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# IDEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL TRADITION

Foreign policy does not spring spontaneously from the minds of decision makers. Rather, it is a product of the past experiences of a nation and the specific political beliefs and ideologies that have come to be accepted over the years. Collectively, such beliefs might be thought of as forming the "national myth system" of a state. In using the term myth we are not suggesting that such beliefs are false, for they are clearly quite real for those who subscribe to them. As Robert M. MacIver has put it, "Every society is held together by a myth-system, a complex of dominating thought-forms that determines and sustains all its activities."<sup>1</sup>

A number of writers have suggested that we are now living in an age of ideology and that among the most important modern ideologies are such belief systems as communism, fascism, democracy, and the world's many religions. Ideologies are distinguished from other parts of the belief system that are derived from the cultural and historical experiences of a people in that they tend to be action oriented and based on a logically coherent set of symbols. Often specific "gospels"

1. Cited in Mostafa Rejai, "Political Ideology: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives," in Mostafa Reja, ed., *Decline of Ideology* (Chicago: Aldine-Atherton, 1971), p. 5.

can be identified in which some of the beliefs are explicitly stated, as in the writings of Marx and Engels, Hitler and Mussolini, or can be found in the texts of the Bible, the Koran, and the like. Other ideologies, such as democracy, seem less explicit, with support for their viewpoints being found in scattered locations.

Ideologies often extend beyond national boundaries and sometimes are spread from one nation to another with messianic zeal, either by missionaries or, occasionally, by the use of force. As an ideology spreads from one society to another, it tends to be modified so that it becomes more compatible with the society's existing cultural and historical values. For example, communism has been interpreted in many different ways by various states. As a result, ideologies have not always succeeded in uniting people of different nationalities and cultures, and the conflict between nations subscribing to a given ideology can be particularly intense, as in the case of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Similarly, ideological ties have not been sufficient to foster cordial relations between China and Vietnam, given their history of conflict over many centuries.

The collective experiences of a people generate a historical tradition that forms part of the belief system of a state and can also influence the course of foreign policy. Indeed, one can tell much about the future foreign policy of a state simply by knowing something about its past experiences. Decision makers make judgments about the present on the basis of their images of the past and their perceptions of the consequences of previous decisions. Habit also plays a critical role in providing continuity over time, again suggesting the importance of past experiences.

### THE FUNCTIONS OF BELIEF SYSTEMS

Whether a state's belief system is derived from ideology or the tradition of its people, those beliefs influence the formulation and conduct of foreign policy in a variety of ways. First, a state's belief system affects what is seen and viewed as significant in the international system. It provides blinders by which certain international events might be denied or reinterpreted to be made compatible with the prevailing belief system. Some writers have likened the belief system to a prism through which decision makers view reality. As with a prism, any light or information that comes in tends to be refracted and dis-

torted so that it is seen quite differently when it exits. So too are new events colored and refracted as they pass through the prism of ideology and past experiences.

Second, the belief system of a state places certain constraints on the range of foreign-policy options. A group of decision makers, even in the most authoritarian regime, will find it difficult and perhaps politically suicidal to venture far from what is generally conceived as compatible with the belief system of their constituents. A democratic leadership may feel constrained by a population that is likely to disapprove of any action by its government that smacks of undemocratic or unfair manipulation of another state's political system. Similarly, certain alignments generally have to be ruled out as viable options for states with competing ideologies. If a pact is made across ideologies, it often tends to involve weak commitments, as in the nonaggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany in 1939 or the temporary alliance made by democratic states with the Soviet Union for the purpose of conducting the fight against Hitler during World War II.

Third, a national belief system helps provide continuity in foreign policy. The more comprehensive a state's belief system, the more stable its foreign policy will be. States with long historical traditions tend to have greater continuity in their foreign policy, whereas newer states do not have to overcome a long-established way of thinking or behaving in order to change their foreign policy.

Fourth, national belief systems provide a means for rationalizing foreign-policy choices—choices that are often made on the basis of interpretations of national security interests but are sold to the public on the basis of certain shared values. Soviet decision makers are quick to note that any choice they make in foreign policy is guided by Marxist principles, and the United States tends to rationalize its choices in terms of "protecting the free world," "making the world safe for democracy," or "ensuring representative government."

Fifth, as devices for rationalizing and justifying positions taken, national beliefs are utilized for propaganda purposes. Efforts are made to convince others of the correctness of one's own views as ideologies struggle to gain people's minds through the use of media such as radio, newspapers, and magazines.

Sixth, national belief systems enhance national unity among those who subscribe to a given view. As such, beliefs are important factors in the development of nationalism and a separate national identity. In the developing states, where national identity is not well estab-

lished because of the lack of a continuous history, leaders have sought to glorify past eras as a way of increasing their national support. Nasser could appeal to the era of the Pharaohs, while Nehru could refer to ancient Hindu empires; Mussolini publicized the success of the Roman Empire, and de Gaulle looked toward the past glory of France in his effort to establish a sense of national pride.

It might be expected that having a common ideology or belief system would help unite nations that subscribe to similar myths. The terms *free world* and *communist world* seem to assume just such a unification among nations with a similar ideological orientation. But ideology frequently has failed to serve as a cohesive force. John D. Sullivan, who coded various nations in terms of their common ideologies over the period 1815–1939, found that such similarity did not predict the stability of alliances.<sup>2</sup> The evidence that ideological values do not cement relations is shown in the deep schisms between communist states such as the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Indeed, China became a thorn in the side of the Soviets, precisely because it espoused a communist belief system and hence threatened the Soviets' leadership of the communist world. There is also suggestive empirical evidence that when a monolithic ideological linkage between two states breaks asunder, it affects all aspects of the relationship, as in the Sino-Soviet split. In contrast, a less hierarchical and ideologically based alliance, such as that which linked the United States and France, will not suffer a complete breakdown. In the case of the alliance between the United States and France, the two states continued to agree on a number of issues following President de Gaulle's noncooperation and the withdrawal of French forces from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the impact of the national belief system on foreign policy can be seen more vividly if we examine the role it plays in several of the more prominent states in the international system. For this purpose we will explore the experiences of the Soviet Union, the United States, the People's Republic of China, India, and Iran. Our treatment will reflect the fact that some of these states have very elaborate and systematic

2. John D. Sullivan, "International Alliances," in Michael Haas, ed., *International Systems* (New York: Chandler, 1974), pp. 100–22.

3. See Ole R. Holsti and John D. Sullivan, "National-International Linkages: France and China as Nonconforming Alliance Members," in James N. Rosenau, ed., *Linkage Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1969), pp. 147–95, for empirical evidence supporting this general pattern.

ideological belief systems, while others have a rich historical tradition. Some states lack both, requiring the leadership to try to create a new national belief system. Although we will try to focus on the more enduring beliefs, we will also take note of the newer traditions that seem to be evolving, such as those emanating from the cold war between the United States and Russia.

### THE SOVIET BELIEF SYSTEM

In any discussion of the belief system of the Soviet Union, the obvious starting point would be Marxist-Leninist ideology. In contrast to democratic theory, communist theory is readily identifiable, since there are a limited number of writings that have provided the basis for subsequent interpretation. More difficult to determine is the impact of the classics of Marxist literature on Soviet foreign policy.

Opinion varies among students of the subject regarding the role ideology plays in influencing Soviet foreign policy making. Some writers see Soviet behavior as influenced primarily by totalitarianism or by authoritarian values that have existed since czarist days, while others see such behavior as determined by a literal interpretation of Marxist-Leninist thought. Still others view Marxist-Leninist ideology as a vehicle for rationalizing policies arrived at in terms of the national interest of the Soviet Union, or as a system for external and internal propaganda.

Regardless of which of these viewpoints is most accurate—and indeed, the accuracy may depend on the particular issue or time—it seems clear that Marxist-Leninist ideology does have an impact on foreign-policy choices. The ideology affects how Soviet leaders view the world, what things they see as important or unimportant, and what their basic predispositions are in responding to a given issue. Several aspects of Marxist-Leninist doctrine seem to have shaped the way Soviet leaders have perceived the external world and consequently reacted to it. One of the major tenets of Marxist theory is the belief that there are two basic classes in society—the proletariat and the bourgeois. Such a view may partly explain why Soviet leaders were slow to appreciate and to exploit anti-imperialism in the third world. They tended instead to believe that one either had to be for the proletarian revolution or against it. One could not be neutral.

