Publisher's Acknowledgments

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Foreign Policy in a Transformed World

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Introduction

Mark Webber and Michael Smith

Since at least the end of the 1980s, the student of world politics and of foreign policy has been confronted by a demanding intellectual challenge: the need to make sense of a world undergoing a profound transformation. In the first place, with the end of the Cold War, followed in short order by the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, there has been a proliferation of new states and the emergence of new patterns of cooperation and conflict both among these new states themselves and within the system of states more broadly. In parallel, a second trend of somewhat longer pedigree has gained ground, albeit one which has accelerated in recent years. In short-hand usually referred to as 'globalisation', this has involved the development of trends in international trade, communication, migratory movements and so on, which, according to some observers, have fundamentally challenged the competence of national governments. Alongside this process, the growth of regional economic and political integration and the emergence of major transnational policy issues, such as those of the environment or international crime, have posed further challenges to the traditionally tidy distinction between the nation state and its international context. Another change frequently noted, and linked to those already mentioned, has been the shifting balance between 'warfare and welfare' in both national societies and international settings; foreign policy makers for a long time have had to confront the complex balance between economic, political and military objectives, and this has been given greater force by the developing world political economy.

This book explores the persistent search for national identity and foreign policy effectiveness in this transformed world. It does not make the claim that hitherto the conduct and analysis of foreign policy has been trouble-free. Indeed, in the early 1960s, for example, decolonisation and the multiplication of new states in the so-called 'Third World', coupled with a

growth of regional and global institutions, formed a superficially similar set of circumstances. What makes the period after the late 1980s (the watershed provided by the end of the Cold War) so much different, however, is the pace, pervasiveness and profundity of change, something that has meant a questioning of the very relevance of concepts of statehood and foreign policy. That said, the state (and its principal agent, national government) still retains a primacy in international life. It is the main subject of international law, the principal member of international organisations and the organising entity of political, military, diplomatic and, to some extent, economic power. In this light, our perspective on the nature of foreign policy can be expressed initially in the following definition:

> Foreign policy is composed of the goals sought, values set, decisions made and actions taken by states, and national governments acting on their behalf, in the context of the external relations of national societies. It constitutes an attempt to design, manage and control the foreign relations of national societies.

Contemporary foreign policy is focused sharply – as is this book – on the ways in which, and the extent to which, national governments have succeeded in dealing with the challenges of a substantially transformed world. Conceiving foreign policy in these terms may smack of an overly traditional approach, one which focuses on states to the detriment of other actors. However, the approach is cognizant of these other actors, be they non-governmental organisations (NGOs), large transnational corporations, stateless nations such as Kosovo, Chechnya and Kurdistan or international organisations such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and so on. Indeed, we do not deny that these actors are important or even that they may pursue activities which resemble foreign policy. For our purposes, these 'foreign policies' are regarded as a part – often a very major part – of the context in which national government has become enmeshed. It may even be the case that the foreign policy pursued by a national government is, in some senses, synonymous with these other 'foreign policies'. This is apparent to some degree in the 'Common Foreign and Security Policy' of the EU and the actions pursued by NATO, in that in both cases EU and NATO policies often conform closely with, and are the consequences of, the foreign policies and preferences of their member states.

Our focus then is the ways in which national government has come to terms with and attempted to manage the changing world around it. This central *problématique* enables us to achieve unity of focus without

neglecting the ways in which actors other than national governments and societies have developed new patterns of international activity. It also forms an essential starting point for a comparison and an evaluation of the effectiveness with which the challenges to national policies have been met. The central teaching aim of the text is thus to stimulate discussion on the extent to which foreign policy formed and conducted by national governments has come to terms with the transformed world.

Elaborating upon these themes, the foundations of our approach to foreign policy are informed by the following:

- First, foreign policy is intimately linked to the notions of statehood and government, but these notions are not taken to be unchanging and uniform. Rather, they are sources of important questions about the ways in which national societies adapt to changing circumstances.

- Second, foreign policy implies a capacity to distinguish between the domestic politics and the external relations of national societies, and to form policies directed towards external 'targets'. This statement instantly raises vital questions about how the 'foreign' is defined or pursued in an increasingly interconnected world.

- Third, foreign policy cannot be detached from notions of strategy and action which embody goals, values and decisions. These notions are not seen as inflexible and unvarying. There is no rigid definition of what goals, values and decisions count as 'foreign policy' and which do not: although there is a substantial body of conventional wisdom as to what should be included and excluded, this wisdom is there to be questioned and evaluated.

- Fourth, foreign policy involves tasks of design, management and control. In an ideal world these would be easily achievable by national government. However, in practice, they give rise to numerous problems and thus impede the attainment of the goals, values and decisions noted above.

These foundations are, in turn, informed by two central issues which link foreign policy analysis (FPA) to the broader academic discipline of International Relations. The first is that of theory development. Foreign policy analysis (FPA) has not been left untouched by theoretical developments in its mother discipline and so this text highlights and utilises theoretically-informed models where appropriate. Furthermore, our approach is informed both by the literature of International Relations and by that of Comparative Politics and other branches of policy analysis. This arises

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from the fact that in studying foreign policy, inevitably one has to confront the relationship between 'national politics' and 'international politics', between public policy at the national level and the ways in which this is projected beyond.

