# CHAPTER

# 3

# Levels of Analysis and Foreign Policy

*Search, seek, find out; I'll warrant we'll unkennel the fox.*
—William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

*Dazzle mine eyes, or do I see three suns?*
—William Shakespeare, *King Henry VI, Part 3*

Women are playing a greater role in the politics of their countries and the world. This woman is at a first anniversary celebration of the January 2006 inauguration of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of Liberia, the first woman to be elected to head an African country. President Sirleaf, who holds a master of public administration degree from Harvard, has helped stabilize the country. Indicative of her benign appearance and firm approach, she is widely called "Ma Ellen" and "the Iron Lady."

H AVING INTRODUCED THE GLOBAL DRAMA in chapter 1 and reviewed its history in chapter 2, it is time to turn our attention to what drives the action on the world stage. Much like the plot of a play, the course of world politics is the story of the motivations and calculations of the actors and how they put those into action. Because states have long been and remain the most powerful actors on the world stage, our focus here will be on how they make and carry out foreign policy. Therefore, most of what occurs in world politics is a dynamic story of states taking actions and other states reacting to them, either directly or indirectly through international organizations. States are certainly not the only global actors, though, and the roles and decision-making processes of individuals such as Osama bin Laden, international governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the UN, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs/transnational groups) such as Greenpeace are taken up in other chapters.

As the following pages will detail, the **foreign policy process** is very complex. Analysts untangle the intricacies by studying foreign policy making from three perspectives termed **levels of analysis**. These include (1) individual-level analysis—the impact of people as individuals or as a species on policy; (2) state-level analysis—how the organization and operation of a government affect policy; and (3) system-level analysis—the external realities and pressures that influence a country's policy.

## INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ANALYSIS

**Individual-level analysis** begins with the view that at the root it is people who make policy. Therefore, individual-level analysis involves understanding how the human **decision-making process**—people making decisions (as a species, in groups, and idiosyncratically)—leads to policy making.

### Humans as a Species

The central question is this: How do basic human traits influence policy? To answer that, a first step is understanding that humans seldom if ever make a purely rational decision. For example, think about how you decided which college to attend. Surely you did not just flip a coin. But neither did you make a fully rational decision by considering all colleges worldwide and analyzing each according to cost, location, social atmosphere, class size, faculty qualifications, program requirements, job placement record, and other core considerations. Furthermore, and making your choice even less rational, it was almost certainly influenced by a range of emotions, such as how far away from home the school was and whether you wanted to be near, or perhaps far away from, your family, friends, or romantic partner. To make things even less rational, you probably had to make a decision without knowing some key factors of your college experience, such as who your dorm roommate would be.

It may be comforting to imagine that foreign policy decision making is fully rational, but the truth is that in many ways it does not differ greatly from your process in deciding which college to attend and many of the other important choices you make in life. They, like foreign policy decisions, are influenced by cognitive, emotional, psychological, and sometimes even biological factors, as well as by rational calculations.

## Cognitive Factors

What you did in choosing your college and what national leaders do when deciding foreign policy is to engage in **cognitive decision making**. This means making decisions within the constraints of "bounded rationality." *External boundaries* include missing, erroneous, or unknowable information. To cite an example, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair had to decide whether to invade Iraq in March 2003 without knowing whether Saddam Hussein would respond with chemical or biological attacks on U.S. and British forces. *Internal boundaries* on rational decision making are the result of our human frailties—the limited physical stamina and intellectual capacity to study exceptionally complex issues. Whatever the "realities" were during the crisis leading up to the Iraq War in 2003, the universe of information available was far more than President Bush, Prime Minister Blair, President Saddam Hussein, or any human could absorb.

Needless to say, none of us likes to think that we are not fully rational, so we are apt to adopt one of a range of mental strategies for coping with our cognitive limits. As illustrations, three such strategies are seeking cognitive consistency, wishful thinking, and using heuristic devices.

*Seeking Cognitive Consistency* Decision makers tend to seek cognitive consistency by discounting ideas and information that contradict their existing views. The controversy about the snarl of information and misinformation about Iraq's abilities and intentions will continue for years, but it is informative to ask why top decision makers in London and Washington were willing to accept British intelligence that Baghdad was attempting to buy uranium from Africa and to ignore the substantial doubts expressed by the CIA. One reason is that the British finding "fit" with the existing negative images of Saddam Hussein and his intentions, whereas believing information that there was no nuclear program would have created uncomfortable cognitive inconsistency.

*Wishful Thinking* To self-justify our decisions, we humans often convince ourselves that our choice will succeed (Johnson, 2004). Given the overwhelming forces he faced, it is hard to understand why Saddam Hussein chose to fight rather than go safely into exile. The reason, according to some of his former aides, is that he believed he would survive in power. In the Iraqi dictator's mind, his military defeat in 1991 was only a tactical retreat. This wishful thinking was evident just before the 2003 war when a reporter pointed out that the forces facing him were even more powerful than those that had routed Iraq's army in the Persian Gulf War and asked, "Why would you think that you could prevail this time on the battlefield?" The Iraqi leader replied, "In 1991 Iraq was not defeated. In fact, our army withdrew from Kuwait according to a decision taken by us. . . . We withdrew our forces inside Iraq in order that we may be able to continue fighting inside our country." Extending his wishful thinking, Saddam Hussein assured the reporter, "If war is forced upon us, then Iraq will continue to be here. . . . [We] will not finish just like that, even though a huge power may want it to be like that."[1]

*Using Heuristic Devices* A third way humans deal with their cognitive limitations is by using **heuristic devices**. These are mental shortcuts that help us make decisions more easily by allowing us to skip the effort of gathering considerable information and analyzing it thoroughly.