The Marxist belief that the state was an anachronism that would

eventually wither away may have influenced Lenin initially to assume that a foreign minister was unnecessary. But the realities of the nation-state system soon became apparent, leading not only to the creation of a foreign ministry but also to the establishment of diplomatic relations with capitalist states.

The historical determinism rooted in Marxist ideology has also influenced the way the Soviet Union has reacted externally. The belief in the historical sequence of feudalism→capitalism→socialism→communism influenced prediction of where socialist revolutions might be expected to arise, and hopes were high that successful revolutions might develop in Western Europe, where the bourgeois revolution had replaced feudalism. Marxist theory hardly prepared Soviet leaders to expect a successful communist revolution in China. Perhaps this partly explains why Stalin supported Chiang Kai-shek in contrast to the Chinese communists, although the more likely explanation is that he was behaving like the traditional nation-state leader fearful of the rise of the Axis powers.

The belief in permanent revolution between classes that is inherent in Marxist-Leninist thought makes it difficult for the Soviet Union to pursue global stability as a goal as long as conflicting classes remain in the international system. Such beliefs probably ensure continued conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union despite efforts to achieve detente. The belief in inevitable conflict between capitalism and communism suggests to the supporters of the latter that it is not only desirable but necessary to destroy capitalism in order to survive.

Although the Soviet Union has become a major supporter of the status quo, particularly in terms of its desire to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and retain its superpower status, its ideological views make it difficult to accept stability as the primary goal of the nuclear deterrent system. This in turn may help explain why the Soviets have been far less preoccupied than the United States with the dangers of nuclear war arising by accident or miscalculation.

Another aspect of Marxism that is likely to affect a decision maker's view of external events is the notion of economic determinism. According to this viewpoint, economics is the basic determinant of social behavior and politics is merely the superstructure. Starting from such a premise leads to a tendency to interpret the external behavior of capitalist states in terms of economic motivation. Much attention is given to the economic role of multinational corporations, economic imperialism, and notions of the military-industrial complex in trying

to explain and understand the foreign-policy behavior of the West. Economic factors are used to explain any war in view of the primacy of such factors in Marxist thought.

The effect of the Marxist belief in the inevitable triumph of communism is somewhat more difficult to assess in terms of its impact on foreign policy. Such a belief might make a state take higher risks or possibly even lower risks. The belief in one's own inevitable triumph could induce highly adventurous policies in the belief that, whatever the risk, one would ultimately prevail. On the other hand, a state might behave cautiously, believing that it can obtain ultimate victory without expending much energy. Perhaps this is what Khrushchev envisioned when he informed Western leaders that "we will bury you." There certainly was little if any evidence that he intended to achieve such a goal through an adventurous foreign policy.

If Marxist-Leninist ideology ever was a primary determinant of Soviet foreign policy, there appears to be considerable consensus that its importance has declined over the years. A number of moves taken by the Soviet Union that seem incompatible with Marxist doctrine are used to document this trend. Such deviance goes back to Lenin's sacrifice of Russian territory with the Brest-Litovsk agreement, in which the Bolshevik regime accepted a separate peace with Germany in 1918. It is also found in his failure to support Béla Kun's communist regime in Hungary, which was showing signs of collapse in the summer of 1919. Such compromises were viewed as essential to the survival of the fledgling Bolshevik regime, as was Lenin's revival of elements of capitalism in his New Economic Policy, introduced in the early 1920s.

Although such digressions might be explained by Lenin's notion that one can take one step backward in return for two steps forward, the pattern of sacrificing Marxist ideology on the altar of national self-interest continued during Stalin's regime with the latter's attempt to cope with the increasing threat of Hitler and the Axis powers. Among these compromises with ideology were temporary reliance on the League of Nations; the French-Russian alliance of 1935; the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement of 1939, in which the Soviet Union and Germany agreed on a nonaggression pact; and the support of various noncommunist leaders, such as Chiang Kai-shek rather than Mao Zedong.

Khrushchev continued the trend, utilizing a hard-line ideological interpretation to humble Georgi Malenkov, who had succeeded Stalin in 1953, then turning to a softer line in order to defeat another rival, Vyacheslav Molotov. Basic changes in ideological posture were an-

nounced by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, where he declared that capitalist encirclement had officially ended and that a third camp of anti-imperialists had become part of the global picture. With this ideological shift, Khrushchev hoped that the Soviet Union might play a leadership role in the Third World. But perhaps the most profound modification of Marxist-Leninist theory came with the announcement that war between the forces favoring capitalism and those supporting communism was no longer inevitable. It was also at this time that Khrushchev began his de-Stalinization program by attacking the personality cult that Stalin had developed. Marxist-Leninist ideology was thereby threatened because of the need to believe in its infallibility. If Stalin could so blatantly misinterpret Marxism, why could not Khrushchev and his successors?

The Brezhnev period, beginning in 1964, has seen even less reliance on doctrine as the policy of detente with the West has taken precedence. There has also been less concern with clothing foreign-policy moves in ideological trappings. Brezhnev has pushed back the timetable for the rise of a "truly communist society," which he has asserted "will take us quite a long time, since human psychology is remade far slower than material foundations of human life."<sup>4</sup>

Under Brezhnev the Soviet Union has been vitally concerned with protecting its primacy in the international system and has consequently refused to support a number of revolutionary movements, especially those in the Middle East and Latin America, where the United States' interests are greatest. The Soviets went as far as to explicitly condemn Castro's 1966 proposals in support of subversion and violence. Yet despite their divergences from Marxist-Leninist ideology, Soviet leaders continue to view all their foreign policies as Marxist by definition.

Additional empirical evidence of the impact of ideology on foreign policy is found in research conducted by Jan F. Triska and David D. Finley, in which a content analysis of speeches delivered at the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961 revealed, among other things, that ideological formulations occurred more often among older elite members and among those who were involved primarily in party work.<sup>5</sup> Such formulations were less apparent among younger elite

4. Morton Schwartz, *The Foreign Policy of the U.S.S.R.: Domestic Factors* (Belmont, Calif.: Dickenson, 1975), p. 199.

5. Jan F. Triska and David D. Finley, *Soviet Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 119-27.

members and among those who have pursued government careers—groups that are assuming increased importance in the Soviet decision-making process. With respect to specific individuals, Khrushchev ranked in the middle of thirteen elite members in terms of his score on the doctrinal quotient. His successor, Brezhnev, ranked several points behind, and long-time Soviet Foreign Minister André Gromyko followed at an even greater distance.

The findings of Triska and Finley also suggested that ideological pronouncements were not used extensively in dealing with more immediate problems, which, after all, constitute the bulk of foreign-policy issues. Doctrinal premises were used more frequently in analyzing trends than in dealing with specific events, and were more likely to be employed in long-range planning than in short-term planning. With respect to perceived crises and short-range problem solving, virtually no ideological references were coded, particularly with respect to Khrushchev. The findings also indicated that the use of doctrinal pronouncements tended to be higher with respect to foreign affairs than with respect to domestic affairs, perhaps because the latter are more related to the daily life of the Soviet citizen, who also has less independent information on which to base foreign-policy judgments.

Jerry F. Hough has documented the decline of ideological fervor in the Soviet Union by comparing two editions of an authoritative Soviet textbook. His analysis indicated that the movement away from ideological rigidity that had begun in the 1960s continued in the 1970s on a wide range of topics. He concluded that those "who believe that the Soviet leadership and elite have some master plan on how to take over the world on the basis of rigid ideological prescriptions simply do not understand the contemporary Soviet Union."<sup>6</sup>

Some writers have suggested that the deemphasis of ideology is related to industrialization and have noted an increasing convergence in values among industrialized states—both Marxist and non-Marxist. In rejecting the assertion that industrialization induces a more conservative stance in Soviet foreign policy, it has been suggested that industrialization actually tends to generate a sense of achievement that enhances loyalty to ideology, and that the action commitment involved in industrialization revitalizes ideology. If industrialization does threaten to undermine ideology, Soviet policy is likely to become more aggres-

6. Jerry F. Hough, "The Evolution in the Soviet World View," *World Politics*, 32 (July 1980), 529.

sive in an effort to generate loyalty internally by showing success and expansion abroad.