A second analytical issue is that of 'theory and practice'. More than in many other areas of analysis, in FPA the student is constantly confronted by the 'real world'. There is thus a constant need to apply the frameworks of theory and comparison to the diversity of actual foreign policies themselves. For this reason it is difficult to propose a 'general theory of foreign policy' except at a very high level of abstraction. More relevant and useful is a range of 'middle range theories' which can encompass the variety of national experiences and foreign policy actions while still remaining informed by general theoretical insights. Linked to this is the matter of the relationship between policy analysis and the 'policy community'. Theories of foreign policy are inevitably subject to the 'so what?' question posed by those directly engaged in the policy process. This, in essence, boils down to a tension between those who seek to explain and understand foreign policy in general terms, and those who advocate analytical approaches which have a direct relevance to actual foreign policy conduct. While by definition the student of foreign policy in an academic sense cannot expect to penetrate the day-to-day untidiness and complexity of foreign policy action, it is nonetheless possible to ask well-directed questions and to see the 'theory/practice divide' as a source of insight rather than a source of frustration.

In a sense, all foreign policies are the same, as implied by the definition deployed above: all national governments are faced with the challenge of responding to the demands of their regional and more broadly international setting. But equally, each foreign policy is unique, given the range of demands and possible responses shaped by the global and regional setting, by national forces, by the process of policy making itself and not least by what happens when foreign policy is implemented. There is thus a constant need not only to compare one foreign policy with another, but also to compare foreign policy with other areas of public policy, with which it may intersect or by which it may be constrained.

This approach is reflected in the structure of the text. Essentially, the book falls into two interconnected parts:

Part One aims to set out the key elements of the analytical framework. Chapter 1 explores in some detail the analytical issues raised by the study of foreign policy, while Chapter 2 provides an introduction to the notion of the 'foreign policy arena' and to those who participate in it. Chapters 3

and 4 take this further by exploring the foreign policy process – the making and implementation of foreign policy. The overall purpose of Part One is twofold: to provide a range of analytical tools with which to approach FPA and to delineate a picture of a transformed world where these tools are to be applied.

Part Two applies this framework to a series of case studies. These are organised on a broadly regional basis, reflecting the argument that foreign policy is shaped by a combination of global, regional and national forces. Each case-study chapter incorporates a review of the foreign policy arena (focusing specifically on the regional arena but also considering how the region has been affected by wider global trends) and relates this to the range of foreign policies to be found within that region. This review is followed in each chapter by two national case studies, selected on the basis of the countries' importance to the region or to the broader global arena. These are not intended to be exhaustive studies of the foreign policies concerned; rather, they are designed to show the distinctive ways in which the relevant country has received and responded to the challenges of transformation.

Each of the chapters contains both an introductory summary of the main themes and questions addressed, and a concluding summary. At the end of each chapter, there is a full set of references and in most cases a short review of additional reading, designed to support further study of the concepts or cases dealt with. Where they are deemed useful, we have also included a number of relevant web site page addresses. The chapters also contain a number of boxes and tables. These are intended to provide schematic illustration of concepts or comparisons and (in the case study chapters) to furnish basic data of the relevant regions and the states which occupy them.

Our assumption is that the users of the text will have some prior knowledge of International Relations, world politics or Comparative Politics, but that this text will constitute their first major and sustained engagement with the area of FPA itself. We have thus tried throughout to ensure accessibility and clarity for those approaching the study of foreign policy from a variety of backgrounds.

Part One
Frameworks

Mark Webber and Michael Smith

1 | Problems and Issues in Foreign Policy Analysis

In the Introduction, it was argued that in analysing foreign policy, the key element was the focus on national governments and their responses to changing global conditions. In this chapter, we aim to identify a number of key issues in foreign policy analysis, and to 'problematise' them, that is, explore their analytical implications for the assessment and comparison of foreign policies.

This chapter falls into five main sections. First, we identify a number of the 'puzzles' which have long preoccupied students of foreign policy. Second, we consider some conventional assumptions about foreign policy. Third, we look at the ways in which global transformation has questioned the continuing relevance of such assumptions. Fourth, we offer an overview of the main schools of thought in foreign policy analysis. Finally, we summarise the main elements of the framework of analysis developed in this chapter. This will then be carried forward in Chapters 2–4 (which explore specific areas of foreign policy itself: the policy arena, the policy-making process and the implementation of policy) and will also be used as the basis for case studies in Part Two.

Foreign policy puzzles

In common with other areas of policy analysis, foreign policy analysis (FPA) starts with a number of central questions about the nature of what is to be studied. Perhaps the most fundamental question is the broadest: what is foreign policy? In the Introduction, we set out a definition, and it is useful to repeat it here as the basis for moving on to a more detailed enquiry:

> Foreign policy is composed of the goals sought, values set, decisions made and actions taken by states, and national governments acting on their

behalf, in the context of the external relations of national societies. It constitutes an attempt to design, manage and control the foreign relations of national societies.

