

## 7 Foreign policy analysis

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A.J. Groom and M. Light (1994)

Contemporary International Relations:  
A Guide to Theory, London: Pinter Publishers.

In some respects, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is firmly within the realist paradigm. It assumes a state-centric international political system, and, although it acknowledges that there are other actors within that system, it primarily focuses on the transactions which take place between states or which concern, on one side at least, a government acting on behalf of the state. In other respects, however, FPA diverges from realism. Realists, for example, assume that the relations between states are motivated by the pursuit of power. Foreign policy analysts accept that power relations are important and that force (threatened, used or simply implicit) is a major instrument of foreign policy. But they are also interested in other types of relations and in other policy instruments. Moreover, while realists assume that the state is a unitary actor, many foreign policy analysts open up the 'black box' of the state to examine the various units that make up its decision-making apparatus. They believe that policy can often be explained by the way the units relate to one another. Finally, realists assume that the state is a rational actor, whereas rationality is a contested concept in FPA. Indeed, a great deal of FPA research is concerned with seeking an explanation for seemingly irrational foreign policy decisions.

Perhaps because FPA does not fit squarely within the realist, world society or structuralist paradigms, it is frequently criticized by IR theorists. This chapter will begin by examining and countering their criticisms. The discussion which follows concentrates almost entirely on work which has been published since 1985 (a discussion of earlier work can be found in [59]). For analytical convenience, the field has been divided into three categories: domestic politics, middle-range theories and comparative foreign policy (CFP), using part of a typology initially employed by Smith [137]. The chapter ends by considering tendencies which do not fall easily into any typology.

#### In defence of foreign policy analysis

It is not unusual to hear grumbling in academic departments that FPA is unworthy of the status of a compulsory subject for an IR degree. The nature

of the objection depends upon the interests of the complainant: 'grand' theorists maintain that FPA is devoid of theory; it is simply diplomatic history. Both diplomatic historians and IR traditionalists disagree, complaining that foreign policy analysts concentrate on political process at the expense of policy outcome and accusing them of 'scientism'. Methodological purists, on the other hand, believe that FPA methodology is insufficiently rigorous, while international system theorists argue that by focusing on the inner workings of the state, foreign policy analysts get the level of analysis wrong and study politics, not international relations.

An added complaint, not always *sotto voce*, is that theoretical research in FPA relies heavily on American foreign policy for its empirical data – a tribute, nevertheless, to the relatively easy accessibility of information about American political processes and policy.

Foreign policy analysts have also become their own trenchant critics. Some of their self-doubt arises from disappointment that the subject did not produce the all-encompassing IR theory its early proponents assumed would ensue if the 'black box' or 'billiard ball' was opened and investigated. Others, influenced by the post-behavioural rejection of positivism, question their early enthusiasm for quantitative methods, while many agree that excessive concentration on processes taking place within the state has made them underestimate the systemic constraints that limit the autonomy of policy makers. These criticisms, self-criticisms and assessments of the achievements of FPA can be found in articles and chapters discussing the state of the art of IR or FPA [for example, Chapter 7 in 33, 56, 74, 136, 137].

Nevertheless, while FPA is not coterminous with IR, there could be no IR without FPA. It would be difficult, for example, to envisage an international *system* unless there were external relations. A system assumes more than units enclosed by a boundary; it also presupposes that there are interactions between the units. And the official relations that take place between the units of the international system constitute foreign policy. FPA is the study of those transactions, the domestic circumstances that produce them, the effect on them of the system and its structures and their influence on the system. Many of the theoretical issues which are raised in this book are significant in part because of the effect that they have on foreign policy.

As a subject of study, FPA is invaluable both because it is a 'bridging discipline' [55, p. 1], connecting together the diverse issues that students deal with under separate headings in other subjects, and because it translates abstract theory into concrete problems. Furthermore, by concentrating on the interface between the state and the state system, FPA links the micro level of politics with the macro level of the international system. And, since it is eclectic and interdisciplinary, it connects IR to other social sciences. Finally, some of its insights have become part of the conventional discourse of IR, and some of the questions it has been unable to answer have become the more general puzzles of IR theory. FPA, therefore, continues to be taught widely and research proliferates.