It is probable that no final answers will be forthcoming regarding the role of Marxist-Leninist ideology in Soviet foreign policy. That there have been changes in the official interpretation of that ideology over time cannot be denied, but the ability of the Soviet Union to adapt to changing conditions may be indicative of the strength of the ideology, not of its weakness. Evidence suggesting the importance of ideology has been provided by David Forte in a study of Soviet responses to developments in the European Common Market. He notes that Soviet ideology has provided more than simply philosophical rationalization, particularly since "shifts in ideological premises nearly always preceded changes in policy; ideological change thus set the stage for a new practical policy."<sup>7</sup> For illustrative purposes he cites several ideological reports that established appropriate doctrinal interpretations, setting the stage for subsequent policy changes. These changes involved initial indifference, based on Marxist predictions that the Common Market would fail anyway, followed by increased hostility when the early predictions were proven wrong and, finally, by acquiescence with an emphasis on containment.

One might also reflect on the implications of increased detente between East and West as far as the future of Marxist ideology is concerned. Detente politics are quite likely to take some of the cutting edge from a messianic ideology. Increased interaction between East and West will also allow increased penetration of Western values, particularly as far as the Eastern European satellites are concerned. As the Soviet Union liberalizes its foreign policy and downgrades its ideological component, the resultant threat to domestic tranquillity and stability will tend to influence the leadership to substitute harsher domestic controls and to punish deviants more severely, as appears to be the case under current detente conditions. Since detente politics are likely to undermine the ability of the Soviet leadership to present the capitalist world as a hostile element ready to destroy the Soviet Union, thus removing a rationale for demanding sacrifice and vigilance on the part of the Soviet citizen, stricter domestic controls may become necessary to counter any possible loss in public support.

The sources of the Soviet belief system go far beyond simple in-

7. David Forte, "The Response of Soviet Foreign Policy to the Common Market," *Soviet Studies*, 19 (January 1968), 373-87.

terpretations of Marxist-Leninist doctrine; those beliefs are rooted in the very essence of Russian history and tradition. Some writers have seen Soviet behavior largely in terms of its continuity with czarist foreign policy. Expansion into peripheral areas is part of the continuing effort to obtain warm-water ports and buffer areas in order to enhance Russian security. Attempts to control Eastern Europe and Asia were made by various czarist regimes, whose territorial ambitions extended well into Eastern Europe and Asia. Expansionist goals included the desire to acquire the warm-water port of Vladivostok in East Asia and access to the Turkish straits. This interest in gaining access and increased use of the seas is also reflected in the extensive naval buildup of the Soviet Union in recent years.

Soviet leaders are also affected by traditional rivalries, as in the case of Russian animosity toward the Chinese. Border conflicts and armed incursions into territory claimed by the other state are nothing new in Sino-Russian relations. The memories of three invasions of Russian territory from the West within the short period of a century and a half is also likely to influence Soviet security concerns in Europe. The first involved Napoleon's penetration to the outskirts of Moscow in 1812. Thanks largely to problems of logistics, the Russian advantage of defense in depth, and the onset of winter, the Napoleonic invasion was unsuccessful. This was followed by the German invasions of World Wars I and II, both of which intruded extensively into the Soviet homeland. During the latter war some 20 million Soviet citizens lost their lives. The issue of security on the western front is an especially sensitive one for the Soviet leadership.

The way in which the Soviet Union goes about making its foreign policy through its highly centralized structure is seen as a continuation of the highly autocratic system employed by the czarist regimes. How different, after all, were the highly personalistic and autocratic foreign policies of Czar Alexander I and those of Stalin in terms of the way decisions were made?

As the Soviet Union gains experience as an actor on the international scene, it is also building its own foreign-policy traditions. Though the rupture between one regime and the next is likely to be greater in an authoritarian system than in a democratic one, Soviet foreign policy has had remarkable continuity over time. Even the break between the Stalinist and post-Stalinist regimes was not as extensive as is sometimes suggested. A reappraisal of Stalin's foreign policy argued that Stalin himself became more conciliatory toward the outside world

beginning in 1949 as he adjusted to a changing domestic and international environment.<sup>8</sup>

### THE AMERICAN BELIEF SYSTEM

The American belief system has evolved from a myriad of writings and experiences involving democratic and liberal theories and is not to be found in a single set of documents. The nation's founders certainly had a major hand in shaping some of the viewpoints that are now taken for granted. Perhaps the most prominent theme in American foreign policy has been the notion of isolationism. This isolationism has existed on several levels, including geographic separation, spiritual and philosophical separation, fundamental political and ideological distinctions, economic self-sufficiency, and the relative military security and invincibility of the Western Hemisphere.<sup>9</sup> It has never meant noninvolvement in the economic and intellectual affairs of Europe, as President George Washington was to point out. Washington even accepted the notion that temporary alliances with other states might be necessary. What he criticized in his farewell address was the establishment of permanent alliances.

A variety of fortuitous circumstances made it possible for the United States to pursue a policy of isolationism throughout much of its history. Among these was its favorable geographic position, separated from the rest of the world by two oceans. Britain, the dominant sea power of the time, also provided considerable protection by opposing the efforts of any other European power to gain territory at the expense of the United States. The latter's preeminent position in the Western Hemisphere and the fact that it was largely economically self-sufficient also permitted it the luxury of an isolationist foreign policy. Finally, the United States was not forced into world involvement, for as a new, fledgling state it did not threaten other states in the international system.

The policy of isolation provided a variety of benefits for the United States. For one thing, it did not have to devote a large portion of its resources to defense spending. Only about 1 percent of the gross

8. Marshall D. Shulman, *Stalin's Foreign Policy Reappraised* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963).

9. Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *Policy Makers and Critics* (New York: Praeger, 1976), p. 7.

national product was used for defense during most of the nation's history, compared with 7 percent in recent years. This relative noninvolvement in foreign affairs allowed the United States to concentrate on its domestic needs and expand across the continent. There was also a very practical reason for playing a minimal role in international affairs in that the United States was essentially a nation of immigrants, with some 20 million foreigners settling there during the years 1880-1920. These new immigrants came from a variety of European countries. Whichever way the United States tilted in its involvement in world affairs, it would probably alienate part of its citizenry. It was by no means clear where the nation would turn in terms of support as the war clouds rose over Europe prior to World War I. Not an inconsiderable number of Americans favored support for Germany.

For the century and a half in which isolationism remained the most salient doctrine in American foreign policy, there was also a strong movement toward liberal interventionism. After the American civil war this took the form of strong-missionary movements, particularly in China. Such interventionism was also represented at the turn of the century in the Open Door policy toward China, in which the United States insisted that it should be allowed to share in the exploitation of China along with the European powers.

But the tradition of interventionism had its most prominent expression in Latin America. The Monroe doctrine of 1823 had already communicated to the European world that it was not welcome in the Western Hemisphere. At the behest of various domestic interest groups, the United States government took an increasingly active role in Latin American affairs. A peak was reached toward the end of the nineteenth century with American involvement in the Spanish-American War. That involvement was accelerated during the administration of Theodore Roosevelt with the so-called strategy of dollar diplomacy, in which it was asserted that the United States had a right to intervene in the domestic affairs of Latin American states in order to advance the economic interests of individual American companies. During President Wilson's administration it was argued that the United States was morally obliged to aid in the development of representative government. Armed force might even be used as a last resort. Indeed, American troops were sent to Nicaragua in 1912 and to the Dominican Republic and Haiti in 1915. Subsequent military interventions by the United States occurred in Lebanon in 1958 and in the Dominican Republic in 1965, and the United States has become involved in a large number of

civil wars around the world. In fact, American troops have been sent abroad without a declaration of war in over one hundred instances, and in many cases the reason given has been the desire to support representative government. One problem, illustrated by Vietnam, has been that American support has been given to many undemocratic regimes, with the United States propping up such regimes as long as they would support the United States in the cold war.

This liberal interventionist attitude also produced in American foreign policy a tendency to develop legal and moralistic arguments to rationalize foreign-policy choices. President Wilson sought to justify United States involvement in World War I both to himself and to the world by saying that this would be a war to end all wars and would make the world safe for democracy. The legal-moralistic approach was seen by some in the creation of the League of Nations, which President Wilson was instrumental in developing but his own country refused to join.