Just how useful is this definition? Consider the following example. During late 1997, there was a severe financial crisis affecting a number of the countries of East Asia. The impact of fluctuating currencies, of financial speculation and of instabilities within the governments of the region caused wild shifts in confidence and undermined the ability of national governments to maintain stable economic conditions. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohammed, made a number of sharp public attacks not on the other countries in the region, but rather on the activities of international financiers, who were accused of deliberate economic destabilisation for the sake of private financial gain. Major commitments were made by leading countries such as the United States (US) and Japan, and by international financial institutions, to the re-establishment of economic stability and to containing the crisis. The latter was a particular concern given fears (in part, subsequently realised) that the 'infection' could spread to the countries of Latin America, Eastern Europe, and even into the US and Western Europe.

Do the responses to this crisis constitute 'foreign policy'? In many respects, the answer would have to be 'yes' in that actions taken clearly conform to the definition of foreign policy set out above. Efforts were made by national governments aimed at identifying goals, setting values and taking action – all in the light of their external financial position and the needs of their national societies. There was also a clear effort to 'design, manage and control' the foreign relations of those societies, specifically their external economic relations. But even the brief outline of the case stated gives rise to some key puzzles:

■ First, were the goals of foreign policy always clear, and were the values set equally acceptable to all members of the national society? Although the aim of economic growth and stability is very widely shared in national societies everywhere, there will always be those who see their interests as lying in speculation, profit and individual gain. In other words, a tension exists between the general good and a sectional or specific good.

■ Second, is it always national governments who take decisions or action? Foreign policy implies essentially that the government acts on behalf of the country, but it seems that on occasion at least, there can be doubts about the unity or stability of the government itself. During the crisis

outlined above, not only did one government in the region (that of Thailand) change, but the country concerned was also in the process of adopting a new constitution which would lead to major political changes. So national governments need not be regarded as monolithic.

■ Third, are national governments the only actors on the international stage? As the above example makes plain, a number of governments were assailed by the activities of international speculators. In other circumstances, they have been challenged by international criminal cartels, terrorist organisations and migratory flows of population.

■ Fourth and related to the points above, how much power to 'design, manage and control' do national governments really have? It seems clear that in many international economic transactions, national governments are only a part of the story, and the flows of international finance, together with the activities of firms or individual speculators, can have important effects in constraining or undermining the authority or 'management capacity' of the governments in question.

Each of the elements in our initial definition is thus subject to questioning. That said, as an analytical convenience some definition has to be offered. That presented above provides us with a check-list of the characteristics to look out for in any national foreign policy. But teasing out some of the implications of the definition alerts us to the fact that in seeking to pin down the meaning of foreign policy, some uneasy questions arise. However, for any foreign policy, the simple questions 'what's going on here?' and 'who is doing what to whom?' are an essential starting point. We now move on to consider the ways in which analysts have attempted to deal with these types of question in the past, and the ways in which they might need reformulating.

Foreign policy: traditional assumptions

Traditionally, foreign policy has been seen as inextricably linked to the 'world of states', in which the primary actors are nation states and their governments, and in which a series of policy problems emerge to reflect the competitive and insecure nature of international politics. This has given foreign policy a very powerful image in the study of International Relations. To put it very simply, foreign policy is often seen as 'special' or 'privileged' by virtue of the answers given to the types of question raised

above: What are the aims and values of foreign policy? Who makes foreign policy? How is it made? How is action taken?

In this light, let us first look at the links between foreign policy, statehood and the world of states. The study of International Relations for many years was conducted within the context of what has been termed 'state-centric realism'. Central to this perspective was the assumption that states were the primary actors in world politics (if not the only actors), that foreign policy was pursued by governments on behalf of the state and that a sharp distinction existed between domestic policy making and foreign policy making. The aims of foreign policy by this view were related to the pursuit of sovereignty and independence. The key value espoused was that of the 'national interest', defined in terms of independence and security. But the fact that the national interest was pursued in a world where all states were pursuing the same aim had a number of important consequences. Specifically, it meant that international politics was characterised by competition and insecurity and the chief task of foreign policy makers was to guard against threats and the actions of competitors. This state of affairs was exacerbated further by what some realists viewed as a central driving force of human motivation, namely a quest for power (Aron, 1962: 21–93; Morgenthau, 1960: 3–15).

Given these basic assumptions about the world of states and the place of foreign policy within it, there was in principle little difficulty in establishing the main characteristics of foreign policy. During the Cold War era, there was a strong tendency in many countries to identify foreign policy very closely with 'national security policy', and to see the military security of the society as the principal if not the only aim of policy making. This had direct and important implications for the question 'who makes foreign policy?' The answer simply was that foreign policy was made by a specialised elite defined by education, training and experience. This elite had the role – indeed, the duty – of establishing and pursuing the national interest and of speaking on behalf of the national society. When it came to the formulation of decisions and actions, this elitist context had further effects. Decision making was necessarily confined to a small circle, and was characterised even in democratic societies by a pervasive secrecy.

From this it might reasonably be inferred that foreign policy was not only specialised but also dangerous. The stakes were high, ultimately expressed in terms of national independence or national survival. Competition from other states might generally be muted and peaceful, but in principle it could always turn nasty and lead to conflict if not war. Whereas national societies could be described as 'security communities', the wider world was an 'insecurity community', in which there were no universally

accepted rules and in which there were constant risks of damage. But this was not a 'war of all against all'. What saved the system from constant system-wide conflict was the institution of statehood itself, through which responsible authorities could practise diplomacy, adjust their differences and cooperate either tacitly or openly to avoid the worst risks and costs of international competition (Hobson, 2000: 50–5; Morgenthau, 1960: 167–223).

