a moral imperative associated with being a middle power—middle powers during the Cold War were the only states able and willing to be collectively responsible for protecting the international order, especially when smaller states could not and greater powers would not.⁴⁷ Despite this claim of moral imperative, middle powers commit their relative affluence, managerial skills, and international prestige to the preservation of the liberal international order because it has been within this order that the middle powers have acquired their affluence, skills, and prestige. They are committed to maintaining the system from which they have benefited. This has made the middle powers—despite claims of being in between different sides—stand rather close to the United States, helping it with system maintenance by virtue of shared values and interests. This closeness has given middle powers entrance to the halls of power as defined by the G7 and G20, two multilateral arrangements of states that control much of the world’s economic output and trade.

Some scholars call the Global South countries of India, South Africa, and Indonesia middle powers.⁴⁸ Typically, the label “middle power” applies when countries have a certain level of affluence, regional prominence, and a demonstrated commitment to multilateralism. Multilateralism is the hallmark of middle powers. Global South “middle powers” are even charged with the task of building regional multilateral institutions that can spread the benefits of the liberal order.⁴⁹ Regional leadership based in regional institutions is portrayed as the way for regional powers to launch themselves into global standing. Regional leaders, whether they take on the title of middle power or not, demonstrate their leadership by extending multilateral linkages into their region and back out to the global system. Because liberal institutionalist theorists believe that many countries—great and middle and everyone else—benefit from the liberal international order, their explanations of foreign policy pivot on the use of multilateralism, a “diplomatic practice” that benefits all countries.⁵⁰

Alternative Theories

Beyond the dominant IR theories of neorealism and liberal institutionalism, most of the other international relations theories do not present guides for understanding foreign policy making and behavior. Most of these theories do

not have much to say about how particular states will act but instead put states into broad categories, and the categories suggest the outlines of policies and behaviors. Here we will discuss the broad elements of what some alternative theories have to say about foreign policy.

Marxism is a critique and response to capitalism. Both of the grand political theories discussed above, realism and liberalism, are compatible with capitalism. As with realism and liberalism, there is much more to Marxism than will be described here. The foundation of the Marxist view is that the economic organization of a society determines its political and social systems. A society premised on capitalism, with its free market and private ownership of wealth and property, is a society divided into economic and social classes. Essentially, there are two classes—owners and workers. The societal norms and political system built on a capitalist-based economy protect the continued profit taking of the owner class and keep the workers working. Elite interests dominate politics, and the institutions of government keep workers in an exploited, dependent position.

An international system based on capitalism is also a system divided into the owners, or the “haves,” and the workers, or the “have-nots.” The institutions of the rich states—their national militaries and international institutions—are used to maintain the world capitalist system, which serves elite interests. The international system is understood as a structure that fuels the wealth and power of the **core** states at the expense of **semi-peripheral** states that help insulate the core and keep the outer poorer states on the **periphery**. The core is roughly composed of the West, which is the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and South Korea. Movement between the levels typically does not happen, but the presence of South Korea in the core suggests that states can move from the semi-periphery to the core under limited circumstances.

The institutional structures within core states keep workers subservient, and the institutional structures of the **international capitalist system** do the same. Consider the 1991 Gulf War between the US-led, UN-approved multinational coalition and Iraq. Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990 resulted from the inability of the two countries to reach agreement on key points of contention regarding Kuwaiti loans to Iraq. When the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein could not persuade Kuwait to accept more agreeable repayment terms, he decided to settle differences with Kuwait through invasion and occupation. Perhaps the Iraqi leader had in mind how the US invaded Panama in December 1989 after the US government could not get the Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega to comply with American demands. Of course, Iraq is not the United States. The UN Security Council condemned the invasion as a violation of key principles of the UN system. When Iraq refused to comply with UN demands to vacate Kuwait, the UN Security Council gave its blessing to the United States and a multinational coalition to use force against Iraq to compel it to act by the established rules.

The international institutions built by the core states maintain the capitalist system for the advantage of the core. One of the primary principles on which the United Nations was founded—that states must not use force to pursue their foreign policy goals—is only enforced when states from the periphery break it in a way that might threaten the existing international structure. The power of the core was threatened by Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. In blunt terms, had Iraq managed to maintain control of Kuwait, Iraq would have controlled too much of the world’s oil reserves to be kept out of the club of the elite. The old core countries did not want to open the doors of their club to Iraq, and so they used their power in the United Nations to justify war against Iraq and put Iraq back in its place. This use of the United Nations was hailed as the beginning of a new world order by Western states.

That Iraq is Muslim was not the primary barrier to its entry in the core. The core does permit some entry for non-European states, as is clear from the presence of Japan and South Korea in the list above. The admission comes when basic capitalist values align with economic weight and economic interdependence, and when the core wants to grant entry based on its own interests. The G20 is a group representing the world’s major economies. The G20 claims that it represents 85 percent of global economic output, 66 percent of the world’s population, 75 percent of international trade, and 80 percent of global investment. It is a group of nineteen countries and the EU; it includes nine countries that were previously in the global semi-periphery: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Indonesia and Saudi Arabia are Muslim countries, so religion is not a barrier to entry.

In the 1950s, analysts studying the problems with underdevelopment and poverty in Latin America proposed that countries on the periphery and semi-periphery suffered from declining terms of trade that kept their economies forever falling behind and ever dependent on others. Dependency theory is a Marxist school of international relations theory that builds on this. Dependency theory explains that even countries that experience some economic development, such as those countries in the semi-periphery, remain dependent on the core for financing, technology, intellectual property, and markets.⁵¹ Dependent capitalist development deepens—at the expense of workers and their country—because of an alliance of local elites, core institutions, and multinational corporations from the core.

Globalization is the manifestation of the power of the core and of neoliberals. States outside the core can only (re)claim their autonomy by resistance to globalization and neoliberal policies imposed on them by core lenders and financiers. Anti-Western and **antiglobalization** sentiments have undergirded the domestic and foreign policies of many noncore states; many people in core states also embrace antiglobalization and reject neoliberal policies that victimize workers and environments. Our mission here, though, is to think about

Marxist and Marxist-inspired theories that provide explanations for foreign policy behavior.