### Domestic politics

Perhaps the most widely known conceptualization of how foreign policy decisions are made is bureaucratic politics. Allison's *Essence of Decision* [1] is the classic work in which this model, and the rational actor and organizational process models, is described. Few IR books have generated more debate or been the subject of more criticism. Yet many of Allison's original insights have become the truisms of FPA, terms which he coined have entered the IR vocabulary, and his work continues to provoke discussion. Allison's adaptation of the model to foreign policy decision-making has been questioned [56], his model has been tested [6], adapted [60, 91] and used by other scholars [89]. None of the adaptations have produced a single, definitive policy-making model, but they invariably produce interesting new insights into the way that decisions are made. Hilsman, for example, proposes a 'political process' model [60] to explain defence and foreign policy making. He suggests that although policy is made by a variety of people working through different institutions (power centres) with disparate motives and diverse views about means, these power centres share some goals. Thus conflict over policy is accompanied by persuasion, compromise and consensus building. He applies his model to seven different case studies, providing a useful investigation of American foreign policy in the process. Strong [145] compares Kissinger's academic views on bureaucracy with his behaviour during his years in office. Those who have forgotten the classical theories of bureaucracy will find Beetham's short book [5] very useful.

Continuing interest in the politics of competing bureaucracies and the attendant effect on foreign policy in the Allison mode has been paralleled by investigation of more general questions of the impact of domestic politics on foreign policy. The conventional belief was that the foreign policy of authoritarian states tends to be more predictable and stable and, at the same time, more flexible than that of democratic states in which publics are resistant to innovation but not averse to imposing sudden change on their governments. However, studies suggesting that public opinion is, for the most part, indifferent to foreign policy and that, in any case, even in a democracy foreign policy tends to be the business of the executive branch of government seemed to contradict the conventional view that authoritarian systems were 'better' at foreign policy. In the post-Cold War world, where more and more countries are switching from authoritarianism to democracy, the effect of domestic politics on foreign policy acquires more than mere theoretical significance: the conventional view suggests that the end of the Cold War will result in a less predictable international system and not just for the usual reason given – that a bipolar balance of power is more stable than a multipolar balance.

Recent studies on domestic politics and foreign policy [26, 42, 46, 91, 96, 119, 121] have been as inconclusive about the effects of democracy on foreign policy as earlier research. While the findings of the various contributors to Skidmore and Hudson's collection [134] suggest that domestic publics rarely play an important role in foreign policy formulation, the editors point out that even in cases where they are thought to be

influential, it is extremely difficult to establish causality (would the policy have been adopted even if the societal group had not exerted pressure?) or to discover the relative importance of group influences compared to other factors affecting the choice of policy. Although the effect of interest groups on foreign policy continues to engage analysts [40], Hinckley (arguing that public opinion does have a perceptible influence on national security decisions) suggests that the information revolution has eroded the importance of interest groups: the flow of information direct to individuals has increased, and the function of interest groups to inform and aggregate opinion is consequently diminished [61]. Examining a longer period of history, Holmes [66] agrees that public opinion, in the form of foreign policy mood, is an important input into American foreign policy. Auerbach [2] looks at strategies employed by decision makers to win public support for 'turning point' decisions.

In a closely argued book defending the effects of democracy on foreign policy [112], Nincic defines a democratic foreign policy as one that reflects the preferences of the national community it is meant to serve and argues that the resultant policy of 'principled pragmatism' is likely to be stable and coherent. Nincic bases his argument entirely on the United States, but the change to democracy in East and Central Europe provides a number of opportunities to test his thesis. Unfortunately, East European democratization occurred too late to be included in the collection by Boyd and Hopple on political change and foreign policy [11]. When other foreign policy analysts turn their attention to the post-socialist world, however, they will be able to use the frameworks suggested by Hermann [54] and Holsti [67] or Goldmann's very complex theory of change and stability [41] to study domestic change and foreign policy re-orientation.

The freedom to choose one foreign policy action over another is affected not just by internal political structures and processes but also by the effects on the domestic political process of external constraints. As a result of the recognition that the number of conventional conflicts in the international system had increased rather than diminished since the invention of nuclear weapons, the geopolitical fatalism of nuclear deterrence (the belief that nuclear weapons rendered geography irrelevant) has been replaced by a renewed interest in geopolitics in recent years (see Chapter 12). Although much of the published work is interesting but only peripherally relevant to foreign policy analysts [116, 132], Parker's study of the geopolitics of domination [118] echoes the Sprouts' distinction between the operational and psychological environments and suggests how geopolitical factors might influence perceptions of the outside world. Sloan [135] argues that geopolitics has a 'conditioning influence' on US strategic policy since it affects the perceptions of decision makers. Douglas [in 117] proposes an agenda for the geographical investigation of inter-state conflict.

