

# Understanding Foreign Policy Decision Making

Alex Mintz

*IDC-Herzliya, Israel*

Karl DeRouen Jr.

*University of Alabama*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

# Contents

*Acknowledgments*

page xiii

## PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

<b>1 Why Study Foreign Policy from a Decision-Making Perspective? . . . . .</b>	<b>3</b>
Foreign Policy Decision Making	3
Why Study Foreign Policy Decision Making?	5
The Rational and Cognitive Schools	7
Comparative Foreign Policy	9
Limitations of the Decision-Making Approach	10
Plan of the Book	10

## PART TWO: THE DECISION ENVIRONMENT

<b>2 Types of Decisions and Levels of Analysis in Foreign Policy Decision Making . . . . .</b>	<b>15</b>
Types of Decisions	15
Unilateral, Negotiated, Structured, and Unstructured Decisions	16
Holistic, Heuristic and Wholistic Decisions	17
Trade-offs in Decision Making	17
The Level of Analysis in Foreign Policy Decision Making	18
Individual-Level Decisions	18
Group-level Decisions	19
Coalition Decision Making	20
Case Study: Israel's Foreign Policy Making by Coalition	21
Another Example of Coalition Decision Making: Iceland's Cod War, 1971–1974	23
The Decision Environment	25
Time Constraints	25
Information Constraints	26

Ambiguity	27
Familiarity	27
Dynamic Setting	27
Interactive Setting	28
Risk	28
Stress	28
Accountability	30
The Role of Advisory Groups	31
Information Search Patterns	32
Holistic versus Nonholistic Search	33
Order-Sensitive versus Order-Insensitive Search	33
Alternative-Based versus Dimension-Based Search	33
Maximizing versus Satisficing Search Patterns	34
Compensatory versus Noncompensatory Rule	34
Noncompensatory Decision Rules	35
Conjunctive Decision Rule (CON)	35
Disjunctive Decision Rule (DIS)	36
Elimination-by-aspect (EBA) Decision Rule	36
Lexicographic (LEX) Decision Rule	36
Conclusion	37
<b>3 Biases in Decision Making . . . . .</b>	<b>38</b>
Case Study: The U.S. Decision to Invade Iraq In 2003 – the Effect of Cognitive Biases on Foreign Policy Making	41
Groupthink	44
Groupthink in American Foreign Policy	45
Beyond Groupthink	47
Groupthink and Multiple Advocacy	48
Polythink	49
Case Study: Polythink at Camp David, 2000	50
Did Polythink Lead to the Collapse of the Camp David Talks?	52
Group Polarization Effect	53
Conclusion	54
<b>PART THREE: MODELS OF DECISION MAKING</b>	
<b>4 The Rational Actor Model . . . . .</b>	<b>57</b>
The Rational Actor Model	57
Case Study: New Zealand's Defiance of the United States and ANZUS	59
The Expected Utility Model of War Decision Making	60
Opportunity Costs	61
Game-Theoretic Models	62
Prisoner's Dilemma	64

Chicken	65
Tit-for-Tat	66
Conclusion	67
<b>5 Alternatives to the Rational Actor Model . . . . .</b>	<b>68</b>
Bounded Rationality and the Cybernetic Model	68
Bureaucratic Politics	70
Organizational Politics	73
Prospect Theory	75
Sunk Costs	77
Integrating the Rational and Cognitive Models: Poliheuristic Theory	78
What is Poliheuristic Decision Making?	79
Case Study: The Decision not to Invade Iraq in 1991 – An Application of Various Decision-Making Models to a Foreign Policy Event	81
Background	81
A Rational Actor Interpretation	82
A Cybernetic Explanation	83
A Prospect Theory Explanation	84
A Poliheuristic Explanation	85
An Organizational Politics Explanation	86
A Bureaucratic Politics Model	87
Applied Decision Analysis	87
A Simple Example: The Cuban Missile Crisis and the Decision Matrix	88
ADA: A Closer Look	89
Application to Decisions of Leaders of Terrorist Organizations: Bin Laden and al-Qaeda	92
Conclusion	93

**PART FOUR: DETERMINANTS OF FOREIGN POLICY  
DECISION MAKING**

<b>6 Psychological Factors Affecting Foreign Policy Decisions . . . . .</b>	<b>97</b>
Psychological Factors	97
Cognitive Consistency	98
Evoked Set	99
Emotions	99
Images	101
Beliefs, Belief Systems, and Schema	101
Operational Code Analysis	102
Analogies and Learning	103

The “Munich Analogy” and Use of Analogies in U.S. Foreign Policy	104
Case Study: Analogies in U.S.-Cuban Relations, 1954–1967	106
The Analogies Provided by Guatemala, 1954	106
The Bay of Pigs	108
The Cuban <i>Foco</i> and Africa, 1965	109
Bolivia, 1966–1967	111
Leaders’ Personality	114
Leadership Style	115
Types of Leaders: Crusader, Strategic, Pragmatic, and Opportunistic	116
Cognitive Mapping	119
Conclusion	120
<b>7 International, Domestic, and Cultural Factors Influencing Foreign Policy Decision Making . . . . .</b>	<b>121</b>
International Factors	121
Deterrence and Arms Races	121
Strategic Surprise	125
Alliances	126
Regime Type of the Adversary	127
Domestic Factors	129
Diversionary Tactics	129
Economic Interests and Foreign Policy Decisions	130
The Role of Public Opinion	131
Electoral Cycles	132
The Effect of Domestic and International Factors on Foreign Policy Decisions: Two-Level Games	133
Case Study: The Domestic and International Underpinnings of Decision Making – the Falklands War, 1982	134
Diversionary Behavior	134
Deterrence and Misperception	135
Electoral Impact	136
Decisions on the Use of Economic Instruments of Foreign Policy	136
The Decision to Use Sanctions as an Instrument of Foreign Policy	137
The Decision to Use Aid in Foreign Policy	138
Negotiation and Mediation Decisions	139
Decisions on Foreign Policy Substitutability	141
Gender Differences in Decision Making	143
Cultural Differences in Decision Making	144
Conclusion	145

## PART FIVE: MARKETING FOREIGN POLICY

<b>8 Framing, Marketing, and Media Effects on Foreign Policy</b>	
<b>Decision Making . . . . .</b>	<b>149</b>
Marketing Effects	149
Framing Effects	150
The Frame as a Political Lens	151
Who is Framing Whom? Framing the Public	152
Framing beyond the Borders	155
Advisory Group Framing and Manipulating	156
Summary	159
Media Effects	160
Case Study: The Marketing of the U.S. Invasion of Grenada, 1983	162
Background	162
The Key Decision Makers	163
The Marketing of the Decision	163
The Decision Process	164
Could the Process Actually Have Been a Compensatory One?	166
Conclusion	166

## PART SIX: CONCLUSION

<b>9 Conclusion . . . . .</b>	<b>169</b>
What Does it All Mean?: A Case Study of the U.S. Decision to Invade Iraq in 2003	171
Conclusion	175
<i>Appendix: Foreign Policy Simulation and Exercise</i>	177
<i>References</i>	179
<i>Index</i>	199