With that rejection, the United States returned to isolationism with a vengeance during the interwar period, only to have this policy replaced after World War II with an interventionist one as the United States assumed the role of the world's policeman. This led former Senator J. William Fulbright to inquire in 1966 whether a new tradition was being built as the United States moved from isolationism to arrogance, involving itself in issues and problems throughout the world that were of minor concern to itself.<sup>10</sup> Fulbright challenged the United States' efforts to nominate itself as the Lord's agent on earth and saw the United States marching to disaster as the Athenians had against Syracuse and Napoleon and Hitler had against Russia. In his view the solution was not to respond to dogmatism with dogmatism and certainly not to imitate the Soviet Union.

Perhaps part of the tradition of liberal interventionism can be attributed to the fact that the United States has not had the same experiences as most Europeans, who have been confronted with major wars on their territory twice in this century. Europeans are somewhat more pessimistic about their ability to control events, whereas Americans retain a passion for control. The fact that the United States, unlike most European states, has not experienced a social revolution has been cited by Louis Hartz to help explain why the United States has not been adequately sensitive to democratic socialism in Europe and revo-

10. William J. Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power* (New York: Random House, 1966).

lutionary movements in Asia, and has sometimes adopted such excessively paranoid views about the threat of communism.<sup>11</sup> Hartz also sees moral absolutism, resulting from past experiences, as inspiring Americans either to withdraw from "alien things" or to seek to transform them. The United States' efforts to shape events by intervening in World War I and in Vietnam, followed immediately by the desire to withdraw from world involvements, are but two examples of this predisposition.

There are those who believe that the United States has not taken an active enough role in its response to the Soviet Union in the postwar period. Instead, they see all the advantages of developing a purposeful foreign policy in the hands of communist leaders, whereas the American value system makes it a reactive state rather than an initiator of policy. Kissinger, for example, has noted that Americans are basically pragmatic and empirically oriented, a trait that dooms the United States "to an essentially reactive policy that improvises a counter to every Soviet move, while the Soviet emphasis on theory gives them the certainty to act, to maneuver, to run risks."<sup>12</sup>

The belief that the United States has simply reacted to events has led to occasional suggestions that it play a more active role in dealing with the Soviet Union. This mood was reflected in 1952, when the Republican party began to press for a policy of liberation in Eastern Europe as a replacement for the policy of containment. Yet when the Eisenhower administration had an opportunity to support liberation during the Hungarian revolution of 1956, it failed to do so. Virtually no one suggested that the United States do anything about the Soviet incursion into Czechoslovakia some dozen years later. A reactive foreign policy based on the concept of containment is what one might expect of a status quo state in world politics.

While there is a common belief system consisting of democratic-liberal myths that is shared by most Americans, as a pluralistic nation the United States contains a wide range of images concerning the nature of the Soviet threat. Many of these images of the enemy have remained remarkably stable despite the fluctuation in cold war politics. This, of course, only confirms the importance of belief systems as filters

11. Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955), pp. 286, 306.

12. Henry A. Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 425.

through which reality passes, enabling dissonant information to be disregarded or reinterpreted. These viewpoints range from the more conservative interpretations of an Elliott Goodman, who sees a continuing threat in revolutionary Marxism, to the views of more leftist writers, who blame the cold war on the United States rather than the Soviet Union. In a book entitled *The Soviet Design for a World State*, Goodman dismisses Soviet pronouncements of "peaceful coexistence" as simply an ideological tool designed to mislead the West.<sup>13</sup> To bolster his case regarding the Soviet Union's continuing efforts to communize the world, Goodman engages in extensive quoting from various Marxist and Soviet writings that support his thesis.

Similar conservative views of Soviet foreign policy are provided by writers who see the basic threat arising from the totalitarian nature of the Soviet leadership. The character of this leadership, as opposed to the tenets of Marxist-Leninist thought, is seen as the major determinant of the aggressiveness of Soviet foreign policy.<sup>14</sup>

The theory of protracted conflict as espoused by Robert L. Strasz-Hupé and associates, similarly ascribes highly aggressive motivations to the Soviet Union but does not see ideology as the major determinant.<sup>15</sup> The basic thesis of protracted conflict holds that the United States is being engaged in a global war that the communists, having developed masterful means of conflict management and being favored by the forces of history, are bound to win—unless, and only unless, the West learns to counter the strategy of protracted conflict, in which the Soviets are able to select the theater of conflict. The Soviets are blamed for having instigated or aggravated virtually every conflict in the postwar world. These writers hold that the West will have difficulty winning in conflicts arising in Africa and Asia, and consequently should seek to exert pressure on the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe, which is seen as the Soviets' Achilles heel.

Somewhere in the middle of the more conservative and liberal views of what motivates Soviet foreign policy are writers like Hans Morgenthau, who see the conflict largely as a competition for people's

13. Elliott Goodman, *The Soviet Design for a World State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

14. A prime example of this viewpoint is found in Bertram D. Wolfe, "Communist Ideology and Soviet Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, 41 (October 1962), 152-170.

15. Robert L. Strasz-Hupé et al., *Protracted Conflict* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959).

minds.<sup>16</sup> Given the nuclear stalemate, the cold war tends to be diverted to Africa and Asia. Morgenthau, however, is critical of emphasizing military containment and alliance policy as a proper response to the Soviet challenge in these areas, believing instead that the United States should employ less militant instruments of foreign policy, such as propaganda, foreign aid, and trade.

Some students of the subject see the conflict as due to the arms race between the two superpowers, in which threat perception and fear play a major role.<sup>17</sup> For those who hold such a view, the solution is to regulate the arms race. Since there is an action-reaction process at work, this view holds that the United States might even take the initiative by showing restraint in its own armaments program.

Several writers have begun to place increased blame on the United States while exonerating the Soviet Union as the primary cause of the cold war. John Lukacs, though admitting that the Soviet Union initiated the cold war with its drive into Eastern Europe, suggests that the United States, through overreaction and counterexpansion, made a heavy contribution to the continuance of the conflict.<sup>18</sup> Yet others have sought to blame the United States and the West for the origins of the cold war because of the hostility expressed toward the Soviet Union from the very beginning through nonrecognition of the Bolshevik regime and efforts to intervene militarily in the Russian civil war.<sup>19</sup> Soviet distrust of the West was also increased by the Western appeasement policy toward Hitler during the pre-World War II period. Stalin, for example, favored taking strong action against Hitler in the latter's efforts to take over Czechoslovakia. Western leaders, on the other hand, sought to appease Hitler at the Munich Conference in 1938. Thwarted by this affront to its security interests, the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression pact with Hitler in 1939. The pact was short-lived, since Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. The lesson to be derived from the experience, according to D. F. Fleming, was that the Soviet Union

16. Hans Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1969).

17. J. David Singer, "Threat Perception and the Armament-Tension Dilemma," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2 (March 1958), 90-105.

18. John Lukacs, *A History of the Cold War* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961).

19. F. L. Schuman, *The Cold War: Retrospect and Prospect* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), and D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1960* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1961).

could no longer trust the Western powers with its security, making it all the more necessary for it to establish a buffer area around its territory. Russian advances into Eastern Europe after World War II were seen as motivated primarily by national security interests rather than by ideological concerns.

A final group of writers blame the cold war on the United States, arguing that it has pursued imperialistic and militaristic activities in order to benefit capitalist interests. They see economic interests and multinational corporations wielding all the power in the making of American foreign policy. Since these writers are examined in Chapter 6, which focuses on economic determinants of foreign policy, we will delay our discussion of this viewpoint until then.

### THE CHINESE BELIEF SYSTEM

Understanding the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China requires far more than an analysis of Marxist-Leninist theory, which, if anything, has had far less impact on Chinese foreign policy than on Soviet foreign policy. The belief system that shapes Chinese foreign policy is a product not only of communist ideology but also of historical forces and, most important, of the beliefs of Mao Zedong, who served as Chairman of the Chinese Communist party for some 41 years prior to his death in 1976.