Marxist theorists are like realists in their emphasis on the power-seeking behavior of international actors, and so we can borrow from realists the idea of balancing against power. There have been collective efforts by noncore states to balance against the core in order to force a change in behavior by the core. In 1955, twenty-nine Asian and African countries met at Bandung, Indonesia, at what became known as the Bandung Conference. This was the predecessor of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) officially begun in 1961 in Yugoslavia. The countries at Bandung called for Global South solidarity against colonialism and neocolonialism. Their goal was to promote a more equitable international political and economic system. The principles of the Bandung Conference still inform the foreign policies of many countries, including Indonesia, South Africa, and India. The efforts of the Bandung Conference and beyond amount to soft balancing against the core states and institutions rather than efforts to create a hard balance aimed at the establishment of a separate international order. Indeed, seven of the attendees at Bandung are today members of the G20: Indonesia, India, South Africa, Turkey, Japan, China, and Saudi Arabia.

Resistance to the institutions of the core has occurred within those institutions as well. For instance, the NAM promoted a call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) within the United Nations starting in 1974. The NIEO was a list of demands by a group calling itself the G77 to highlight its difference from the G7 of the time. The NIEO demands were brought before the UN General Assembly and the UN Conference on Trade and Development, but they were not adopted or accommodated in any substantial way by the core states.

Individual states have also adopted foreign policies of resistance in the time since the end of the Cold War. Venezuela, Turkey, and Iran attempted briefly to form a loose coalition against the Western-dominated world system. Their resistance foreign policy agenda was not fully articulated, and these states did not maintain their affiliation. Brazil's soft balancing against UN civilian protection mandates was also an act of resistance, but not one that formed the foundation of a national role conception and a subsequent foreign policy agenda. Marxist, anticore, and antiglobalization ideas inform the foreign policies of many states, but these ideas characterize the changes these states seek in the international order rather than a foreign policy identity associated with observable foreign policy behaviors. Models explored in other chapters of this book can help to understand when and how foreign policies of resistance start.

There are many other IR theories that propose resistance to the dominant international order, particularly theories that use the lenses of feminism and postcolonialism. Maybe readers of this book will go on to develop foreign

policy models that derive from these and can be included in the study of foreign policy. The next chapter concludes this book by thinking about possible research topics that await investigation.

For Discussion

1. What is international order?
Discuss the three types of international order and give examples of each.
2. Explain China's Belt and Road Initiative as complementary to the liberal international order and as a challenge to it.
3. Discuss how the National Security Strategy of Barack Obama illustrates liberal institutionalist ideas while that of Donald Trump illustrates offensive neorealist ideas.
4. Using a defensive neorealist perspective, explain why there is no hard balancing against US preponderant power.
5. How is the liberal international order a hegemonic order? What did the hegemon do to construct this order?
6. Explain the concept and practice of multilateralism. Why do liberals say that multilateralism removes the problem of trust from international relations?
7. Describe how Marxist-based theories describe the present international system and what the Gulf War of 1991 illustrates about this system.

Key Words

globalization
 protectionism
 liberal institutionalism
 neorealism
 offensive neorealism
 international system
 bipolar international system
 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)
 governance
 sovereignty
 supranational
 anarchy
 great power
 primacy
 defensive neorealism
 revisionist state
 grand strategy
 hegemon
 balance of power
 balancing
 unipolar international system
 hard balancing
 internal balancing
 strategic balancing
 soft balancing
 unipole
 civilian protection
 Global South
 bandwagoning
 multipolar international system
 forward partnering
 reciprocity
 liberal international order
 hegemonic order
 multilateralism
 middle power

middle power diplomacy
Global North
Marxism
core

semi-periphery
periphery
international capitalist system
antiglobalization

9

An Intermestic Arena with Linkage Actors

In This Chapter

- Linkage Actors
- Linkage Actors Complicate the Two-Level Game
- Final Thoughts

Major Cases Explored

- Iraqi and Syrian Kurds form coalitions with the US military to defeat ISIS
- Iraq and Turkey wage war against the Iraqi and Syrian Kurds
- Myanmar's ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya and the reaction of linkage actors

The distance between Afrin and Manbij in Syria is about sixty-one miles (98.66 kilometers) as the crow flies. By highway, the trip is about ninety miles (144 kilometers). In January 2018, this was the distance between Kurds under attack by Turkish forces in Afrin and a Kurdish–US Special Forces partnership controlling Manbij. The Kurdish–US coalition had taken Manbij from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The Turkish attack on Afrin was coordinated with Russia, which pulled Russian forces out of the Afrin area in anticipation of Turkey's attack. Turkey claimed it was cleaning out a terrorist enclave in Afrin; the terrorists were the Kurds. Turkey said it would continue its attack westward to Iraq, cleaning out the “terrorist corridor” along its border.¹ Turkey's next stop was Manbij; that is, Turkey's next stop was a possible direct confrontation with its NATO ally the United States. This possible clash of NATO allies was because of two **nonstate actors**—the Kurds whom Turkey called terrorists, and ISIS, a group that everyone agreed was terrorist. This dire situation threatened to put another dagger in the heart of the US-led liberal international order, pitting NATO allies against each other, no doubt to the delight of Russia. That same crow flying from Afrin

to Manbij would pass over Dabiq, the village of ISIS internet lore that pulled Western-born Muslims to the war in Syria.

Whether the Kurds were terrorists depends on who was making the claim. Trump White House officials claimed that the Kurds in Afrin were not the same Kurds partnering with the US military in Syria, although the US military and the Kurds disputed this claim.² For both the Turkish government and the American government (or more specifically the American military), the Kurds constituted a nonstate actor of strategic importance.

The Kurds and ISIS are both nonstate **linkage actors**. Linkage actors play a prominent role in world politics, complicating as well as facilitating the foreign policies of states. Nonstate linkage actors are both autonomous from states and bound by states—since most of the world is divided into sovereign units—and we include them here as a way to return to the idea that foreign policy is a complex, intermestic game with many players. Before we explain the notion of linkage actors, we need some more details on this case study.

The Kurds, like the Palestinians, are a **stateless nation**. Kurds live in Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Armenia. Some Kurdish groups have sought the formation of a sovereign Kurdistan; others seek autonomy within their countries and/or protection for their people, language, and culture. The Kurds in southeastern Turkey have experienced short periods of normal integration into the politics of Turkey, and other times Kurdistan groups have engaged in open warfare with the Turkish military. The Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) is the main Kurdish party and rebel group; initially the PKK wanted statehood for Turkey's Kurds, but later it demanded equal rights and protection of the Kurdish language and culture within Turkey. During lulls in the fighting, the PKK withdrew to northern Iraq. In 2012, Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan began political negotiations with the PKK leader (who sat in a Turkish prison), but the talks broke down, particularly as events in the Syrian civil war created alarm for the Turkish government. Active fighting resumed between the Turkish military and the PKK in 2015, resulting in thousands of deaths, mostly of Kurds. This fighting straddled both Turkey and Iraq until 2018, when Turkey brought its war on the Kurds to Syria.