*Stereotypes* are one type of heuristic device. For example, the willingness of the U.S. Department of Justice to countenance at least the limited torture of Muslim

Wishful thinking is common in human decision making. Saddam Hussein seemed to believe that he would politically survive a war with the United States in 2003 just as he had in 1991. This may have increased his willingness to risk war. Wishful thinking cannot change reality. Saddam appears to have realized this by the time this photograph was taken of him during his trial for war crimes against his own people in the 1980s. Seven months after this photo was taken, Saddam was hanged by the Iraqi government for his crimes.

prisoners suspected of terrorism was arguably voiced in Attorney General John Ashcroft's stereotypic comment that "Islam is a religion in which God requires you to send your son to die for him. Christianity is a faith in which God sends His son to die for you."[2]

*Analogies* are another heuristic shortcut (Dyson & Preston, 2006; Breuning, 2003). We make comparisons between new situations or people and situations or people that we have earlier experienced or otherwise have learned about. One such mental connection that frequently figures in policy debates is the **Munich analogy**. This refers to the decision of France and Great Britain to appease Nazi Germany in 1938 when it threatened Czechoslovakia. World War II signified the failure of appeasement, and the "lesson" later leaders drew was that compromise with dictators only encourages them. The Munich analogy was clearly in the mind of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld when he urged action against Iraq despite the lack of definitive evidence of Iraqi WMDs, by arguing, "Think of the prelude to World War II . . . [and] all the countries that said, 'Well, we don't have enough evidence.' . . . There were millions of people dead because of the miscalculations."[3] As the postwar attempt to democratize and stabilize Iraq went from bad to worse, opponents of the war used another analogy, Vietnam. When, for example, President Bush announced in early 2007 that he would "surge" 21,000 extra troops into Iraq, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) warned, "The Department of Defense kept assuring us that each new escalation in Vietnam would be the last. Instead, each one led only to the next."[4] Figure 3.1 on page 68 shows how broadly the Vietnam analogy to Iraq resonated with Americans (Schuman & Corning, 2006).

## Emotional Factors

Although it is comforting to imagine that decision makers are coolly rational, the reality is that they get depressed, sad, angry, and experience all the other human emotions. For example, President Jimmy Carter was irate when Iranian students studying in U.S. colleges picketed the White House in 1980 during the hostage crisis with Iran over its seizure of the U.S. embassy and its staff in Tehran. An incensed

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**SIMULATION**
Heuristic Devices

**FIGURE 3.1   Iraq and the Vietnam Analogy**
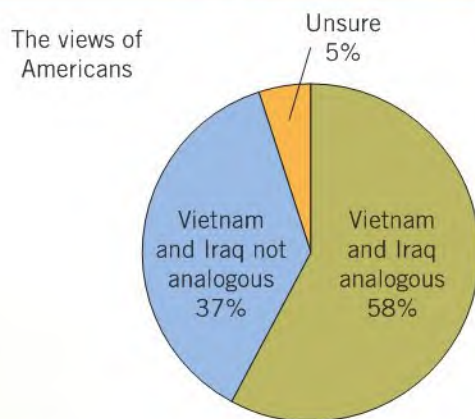
By 2006, most Americans saw the U.S. presence in Iraq as analogous to the U.S. entanglement in Vietnam (1964–1973). This analogy persuaded some people to advocate a quick U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. In other cases, the analogy strengthened the convictions of people already opposed to the U.S. military presence in Iraq.

*Note:* The question was: "Do you think the war in Iraq has turned into a situation like the United States faced in the Vietnam War, or don't you think so?"
*Data source:* CNN Poll, November, 2006; data provided by The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

Carter growled that he would like to "go out on the streets myself and take a swing at . . . those bastards" (Vandenbroucke, 1991:364). Carter could not go out on Pennsylvania Avenue and beat up protesters, but his anger and desperation to do something arguably led to his ill-advised and ill-fated attempt to rescue the hostages. Similarly, President Bush was outraged by the 9/11 terrorist attacks. "We're going to find out who did this," he told Vice President Cheney, "and we're going to kick their asses."[5]

## Psychological Factors

Humans share a number of common psychological traits that also help explain why their feelings and decisions are usually less than fully rational. One such approach is **frustration-aggression theory**, which argues that individuals and even societies that are frustrated sometimes become aggressive.

"Why do they hate us?" President Bush rhetorically asked Congress soon after the 9/11 attacks.[6] "They hate our freedoms," was the answer the president supplied to his own question. Perhaps, but others put the source of rage in a very different light. Based on polling in nine Muslim countries, one analyst suggests that rather than a hatred for freedom, the reason for the widespread negative opinions among Muslims is that, "The people of Islamic countries have significant grievance with the West and the United States in particular" based on their view that the United States is "ruthless, aggressive, conceited, arrogant, easily provoked, [and biased against Muslims]."[7] It is not necessary to agree with Muslims, especially Arabs, to understand their sense of frustration over the lack of a Palestinian homeland, the underdevelopment that characterizes most of the Muslim countries, or the sense of being dominated and sometimes subjugated by the Christian-led West (Zunes, 2005). Nor does one have to agree that Muslims' anger justifies the violence that has sometimes occurred to pay heed to the old maxim that an "ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Preventing terrorism surely includes building defenses and bringing terrorists to justice. Those are half-measures, though, and they will be much enhanced by addressing the root causes of terrorism rather than by simply waging war on the terrorists themselves.