The fact that the mainland of China went communist in 1949 certainly was not attributable to the persuasiveness of Marxist-Leninist slogans. The promise of agrarian reform, as well as the ineptness and corruption of the regime of Chiang Kai-shek, contributed to the success of communism. It has also been suggested that Mao actually came to power "by waging a nationalistic struggle. He was a nationalist before he was a communist, and China has always been more important to him than world revolution."<sup>20</sup>

With the death of Stalin in 1953, Mao had some aspirations to succeed Stalin as the authoritative interpreter of Marxist-Leninist doctrine. He was critical of Khrushchev's efforts at revisionism, particularly with regard to de-Stalinization, at the 1956 Communist party conference. If Stalin were to be viewed as having been fallible, perhaps other communist leaders, including Mao himself, might be challenged. But

20. Robert G. Wesson, *Why Marxism?* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 107.

for Mao to assume the role of global spokesman for Marxism might have been questionable, for his contribution to Marxist-Leninist thought was extremely limited. Robert G. Wesson has even asserted that "Maoism is mostly a mass of homilies and exhortations, hardly a system. As a theoretician he does not stand high; he may never have read Marx and Engels, and his more theoretical statements are likely to be borrowed straight from Soviet sources."<sup>21</sup>

Although Mao's efforts to establish communes during the Great Leap Forward and his emphasis on industrialization were compatible with Marxism, they are hardly sufficient to justify the role of ideological spokesperson. A number of Mao's views conflicted directly with Marxist thought. Whereas Marx argued that the structural qualities and inherent contradictions in feudal and capitalistic systems caused human injustice, Mao tended to emphasize the undesirable moral behavior of individuals within the class structure. Certainly the process by which Mao achieved his successful revolution in China violated Marxist theory, for China had not progressed beyond the feudal period, and considerable reliance had to be placed on the peasants rather than on the workers in order to achieve a successful revolution. Moreover, Mao's belief that it would be possible to move directly from a semifeudal status to socialism without transversing the capitalist stage violated basic notions of Marxist thought.

Mao's interest in Marxism, which he apparently never really understood, lay in his concern with changing Chinese society, with its emphasis on love of peace and interpersonal harmony, into a force capable of meeting the challenges of modernization. As a revolutionary ideology, Marxism provided a vehicle that could be used to explain current injustices as well as give hope to a people that had endured decades of war and hunger. Marxism became primarily a means to other ends. Other revolutionary ideologies might have served Mao's purposes just as well.

China has supported communist movements throughout the world with more revolutionary zeal than the Soviet Union has, and in this sense it has shown itself to be more supportive of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary goals. With the increase in China's interest in improving its relations with the United States, these external ambitions may be modified. It should also be remembered that many of China's efforts on the external revolutionary front have been made at the verbal rather

21. *Ibid.*, p. 112.



than the action level, and that China in general has not taken many risks in foreign policy. Peking's general advice to its revolutionary clients abroad has usually been for the latter to do the job themselves and to remain self-reliant.

One authority, after reviewing a number of Chinese foreign-policy decisions, concluded that these decisions can all be explained on non-doctrinal grounds and that, consequently, ideology must be viewed as at most a supplementary factor.<sup>22</sup> He argued further that Chinese communist ideology was not much of a guide for action, since he knew of no key foreign-policy decisions since 1949 on which the small cadre of Chinese decision makers was not divided. The fact of the matter is that Marxist-Chinese doctrine, like any doctrine, is compatible with alternative courses of action.

A study of the Chinese application of its United Front doctrine vis-à-vis Indonesia, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Tanzania revealed that this ideological doctrine had more relevance in shaping policy toward states of less strategic importance, those at a greater geographic distance, and those about which one has less complete information.<sup>23</sup> If one lacks information about another state, it is quite natural to resort to stereotypic ideological thinking, but if the state is important strategically, one may be more careful about relying on ideological impulsiveness.

As time has progressed, even less lip service has been given to Marxist ideology. For example, in the 1973 Chinese Communist Party Congress China portrayed itself as the defender of the interests of the small and medium-sized countries and the leader of the Third World, to which it claimed to belong rather than to the communist world. A content analysis of ideological themes in the *People's Daily* has shown a particularly sharp reduction in the use of ideological themes. Thus, references to communism, which scored 115 and 109, respectively, in 1972 and 1973, dropped to a mere 16 in the following year.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, references to imperialism, racism, and colonialism were reduced by almost half between 1972 and 1974.

During the 1960s, the chairman's closest comrades began to speak

22. Donald S. Zagoria, "Ideology and Chinese Foreign Policy," in George Schwab, ed., *Ideology and Foreign Policy* (New York: Cyrco Press, 1978), p. 116.

23. J. D. Armstrong, *Revolutionary Diplomacy: Chinese Foreign Policy and the United Front Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 238.

24. Davis B. Bobrow, Steve Chan, and John A. Kringen, *Understanding Foreign Policy Decisions* (New York: Free Press, 1979), pp. 168-69.

more of the thought of Mao Zedong and less of Marxism. The primary source for determining proper action was no longer the gospels of Marx, Engels, and Lenin but, rather, the "little red book" of Chairman Mao. The Soviet Union, given these trends, asserted that the People's Republic of China was actually anti-Marxist.

Traditional Confucian values appear to be as important as, if not more important than, Marxism in affecting Chinese behavior. There is some compatibility between the two in that both tend to emphasize contradictions. Marxism, with its concept of thesis and antithesis, appears quite compatible with the predisposition of the Chinese to accept opposites as they support the pacifism of Confucianism while at the same time holding great respect for the violent Warring States period of ancient China, which lasted from 403 to 221 B.C.

A central part of Confucian thought is its emphasis on authority. The traditional Chinese respect for authority helped place Mao Zedong in the eminent position he held during most of his lifetime, and Mao was not beyond exploiting such traditions. In fact, he explained that Khrushchev's problem, which led to the latter's downfall, was his failure to develop a cult of personality.

Chinese foreign policy is also a function of a rich historical and cultural tradition. Several centuries prior to the rise of the Greek city-state system, a highly developed civilization was evolving in China under the Chou dynasty. At the center was a king who was viewed as the "son of heaven" and treated surrounding feudal lords as vassals. China was the Middle Kingdom, to which others were to pay tribute. The last sovereign, Empress Tzu-hsi, who ruled until China was made a republic in 1911, retained the myth of "governing the whole world" in her decrees. Her imperial edicts spoke of the duties of the French and English as if they were part of the structure of the Middle Kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

Juxtaposed against centuries of dominance and status as the Middle Kingdom came a century of humiliation, which began in 1839 with the First Opium War, and continued with foreign occupation and the imposition of unequal treaties on China. These treaties established extraterritoriality, allowing foreign courts to have jurisdiction over their citizens if they committed a crime on Chinese territory—an activity that clearly interfered with the sovereign rights of the Chinese people.

The century of humiliation has remained in the minds of Chinese leaders, who have sought to restore China's position in the interna-

25. Alain Peyrefitte, *The Chinese* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977), p. 246.

tional system. Given this feeling, it is small wonder that Zhou En-lai reacted so sensitively to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' refusal to shake his hand at the 1954 Geneva Conference, and every effort was made not to repeat any similar affront in 1972, when President Nixon visited China. The humiliation imposed on China by foreigners also helps explain why China has stressed self-reliance in its efforts to build its economy. Until recently the Chinese have been particularly reluctant to receive technological and economic aid from the outside, even though it would help them exploit important resources like oil. The People's Republic has also been unwilling to accept anything less than full recognition as the government of China, with the concomitant requirement that recognition be withdrawn from Taiwan. In 1971 the People's Republic established its position as a major actor in the international system by assuming China's permanent seat at the United Nations. But it took eight more years for the United States to extend full diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic.

Historical relationships also help explain policies toward specific states, as in the case of the long tradition of conflict with the Soviet Union over boundary issues. The long-harbored suspicions between China and Vietnam also make the recent conflict between the two states more understandable. Historical claims to territory continue to affect relationships between China and neighboring states, since official Chinese maps based on 1840 claims include all of Southeast Asia except the Philippines and Indonesia, along with parts of the Soviet Union. Despite these claims, Chinese irredentism (concern about regaining lost territories) has been extremely limited. A number of territorial claims have been compromised in border agreements with Mongolia, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Burma. In fact, the Chinese government unilaterally withdrew from the disputed eastern Himalayan region, which its troops had occupied during the 1962 war with India.

China is likely to remain sensitive to invasions from the outside, as it has suffered from its own "yellow perils" over the centuries. The first was the invasion by the Huns, which led to the building of the Great Wall in an effort to increase security. The Mongols later invaded and ruled China for about one hundred years, and the Manchus controlled the country for three hundred years. The fourth incursion was by the Japanese, who occupied major parts of China from 1931 to 1945.