The Kurds in northern Iraq have enjoyed autonomy since the 1991 US-led military intervention to protect them from the government of Saddam Hussein. The Kurdish militia, the Peshmerga, has worked with the US military since that time, including during the 2003–2009 US war in Iraq. The Kurds formed the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in 1992 and retained this government in the post-Saddam political system. Turkey has never liked that an autonomous Kurdish government existed in Iraq and on its border, nor that the PKK took safe haven in the KRG from time to time. The KRG frequently acted against the interests of the federal Iraqi government, too, including signing an oil exploration deal with ExxonMobil in 2011, headed at that time by Rex Tillerson, Trump's future secretary of state. When ISIS

started capturing substantial territory in Iraq in mid-2014, US Special Forces embedded with the Peshmerga and elements of the Iraqi regular army and began to fight against ISIS. Under US airstrikes, the coalition managed to retake most of the ISIS-captured territory in Iraq by 2016. To consolidate these gains, the United States started supplying heavy weaponry directly to the KRG, to the displeasure of Iraq and Turkey.

At the same time that US Special Forces and air command started working with Iraqi Kurds against ISIS, a similar coalition was formed in Syria. The Kurds live mostly in northeastern Syria. As a group, they had had problems with the Assad government before the start of the 2011 civil war, but most of the problems were about the use of the Kurdish language in schools and the preservation of Kurdish culture. When the 2011 civil war began, the Assad government sought to neutralize the Kurds in order to devote attention to fighting the rebels. Assad permitted the Kurds local autonomy, particularly regarding the use of Kurdish. The Syrian Kurds formed their own militia, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), and stayed out of the war. The YPG established itself as an effective security force and was noteworthy for its use of female troops and commanders. ISIS had been a presence in the Syrian civil war from the start. As ISIS spread and established what it called a caliphate in eastern Syria, it came into direct confrontation with the Kurds. The successful US-Kurdish-Arab coalition in Iraq was replicated in Syria in 2014. The BBC reports that a US-led coalition conducted more than thirteen thousand air strikes in Iraq against ISIS from 2014 to the end of 2017 and more than fourteen thousand air strikes in Syria in the same period in support of the coalitions fighting on the ground.³

The coalition forces on the ground, supported by a multinational coalition of seventy-four countries providing air support, pushed ISIS out of most of the territory it had occupied in Syria and Iraq by the end of 2017. As this victory was unfolding, the KRG came to occupy and control more and more territory in Iraq, including areas with substantial oil reserves. The expanded KRG declared it would hold a referendum on Kurdish independence from Iraq in September 2017. The Kurdish vote was overwhelmingly for independence, but the Iraqi government had had enough and sent troops to reassert Iraq national control and push the KRG back to its 1992 territorial boundaries.

In Syria, the coalition of US Special Forces and Kurds, again with some Arabs, took and held territory in eastern Syria up to the Euphrates River, and then the US Special Forces and Kurds crossed the river and set up a base in Manbij. The Kurds controlled 25 percent of Syrian territory at this point.⁴

In the beginning of 2018, the US military announced that it would stay in Syria for two years, training and standing up a thirty-thousand-strong force to protect the border and keep ISIS at bay. Syria, Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Russia objected strenuously to this idea. At this point, Turkey had had enough. Taking to Twitter, Erdogan warned, "The US has now acknowledged that

it has established a terror army along our borders. Our duty, in return, is to nip this terror army in the bud.”⁵ Within a week, the Turks had launched an air and ground offensive against the Kurdish enclave of Afrin and warned the US-Kurd forces that they were heading next to Manbij.

The presence of the terrorist group ISIS created the circumstances that caused the United States to deepen its military commitment to the Iraqi and Syrian Kurds. This US military partnership with the Kurds was tolerated by states in the area as long as ISIS remained a significant problem. Once the threat of ISIS dissipated, the Kurds’ status and power became more problematic. This case demonstrates that we cannot fully understand state-state relations without bringing into focus some other very important autonomous actors. Turkey had threatened to send troops into the Syrian civil war early on and had funneled weapons and foreign fighters into that conflict, but it was not until the Syrian Kurds appeared to be achieving territorial control that Turkey actually intervened. The timing of the intervention appeared tied to the 2018 national elections in Turkey; thus we can label the intervention a mobilization strategy designed to rally nationalism among Erdogan’s supporters ahead of the elections.⁶ This case played out in real time as this book went to press; readers should investigate what happened next, perhaps blending the models discussed in chapter 6 with concepts from this chapter.

Linkage Actors

In many places in this book, we have seen nonstate, autonomous, self-interested actors that are not simply players within a single country’s political system or agents/representatives of states. Karen Mingst calls these nonstate actors a type of linkage actor. Mingst uses James Rosenau’s definition of *linkage* to indicate “any recurrent sequence of behavior that originates in one system and is reacted to in another.”⁷ Mingst offers seven categories of linkage actors. The first is familiar to the readers of this book: **government negotiators** engaged in the two-level game between domestic and international politics. The second is also state related: **transgovernmental coalitions** comprised of state agencies cooperating toward common goals. The inclusion of states/leaders/representatives/agencies here signals that Mingst envisions global politics as a pluralistic arena with many actors, including but not limited to states.

The third linkage actor is **international organizations**, such as the United Nations or the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which appeared in earlier chapters. The fourth is **international courts** with supranational jurisdiction, specifically the European Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. The fifth actors are individuals who are “**track-two**” **diplomats** engaged in informal diplomacy, such as Bill Richardson in the next case study in this chapter. The sixth linkage actor is **nongovernmen-**

tal organizations (NGOs); this is a diverse group including terrorist groups, transnational criminal groups, ExxonMobil, Amnesty International, and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Finally, the last linkage-actor group is **epistemic communities** of issue-area experts, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Al Gore in 2007.

The concept of linkage actors fits in the liberal institutionalist theory of global politics discussed in chapter 8. These actors bring their own identities and interests as well as their own bargaining resources to the arena of global politics. Of course, global politics occurs somewhere tangible and not just conceptually (out in the world) or online in virtual reality, and so these actors' activities originate in some states and cross boundaries into other states. The activities of linkage actors within the domestic political systems of states could be evaluated using models discussed elsewhere in this book, but such an approach would fail to accommodate their full "linkage" nature. We need to consider how linkage actors seek to influence foreign policy making, keeping in mind that all linkage actors occupy and interact within that space we call intermestic.