## Biological Factors

Although they are highly controversial, various biological theories provide yet another way to explain why human decisions fall short of being fully rational. One of the most important issues in human behavior is the degree to which human actions are based on animal instinct and other innate emotional and physical drives or based on socialization and intellect. With specific regard to politics, **biopolitics** examines the relationship between the physical nature and political behavior of humans. Biopolitics can be illustrated by examining two approaches: ethology and gender.

*Ethology*   The comparison of animal and human behavior is called **ethology**. Konrad Lorenz (*On Aggression*, 1969), Desmond Morris (*The Naked Ape*, 1967), Robert Ardrey (*The Territorial Imperative*, 1961), and some other ethologists argue that like

animals, humans behave in a way that is based partly on innate characteristics. Ardrey (pp. 12–14), for example, has written that "territoriality—the drive to gain, maintain, and defend the exclusive right to a piece of property—is an animal instinct" and that "if man is a part of the natural world, then he possesses as do all other species a genetic . . . territorial drive as one ancient animal foundation for that human conduct known as war."

It is clear that territorial disputes between neighboring countries are a common cause of war. As one study puts it, "empirical analyses consistently show that territorial issues . . . are more likely to escalate to war than would be expected by chance" (Vasquez & Henehan, 2001:123). To an outsider, some of these territorial clashes may seem rational, but others defy rational explanation. One inexplicable war was the 1998–2000 conflict between two desperately poor countries, Ethiopia and Eritrea, over tiny bits of territory along their border. The land was described in one press report as "a dusty terrain of termite mounds, goatherds, and bushes just tall enough for a camel to graze upon comfortably." It was, said one observer, "like two bald men fighting over a comb."[8] Even the leaders of the two countries could not explain why war was waged. "It's very difficult to easily find an answer," Eritrea's president admitted. "I was surprised, shocked, and puzzled," added Ethiopia's perplexed prime minister.[9]

*Gender*    A second biopolitical factor is the possibility that some differences in political behavior are related to gender. An adviser to President Lyndon Johnson has recalled that once when reporters asked him why the United States was waging war in Vietnam, the president "unzipped his fly, drew out his substantial organ, and declared, 'That is why.'"[10] Such earthy explanations by male leaders are far from rare in private, and they lead some scholars to wonder whether they represent a gender-based approach to politics or are merely gauche.

Political scientists are just beginning to examine whether gender makes a difference in political attitudes and actions. It is clear that a **gender opinion gap** exists between men and women on a range of issues. War and other forms of political violence is one of those. Polls among Americans going back as far as World War II have almost always found women less ready than men to resort to war or to continue war. For example, two-thirds of American men compared to half of American women supported going to war with Iraq in 2003.[11] This gender gap was again found internationally with, for instance, men in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, and Italy 10% to 15% more favorable toward war than their female counterparts. Indeed, cross-national polls have generally found that the gender gap on war is worldwide, as evident in Figure 3.2. Polls about attitudes toward other forms of political violence yield similar results. One survey that asked Muslims in 11 countries about suicide bombings found that 35% of the men, but only 31% of the women thought they were justified.[12]

Why do gender gaps exist? Are they inherently rooted in differences in male/female biological traits, or are they produced by differences in male and female socialization? The idea of gender, as distinct from sex, is based on the belief that all or most behavioral differences between men and women are based on learned role definitions. Thus sex is biology; gender is behavior. There are some, however, who argue that biology strongly controls behavior. One recent book, *Manliness*, argues that aggressive behavior is closely related to sex (Mansfield, 2006: 16, 64, 85, 206). The author contends that all humans can be aggressive, can exhibit the "bristling snappishness of a dog," but suggests that "the manly have this trait in excess." Furthermore, manliness includes a distinct sense of territoriality, a factor that can "connect aggression to defense of whatever is one's own." Such behaviors are apt to become national policy because more manly people (conceivably including women)