It remains to be seen whether Marxist, Maoist, or more traditional Chinese values will shape Chinese foreign policy in the years to come. Efforts to diminish the role of Mao have begun with the forced removal

of Hua Guofeng, Mao's choice for successor as party chairman, the trial of Mao's wife, Jiang Qing and her associates, and the development of a publicity campaign against Mao himself. In the interest of modernization, China has softened its foreign policy toward the West. Since its relations with the Soviet Union appear to be beyond repair, China has little choice but to obtain technical assistance and trade from the industrialized West and Japan if it hopes to modernize its economy.

### THE INDIAN BELIEF SYSTEM

As another example of how belief systems affect foreign policy, let us turn to a developing country and examine the ideological values and traditions of India. For the most part, developing countries have less entrenched ideologies and traditions than their longer-established, more developed counterparts. This is partly due to the disruption brought about by the period of colonial rule during which the imperial rulers sought to change values and even impose their own languages upon many of these states. But it is also a result of the condition of underdevelopment itself, which undermines the growth of national belief systems. In countries in which illiteracy is high and participation in politics is minimal, the attention of the people tends to be limited to the village or the immediate region rather than the nation. Also, the condition of underdevelopment, with its limited mass communication capabilities and its low levels of literacy, makes it difficult for a national leadership to instill a sense of national unity and identification by utilizing the myths and beliefs of the state.

Despite India's experience as a colonial dependent of Britain, Indian leaders have been able to gain inspiration from a rich heritage dating back some five thousand years. As the birthplace of both Buddhism and Hinduism, India's values and philosophies spread into many parts of Asia, and India itself served as a focal point for religious pilgrimages. The pride in a past in which the Indian subcontinent, under various Hindu rulers, may well have been the richest area in the world for over a millenium and a half provides an important source of unity and inspiration for an impoverished modern India. It may have been partly this pride of tradition that led Jawaharlal Nehru to play a more important role in world politics than would have seemed justified, given the power of India.

India was subjected to a number of invasions by various Islamic

rulers beginning in the eleventh or twelfth century. These invasions eventually resulted in the establishment of the Mogul empire in the sixteenth century. Two centuries later the European colonial invasions began, leading to the ultimate triumph of Britain. British rule lasted until 1947, when independence was granted and the subcontinent was partitioned into the states of India and Pakistan.

Despite its rich historical tradition, India, like other developing states, has been forced to comply with the Western-dominated international system in its postindependence foreign policy. Instead of operating in accordance with the well-established rules developed by diplomats like Kautilya as early as the fourth century B.C., the Indians have had to accept Western ways of diplomacy. Kautilya had established complex rules as to how states with various degrees of power should behave in the international system. These even show considerable similarity to the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli, the adviser of Italian princes, but predate the latter by some two thousand years.

The colonial experience affected states like India in a number of ways. In the first instance, it established English as the basic language of communication between peoples of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Despite efforts to make Hindi the national language, English has continued to dominate as the language of government and the educated elites. The sections of India where Hindi is not spoken have been particularly opposed to efforts to make Hindi the national language.

The close connection to the former colonial power has also resulted in the borrowing of political institutions as well as continued political and economic ties to the West. India is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations and cooperates with Britain in a number of economic and cultural activities. Other former British colonies have followed the same pattern, and most former French colonies retain close economic and political ties with France.

Another aspect of colonial rule that has helped shape Indian attitudes was the explicit racism of the colonial period during which Europeans and British subjects were provided with segregated facilities such as rail cars, park benches, and social clubs. Indians were also systematically excluded from certain elite positions in their own country. These experiences, needless to say, have been a major factor affecting India's view of racial discrimination in other countries as well as its attitude toward international conflict between peoples of different races. The bitterness with which Indians attacked United States action

in Vietnam may well have been due to the memory of their own treatment as inferiors.

A tradition that has been strongly associated with India over the centuries is nonviolence. Some Indian writers date this tradition from the time of Emperor Ashoka, who ruled an extensive portion of the Indian subcontinent during the third century B.C. Ashoka's acceptance of nonviolence, however, came only after he had conquered everything in Aryan India. Following his experience with the horrors of war, he turned to Buddhism, with its strong proscription against killing, and began preaching nonviolence. Others see the origins of nonviolence in Indian thought in the example and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi championed nonviolent civil disobedience as a device for pressuring government to change discriminatory laws and ultimately as a means for getting Britain to "quit India"—a goal that was finally achieved in 1947.

One writer, Nirad C. Chaudhuri, has expressed skepticism about India's nonviolent tradition, finding instead considerable martial boasting among both Hindu and Buddhist rulers.<sup>26</sup> The whole of Sanskrit literature is seen as a series of epics exulting war. Nor can the Islamic influence on India during the Mogul empire explain a nonviolent tradition, for Islam is one of the most militant of religions.

India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, although clearly influenced by Gandhi, found himself at odds with his mentor on a number of occasions. Nehru, unlike Gandhi, favored higher military spending, greater control over Kashmir, and the establishment of the separate states of India and Pakistan. The intellectual source of Nehru's pacifism, imperfect as it was, may have been derived largely from the writings of Western leftists after World War I, rather than from Indian tradition or the teachings of Gandhi.

Nehru, despite his tendency to moralize to other nations, was not totally averse to the use of the military, as can be seen in the 1961 Indian invasion of Goa. This action enabled India to regain control of territory on the western coast of India that had been ruled by the Portuguese for some four hundred years. But Nehru's predominant commitment to nonviolence may partly explain the unprepared state in which the Indian military found itself during its border war with China in 1962.

With its underground explosion of a nuclear device in 1974, India

26. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Continent of Circe* (Bombay: Jaico, 1965).

has perhaps removed itself from the tradition of nonviolence, although it can be argued that nonviolence has always been more a myth than a reality for Hindu India.

A closely related tradition in Indian foreign policy has been that of nonalignment, which Nehru strongly advocated. His concept of nonalignment was not one of noninvolvement in world affairs, for he played an active role. Nor was it based on neutralism, for Nehru had decided opinions about the behavior of other states that he was not timid about stating publicly. As a result, he often antagonized other states with his moralizing. For Nehru, nonalignment meant abstention from the cold-war alliance systems. He could even accept the notion that alliances were appropriate for some states but not for India. The strategy of nonalignment had some utility for India, as it was able to obtain economic and military assistance from both superpowers and, at the same time, reduce the likelihood of being pulled into cold-war conflicts and military actions.

As a reflection of its nonalignment policy, India has been active in several conferences involving nonaligned states, beginning with the Bandung Conference in 1955. The course set by Nehru has largely been followed by his successors, although some eyebrows were raised when his daughter, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, signed a Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation with the Soviet Union on August 9, 1971. The public commitment to nonalignment, however, was reaffirmed in February 1981, when New Delhi hosted the Nonaligned Foreign Ministers Conference.

### THE IRANIAN BELIEF SYSTEM

Both nationalism and religion appear to have had their impact on recent Iranian foreign policy. Nationalistic symbols and images of a great past were particularly emphasized during the tenure of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who assumed the title of Shah of Iran after his father abdicated in 1941. Although the Pahlavi dynasty included only the father and the son, it laid claim to the world's oldest continuous monarchy, which had existed for some 2,500 years. In speeches and writings the Shah referred frequently to the founder of the Persian Empire, Cyrus II, who was able to establish Persian rule over a vast region in a single generation. Like his father before him, the Shah assumed ancient titles such as Shahanshah (king of kings), Shadow of

the Almighty, Vice-Regent of God, and Center of the Universe. The Shah's personal guard was even called the Ten Thousand Immortals, after the guard of Cyrus.