Mingst categorizes the strategies guiding linkage-actor behavior into four types. The first strategy is the **power approach**. This entails making diplomatic contacts at the highest decision-making levels in a high-stakes game of influence. Mingst warns that this strategy is risky because failed efforts can come at a great loss of the linkage actor's credibility. Credibility is one of the bargaining advantages held by the linkage actors, from states to all the other types.

Syrian Kurds are represented by different groups. Some of these Kurdish groups attended the UN-led diplomatic efforts in Geneva to achieve a political solution to the Syrian war, but they maintained their separateness from other antigovernment Syrian groups in order to maintain the appearance of neutrality. This neutrality gave the Syrian Kurds credibility when they engaged with state actors. Despite partnering with the US military against ISIS, the Kurds tried to maintain communication with most of the other actors in the war, including Russia. In 2017, Russia had called for some Kurdish groups to be seated at the Geneva talks as full participants, and the Russian government announced that the Syrian Kurds would be at negotiations in Sochi at the end of January 2018. However, Russian credibility with the Syrian Kurds was damaged by Russian collusion with Turkey when Turkey launched its attacks on the Kurds in Afrin.⁸ As a result, the Syrian Kurds and the opposition stayed away from the Sochi talks.

The second strategy employed by linkage actors is the **technocratic approach**. This entails, among other things, the use of the linkage actor's knowledge and expertise in the procedural mechanisms of domestic and international systems. In a previous edition of this book, we examined international lawyers using their knowledge of national and international legal systems to

promote justice for victims of torture. In the wars described above, foreign fighters formed a significant part of the ISIS fighting ranks. On the other side of the fight, US Special Forces brought their own expertise, training and assisting Kurdish militias. These vastly different foreign fighters—from Western individuals joining ISIS to the US military—brought their war-fighting expertise and technology to the battlefield as force multipliers for the nonstate actors located there.

The third linkage-actor strategy is the **coalition-building approach**. Building a coalition that contains many different linkage actors and their resources ensures a stronger, more effective tool to achieve the coalition's goals. Some of the Kurds across the Middle East had desired statehood since at least the end of the Ottoman Empire. The US-led humanitarian intervention in northern Iraq in 1991 set in motion events that would strengthen the territorial claims of a future Kurdistan, at least in Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds gladly formed a coalition with US forces in Iraq that deepened during the 2003 US war in Iraq. This same coalition served American and Kurdish interests when ISIS arose in Syria and Iraq. This Kurdish-US coalition strengthened Kurdish claims to a larger Kurdistan in Iraq and Syria while facilitating the shared goal of defeating ISIS. We can connect the coalition-building strategy to the power approach above, since the US-Kurdish coalitions provided Kurds in both Iraq and Syria with greater credibility as global actors. No doubt, the raised global stature of the Kurds angered and threatened Turkey and Iran, countries with their own ambitious Kurdish populations.

Finally, the fourth strategy is the **grassroots mobilization approach**. This entails building widespread public involvement in the cause, but here the “public” crosses national borders. Such a strategy involves the use of large-scale public education efforts designed to mobilize other actors—such as key individuals, business interests, or populations—to demand a response from officeholders. As the Turks attacked Afrin and threatened other Syrian Kurds, an opinion piece was published in the *New York Times* calling for Western powers to stop Turkey. The writer was Nujin Derik, the commander of the Women's Protection Units in Afrin, Syria.⁹ The Syrian Kurdish militias are noteworthy for their use of women's units that have fought side by side with men's units to rid Syria of ISIS. Derik called on Western countries to side with the Kurds in support of “democracy, environmental protection and women's liberation,” and against Turkey and its support for Islamic fundamentalists. The readers of this book should investigate how far Derik's appeal spread and whether she galvanized other linkage actors to join a broad coalition in support of the rights of the Kurdish people. Grassroots mobilization was happening in a more direct way as well, with foreign fighters coming from Western countries not to join ISIS but to join the Kurdish People's Protection Units against the invading Turks.¹⁰

Linkage Actors Complicate the Two-Level Game

As is apparent to the readers of this book, states do not just conduct their foreign policies with and against other states. A variety of autonomous nonstate actors carrying their own identities and pursuing their own interests work within states and between states, causing states to do more than take note of them. In chapter 1, human and religious rights groups in the United States formed a coalition to push the US government to help the Tibetan people and prodemocracy protestors in China. The Dalai Lama, the religious head of the Tibetan people, was a prominent individual engaged in track-two diplomatic efforts on behalf of peace. For his efforts, the Dalai Lama won the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize.

In September 2017, the Dalai Lama wrote an open letter to the leader of Myanmar/Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi. He wrote to her as one Nobel Peace Prize laureate to another, that is, as two recipients of a high honor bestowed for peace work. The Dalai Lama wanted Aung San Suu Kyi to reconsider the domestic policies of her government. To use our conceptual material, the Dalai Lama was a nonstate linkage actor using a power strategy based in part on membership in a select coalition. He wrote the letter to express concern over the maltreatment of the Rohingya people in Myanmar and Aung San Suu Kyi's silence or complicity in this.

The Rohingya are a nation located in several countries; before 2016, they were the majority of Muslims living in the Myanmar state of Rakhine. The government of Myanmar treated the Rohingya as stateless people illegally residing in the country. The Rohingya had no economic, social, or political rights, and they were subjected to state-sanctioned violence. In 2016, attacks by unknown persons on border guards caused the Myanmar military to launch a brutal reprisal against the Rohingya. Burmese citizens, including Buddhist monks, joined in the attacks against the Rohingya with impunity. The Rohingya, a Muslim people in a Buddhist-majority country, came under another massive attack by the military in August 2017 after armed Rohingya militants attacked police posts. In a series of "clearance operations" in the month of August alone, the military killed more than 6,700 people, including children. After the 2016 military crackdown, more than three hundred thousand Rohingya had fled to refugee camps in Bangladesh. From August 2017 to the end of December, that number more than doubled. The military engaged in mass killings, mass rapes, and the burning of homes and villages. In response to international calls for the government to stop the **ethnic cleansing** campaign against the Rohingya, Myanmar officials brutally stated that "there is no such thing as Rohingya."¹¹

Aung San Suu Kyi was the state counselor (head of state) of Myanmar, a position she won when her party, the National League for Democracy, won a supermajority of seats in the 2015 elections. This was the third national elec-

tion in a period of **democratization** that began in 2008. The previous military regime held Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest from 1989 to 2010 for her political activism. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 in recognition of her nonviolent efforts to bring democracy to her country. The year after Aung San Suu Kyi became state counselor, the military started a brutal campaign against the Rohingya.