### FIGURE 3.2 War and the Gender Gap
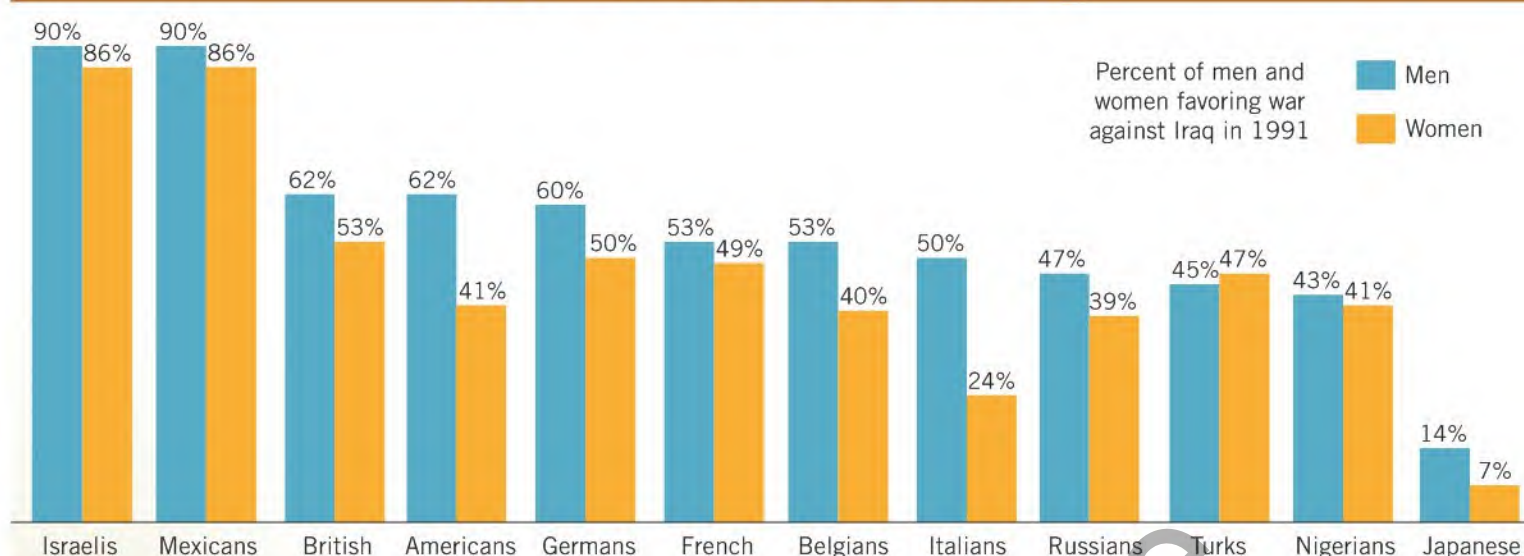


This figure shows the percentages of men and women in favor of using military force to expel Iraq from Kuwait in 1991. Notice that in all but one country, Turkey, more men than women favored using force. Also notice the variations among countries. Women cannot be described as antiwar, nor can men be characterized as pro-war because both men and women in some countries favored war and opposed it in others.

*Note:* The American response (Pew) was to a slightly different question than for all others (Wilcox, et al.) and is used here as generally representative only. Except for Americans, the poll was taken in each country's capital city. Respondents in the Soviet Union were therefore mostly Russian.
*Data source:* Wilcox, Hewitt, & Allsop (1996); Pew Research Center poll, January 1991.

are more likely to be leaders, given that "The manly man is in control when control is difficult or contested" (Kenneally, 2006).[13]

This view leads to the question of whether equal representation (or perhaps dominance) of women in foreign and defense policy making would change global politics. Concurring with Mansfield that men are particularly prone to bellicosity, Francis Fukuyama (1998:33) concludes that a world led by women "would be less prone to conflict and more conciliatory and cooperative than the one we inhabit now." Supporting this view, one recent study found that women tend to adopt more collaborative approaches to negotiation and conflict resolution, while men pursue more conflictual ones (Florea et al., 2003). Other studies, however, have found more mixed results about the potential impact of women decision makers and contend that a future world dominated by women "would not be as rosy as Fukuyama suggests" (Caprioli, 2000:271).

What do you think? Would the U.S. invasion of Iraq have occurred if Laura Bush, not her husband, George W., had been president of the United States; if the long-time head of Iraq had been Sajida Khairallah Telfah, not her husband, Saddam Hussein; and if most of the other top diplomatic and national security posts in the United States and Iraq had been held by women, not men?

**JOIN THE DEBATE**
Do Women Speak with a Different Voice?

### Perceptions

There is an ancient philosophical debate over whether there is an objective world or whether everything is only what we perceive it to be. Whatever the answer to that debate may be, it is clear that we all view the world through perceptual lenses that distort reality at least to some degree. All the elements of individual-level analysis that we have been discussing, and others, help shape **perceptions**. Whatever their
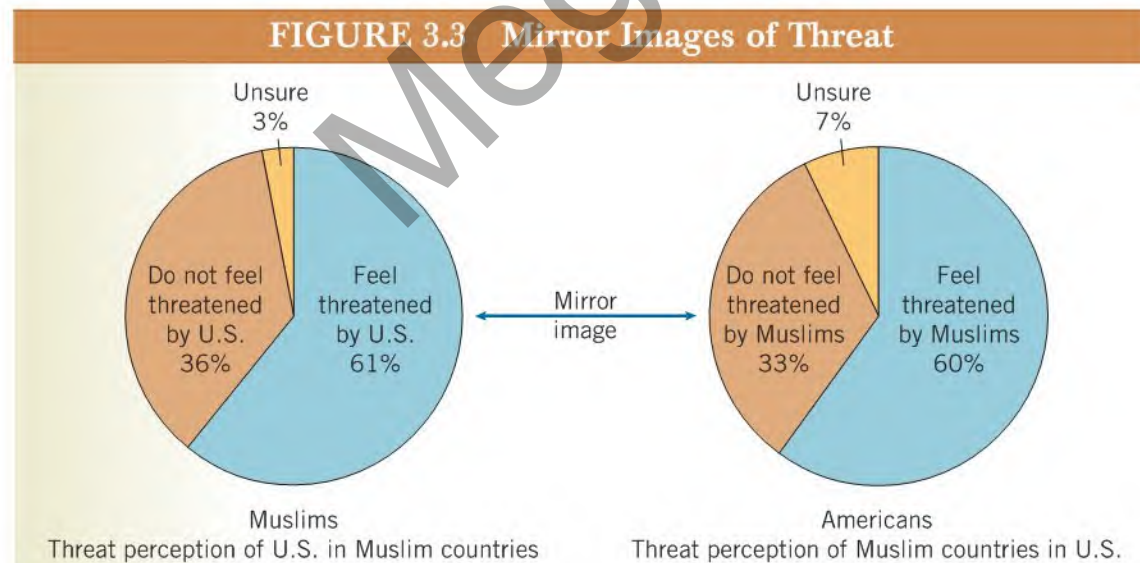
source, though, perceptions have a number of characteristics that influence global politics. To demonstrate this, we can take a look at four common characteristics of perceptions.