Foreign policy in the traditional view, therefore, was conducted not only within a world of states, but also within a society of states, in which there was a number of powerful unwritten rules about the ways in which national governments should behave (Bull, 1977: 13–16, 23–52). The essence of 'responsible statehood' was in the conduct of responsible foreign policies – not shirking international competition or the defence of the national interest, but using the practice of diplomacy to conduct the business of the nation. Only in extreme circumstances could the use of force or a declaration of war be justified. Governments which flouted this rule could easily find that large numbers of others would group up to retaliate or to contain them, as in the case of Napoleonic France, Nazi Germany or (during the Cold War) the Soviet Union. But to state this 'rule' is to raise further questions. National governments would be faced in such a context with constant delicate choices, and the consequences of those choices were by definition uncertain. Foreign policy, therefore, hinged ultimately on the judgement and decisions of a small number of specialists whose knowledge of the consequences of their actions was imperfect; if things went badly wrong, it could mean national loss or national extinction.

According to this view, foreign policy action is one of the most demanding of political acts. The attempt to influence behaviour across national boundaries where there are none of the supports provided by national law, culture or habits of obedience, where knowledge is restricted and where the consequences of actions are very difficult to estimate, gives a fundamental element of delicacy and risk which is absent from any other areas of policy making. Even between the closest of national allies, there is the potential for confusion, recrimination, escalation and ultimately war. While the practices of 'responsible statehood' can contain many of these uncertainties and risks, they cannot eliminate them. In addition to being elitist, secretive and linked with national security, foreign policy is consequently also risky.

Thus far, we have established that the essence of foreign policy, as traditionally viewed, is the same for all states. The problem, however, as you may have suspected, is that foreign policies are characterised by considerable variety. Traditional views of foreign policy do not entirely

neglect this variety. Central to much traditional thinking is the notion of power. Often described in terms of military power, this can be seen as an essential way of discriminating between foreign policies, not only in terms of their key characteristics but also in terms of their prospects for success. Thus descriptions of countries as 'Great Powers', 'Middle Powers' or 'Small States' are intended to give an indication of the scope and responsibilities of foreign policy; they also give a broad description of the potential for action and of success in any given venture (Berridge, 1992: 9–25). During the Cold War period, the description of the US and the Soviet Union as 'superpowers' was intended to convey the impression that they were unlike any previous global powers, and thus, by extension, that their foreign policies were shaped by a distinctive if not unique set of influences. The 1960s and 1970s saw not only the consolidation of this superpower status for the two states concerned, but also the emergence in the Third World of a large number of new, often small and poor states, which greatly increased variety within the world of states.

Another element in the variety of foreign policies accounted for by traditional views concerned the policy makers themselves. Policy, arguably, is not formed until the commitment to pursue a goal is brought into balance with the capabilities necessary for its implementation. Not all policy makers or governments are going to be equally competent at performing this balancing act, and much of the effort of traditional FPA has been devoted to understanding the ways in which performance can fall below expectations or potential. One of the key distinctions between foreign policies is thus the efficiency and effectiveness of the 'foreign policy machine', and one of the key problems is that the 'machine' is really a collection of rather imperfect human beings.

Size, status, resources and human factors are thus key elements in the traditional study of foreign policies. Another is what might be described as 'circumstances': both the long-term geopolitical situation of a country and the short-term challenges it faces. For a very long time, foreign policies have been described in terms of location – the 'island state', the 'buffer state' – and in terms of the general political context within which governments operate – democracy, dictatorship, stability and instability (Wallace, 1971). Such factors are clearly important in shaping the choices available to foreign policy makers, and in influencing the ways in which actions are taken. As much as anything else, they affect expectations and perceptions, both on the part of foreign policy makers in one country and on the part of their counterparts in other countries. But these long-term factors can also be supplemented if not supplanted by short-term factors, such as those contained in threatening or crisis situations.

We hope it is clear from this discussion that what we have described as 'traditional' views of foreign policy based on state-centric realism do not eliminate complexity or variety from the study of the policy-making process. It is also clear, however, that such views seem most appropriate to the conditions of the Cold War and do not happily encompass the processes of change and development which were already apparent in the Cold War period itself but which have become much more prominent with its demise. We now discuss a number of these processes, and then look at the ways in which these have generated new approaches to the study of foreign policy.

A transformed world

One of the most common descriptive labels of world politics in recent years has been that of transformation (Held et al., 1999). In this section, we discuss a number of the far-reaching processes of change that have been identified in global affairs and link them to the ideas about foreign policy outlined earlier.

An important point must be made at the outset. Although the period from the late 1980s on has frequently been presented as constituting a watershed in many senses, it is necessary to retain a historical perspective. Change in world politics does not occur overnight. Many of the apparently sudden and radical shifts that have taken place at key points in history reflect longer, sometimes hidden trends of development. For instance, the emergence after the Second World War of the two superpowers was the consummation of processes which had been going on for the previous fifty years – not just the rise of the two new world powers, but the decline of others, such as Britain and France. Similarly, while the years 1989–91 seemed to witness a sudden revision of the political map of the world (with the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia most notably), it should be remembered that this process had gestated for a considerable period of time owing to the long-term structural problems of communist political systems.