When the 2016 campaign against the Rohingya began, Aung San Suu Kyi agreed with the military that all reports about the maltreatment of people in Rakhine state were “fake news” and misinformation and not the business of anyone outside Myanmar. She maintained this position when the 2017 cleansing campaign brought greater international attention. Despite her official position, Aung San Suu Kyi did establish some commissions and panels devoted to understanding the problems of Rakhine state. In January 2018, one high-profile member of an advisory panel quit; former US ambassador to the United Nations and governor of New Mexico Bill Richardson quit his panel, calling it a “whitewash.” Richardson, a person with a long career in track-two diplomacy, called the advisory panel a “cheerleading squad” for the government and Aung San Suu Kyi.¹² Richardson used his credibility as a track-two diplomat to publicize the government-caused problems in Rakhine and the government resistance to any outside advice in media interviews and in an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* aimed at US policy makers.

Other track-two diplomatic coalitions called on Aung San Suu Kyi to use her authority to stop the mass killings and expulsions of Rohingya. The Dalai Lama had called out to her when the violence ignited in 2016. That same year, a Facebook coalition of eleven Nobel laureates, international business leaders, writers, and former diplomats called on the United Nations Security Council to stop the ethnic cleansing. In late 2017 when worse ethnic cleansing began, a coalition of five women Nobel Peace Prize laureates called on Aung San Suu Kyi as a woman and sister laureate to step up to her responsibilities to create peace for the Rohingya. The Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Malala Yousafzai—all Nobel laureates—similarly made public calls to Aung San Suu Kyi. The leaders of Muslim-majority countries implored her to stop the violence, including Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. In a news report about a phone call between Erdogan and Aung San Suu Kyi, she is reported to have said the military was engaged in a campaign against terrorists and that her government was attempting to protect her people’s human rights and democracy.¹³ Meanwhile, a change.org website engaged in grassroots mobilization gathered close to five hundred thousand signatures from around the world to ask the Nobel Committee to rescind the prize awarded to Aung San Suu Kyi in acknowledgment of her complicity in **genocide**.

Aung San Suu Kyi and her government faced a high-stakes two-level game. On the international side, other states, international organizations, humanitarian groups, coalitions of activists, and even grassroots online cam-

paigns were rallying to stop the ethnic cleansing campaign. On the domestic side, Aung San Suu Kyi and her political party had joined a coalition with the old military elite with the goal of maintaining a quasi-democracy for her people. Her people, apparently, did not include the Rohingya, and so she did not hesitate to scapegoat the Rohingya in order to ensure her own domestic political survival. Given our study in this book, we might predict that the domestic side of this terrible game will win, with more tragedy in store for the Rohingya. However, it is possible that this case could go a different way. The coalition building and grassroots mobilization efforts of the linkage actors may yet prove stronger than the bargain struck between the military and Aung San Suu Kyi. One lesson to be drawn from the experience of the Iraqi and Syrian Kurds is that coalitions can form to lift the less powerful up to the halls of the powerful.

Readers of this book will know what events have transpired regarding whether Myanmar's democracy stabilizes and whether the Rohingya survive in Myanmar. Readers can use some of the models here about linkage-actor strategies to continue writing this case study, contributing to the development of the field of foreign policy in the process. You might take your newly gained knowledge and expertise and use it on behalf of an international movement to save and get justice for stateless people and refugees, or to forge a new alliance for the climate, or to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction.

Final Thoughts

The study of foreign policy is a study of complex interactions and competing interests, which is easier to get our minds around when we disaggregate it into smaller parts. Although foreign policy study is still about states and their foreign policies, scholars need to find ways to incorporate nonstate linkage actors into their models. Maybe we need to add a new level of analysis—the intermestic level—to our study. At this new level, we could study the patterns of behavior among linkage actors in order to develop new models for future analysts. These models should demonstrate how linkage actors use their bargaining resources to form coalitions as they compete and cooperate in global politics.

For now, we will close this discussion and this book by reframing some simple statements about foreign policy from the first chapter. First, foreign policy results not just from two-level “games” waged in the domestic and international political environments, but also from the interactions of linkage actors in the intermestic arena. Second, domestic and linkage actors bring different interests and bargaining resources to the competition. Finally, foreign policy results from the interactions of coalitions of domestic and linkage actors. The task now for students and scholars is to build the models necessary for the study of this new foreign policy.

For Discussion

1. List and categorize all the linkage actors present in both case studies in this chapter.
2. Identify the linkage-actor strategies used by the actors on the list created for item 1.
3. Propose a way to modify some of the models used earlier in this book to accommodate the notion of linkage actors.

Key Words

nonstate actors
linkage actors
stateless nation
government negotiators
transgovernmental coalitions
international organizations
international courts
track-two diplomats
nongovernmental organization
(NGO)

epistemic communities
power approach
technocratic approach
coalition-building approach
grassroots mobilization approach
ethnic cleansing
democratization
genocide

Glossary

- accommodation strategy** a strategy in which leaders attempt to bargain with a vocal opposition, accommodating or adopting some of its demands, in order to avoid controversy
- additive political change** occurs when an opponent has demonstrated sufficient power to cause the ruling regime political harm, causing the regime to invite the opponent into the government
- aggressive leader** a leadership personality profile with the following traits: high nationalism, high need to control others, high need for power, high distrust in others, and low integrative complexity; expects international interactions to be on his or her own terms
- anarchy** the general condition of the international system in which no ultimate authority (such as a world government) exists to govern relations between states and other international actors
- antiglobalization** opposition to the growing internationalization of culture and economics and the accompanying increased interdependence between individuals, states, and non-state international actors; often associated with populism
- attribution bias** a cognitive error in which one assumes that one's own group is good by nature and only does bad things when forced to do so, while the opponent does bad things because it is inherently bad
- austerity** a policy designed to reduce government debt by severely cutting government spending; intended to shock an economy into course correction and diminish the government's involvement in it
- autocratic** a form of government in which a leader (an autocrat) wields unlimited power
- balance of power** the distribution of power among the great power states in the international system or in a regional system
- balancing** the effort by a state or group of states to build a counterweight against the power of another state or group of states in order to achieve a new balance of power
- bandwagoning** joining a powerful state or group of states in order to appease it and lessen the threat it poses; sometimes done in anticipation of a future payoff for joining
- bargaining advantages** resources available to a political actor that help it influence or control policy making
- belief set** an organized, relatively integrated, and persistent set of perceptions that an individual, group, or state holds about a particular universe
- bipolar international system** an international system in which power is fairly evenly distributed between two significant powers (states) or two power blocs (groups of states)
- bounded rationality** rational decision making within limits of time and information
- bureaucratic politics model** a model in which members of a decision-making group are motivated to protect the interests of the organizations they represent; decision making results from competition between the members
- civilian protection** the notion that the international community should protect people from mass atrocity crimes when a state cannot or will not protect

them; a civilian protection mandate by the UN Security Council authorizes the use of all necessary measures (including force) to render such protection

closed-mindedness a condition characterizing an individual decision maker or a small group in which there is resistance to information and a lack of adaptation to changes in the political environment