The Shah's efforts to modernize Iran and to reestablish a "Great Civilization" were modeled on earlier experiences in Persian history. His White Revolution reform movement, which he announced in 1963, was equated with Cyrus' efforts to establish a benevolent monarchy with minimal bloodshed. Inspired by a great past, the Shah hoped to make Iran one of the "five biggest powers" in the world before the turn of the century.<sup>27</sup> To aid in building his new civilization, he began to divert more and more resources to military spending, aided somewhat by Iran's increasing oil revenues and the willingness of the Nixon administration to sell arms to the Shah in significant amounts. Such shipments totaled \$6.7 billion during the years 1974-78, making Iran by far the largest recipient of American arms during the period. Iranian military spending more than doubled in terms of constant dollars between the years 1973 and 1976.<sup>28</sup>

The impact of Islam on the foreign policy of the Pahlavis was limited. One authority has suggested that its effect on foreign policy during Reza Shah's tenure (1925 to 1941) was "almost nil."<sup>29</sup> As modernizers, both Pahlavis frequently came into conflict with the mullahs, or Islamic religious leaders. The latter were particularly disturbed by the Shah's assertion in 1976 that "we, the Pahlavi dynasty, nurse no love but that for Iran, no zeal but that for the dignity of Iranians, and recognize no duty but that of serving our state and our nation."<sup>30</sup> Such a viewpoint clearly conflicted with the Muslim concept of *umma* (community of the faithful), which is recognized as taking precedence over national loyalties.

Despite behavior and statements that would seem to be in contradiction with Islamic thought, the Shah attempted on numerous occasions to utilize Islam for his own purposes. He claimed to have had religious visions on at least three occasions, and often asserted that he

27. R. K. Karanjia, *The Mind of a Monarch* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977), p. 243.

28. U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1969-1978* (Washington: A.C.D.A., 1980), pp. 52 and 160.

29. Rouhollah K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran, 1500-1941* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1966), p. 305.

30. William H. Forbis, *Fall of the Peacock Throne* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).



was guided in his actions by a supreme being. To help shore up his shaky regime in the early years of his rule, the Shah vigorously sought the support of the mullahs. He also used the Islamic connection in his dealings with other states, as in his appeals for Islamic unity to prevent the rupture of relations between Iran and the Arab states.<sup>31</sup> During the period 1969-75, the Shah was accused of using religion to stir up the Shiite majority in Iraq against their leaders, most of whom belonged to the minority Sunni sect.<sup>32</sup>

With the assumption of power by the Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini in 1979, the powerful role that religious beliefs can play in the making of foreign policy became apparent. Americans were made aware of the impact of religion on political life as they viewed nightly televised scenes of obedient Muslims chanting anti-American and religious slogans outside the American Embassy in Teheran, which had become a prison for about fifty American hostages beginning in November 1979. Subsequent attacks on American facilities by Islamic groups in other countries reminded the world that the political role of Islam was not limited to Iran. With some 750-900 million Muslims in various parts of the world, Islam is likely to remain a potent force in world politics. Its growth is particularly striking in regions like Africa, where some twenty-five years ago only one in four, or perhaps one in three, people were Muslim, whereas by the early 1980s over half are expected to be Muslim.

When political power is assumed by the religious leadership itself, as in the case of Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini and his Revolutionary Council, it is likely that religion will have its greatest impact on foreign policy. Various other secular leaders have sought to establish their own Islamic republics based on the teachings of the Koran, which is viewed as a complete guide to living. This has been especially true of General Mohammad Zia al-Haq of Pakistan and Libyan leader Muamm el-Qaddafi. The latter has used considerable amounts of Libyan oil revenues to support Islamic causes throughout the world. He claims to have been the first to have helped the Ayatollah Khomeini in his efforts to gain power in Iran and has been reported to have aided Pakistan in its quest for an "Islamic" nuclear bomb.

31. Shahrar Chubin and Sepehr Zabih, *The Foreign Relations of Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 299.

32. A. I. Dawisha, "The Middle East," in Christopher Clapham, ed., *Foreign Policy in Developing States* (Westmead, England: Saxon House, 1977), p. 55.

There are certain aspects of Islamic thought that may influence the way Iran and other Islamic states behave in terms of foreign policy. The first thing to note about Islam is that it is an activist religion, not passive like Buddhism or Hinduism. As such, it has served to rationalize the use of force in order to spread the faith, beginning with the Prophet Mohammad. Closely related to the notion of using the sword to obtain converts is the concept of holy war, which has been particularly salient in the thinking of the dominant Islamic sect in Iran—the Shiites. Iranian leaders spoke of a holy war in their defense against the Iraqi invasion of 1980, and the concept has been promoted over the years by various leaders of Arab states with respect to the conflict with Israel.

The Islamic belief in martyrdom can also serve the purposes of a leader who is intent on a holy war and having others sacrifice for the cause. This in itself provides an important power base, since morale is so important in determining who is to prevail. Being willing to sacrifice more lives than your adversary can often compensate for a deficiency in number of troops.

When the willingness to sacrifice and even to welcome martyrdom is combined with yet another characteristic of Islamic thought, respect for authority, the power of the leadership is strengthened even more. A particularly strong form of militant Islamism can develop when the religious and political power of the state is concentrated in one man, as in the case of the Ayatollah Khomeini. This is reflected in the constitution drawn up for Iran in late 1979, in which ultimate power is given to the clergy, led by the ayatollah, who is to "safeguard against any deviations by various government organizations from their true Islamic functions and obligations." The ayatollah and his successors can dismiss the president at will, declare war, and select both military and judicial leaders.

Politico-religious leaders like the ayatollah often believe that God is with them and that they have complete understanding and knowledge of the truth. With a highly emotional view of right and wrong, they are hardly likely to bargain in the usual sense of the term. The 444-day standoff over the issue of the American hostages in Iran illustrates the difficulties the true believer often has in making concessions. It might be noted, however, that the rigidity shown by Khomeini not only was a function of his religious beliefs but also may have been explained by his years in exile and isolation, which engendered a deep feeling of resentment against the Shah.



Although the hope of the devout Muslim is for unity among all Islamic peoples, Islam, like communism, has been subjected to many schisms and has had to compete with nationalism. The major split within the Islamic world, as noted earlier, is that between Sunni and Shiite. The failure of some Islamic states to support the Ayatollah Khomeini is partially attributable to the fact that Iran is primarily Shiite, whereas most of the other Moslem states are Sunni. Anwar, Sadat of Egypt, in particular, was so disturbed by the impact of Khomeini on the image of Islam that he referred to the Iranian leader as a lunatic.<sup>33</sup>

In attempting to gain the hearts and minds of the population, Islam has had stiff competition from nationalism. In states with large religious minorities, there is likely to be greater emphasis on secular nationalism, as in the case of Syria, but where religious and national identities share the same boundaries, efforts toward religious patriotism may be encouraged, as in Saudi Arabia. The devout believer in Islam, however, is more likely to reject nationalism in favor of Pan Islam. This is particularly true of those of the Shiite faith, such as Khomeini, who believe that a descendent of Mohammad will return to bring justice to the world and unite it under Islam.

Since 1970 a permanent Islamic secretariat has been located in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, and there have been periodic meetings of Islamic foreign ministers. One such meeting was held at Islamabad, Pakistan, in January 1980 in response to the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan. In an unprecedented show of unity some thirty-six Islamic states voted to condemn the Soviet Union for its action in what was among the strongest, if not the strongest, anti-Soviet statement adopted to date by any group of third world countries. The divisions among the Islamic countries at the conference were more demonstrable with respect to Iran's efforts to condemn the United States for instituting economic sanctions against Iran. Some felt Iran itself had gone too far in its insistence upon detaining the hostages.

Despite the attempts at Islamic unity, splits and even wars have been a recurrent phenomenon among Islamic states, as in the 1980 war between Iraq and Iran, Libya's border war with Egypt in 1973, and Syria and Egypt's attack on Jordan in 1970. On one occasion, Syria even inter-

33. Christopher S. Wren, "Cairo Said to Worry About Islam's Image," *New York Times*, November 12, 1979.

vened in the Lebanese civil war on the side of Christian forces rather than in support of its Islamic brethren.