Moreover, fixing on these events as somehow characteristic of wider global developments is also misleading since it tends to play down autonomous but still important processes of change taking place in areas outside Europe and the North Atlantic region, in Asia and Latin America for example. Such cautionary notes are not simply for the benefit of students; policy makers themselves are in many ways less well-adjusted if they

ignore the longer term and the historical or operate on the basis of cultural 'blinkers'.

These qualifications aside, there is nonetheless a commonly held view that since the 1980s we have witnessed radical, widespread and in many senses irreversible changes in world politics and the world economy, and that these must be taken into account when studying foreign policy (Light, 1994).

Beyond the 'world of states'

We have already seen that traditional views of foreign policy depend heavily on assumptions about the 'world of states'. This is not seen as an unchanging or undifferentiated world: there has always been a place for discussion of the variety of states and statehood.

More recent changes, however, seem to have gone well beyond the assumptions of the traditional view. Two developments are particularly important in this context: first, the sudden increase during the 1990s in the number of states, many of which are fragile and the source of instability. And second, the accelerated development of political and economic networks which seem to demand more than mere statehood for their operation and regulation.

Taking the first of these – the expansion of the 'world of states' – it should be noted that this is not an unprecedented process. During the early 1960s, the dismantling of the British and French colonial empires led to a major influx of new participants on to the international scene, and many of these new states brought with them new problems of political and economic development as well as significant international or domestic conflicts (Jackson, 1990). They also brought with them new problems for FPA, in the sense that it had now to encompass not only well-developed (and, therefore, predictable) 'western' or 'northern' states, but also fragile, less-developed (and, therefore, unpredictable) 'southern' ones as well (Calvert, 1986). This upsurge of state creation was, however, balanced by the stabilising factor of the Cold War which, through the creation of spheres of influence between the superpowers (and, to a limited extent, by China also), harnessed (but did not eliminate) many of the system instabilities brought about by this influx. The Cold War also brought a certain analytical tidiness, allowing as it did an analysis of foreign policy in terms of where a state stood in the bipolar competition between the two superpowers.

The collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union has upset this picture of stability. Fifteen states have arisen from the ruins of the Soviet Union

and a further five have so far emerged within what was once the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. These have brought with them economic, political, ethnic and other tensions, resulting in the Balkans and the Transcaucasus regions in vicious local wars and external intervention. Even where states are not 'new', in the sense that they had previously had an independent existence (as in the case of most of states of Eastern Europe once subject to Soviet power) these same states have frequently been assailed by a variety of political and economic instabilities. Such developments are clearly a significant challenge to the rather cosy idea of a 'society of states' based on 'responsible statehood'. Quite simply, there is less prospect of a functioning 'society' where there are extensive and fundamental conflicts over territory, assets and ideas; and there is less prospect of 'responsible statehood' where states are new, fragile and subject to conflicting pressures of global change. It is important to remember, nonetheless, that these types of problem are not entirely new. The twentieth century was characterised by Balkan conflicts in both its second and final decades.

The earlier spasms of the 'society of states' took place in a world where there were no really substantial challenges to state dominance. The 'ideology' of sovereign statehood has been the most potent symbol of the twentieth century, responsible for many of its most dire conflicts as well as many of its economic and political gains. During the 1970s and 1980s, there was a growing recognition that this image of state dominance, while not disappearing, was contested by the development of new forces, the second of the two developments alluded to above (Keohane and Nye, 1977; Mansbach et al., 1976). One product of the appearance of new and fragile states has been the increased incidence of sub-national challenges to the state, either through threats of secession and resultant civil war (as in the nominally Russian republic of Chechnya) or through more peaceful movements to regionalism or federalism (as in the case of the European Union (EU)). At the same time, the development of the world economy has led to a new focus on transnational forces, such as those embodied in powerful corporations such as Microsoft and Nestlé and in a variety of political movements such as those which have mobilised against perceived injustices in world trade and global financial arrangements. It has been argued that such forces represent a powerful movement towards globalisation, in which social, economic and political activities everywhere are connected with such activities everywhere else. Opinions differ greatly as to whether such forces are harbingers of new wealth and global prosperity, or of new inequalities and forms of exploitation (Hutton and Giddens, 2000).

Related to the development of non-state forces has been the emergence of new forms of international organisation. One of the key claims made by states to dominate international affairs has been that they are better organised on the whole to achieve the requirements of citizens for order, prosperity and development. The extent to which this claim was borne out in many cases can be challenged. As indicated above, the 'society of states' is a diverse one. During the past twenty or thirty years, however, there has been an immense proliferation (or consolidation) of forms of organisation whose operation have detracted from the competencies of states. These range from global bodies such as the United Nations (UN) or the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to regional or sub-regional institutions such as the Council of Europe and the North American Free Trade Association (Keohane and Martin, 1995).

The net effect of these processes is a substantial but incomplete transformation not only of the 'world of states' but also of the world in which states exist. This is not to say that states are on the way out – many of them are more vigorous, wealthy and powerful than ever before. But it is to argue that national governments have to deal with a new and more complex reality, the product of many years of evolution, which appears in important respects to be irreversible. We will discuss the implications of these changes more fully in Chapter 2.