CNN effect/media effect an explanation of the media's independent role in foreign policy making that posits that media broadcasts of unsettling international images incite the public to demand foreign policy action by the government

coalition-building approach a linkage-actor strategy that involves the building of a transnational coalition of diverse linkage actors who share an interest in a common outcome

coalition government in a parliamentary system, an arrangement to govern between two or more political parties that together control sufficient votes to be the majority group in parliament; the leader of the party with the greatest number of seats in parliament is typically the head of the government formed

coercive diplomacy using the threat of force to achieve a desired outcome

cognition the study of the mental process or faculty of knowing; the study of how beliefs and personality influence policy making

cognitive consistency the idea that the images in a belief set must be logically connected and fairly well integrated

cognitive miser the idea that individuals are assumed to be limited cognitive managers (lazy thinkers) who rely on shortcuts to interpret and understand new information

complex learning a learning process that manifests in an obvious change in goals and a subsequent allocation of energy and resources toward those new goals

conciliatory leader a leadership personality profile with the following traits: low nationalism, low need to control others, low distrust of others, high need for affiliation, and high integrative complexity; such a leader is more responsive to the international environment and cooperative

conscription mandatory military service

consensus a general agreement; a unanimous decision

constructive engagement a policy of long-term involvement meant to change or influence the policy and behavior of a target state through offering incentives rather than threats and punishments

constructivism a view that proposes that our understanding of world politics is a social creation (construction); for instance, constructivism holds that the international system is not anarchic but is understood and accepted to be anarchic

core the most wealthy, advanced, and influential states in the international capitalist system; generally recognized as the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, and South Korea

covert actions secret actions undertaken in order to influence the course of political events

crisis a circumstance in which a threat or acute problem exists that requires immediate action by decision makers

democracy a type of government in which power is exercised by the people through freely contested, open, and regularly held elections in which representatives are selected for government office; a central feature of a

- democracy is decentralized political authority
- deadlocked solution** when members of an ultimate decision-making unit cannot agree and so are unable to make a decision or formulate a policy
- decision making** the act of choosing among available alternatives about which uncertainty exists
- defensive neorealism** the variant on neorealism that proposes that states are satisfied with the status quo and are inclined only to respond to materialized threats to power and security
- democracy promotion** a foreign policy aimed at encouraging, pushing, or coercing other countries into adopting democratic institutions of governance
- democratic peace** the theory that democracies are less likely to go to war with other democracies, or that democracies are less conflictual than nondemocracies in their overall foreign policies
- democratic transition** the period in which democratic institutions and values are adopted and consolidated within a country
- democratization** the process in which constitutional limits are placed on the exercise of power by central authorities, while free and openly contested elections for political office are held and routinized, with universal suffrage and regularized mass political participation
- deterrence** a situation in which the opponent is stopped from initiating an action—such as a military attack—because of the threat of disproportionate retaliation and/or punishment
- diversionary theory of war** a theory in which leaders commit military forces abroad in order to distract from problems in domestic politics
- domestic opposition** political parties or organized groups that are opposed to the regime/officeholders in power
- domestic political survival** the objective of political actors; usually pertains to officeholders retaining control of their positions
- dominant solution** the solution advocated by the leader of the ultimate decision making unit and agreed upon by the members of the unit
- dual game** see **nested game**
- electoral punishment** the electoral losses that policy makers suffer in response to unpopular decisions or policies
- elites** individuals who exercise great influence in the policy-making process either in the role of government officials, domestic opponents, or individuals who have greater access to decision makers
- enemy image** a belief set that portrays the opponent as inherently evil and strategically cunning with nearly unlimited capacity for causing harm
- epistemic communities** a transnational network of knowledge-based experts who help decision makers define the problems they face, identify solutions, and assess outcomes
- escalation–de-escalation strategy** the strategy of provoking an opponent until there is a countermove, such as a warning from the opponent, at which point a de-escalation is ordered
- ethnic cleansing** see **genocide**
- Eurozone** the group of seventeen states within the European Union that use a single currency (the euro) and agree to limit government debt and deficits to commonly set targets; not all EU members are members of the Eurozone
- forward partnering** a strategy of expanding support activities for major powers and coalitions in order to make others share the costs of international peace and security
- framing** the act of explaining a problem in such a way as to promote a certain

solution to it; a successful “frame” is culturally resonant and repeated with great frequency so that competing frames are shut out

game theory a mathematically based method for evaluating interactive choices that assumes that each player in the “game” (1) operates under the same assumptions and rules for interaction, (2) is aware of the payoff system, and (3) holds a clear understanding of “winning”

genocide the deliberate targeting of an ethnic, racial, national, or religious group with the intention to destroy the group in whole or part

globalization the internationalization of culture and economics, accompanied by increased interdependence between individuals, states, and nonstate international actors

Global North the countries that control most of the world’s wealth and power and often control international institutions

Global South the countries that were at one time colonies, possessions, or subordinate parts of empires that have political and economic development issues often associated with under- and uneven development

governance the act, process, or power of governing

government negotiators linkage actors that represent states in international negotiations

grand strategy a global vision and set of operating principles that frame the foreign policy of a great power, with special emphasis on the harnessing of military force to achieve global goals

grand theory an explanation of why things are the way they are overall, or how things might be; frames how analysts or policy makers think about international politics

grassroots mobilization approach a linkage-actor strategy in which public education and publicity efforts attempt to create widespread public engagement in favor of a cause or policy outcome

great power a state with the ability to shape and maintain the international system; a state with significant military, economic, and political power

group-level rationality the application of rational decision-making metrics to group decision making

groupthink a distortion of small-group decision making in which the members’ desires for maintaining group cohesion are prioritized over problem solving; associated with premature closure around a solution advocated by a strong group member

hard balancing an effort to build a counterweight against a dominant, threatening state or coalition of states through increased military spending and alliance formation

hegemon the preponderant power in the international system as determined by military and economic power; a state that creates and maintains an international or hegemonic order

hegemonic order the international system created by the hegemon to suit its global goals and objectives

humanitarian intervention military involvement in the internal affairs of a state by another state, group of states, or international organization for the purpose of stopping mass killings and/or preventing a humanitarian disaster such as widespread famine

human rights political, civic, and economic rights that are inherent to all human beings, regardless of sex, race, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or any other status