There are other external constraints on foreign policy that have little to do with geography. In a detailed empirical study, Geldenhuys compares the predicament of states that exist in enforced isolation from the international system [37], while Jackson [76] examines the prospects, and the consequences for the international system, of 'quasi-states', that is, states to whom

the trappings of external sovereignty have been ascribed despite their lack of the usual features of internal sovereignty and legitimacy.

### Middle-range theories

The psychological attributes of individual leaders and groups and the significance of perception have long been important aspects of FPA. Much of the recent work which falls into the category of middle-range theories continues this line of investigation. Useful surveys of past research on perception, personality and the effect of the psychology of groups on foreign policy appear in Singer and Hudson's collection of essays on political psychology [133].

Earlier work on leadership was concerned with the personality of individual leaders and this line of enquiry has continued [22, 26, 75, Chapter 5 in 133]. Hoffmann [62] argues that concentration on how structures shape policies may lead to an underestimation of the role of leadership. Post [120], on the other hand, is concerned with the mental and physical health of leaders and the effect of ill health on policy. To establish how the American presidency has evolved, Greenstein, a pioneer of studies of leadership, has made a comparative analysis of nine US presidents since 1933 [45]. But his attention, and that of other scholars in the field, has shifted to a more overtly normative concern with the way in which leaders can obtain the best advice from those that surround them.

Burke and Greenstein [15], for example, compare and contrast Eisenhower's decision not to intervene in Vietnam in 1954 with Johnson's 1965 decision to intervene. They conclude, rather surprisingly, that the former's formal advisory system worked rather better than the informal arrangements preferred by Johnson. They suggest that 'multiple advocacy' (a technique developed by Alexander George whereby advisers compete for their preferred options) can curb the negative effects of small group dynamics (for example, group think) and ameliorate defective advisory processes. Multiple advocacy can, however, produce paralysis of action resulting from too much choice. Moens, who has tested multiple advocacy on the foreign policy decision making of the Carter administration [106], maintains that the technique failed when Brzezinski became an actor rather than the organizer of the process. In other words, if multiple advocacy is to work, there must be a coordinator to help the decision maker choose among options. The late lamented Janis also became concerned about 'good' decision-making [52, 53], while Orbovich and Molnar [in 133] construct models of various advisory processes.

The phenomenon of foreign policy that has most preoccupied analysts is international crisis. Their primary normative concern is to establish how crisis can be avoided or at least managed to prevent escalation and war. Janis concentrates on 'good' decision-making, defined as 'vigilant problem solving', as the essential prerequisite [77], while George proposes seven operational principles of crisis management [38]. He links his analysis of inadvertent war (a war neither side wanted or expected) with the role that

crisis management can play in preventing it, contrasting six successfully managed crises with five inadvertent wars. In an interesting and topical epilogue, he defines the second Gulf War as an inadvertent war and discusses why crisis management failed. Unlike Janis and George, Lebow does not believe that there is a key to crisis management or the achievement of national security, at least with regard to a nuclear crisis between the two superpowers [92]. He argues that as long as force structures, doctrines and targets remain unchanged, the best that can be expected is a reduction in crisis instability. He implies that the fact that nuclear catastrophe has been avoided is a matter of luck rather than management and Dixon [29] would certainly agree with his view. As Brecher and Wilkenfeld point out [12], however, in direct confrontation with the United States the Soviet Union almost always backed off, thereby reducing crisis instability. Since Lebow's three requirements for national security have now occurred, Janis's good decision-making and George's seven principles of crisis management have presumably acquired a new salience in American-Russian relations.

The International Crisis Behavior Project has produced a number of decision-making studies over the years that have become classics of FPA. The project is now complete, and the results have been published in three volumes. Two of the volumes [13] give profiles of the most crisis-active states between 1929 and 1979, summaries of 278 different crises and the major findings of the survey. The third [12] presents the findings of the project in an integrated and systematic form.