*We tend to see opponents as more threatening than they may actually be.* The nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran have alarmed many Americans. One survey found that 71% of Americans considered Iran a threat to regional stability and 77% saw North Korea in the same way. By contrast, in the other 20 countries surveyed, only 40% believed Iran to be a force for instability and just 47% perceived North Korea in that light.[14]

*We tend to see the behavior of others as more planned and coordinated than our own.* During the cold war, Americans and Soviets were mutually convinced that the other side was orchestrating a coordinated global campaign to subvert them. Perhaps more accurately, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (1979:1202) has described the two superpowers as behaving like "two heavily armed blind men feeling their way around a room, each believing himself in mortal peril from the other whom he assumes to have perfect vision." Each, according to Kissinger, "tends to ascribe to the other side a consistency, foresight, and coherence that its own experience belies."

*We find it hard to understand why others dislike, mistrust, and fear us.* President George W. Bush captured this overly positive sense of self during a press conference when he pronounced himself "amazed that there's such misunderstanding of what our country is about that people would hate us. . . . Like most Americans, I just can't believe it because I know how good we are."[15] Others are less sure of Americans' innate goodness. One recent survey found that 60% or more of poll respondents in countries as diverse as Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey, and Russia thought that the United States posed a military threat to them.[16]

*We and others tend to have similar images of one another.* Between countries and even between leaders, it is common to find a **mirror-image perception**. This means that each side perceives the other in roughly similar terms. Figure 3.3 depicts this sense of mutual threat that exists between the United States and Muslim countries.



**FIGURE 3.3    Mirror Images of Threat**

Muslims
Threat perception of U.S. in Muslim countries
- Unsure 3%
- Do not feel threatened by U.S. 36%
- Feel threatened by U.S. 61%

Mirror image

Americans
Threat perception of Muslim countries in U.S.
- Unsure 7%
- Do not feel threatened by Muslims 33%
- Feel threatened by Muslims 60%

Americans and citizens of Muslim countries share a mirror image of hostility toward one another. Note the almost equal percentages of Americans who see Muslims as hostile and Muslims who see Americans as hostile.

*Note:* The question of Americans was, "Do you think the Muslim world considers itself at war with the United States?" The question in Muslim countries was, "How worried are you, if at all, that the U.S. could become a military threat to your country someday? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?"

*Data source:* Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2003).

## Organizational Behavior

Yet another common characteristic of humans is that they tend to think and act differently in collective settings than they do as individuals. This leads to a second approach to individual-level analysis, one that examines how people act in organizations. Two concepts, role behavior and group decision-making behavior, illustrate this approach.

### Role Behavior

We all play a variety of **roles** based on our attitudes about the positions we have and the behaviors we adopt in them. For example, how you act when you are in class, on the job, or in a family situation varies depending in part on your role—on whether you are a professor or a student, a manager or a worker, a parent or a child.

Presidents and other policy makers also play roles. The script for a role is derived from a combination of *self-expectations* (how we expect ourselves to act) and *external expectations* (how others expect us to behave). For leaders, these latter expectations are transmitted by cues from advisers, critics, and public opinion. One common role expectation is that leaders be decisive. A leader who approaches a problem by saying, "I don't know what to do" or "We can't do anything" will be accused of weakness.

For example, President Bush was in Florida when the 9/11 attacks occurred, and the Secret Service wanted him to remain safely out of Washington, D.C., for a time. However, Bush's sense of his role as president soon prevailed, and he irritably told his chief of staff, "I want to go back [to Washington] ASAP." By 7:00 P.M. that evening he was back in the White House, and 90 minutes later he addressed the nation from the Oval Office. The president felt it was important to reassure the public by being visible at his post in the White House. "One of the things I wanted to do was to calm nerves," he later said. "I felt like I had a job as the commander in chief" to show the country "that I was safe . . . not me, George W., but me the president."[17]

### Decision-Making Behavior within Organizations

When people give advice and make decisions within an organization, they not only have to consider what they think but also how their opinions and decisions will be viewed by others in the organization, especially its leaders. The calculation of how our views will "go over" tends to promote **groupthink**. This concept denotes pressure within organizations to achieve consensus by agreeing with the prevailing opinion, especially the view of the leader (Schafer & Crichlow, 2002).

The image of the devil's advocate pressing principled, unpopular views is appealing, but such individuals are rarities in organizations, in part because those who take this approach get forced out. Similarly, agencies that dissent can wind up with their budgets cut and their areas of responsibility diminished. In a case in point, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld favored sending a relatively small force to invade and pacify Iraq in 2003. Disagreeing, General Eric Shinseki, head of the U.S. Army, told Congress that several hundred thousand troops would be needed. Rumsfeld, whose approach was summed up by another retired four-star general as "Do it my way or leave," forced Shinseki to retire.[18] According to another national security official at that time, Rumsfeld's actions "sent a very clear signal to the military leadership . . . [and] served to silence critics just at the point in time when, internal to the process, you most wanted critical judgment." History records that in time virtually everyone realized that, as one senator put it in 2007, "We never had enough troops to begin with. . . . General Shinseki was right."[19]

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**ANALYZE THE ISSUE**
The Cuban Missile Crisis

and foibles of individuals are crucial to the intentions, capabilities, and strategies of a state" (Byman & Pollack, 2001:111).