New issues

The traditional image of foreign policy depends heavily on a certain view of the foreign policy 'agenda'. As noted above, the competing claims of states in international affairs created insecurity and, as a result, the pursuit of national security was indisputably at the head of national priorities. Although this has economic and social aspects, the ultimate expression of national security was the ability to ensure military security for the territory and its citizens. From this sprang many of the claims of states to design, manage and control not only their foreign relations but also the activities of their citizens both at home and abroad. Even the apparently mundane details of national passports and customs controls are in this sense a powerful symbol of the claim to state dominance.

How has this traditional agenda been affected by changes in the contemporary era? Again, it is important to have some historical perspective. Even during the Cold War, the ability of most states to provide for their own national security was often challenged: either states were inherently weak, as were many in the Third World, or they had to depend upon powerful patrons, particularly the superpowers with their nuclear arsenals. This is a state of affairs that has changed little. Very few states, even after the demise of the Cold War, have asserted a self-sufficiency in national security affairs; and those that have – North Korea, Iraq, Libya, Cuba and, to some degree, China – tend to be regarded as unusual. The continuing pattern is, in fact, collaboration, a condition to which even the most powerful of states – the US (through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation [NATO]) or Russia (through arrangements with partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS]) – still resort. National security has then remained a key aim of foreign policy – indeed, the fact that certain of the transformations of world politics have been so disruptive makes this a seeming necessity.

The provision and meaning of national security has, however, altered in recent years. The emphasis which the Cold War placed on the military instruments of security (and, by extension, foreign policy) has been downgraded both by governments and by foreign policy analysts. For many states, the Cold War imposed a considerable opportunity cost in the form of expenditures foregone on economic and social development. With the disappearance of the Soviet threat this has led in the West to the exploitation of a 'peace dividend' – the diversion of resources away from the military (apparent in a fall in defence expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product) towards civilian needs. This pattern is not, however, a uniform one. Many states elsewhere feel no such luxury in their security situation. Indeed, in large swathes of Africa, the Middle East and the Asian sub-continent military instruments and threats continue to fixate national leaderships. Even here, however, the meaning of security is no longer seen as fixed. The 'military sector' of security may be the most pressing for some, but it is buttressed by threats to states, national populations and individuals that derive from other economic, environmental, political and societal 'sectors' (Buzan et al., 1998). This is also the case in the more settled states of Europe and North America. Here, the threats to the human environment, the burdens of migration and refugees or the task of promoting economic prosperity have come to many governments to appear far more immediate and challenging items on the foreign policy agenda. It is not that economic and social priorities have never been given a place; rather, it is that historically they have always been 'trumped' by the primacy of national security. Since the 1980s, it has not been so easy to play the national security card in its traditional form. New issues have become more immediate and, importantly, many of these issues are inherently transnational or global in their implications.

How much of a transformation?

The picture we have painted so far is necessarily an outline, one that will be developed more fully in the following chapters. It is important, though, to be aware of this general context for the study of contemporary foreign policy. We have identified a number of key areas in which the pressures of change have been felt. But how much of a transformation do these represent? Although the context of foreign policy has clearly been subject to major shifts, does this mean that our initial definition of foreign policy, with its emphasis on states and their national governments, is in any way less appropriate? We would argue that the definition is, in fact, still a relevant one. It is still the case that national governments seek to 'design, manage and control' the foreign relations of national societies, that the institution of statehood remains central to the ordering of international life, and thus that the foreign policies of states enjoy an influence that privileges them above non-state actors. Of course, there is variety. It would be manifestly obtuse to suggest that the foreign policies of all states enjoy this degree of importance (the foreign policy of the US is clearly more significant in a global sense than that of say Sri Lanka or Nepal) or that all states, in practice, are more influential than other actors in international life (the US may be more important than the United Nations in many instances, but the UN is more important in many other instances than Sri Lanka or Nepal). Furthermore, as we have made clear throughout this chapter, foreign policy is made and conducted in a context characterised by a number of changing features. In short, these constitute the following:

- Changes in the numbers, resources and status of both states and non-state actors, including the rise of 'non-state foreign policies'.

- Changes in the nature of national security and other national objectives and values.

- Changes in policy-making processes, including the new salience of cross-departmental and cross-national processes.

- Changes in the nature of power and influence, and in the effectiveness of particular methods of policy implementation.

This does not mean that foreign policy is marginalised or uninteresting. We would maintain that it is not only central to national and international life, but also interesting in new and challenging ways.

Changing perspectives on foreign policy

In view of what we have said so far, it is not surprising that one of the central features of the study of foreign policy has been a competition between different perspectives. The study of International Relations in general has been distinguished by tensions between a variety of approaches, and FPA has shared in this process of development. We have already pointed out the central features of a 'Realist', state-centric view of foreign policy, or what we have also described as the 'traditional' view. This is a compelling image of foreign policy, which sets the national government as the representative of a society against the world and casts success or failure in Manichean terms of triumph or disaster. As with all such images, it is not representative of all day-to-day events or processes in foreign policy, although it is clear from what we have said that there is still some mileage in such a perspective. Indeed, the proliferation of new states, each with their own national identity and role to develop, and confronted by an often uncertain and sometimes hostile international environment, could be said to have given it new life (Goldgeier and McFaul, 1992).