Whether or not they are dealing with a foreign policy crisis, what advisers advocate and what policy makers decide depend to a large extent on how they perceive their own countries and the outside world, as well as their perceptions of the past, the values they hold and how they process the information they receive. Foreign policy analysts have always distinguished between the psychological and the operational environments of decision-making. Recent studies, however, have turned to the problem of belief systems [98, 125] and ideology [20] and how they affect policy, the role of history in decision-making and whether and how decision makers learn and process information, whether from past history or from more recent experience.

It seems common sense that the past affects the way the present is perceived. After all, individuals could not learn unless their past experiences guided their responses. But analysts argue about the use, abuse and usefulness of history in foreign policy decision-making. Fry [34] argues that statesmen use history habitually as an aid. Hill [58] would not disagree, but he distinguishes among legacies from the past that have been so deeply internalized that they are ineradicable, those which, although profound, can still be transformed with difficulty and those from the less closely held past, which constrains choice in a more limited way. In *The Lessons of History* Howard [69] denies that history teaches any lessons, since 'the past is infinitely various' (p. 11). In a later essay, however, he argues that 'only a knowledge of the past enables us to fully understand the present' (p. 188). But the history of foreign policy is replete with examples of leaders learning the wrong lessons from history. Warning against easy analogies and insisting

that presumptions must always be questioned, Neustadt and May [109] offer decision makers a primer on how to know the past.

Der Derian [27] would probably reject their primer since he argues that traditional theorists (by which he means those who are not postmodernists) abuse history by projecting the present on the past. Vertzberger, on the other hand, recommends the Neustadt and May rules as a means of ensuring that history is not abused [Chapter 6 in 151]. He is not only concerned that leaders should learn the correct lessons of history, since the question he poses is why decision makers make mistakes even when all the information they need is available [151]. To broach this question, he examines the effect of perception and misperception on information processing, the trade off that frequently takes place between efficiency and accuracy and the impact of personality and societal-cultural factors on the quality of information processing. He concludes his interesting study by suggesting how the potential negative consequences of faulty processing can be limited.

Insisting that the 'correct' lessons of the past must be learned, considering how decision makers' techniques of information processing can be improved, devising better structures of conflict management and ensuring that the best possible advice is available to decision makers all indicate a normative concern for 'good' foreign policy management. But there are also underlying implications that rationality is an attainable and sufficient aspiration and that decision makers are untrammelled by the structures within which they operate.

On rationality, Ferguson and Mansbach [Chapter 6, 33] argue that cognitive approaches are interesting but cannot serve as the basis for theory because cognitive behaviour varies not only between people and institutions but also between decisions. Without the assumption of bounded rationality, therefore, FPA is doomed to turn from scientific analysis to idiosyncratic narrative. Some studies of perception are, however, based on assumptions of bounded rationality [see, for example, Chapters 2 and 3 in 133]. Moreover, critics have pointed out that although bureaucratic politics is intended to debunk the idea of a unitary rational decision maker, the bargaining between and within bureaucracies posited by the model implicitly assumes rationality.

The second problem, the relationship of agency to structure, is one of the central issues of IR. To quote Carlsnaes [19], as far as FPA is concerned, 'the question is how to conceptualize interstate behaviour in terms of both human choice and social determination' (p. 256). Wendt [159] approaches the problem through Giddens's structuration theory. Carlsnaes argues that the simultaneous duality of Giddens's theory makes it impossible to apply in practice. He attempts to resolve the problem by positing a reciprocal interplay over time between agency and structure: actions are not only causally affected by structures (which both constrain and enable) but they themselves subsequently affect structures.

Hollis and Smith [64, 65] invoke the notion of role (a term also used by Walker [154] in a more restricted meaning) to deal with the relationship between agency and structure and to improve both the rational actor and the bureaucratic politics models. Roles operate within structures, acting as constraints and enablements. But they contain an area of indeterminacy and

they are inconsistent, thus leaving room for personal qualities of judgement and skill. The question of the interaction of agency and structure represents the intersection of social science and international relations theory with the theory of foreign policy. It is a problem which will continue to preoccupy both IR theorists and foreign policy analysts.