- influence operations** the coordinated and integrated use of national capabilities in order to affect the perceptions and behaviors of leaders, groups, or entire populations in other countries
- insulation strategy** a strategy in which leaders attempt to deflect attention from and otherwise protect their foreign policy
- integrative complexity** a measure of information processing based on the simplicity to complexity of words used and reasoning expressed; higher integrative complexity is typically associated with more cooperative international behavior
- integrative solution** a compromise, synthetic decision by an ultimate decision unit reflecting full discussion of different options
- intermestic** a term for the blurring of the distinction between international and domestic politics
- internal balancing** when a country engages in an arms buildup and military preparations in response to a threatening international opponent
- international capitalist system** a global economic system based on more or less free trade of goods and services across national boundaries
- international courts** a linkage actor that has supranational judicial jurisdiction, such as the European Court of Justice
- international organization** a formal organization created by an agreement among states in order to facilitate cooperation on matters of mutual concern; may be regional or global
- international relations (IR)** an academic discipline (sometimes considered a subdiscipline of political science) that focuses on the interactions between states and nonstate actors at the international or global level
- international system** as a descriptive term (rather than as a level of analysis), refers to the totality of international actors, distribution of resources, and the (written and unwritten) rules and (formal and informal) institutions that govern relations among the actors
- internationalism** a foreign policy orientation that favors cooperation and mutual empowerment over the narrow pursuit of immediate national interests
- intifada** uprising or public resistance; associated with the Palestinian uprisings in Israeli-occupied contested territories
- junta** a military group that controls a country by force
- leader** a person, usually the head of a government, who makes policy choices affecting the international and domestic environments
- leadership** the top decision makers in a national government; regime
- legitimacy** the recognition or acceptance by citizens and/or international actors, including other states, that a government has the right to exercise power and make decisions on behalf of the country
- levels of analysis** tools, or heuristic devices, for gaining different views of a subject
- liberal institutionalism** a grand theory (and variant on liberalism) that proposes that international cooperation occurs because self-interested states understand the long-term benefits of common or collective action through multilateralism
- liberal international order** the American hegemonic order constructed after World War II and built on the foundations of free trade and multilateral, institutionalized problem solving;

associated with the construction of numerous multilateral organizations designed to facilitate international cooperation and prevent world war; also called liberal world order

linkage the direct or indirect interconnectedness of two policies, groups, ideas, and so on

linkage actors individuals, government representatives, international organizations, and nongovernmental non-state actors who work across national boundaries to influence public policy

lobbying the act of attempting to influence decisions made by the government

logrolling putting off further steps toward the consolidation of democracy by holding together a nationalist coalition through a protracted external problem

Marxism the political and economic theories of Karl Marx; the theory that proposes that the economic organization of a society (state or global) shapes its political and social organization

middle power a state that is neither a superpower nor a great power, but with considerable affluence and prestige; often linked to a commitment to multilateralism and liberal internationalism

middle power diplomacy the foreign policies associated with middle powers; typically defined in terms of multilateralism and acting as “good international citizens”

misperception the mental process in which one develops an incorrect image of others and of their intentions

mobilization strategy a strategy in which leaders use nationalist calls to rally their supporters behind a foreign policy that is risky or aggressive; designed to assert a government’s legitimacy against a vocal domestic opposition

most favored nation (MFN) refers to the extension of beneficial trade terms (usually in the form of lowered tariffs) to a country that reflect the best terms extended to third parties in the past or in the future

multilateralism called the “international governance of the many”; participation in institutionalized arrangements of more than three states on specific issue areas; the arrangements codify obligations and benefits of membership and punishments for noncompliant behavior

multiple autonomous groups a type of decision unit in which necessary actors are separate individuals, groups, or coalitions and where no party can force compliance on the others

multipolar international system an international system in which power is distributed among four or five major powers (states)

mutual assured destruction (MAD) the idea that because both the Americans and Soviets possessed nuclear second-strike capability (the ability to sustain a first attack and retaliate in kind), any war between the two initiated by either side would destroy both

national interests the interests of a state that are of primary importance for protection and enhancement

national narrative the dominant story about a country shared and supported by the dominant nation and perpetuated through political, cultural, and sometimes religious institutions; often understood as the official history

national role conception the set of decisions, commitments, rules, and actions about a state and its appropriate place and behaviors in global affairs; shared by and reflected in the ideas of the elite and dominant nation within the state

- national self-image** the concept or image of a country that is shared among the country's elite and public and which guides the country's foreign and domestic policies and behaviors
- nationalism** strong, positive feelings about a group that are shared among its members and lead the members to want to preserve the group at all costs
- nation-type** archetype created through the configuration of three national attributes: size, economic system, and political system
- negotiation** the process through which international actors interact with and engage one another in order to achieve common objectives
- neorealism** a grand theory (and variant on realism) that proposes that power is the most important factor in international relations and that international anarchy dictates the behavior of states; see also **defensive neorealism** and **offensive neorealism**
- nested game** the concept that national leaders must divide their attention between the domestic and international environments, sometimes using one arena to further agendas in the other; also called a dual or two-level game
- neutrality** a policy that a country will not take sides in international disputes or form military alliances of any sort
- Non-Aligned Movement** started by Global South countries during the Cold War, a group of states not formally aligned with or against either major power bloc
- nongovernmental organization (NGO)** an international actor whose members are not states and whose membership and interests transcend national boundaries
- nonprovocative defense** a defense posture in which a country only maintains weapons that can be used for national territorial defense and cannot be easily reconfigured for outward force projection; intended to cause no fear in others about the state's intentions
- nonstate actor** an international actor that is not a state or a representative of a state
- normal power** a state that uses military and economic power to pursue its foreign policy objectives, or a state whose foreign policy is guided primarily by domestic politics, not external, systemic factors
- nuclear deterrence** the condition in which opposing nuclear weapons states refrain from using such weapons against one another because of the mutual threat of unacceptable damage
- Nuclear Suppliers Group** a coalition of countries with nuclear capabilities that seek to limit nuclear proliferation through the control of the export of materials, equipment, and technology
- offensive neorealism** the variant on neorealism that proposes that states must always be looking for opportunities to gain power and must remain vigilant about potential threats
- open-mindedness** a condition characterizing an individual decision maker's or a small group's openness to new information and adaptability to changes in the environment
- operational code** a cognitive map of an individual's philosophical/normative and operational/behavioral beliefs; indicates a leader's predisposition toward action
- outcome rationality** a type of group-level rationality in which the decision-making process is judged by whether the outcome serves short-term or longer-term national interests
- peace enforcement operation** a multinational military force tasked with creating secure conditions in a conflict zone using all means necessary, includ-