A related approach is that of 'Neo-Realism'. While still giving a central role to the state, this approach attributes state behaviour less to qualities which inhere within the state itself (such as the quality of leadership or the quest of leaders for power and glory) and more to the conditioning effects of the international system's anarchical structure (or, in other words, the absence of world government). Anarchy creates conditions of suspicion and competition among states and consequently imposes one compelling motivation upon them, that of self-preservation. This need not mean that states are engaged in a constant round of wars and conquest. Indeed, Neo-Realism suggests that states are constrained in their behaviour by 'the distribution of capabilities' within the international system. The most obvious manifestations of this include nuclear weapons-based deterrence and also more traditional forms of balance of power. Kenneth Waltz, the best known Neo-Realist, was clear in his writings that this perspective did not constitute a theory of foreign policy; however, certain important inferences can be drawn. Foreign policy, according to this view, can be seen as guided ultimately by national survival, the related objective of exploiting opportunities that enhance state capabilities and a general predisposition against anything but expedient forms of cooperation with other states (Waltz, 1979).

While there are those who might present foreign policy as essentially about competition, insecurity and threat, the reality is that much of foreign policy is about cooperation between states. Working on this assumption,

perhaps the most sustained challenge to Realist and Neo-Realist conceptions of foreign policy has come from what is often termed the Pluralist perspective (Viotti and Kauppi, 1993b: 7–8). In many ways, this approach is a direct response to the perceived inadequacies of the traditional approach, especially in the light of changes to domestic and world politics. Pluralist approaches takes these changes as central influences on foreign policy and thereby demand new concepts and methods of analysis. Pluralists have identified a number of pervasive global trends which have had the effect of reducing the 'insulation' of national governments and national societies. One influential approach in this vein is Keohane and Nye's (1989) notion of 'complex interdependence'. According to this view, world politics has, since at least the 1970s, become increasingly characterised by an agenda of 'multiple issues' and thus foreign policy has moved away from its traditional concern with military and security matters towards economic, social, environmental and other concerns. As a consequence, links between governments have multiplied as new issues and areas of cooperation have emerged, and many of these have given rise to new forms of international organisation. In many ways, although there is still no world government, world politics and the world economy are increasingly 'governed' by intricate sets of rules and institutions. Thus, the 'cast of characters' on the world stage has expanded, and it is not always clear that individual national governments hold the whip hand in dealing with political or economic issues.

Another key characteristic of this new context is that international issues affect much wider parts of domestic populations, and thus that a range of 'private' or non-governmental organisations can become interested in foreign policy making. Pressure groups, organised interests and other domestic forces can gain a role in the shaping of foreign policy, particularly on economic and social issues. In the implementation of policy, equally, a wide range of organisations can become involved, through systems of cross-departmental and cross-national policy activity. Notions of power and of coercion become less prominent than notions of influence, access and communication. A logical development of this line of argument is to see foreign policy as in many ways the 'international dimension' of domestic policies and, indeed, to deploy many of the analytical tools of Comparative Politics or Policy Analysis more generally to explore the foreign policy process (Evans et al., 1993; Risse-Kappen, 1995).

A further strand in the study of foreign policy has been what can be termed the Dependency perspective. This bears particular relation to the emergence noted above of many new states in the Third World. Although these states could lay claim to the classical properties of statehood –

sovereignty, recognition, control of territory – it was apparent from the outset that many of them were incapable of exercising their independence. By this view the world was (and still is) one of profound inequalities between states and within societies, which means that the small, the poor and the unstable are effectively subordinate to the large, the rich and the stable. For FPA, this perception leads to the conclusion that less developed countries have few realistic policy choices – they succumb to a form of economic servitude upon rich states and international financial institutions and, in regional terms, become preoccupied with immediate threats to their national security that arise from arbitrary borders (a legacy of the colonial period) and unresolved territorial claims (Thomas, 1987). Their policy-making processes, meanwhile, are often characterised by a lack of stable structures, a severe lack of resources both human and administrative and by a close linkage between domestic political contests and foreign policy actions. For such states, the making and implementation of foreign policy is often a matter of reflexes, in the sense that the actions are demanded if not compelled directly by pressing national need and dependence on others. Lest it be thought that these features are somehow in the past, it should be remembered not only that there are still large numbers of less developed countries of the 'classical' type, but also that the 1990s saw (as already noted) the emergence of large numbers of 'new' states often with these same features of dependency and vulnerability.