The fundamental question idiosyncratic analysis asks is how the personal traits of leaders affect their decisions. Why, for example, are older leaders more likely than younger ones to initiate and escalate military confrontations? (Horowitz, McDermott, & Stam, 2005). Five of the many possible factors to consider are personality, physical and mental health, ego and ambition, political history and personal experiences, and perceptions and operational reality.

## Personality

When studying personality types and their impact on policy, scholars examine a leader's basic orientations toward self and toward others, behavioral patterns, and attitudes about such politically relevant concepts as authority (Dyson, 2006). There are numerous categorization schemes. The most well known places political personality along an active-passive scale and a positive-negative scale (Barber, 1985). Active leaders are policy innovators; passive leaders are reactors. Positive personalities have egos strong enough to enjoy (or at least accept) the contentious political environment; negative personalities are apt to feel burdened, even abused, by political criticism. Many scholars favor active-positive presidents, but all four types have drawbacks. Activists, for example, may take action in a situation when waiting or even doing nothing would be preferable. Reflecting on this, former Secretary of State Dean Rusk (1990:137) recalled, "We tended then—and now—to exaggerate the necessity to take action. Given time, many problems work themselves out or disappear."

Of recent U.S. presidents, Clinton has an active-positive personality. He reveled in the job and admitted to being "almost compulsively overactive" (Renshon, 1995:59). Scholars differ on President George W. Bush. One assessment is that he is an active-positive personality who "loves his job and is very energetic and focused" (DiIulio, 2003:3). Perhaps, but he is certainly less active than Clinton, and might even be positive-passive (Etheredge, 2001).

Whatever the best combination may be, active-negative is the worst. The more active a leader, the more criticism he or she encounters. Positive personalities take such criticism in stride, but negative personalities are prone to assume that opponents are enemies. This causes negative personalities to withdraw into an inner circle of subordinates who are supportive and who give an unreal, groupthink view of events and domestic and international opinion. Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon were both active-negative personalities who showed symptoms of delusion, struck out at their enemies, and generally developed bunker mentalities. Yet their active-negative personalities were but shadows of Saddam Hussein's. According to a postwar report to the CIA, Saddam's psychology was shaped powerfully by a deprived and violent childhood.[23] Reflecting that, he changed his original name, Hussein al-Takrit, by dropping al-Takrit (his birthplace) and adding Saddam, an Arabic word that means "one who confronts."

## Physical and Mental Health

A leader's physical and mental health can be important factors in decision making. For example, Franklin Roosevelt was so ill from hypertension in 1945 that one historian concludes that he was "in no condition to govern the republic" (Farrell, 1998:xi). Among other impacts, some analysts believe that Roosevelt's weakness left him unable to resist Stalin's demands for Soviet domination of Eastern Europe when the two, along with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, met at Yalta in February 1945, just two months before Roosevelt died from a massive stroke.

Occasionally leaders also suffer from psychological problems. Adolf Hitler was arguably unbalanced as a result of ailments that may have included advanced syphilis and by his huge intake of such medically prescribed drugs as barbiturates, cardiac stimulants, opiates, steroids, methamphetamine, and cocaine (Hayden, 2003). According to one analysis, "The precise effects of this pharmaceutical cocktail on Hitler's mental state [are] difficult to gauge. Suffice it to say, in the jargon of the street, Hitler was simultaneously taking coke and speed."[24] The drug combinations Hitler used offer one explanation for the bizarre manic-depressive cycle of his decision making late in the war.

Alcohol abuse can also lead to problems. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once referred to President Richard Nixon as "my drunken friend," who among other events was once reportedly incapacitated during an international crisis with the Soviet Union (Schulzinger, 1989:178). More recently, an official in the Clinton administration has recalled that Russia's President Boris Yeltsin was often inebriated. Indeed, during the first summit meeting of the two presidents in 1994, Yeltsin arrived so drunk that he "could barely get off the plane." He continued to get "pretty roaring" at other times during the summit, and at one point was "staggering around in his underpants shouting for pizza." As for Yeltsin's decisions, the U.S. official terms them "sometimes . . . just wacko." As an illustration, the adviser relates that during the U.S.-led bombing campaign against Serbia in 1999, "Yeltsin, who was clearly in his cups, suggested that he and Clinton had to get together on an emergency basis, and . . . should meet on a submarine." Such images might have been grotesquely amusing had not the besotted Russian president controlled a huge nuclear arsenal.[25]

### Ego and Ambition

A leader's ego and personal ambitions can also influence policy. One thing that arguably drove Saddam Hussein was his grandiose vision of himself. According to one intelligence report, the Iraqi leader saw himself in "larger than life terms comparable to Nebuchadnezzar [the great Babylonian king, 605–563 B.C.] and Saladin [the Sultan of Egypt who in 1189 defeated the Christians during the Third Crusade]."

The ego of the first President Bush also may have influenced policy. He came to office in 1989 with a reputation for being wishy-washy, and *Newsweek* even ran a picture of him with a banner, "The Wimp Factor," on its cover. Arguably an ego-wounded Bush responded by being too tough. He soon invaded Panama, and the following year in the Persian Gulf crisis his fierce determination not to negotiate with Iraq left it little choice but to fight or capitulate. Certainly, it would be outrageous to claim that Bush decided on war only to assuage his ego. But it would be naïve to ignore the possible role of this factor. In fact, after defeating Panama and Iraq, the president displayed a prickly pride when he told reporters, "You're talking to the wimp . . . to the guy that had a cover of a national magazine . . . put that label on me. And now some that saw that we can react when the going gets tough maybe have withdrawn that allegation."[26]