- ing war; typically approved by the UN Security Council but not under UN command
- peacekeeping** a neutral multinational armed force deployed for the purpose of enforcing a cease-fire, maintaining a demilitarized zone, overseeing the return to normal politics, and other postconflict tasks; authorized by the UN Security Council and under UN command and control
- periphery** underdeveloped states with the least influence and wealth in the international capitalist system
- poliheuristic (PH) theory** a theory that proposes that decisions are made in a two-step process; first decision makers calculate political feasibility and rule out some options, and then they examine the remaining options through rational choice
- political science** a social science discipline that studies governance systems and theories, as well as institutional and noninstitutional political behavior
- populism** a political philosophy that emphasizes the struggle of ordinary people against the privileged elite
- power approach** a linkage-actor strategy in which the highest diplomatic circles or ultimate power resources are tapped in order to influence a policy outcome
- predominant leader** a single individual who has the power to make choices and stifle opposition
- preferential rationality** a type of group-level rationality in which the decision-making process is judged by the extent to which the decision faithfully reflects the preferences of its members
- primacy** a term referring to the preponderance of power in the international system; the state with preponderant power is said to have primacy
- prisoners' dilemma** a game theory scenario in which two rational actors acting in their own self-interest pursue actions that do not result in the ideal outcome for either
- procedural rationality** a type of group-level rationality in which a group process is judged by the extent to which it approximates the individual rational actor model in which multiple options are identified, preferences are ranked, and actions are judged in terms of costs and benefits
- protectionism** the theory and practice of protecting a country's domestic industries from foreign competition through tariffs and quotas on imports
- public** the populace of a country; often differentiated into the mass public and the attentive public; distinct from the elite
- public attentiveness** public interest in leaders, issues, and decision making
- public opinion** the general views of the majority of individuals about some idea, person, policy, or action
- public scrutiny** see **public attentiveness**
- rational decision making** when an actor selects a course of action that maximizes its values, after considering various options, ranking preferences, and weighing the relative costs and benefits; feedback from the environment after earlier action is also calculated into the options
- realism** a grand theory that proposes that states seek to protect and extend their own narrowly defined national interests, pursuing power and security because of the lack of international trust and government
- reciprocity** the practice of exchanging things of equal value with others for mutual benefit
- regime** the central, primary decision makers within a national government
- regime interests** the interests of a regime that are of primary importance for protection and enhancement; often

- used in association with autocratic governments
- revisionist state** a state that seeks the overthrow of an existing international order to create one that serves its interests
- risky foreign policy** an aggressive policy that typically is associated with the use of force or some other violation of international norms
- rule of law** a norm- and rule-based legal system governing decision making, decision enforcement, allocation of resources, and peaceful conflict resolution within a society; also expressed as a political principle
- scapegoating** attributing the blame for some bad or negative condition on others, particularly foreigners; typically performed by elites attempting to mobilize their supporters in the mass public
- security dilemma** a cyclic situation in which actions undertaken by a state to increase its security ultimately decrease overall security because other states (mis)perceive the defensive actions to be hostile and threatening and so they respond in kind
- semi-periphery** states that are not considered to be in the core but also are not the poorest states on the periphery; these states are of mid-low wealth and influence in the international capitalist system
- siege mentality** when members of a group, nation, or state share the belief that the outside world holds hostile behavioral intentions toward the group
- simple learning** a learning process that does not manifest in any real change of goals or reallocation of energy and resources toward new goals
- soft balancing** an effort to build a political counterweight against the dominant state on specific policies or issues without challenging the dominance of the state or the current international system
- soft power** the ability to persuade others to pursue common goals; also understood as the “pull” of an attractive culture and/or society
- sovereignty** the ultimate decision-making and decision-enforcing authority within a defined territory; only states are sovereign in the international system
- standard operating procedures** a set of routinized policies and procedures guiding the operation of an agency or bureaucracy
- state** a legal-political concept denoting a sovereign actor in the international system with a recognized territory, population, and effective government
- stateless nations** ethnic or national groups that do not possess their own state and are not the majority in any state
- strategic balancing** formal and informal groupings of states not for military hard balancing, but for political posturing against another group of states
- subnational narrative** the story of a subnational group and its struggle against the dominant group
- subset solution** the result of decision making within an ultimate unit; reflects the preferences of a minority of the group
- supranational** a body that has power or influence that transcends national organizations or bodies
- system level of analysis** level of analysis that explores global issues and interactions between states
- technocratic approach** a linkage-actor strategy in which expert knowledge is utilized to influence a policy outcome
- terrorism** the use or threatened use of violence against noncombatants for the purpose of intimidating govern-

ments and societies in pursuit of political and/or social objectives

theory an explanation of how things work, or how an analyst thinks something works

track-two diplomats linkage actors who are individuals who engage in informal diplomacy

trade liberalization the removal or reduction of restrictions or barriers on the free exchange of goods and services between countries

transgovernmental coalitions a linkage actor composed of agencies from different countries that form coalitions to cooperate toward a common goal

transnational actors individuals or organizations in the international system that conduct activities across national borders

tribal politics a term used to describe politics in parts of Europe and the United States in the new millennium; a politics that is typically antiglobal, antimodern, and requires loyalty to the point of defying facts

two-level game see **nested game**

ultimate decision unit the set of authorities that has the final say on policy direction and the commitment of national resources; the decision made by the unit cannot be easily reversed by any other actor in the government

unilateral when a state acts alone in its pursuit of its own narrowly defined foreign policy goals

unipolar international system an international system in which one state holds a preponderance of political, military, and economic power

unipole the state that holds preponderant power in a unipolar international system

worldview an individual's view of how things work on a macro level; serves as a guide to behavior

zero-sum game an interaction in which power is finite; when one country increases its power, another country loses power

Notes

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