Since the 1990s, (Neo) Realism, Pluralism and Dependency approaches have been joined by what can be termed the Globalist approach. In International Relations, the 'globalisation' process has been noted most dramatically in the area of political economy, with the growth of transnational processes of production, exchange and communication. Some would argue that this is itself a very long-standing phenomenon, starting with the growth of maritime trade in the Middle Ages and proceeding through the growth of the great nineteenth-century empires. Equally, in the area of global security, the twentieth century has seen a consistent attention to the process whereby the security and integrity of different countries or regions have become linked. What is said to be distinctive about more contemporary globalisation processes is their rootlessness: in other words, they are less constrained by territorial or national divisions, or by the authority of national governments, than previously (Sasken, 1996). This is clearly a distinctive basis on which to approach foreign policy, since it effectively challenges the credentials of national governments at the most fundamental level, and threatens to undermine some of the most cherished elements of national security and national action. Globalisation might in principle mean that 'foreign policy' is often powerless in the face of a multiplicity

of external influences. Whereas the Realist, Pluralist and Dependency approaches all rely on strong assumptions about power, influence and the rules to which they give rise, a Globalist view assumes no such structures. For foreign policy decision making and action, this produces a very indeterminate world; indeed, some have defined such a world as essentially 'postmodern', one in which there are no settled structures of authority and in which individuals or groups hold no settled positions (Devetak, 1996).

This review shows that the concept of 'foreign policy' itself has been subject to considerable debate, and that this debate has intersected with broader developments of a global character. It is not possible to draw simple lines of cause and effect between the 'real world' and the analysis of foreign policy, but it is clear that the relative certainty and predictability of the 'world of states' which might be said to have characterised the 1950s and 1960s has disappeared. It is also apparent that theories of foreign policy are not simply mechanical descriptions of processes and events but embody value-laden assumptions about what is or is not significant. Thus, for example, Realist and Neo-Realist approaches may be described as essentially 'conservative', Pluralist approaches as 'reformist', and Dependency and Globalist theories as 'radical', in the sense that each takes a position on the acceptability of the status quo that implies actions to maintain, amend or transform the structures of world politics.

Another distinction which has been made, and which is particularly relevant to the study of foreign policy, is that between 'problem-solving theories' and 'critical theories'. The former takes the existing order as given and seeks to make it work more effectively, while the latter sees the existing order as a reflection of power relations and ideologies which represent particular dominant groupings in international affairs. In this context, both Realism and Pluralism might be seen as 'problem-solving' approaches, while Dependency and Globalist approaches would contain strong elements of critical theory (as, for example, would approaches to foreign policy and world politics more generally, such as feminism and environmentalism). For easy reference, the approaches we have identified are summarised in Table 1.1 below.

Summary and conclusion

To conclude this chapter, and to form a basis for the more detailed treatment in Chapters 2–4, we put forward here a summary of our framework

Table 1.1 Perspectives on foreign policy

	Nature of the international system	Foreign policy issue	Value-laden assumptions
Realism	Competitive. Prone to war. Influence of high-level diplomacy, balances of power. Society of states.	Acquisition of power. State survival. Glory and prestige. The 'national interest'.	Conservative
Neo-Realism	Anarchic. Competitive. Balances of power.	State survival. Preoccupation with national security.	Conservative
Pluralism	'Complex interdependence'. Increased likelihood of cooperation.	Multiple issues with no hierarchy. Economic issues as important as military ones.	Reformist
Dependency	Unequal. Economically weak states unjustly dependent on richer states.	For the weak states survival and manoeuvre in constrained circumstances. For the richer states entrenchment of beneficial exploitation.	Radical
Globalist	Acceleration of transnational processes of production, exchange and communication. Security of different countries or regions increasingly linked.	Multiple. States overwhelmed by this multiplicity.	Radical

for analysis of foreign policy. As indicated at several points in the chapter, we base our framework on a combination of the initial definition of foreign policy and specific elements in the foreign policy process. The key elements are three:

- First, the foreign policy arena. In this chapter we have intimated at a notion of an arena in which foreign policy is conditioned and takes place, but we must take this further and analyse the nature of this arena and the ways in which particular national governments are affected by and form a view of this arena. We must also assess in more detail the ways in which changes in the foreign policy arena are 'registered' by national governments, and the ways in which this relates to the groups, organisations and interests which 'populate' the foreign policy arena. This is undertaken in Chapter 2.

- Second, foreign policy decision making. We have dealt in a very general way with ideas about how governments make policy, and how policy making has responded to processes of transformation . We now need to take this analysis further, and to explore the ways in which different models of foreign policy making can be used to assess specific cases. This is the focus of Chapter 3.

- Third, the implementation of foreign policy. This chapter has talked in general terms about issues affecting the implementation of policy, including the changing nature of power and influence and some of the instruments of policy. Chapter 4 will focus in more detail on the implementation process, and will assess the ways in which implementation has responded to the transformation of world politics.

Further reading

Foreign policy analysis (FPA) is an important sub-field of the academic discipline of International Relations. Two useful surveys of the FPA literature are Hill and Light (1985) and Light (1994). Texts dedicated to the analytical and comparative study of foreign policy include Clarke and White (eds) (1989), Macridis (ed.) (1992), and Neack, Hey and Haney (eds) (1995). Useful surveys of different perspectives in International Relations (and by extension in FPA) can be found in Brown (1997), Viotti and Kauppi (eds) (1993a) and Walt (1998). On the recent transformation of world politics there is now quite a sizeable literature. See, for instance, Halliday (2001) and Hocking and Smith (1995). Work on transformation and foreign policy is much less in evidence (hence this volume). However, see Rosati, Hagan and Sampson (eds) (1997) for recent foreign policy responses to change, and Boyd and Hopple (eds) (1987) and Smith (1981) for more general approaches on foreign policy adaptation.

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