### Political History and Personal Experiences

Decision makers are also affected by their personal experiences. It is worth speculating how much the personal experiences of President Bush influenced his determination in 2003 to drive Saddam Hussein from power. It is clear that Bush is very close to his family (Greenstein, 2003; Helco, 2003). That connection, in the view of some, made him especially sensitive to the criticism of his father for not toppling the Iraqi dictator in 1991, and may have created in the younger Bush an urge to complete the business of his father (Wead, 2003).[27] Moreover, it is widely believed that Saddam

Hussein tried to have the first President Bush assassinated when he visited Kuwait in 1993. Nine years later, his son told a gathering, "There's no doubt [that Saddam Hussein] can't stand us. After all, this is the guy that tried to kill my dad at one time." White House officials quickly issued assurances that the president did not mean "to personalize" his campaign to depose the Iraqi dictator, but it is hard to totally discount the antipathy of a devoted son toward a man who "tried to kill my dad."[28]

## Perceptions and Operational Reality

Decision makers' images of reality constitute a fifth idiosyncratic element that influences their approach to foreign policy. Although we have already examined human perceptions in this chapter, it is worth separately considering the perception of leaders here because of the central role they play in making policy. Whatever their source, the sum of a leader's perceptions creates his or her worldview (Hermann & Keller, 2004). One scholar who served on the staff of President George W. Bush has written, "By the time I left the White House . . . I was convinced . . . [that] the sitting president's 'world view'—'his primary, politically relevant beliefs, particularly his conceptions of social causality, human nature, and the central moral conflicts of the time'—probably explain as much or more about . . . foreign policy than any other single variable" (DiIulio, 2003:3).

Perceptions play a key role in policy because they form an **operational reality**. That is, policy makers tend to act based on perceptions, whether they are accurate or not. For example, research shows that supposedly "rogue states" are no more likely than any other country to start a war (Caprioli & Trumbore, 2005). Yet the operational reality of the perceptions among most ranking officials in the Bush administration was that one such rogue state, Iraq, one of the "axis of evil" in Bush's mind, had WMD capabilities and intended to develop them more fully. This was a key factor in the U.S.-led intervention. That those perceptions were wrong is an important question in its own right. But as far as the causes of the war itself are concerned, the operational reality (even though it differed from the objective reality) was determined by the belief of President Bush, Prime Minister Blair, and others that Saddam Hussein did have such weapons and that they presented a long-term threat.

A related perceptual phenomenon is called an **operational code** (Schafer & Walker, 2006). This idea describes how any given leader's worldview and "philosophical propensities for diagnosing" how world politics operates influence the "leader's . . . propensities for choosing" rewards, threats, force, and other methods of diplomacy as the best way to be successful (Walker, Schafer, & Young, 1998:176). President Bill Clinton's worldview saw the United States as operating in a complex, technology-driven, interconnected world, in which conflict was more likely to result from countries' internal conditions (such as poverty) than from traditional power rivalries between states. Among other things, this led Clinton to favor a multilateral approach to diplomacy, to often view the motives and actions of other countries in nuanced shades of gray, and to delve deeply into the intricacies of policy.

George W. Bush's operational code is very different. Whereas Clinton took a cerebral approach to policy, Bush has described himself as more a "gut" player than an intellectual (Daalder & Lindsay, 2003:7). Perhaps stemming from his profound religious convictions, Bush, more than Clinton, is apt to see the world in right-versus-wrong terms.[29] For him, not only were the terrorists who launched the 9/11 attacks analogous to the fascists of the 1930s, but countries suspected of abetting terrorism were part of an axis of evil. Compared to Clinton, this belief also makes Bush more disposed to see the world as a more inescapably dangerous place

(Mercer, 2005). Instead, it is best to see human decisions as a mix of rational and irrational inputs. This view of how individuals and groups make policy choices is called **poliheuristic theory**. This theory depicts decision making as a two-stage process (Kinne, 2005; Redd, 2005; Dacey & Carlson, 2004). During the first stage, decision makers use shortcuts to eliminate policy options that are unacceptable for irrational personal reasons. Poliheuristic theorists especially focus on reelection hopes and other domestic political considerations, but the shortcuts could include any of the other irrational factors we have been discussing. With the unacceptable choices discarded, "the process moves to a second stage, during which the decision maker uses more analytic processing in an attempt to minimize risks and maximize benefits" in a more rational way (Mintz, 2004:3). It is at this second stage that decision makers tend to set aside domestic politics and personal factors and concentrate on strategic, realpolitik considerations (James & Zhang, 2005; DeRouen Jr. & Sprecher, 2004).

For example, one recent study using poliheuristic theory looked at U.S. decision making during the hostage crisis with Iran. As noted above, there is ample evidence of nonrational factors in the decisions of President Carter and other top administration officials. The study concluded that "Carter ruled out alternatives" that had negative domestic political consequences, then "selected from the remaining alternatives according to its ability to simultaneously maximize net benefits with respect to military and strategic concerns" (Brulé, 2005:99).

## STATE-LEVEL ANALYSIS

For all the importance of the human input, policy making is significantly influenced by the fact that it occurs within the context of a political structure. Countries are the most important of these structures. By analyzing the impact of structures on policy making, **state-level analysis** improves our understanding of policy. This level of analysis emphasizes the characteristics of states and how they make foreign policy choices and implement them (Hudson, 2005; Bueno de Mesquita, 2002). What is important from this perspective, then, is how a country's political structure and the political forces and subnational actors within the country cause its government to decide to adopt one or another foreign policy (Chittick & Pingel, 2002).