Whether or not Islamic thought will continue to play an important role on the world stage remains to be seen. Recent events may well be an aberration, and one might anticipate a reemphasis on nationalism from time to time. After all, even in the more militant Islamic states of Iran and Pakistan a more secular approach has been emphasized, as was the case during the Shah's reign and prior to the assumption of power by President Zia. Ayub Kahn, who was president of Pakistan during most of the 1960s, went so far as to declare in a visit to the Middle East that Islam was no longer a solid tie between peoples and that nationalism was the force that triumphed in the world.<sup>34</sup>

### THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL BELIEFS

Having identified some of the general functions of national belief systems and examined the role they have played in several states, let us now attempt to evaluate the general impact of these beliefs on foreign-policy behavior. Werner Levi has cited two conditions under which he feels the ideological determinant will be instrumental in shaping foreign-policy choices.<sup>35</sup> The first involves situations in which established values are being challenged, as they are, for example, during revolutionary times, for throughout history people have shown themselves willing to die for an idea. Second, Levi suggests that ideological influences are likely to have a greater impact in political systems that concentrate decision making in a very few individuals. As long as those individuals share a revolutionary ideology, they will be less constrained by other factors in the pursuit of their objectives. Katarina Brodin has suggested that the restraint of ideological doctrine is higher in more developed bureaucratic states than in less bureaucratically developed states.<sup>36</sup> In other words, the ideological system serves as a guide for action for a small and cohesive elite but as a constraint on

34. Arif Hussain, *Pakistan: Its Ideology and Foreign Policy* (London: Frank Cass, 1966), pp. 149-50.

35. Werner Levi, "Ideology, Interests, and Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly*, 14 (March 1970), 1.

36. Katarina Brodin, "Belief Systems, Doctrine, and Foreign Policy," *Cooperation and Conflict*, 7, no. 2 (1972), 109.

the actions of decision makers in highly bureaucratized states which tend to have more entrenched myth systems.

In studying negotiating behavior during the Kennedy Round of trade negotiations (1963-67), Gilbert R. Winham has noted yet another situation in which ideology becomes a more salient determinant of foreign policy, namely, when there is high complexity and uncertainty regarding the issues involved.<sup>37</sup> It is at such times that decision makers rely more on their basic belief systems and "gut" reactions to an issue. Complexity increases the probability that governments will adopt simplified, overriding goals. Had it not been for the predominant ideology favoring trade liberalism, which predisposed the participants to lower trade barriers regardless of whether an identifiable *quid pro quo* was obtained, the Kennedy Round would have been much less successful.

The role ideology plays in foreign policy depends on the specific beliefs inherent in the ideology itself. A democratic ideology will stress the notion of a people determining its own future. Such an emphasis does not preclude the possibility that democratic decision makers will use force in foreign policy, but by and large, more peaceful options allowing democratic choice for others will be selected.

Advocates of messianic ideologies, such as communism, and some religions, such as Islam, are more likely to utilize aggressive means to extend their belief systems. Certain ideologies are even used to rationalize killing and violence as the price a people must pay in order to enjoy a brighter future. The aggressiveness of fascist leaders can be explained in part by fascism's organicist view of the state, which holds that a nation must expand or it will decline. Mussolini declared, in invading Ethiopia, that "fascism sees in the imperialistic spirit a manifestation of its vitality."<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Hitler was concerned with *lebensraum*, or living space.

Different ideologies may also lead to conflict because of the fear that is generated by people who think differently than oneself. The mere existence of another group with a different viewpoint can be threatening because it implies that one's own views may be wrong. The contemporary world has often been described in terms of a struggle between communism and democracy. Although this view is far too

37. Gilbert A. Winham, "Complexity in International Negotiations," in Daniel Druckman, ed., *Negotiation: Social-Psychological Perspectives* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1977), p. 364.

38. Robert W. Tucker, *The Inequality of Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), p. 24.

simplistic, the labels are quickly applied to rally support for one belief system over the other.

Several studies have concluded that ideology is a more important determinant of foreign-policy choices than economic variables, particularly when it comes to issues related to the Soviet threat. In an analysis of Senate voting on the antiballistic missile decision, Bernstein and Anthony found that the individual ideological values held by each senator was a better predictor of that individual's vote on the issue than either party affiliation or whether the senator's state would benefit from increased military spending.<sup>39</sup> Moyer also discovered that ideological orientations were more important than a congressional district's economic dependence on military contracts in explaining congressional voting on military spending,<sup>40</sup> and in surveys of business executives Russett and Hanson found that ideological considerations appeared to take precedence over economic concerns.<sup>41</sup>

Richard Cottam, on the other hand, has suggested that power and security interests are more critical than ideological interests.<sup>42</sup> The United States is far more tolerant of human-rights violations in states that are important to its security interests. In 1977 the Carter administration despite its strong verbal support for human rights and the congressional requirement that aid be denied to violators of such rights, could find only three states to which it would deny aid. These were Argentina, Ethiopia, and Uruguay. Overlooked in the selection process were repressive regimes like those of the Shah in Iran, Park in Korea, and Marcos in the Philippines. The latter states were simply viewed as more important to American security interests. This unequal treatment based on perceived security interests is vividly illustrated by the reaction of the *New York Times* to two successive regimes in Iran. In the mid-1950s, when Mossadegh desperately attempted to stage a plebiscite in an effort to retain power in opposition to pressures from the United States and the United Kingdom, a *Times* editorial labeled it as a totalitarian action; but when his successor, the Shah, did the same

39. Robert A. Bernstein and William W. Anthony, "The ABM Issue in the Senate, 1966-70," *American Political Science Review*, 68 (September 1974), 1198-1206.

40. Wayne Moyer, "House Voting on Defense: An Ideological Explanation," in Bruce M. Russett and Alfred Stepan, eds., *Military Force and American Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), pp. 106-41.

41. Bruce M. Russett and Elizabeth C. Hanson, *Interest and Ideology: The Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Business* (San Francisco: Freeman, 1975).

42. Richard W. Cottam, *Foreign Policy Motivation* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), p. 87.

thing some ten years later, gaining over 98 percent of the vote, he was congratulated on his well-deserved popularity.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, during the 1978 riots against the Shah, the United States government maintained its steadfast support of his regime for fear of what the fall of the Shah might mean in terms of possible Soviet influence in the area.

What is perhaps most remarkable about national beliefs is the extreme length to which decision makers will go to retain a given belief when the evidence contradicting it is overwhelming. As suggested, the United States has been guilty of this tendency when it classifies the vilest of dictatorships as part of the "free world"; Hitler's apologists even went so far as to define the Japanese as part of the Aryan race after the Berlin-Tokyo axis was forged; and Soviet leaders have engaged in a considerable amount of ideological gymnastics in order to keep their Marxist beliefs compatible with their real-world needs as they have sought to redefine class enemies whenever temporary alliances were desirable.

## CONCLUSION

The national belief system of a state, based on varying ideological beliefs and historical traditions, clearly affects its foreign policy. This impact comes largely from the role beliefs play in influencing perceptions about the world, defining the range of choices, fostering continuity of policy, enabling decision makers to rationalize choices, serving propagandistic purposes, and even enhancing national unity. Ideological beliefs that transcend the nation-state have been less successful, because they compete with nationalistic belief systems (as discussed in the previous chapter).

Our review of the belief systems of specific states has revealed that some states, such as those that subscribe to Marxism, have a more identifiable ideology than others. Yet the evidence is overwhelming that national beliefs and experiences have affected the interpretation of Marxism, and that on the whole Marxism probably has been used more for rationalizing foreign policy decisions than for determining them. Both China and the Soviet Union have become less doctrinaire in their references to Marxist-Leninist thought, and the foreign policies of both

43. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

states should be viewed as much from the perspective of their respective historical experiences as from that of ideology.

A distinctive American belief system seems to have taken shape over the years. It is a product not only of democratic values but also of historical experiences. Two noteworthy trends have evolved: isolationism and liberal interventionism. The extensive overseas involvement of the United States since World War II has led some observers to suggest that a new foreign-policy tradition has been developing based on concern about the communist threat.

The problem of creating a coherent belief system is a serious one for the developing countries. India and Iran have sought to achieve a cohesive belief system on the basis of references to a period of greater glory and also, in the case of India, by attempting to create a new, but not always successful, tradition of nonalignment. The case of Iran illustrates how religion as ideology can affect foreign policy. As a messianic religion, Islam seeks to go beyond the nation-state with its hope of uniting all people. In practice, however, national differences have impeded such a development, and national leaders have more often exploited Islam for their own ends.

Despite the fact that national beliefs anchored in ideology and tradition can be manipulated by decision makers and used to rationalize decisions, such beliefs also influence choice. National beliefs are likely to play a more deterministic role in situations of greater complexity, when information is limited, or where the national interest is not as clearly defined. Several studies undertaken in the United States have suggested that ideological orientations toward the perceived communist threat have taken precedence over the economic interests of various groups, whereas broader ideological values concerned with global human rights have not preempted national security interests.