### Comparative foreign policy

Comparative foreign policy (CFP) is the field of FPA that has been most subject to criticism and self-criticism. While its critics do not expect it to make much progress [Chapter 7 in 33], its defenders give examples of how CFP efforts at theory building could form the basis for more comprehensive theories [Chapter 1 in 55]. Whether one is a detractor or defender of CFP, cross-national events data and other comparative collections provide a rich mine for the future use of IR and FPA theorists. The findings of the International Crisis Behavior Project [13] represent one example.

There are a great number of foreign policy analysts who are less concerned with scientific rigour (in the sense of producing testable hypotheses) than those who classify their work as CFP but whose research is distinctly comparative and rigorous. Geldenhuys's work on isolated states [37], for example, or Jackson's notion of quasi-states [76] are based on comparative studies. Other scholars have grouped together various types of states to investigate aspects of their foreign policies. The foreign and defence policies of Third World states and new states have been examined, for example [16, 79, 146], and the particular problems of small states have been investigated [51, 80, 82, 131]. There are also interesting cross-national studies of particular types of policy [28, 35, 107]. Whatever the future fate of CFP, this kind of comparative foreign policy is unlikely to disappear.

### FPA in a changing world

It is a truism of FPA that whereas in previous centuries foreign policy consisted almost entirely of 'high' politics, it now embraces 'low' politics. Economic instruments of foreign policy have become at least as important as diplomacy and force. Increasingly it has become difficult to separate foreign policy from domestic politics. Nor are governments and the states they represent any longer the sole actors in the international system. While this does not imply that governments no longer conduct foreign policy, it is clear that interdependence, concern about global problems and permanent membership of alliances, regional and international organizations mean that governments are no longer free arbiters of the policies of their states. Thus there is a steady erosion of a separate concept of foreign policy and a consequent undermining of FPA as a discrete field of investigation.

On the other hand, the demise of the territorial state has not occurred, and the number of new states joining the international system has increased markedly in the last five years. Foreign policy, therefore, has both changed

and expanded. Rather than undermining FPA, these new phenomena represent the expanding range of concerns that are relevant to the subject. In addition to the matters they have traditionally investigated, therefore, foreign policy analysts now need to consider the implications of international political economy [39, 114, 143, 144] for foreign policy and to consider how interdependence [83, 87] or membership of regional organizations [32, 93, 127, 149] affect the independent conduct of foreign policy. Since new states are appearing at the same time as demands for autonomy are increasing in old ones, the potential for foreign policy-making in subnational units is of great consequence [72, 103]. The global system may, in some respects, enjoy governance without government [126], but foreign policy, and therefore FPA, will remain relevant to the international system and to IR for the foreseeable future.

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## 8 Strategy

### Ken Booth

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From the perspective of 1994 we can see the whole history of academic strategic studies. It falls into three distinct parts: early strategic studies, from the first atomic bomb to the 'massive retaliation' debate (1945-55); the period of high strategic theory (1956-85) when the subject became a major subfield within international relations; and finally - and conveniently for this survey - the period of late strategic studies, defined by the Gorbachev era (1985-91). In Gramscian terms this last period could be seen as an 'interregnum', when the old was dying, the new could not yet be born and there existed a great diversity of morbid symptoms [18].

#### Pre-nuclear strategy

Throughout history strategy was always an expanding phenomenon, both conceptually and in practice. In ancient times the word simply meant a commander's 'plan for battle'; it then evolved into 'the art of war', and by the 19th century into a country's whole disposition for war whether in peacetime or during periods of conflict; by the middle of the 20th century, strategy and external policy were seen frequently as synonymous in the industrial world, and the consequence of major conflict risked being coterminous with the destruction of civilization in the northern hemisphere.

Strategy relates military means and political ends, in both war and peace. Accordingly, strategic studies is concerned with understanding and explaining the military dimensions of international relations; this involves the study of the ends and means of strategy, the threat and use of military force, the prevention and conduct of war and the societal effects of strategy. As a developing subfield of IR strategic studies fitted comfortably into the dominating realist (and then neorealist) perspective.

Clearly, strategy as a major business of states long preceded its systematic academic study. For most of history, writing about strategy was confined to occasional chroniclers of war and, even rarer, theorists. A handful of these writers have now achieved 'classic' status; a short-list, in chronological order, includes Sun Tzu, Thucydides, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, Mahan, Douhet and Liddell Hart [84, 202, 130, 42, 132, 51, 122]. For many years the only