## Making Foreign Policy: Type of Government, Situation, and Policy

Those who study how foreign policy is made over time in one country or comparatively in several countries soon realize there is no such thing as a single foreign policy process. Instead, how policy is made varies considerably.

### Type of Government and the Foreign Policy Process

One variable that affects the foreign policy process is the type of government a country has. These types range along a scale that has absolute **authoritarian governments** on one end and unfettered **democratic governments** on the other. The more authoritarian a government is, the more likely it is that foreign policy will be centered in a narrow segment of the government, even in the hands of the president or whatever the leader is called. It is important to realize, though, that no government is

absolutely under the thumb of any individual. States are too big and too complex for that to happen, and thus secondary leaders (such as foreign ministers), bureaucrats, interest groups, and other domestic elements play a role in even very authoritarian political systems.

At the other end of the scale, foreign policy making in democracies is much more open with inputs from legislators, the media, public opinion, and opposition parties, as well as those foreign policy–making actors that influence authoritarian government policy. President Bill Clinton signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty on behalf of the United States, for example, but the Senate disagreed with his view and in 1999 refused to ratify it. Yet even in the most democratic state, foreign policy tends to be dominated by the country's top leadership.
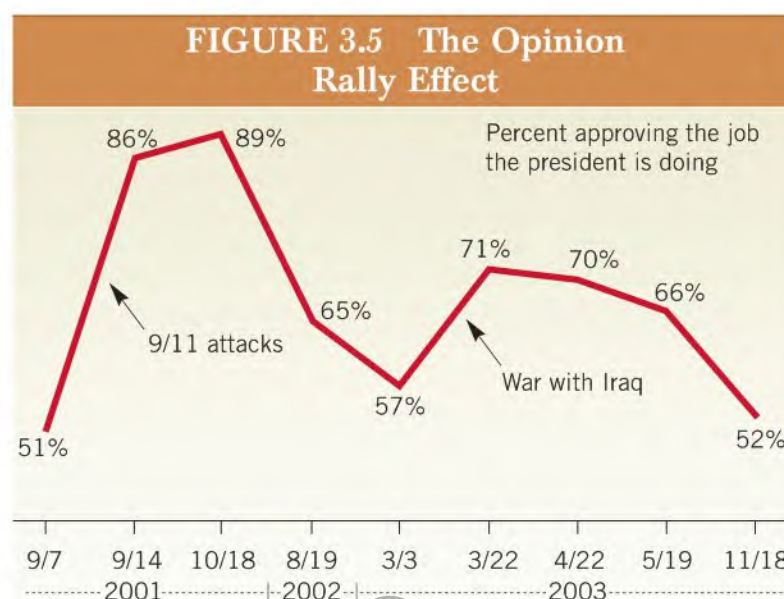
## Type of Situation and the Foreign Policy Process

The policy-making process also varies within countries. Situation is one variable. For example, policy is made differently during crisis and noncrisis situations. A **crisis situation** occurs when decision makers are (1) surprised by an event, (2) feel threatened (especially militarily), and (3) believe that they have only a short time to react (Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1997). The more intense each of the three factors is, the more acute the sense of crisis.

Whereas noncrisis situations often involve a broad array of domestic actors trying to shape policy, crisis policy making is likely to be dominated by the political leader and a small group of advisers. One reason this occurs involves the **rally effect**. This is the propensity of the public and other domestic political actors to support the leader during time of crisis. Figure 3.5 shows the impact of the rally effect on the popularity of President Bush at the time of the 9/11 attack and also at the onset of the Iraq War in 2003 (Hetherington & Nelson, 2003). A similar pattern was evident in Great Britain, the only major U.S. ally. There, support for the way Prime Minister Tony Blair was handling the crisis with Iraq rose from 48% before the war to 63% after it began.[30]

## Type of Policy and the Foreign Policy Process

How foreign policy is decided also varies according to the nature of the **issue area** involved. Issues that have little immediate or obvious impact on Americans can be termed pure foreign policy. A narrow range of decision makers usually makes such decisions in the executive branch with little or no domestic opposition or even notice. For instance, President Bush consented to expanding the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by adding seven new members (Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) in 2004. Even though this substantially added to U.S. defense commitments by including countries that border Russia, the move was nearly invisible within the United States. The media made little mention of it, and pollsters did not even bother to ask the public what

**FIGURE 3.5   The Opinion Rally Effect**

Percent approving the job the president is doing

86%   89%   9/11 attacks   65%   57%   71%   70%   66%   War with Iraq   51%   52%

9/7   9/14   10/18   8/19   3/3   3/22   4/22   5/19   11/18
---- 2001 ----   |--2002--|   ---------------- 2003 ----------------

People usually rally behind their leader during times of crisis. Public approval of President Bush's performance in office skyrocketed 35% after the 9/11 attacks, then rose sharply again at the onset of the war with Iraq. Also note that the rally effect is fleeting, and the president's ratings soon declined after each peak.

*Data source: CNN/USAToday/Gallup Polls found at Polling Report.com.*

The expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) eastward to the very borders of Russia has potentially great stakes for Americans because the NATO treaty pledges them to defend numerous small states that were once in the orbit of Moscow and even part of the former USSR. Yet as pure foreign policy issues, the rounds of expansion in 1999 and 2004 drew almost no notice and less dissent among the American people and members of Congress. By contrast, intermestic issues, such as trade, draw much greater public and legislative interest and activity.

it thought. Neither did the expansion arouse much interest in the Senate, which ratified it unanimously.

By contrast, foreign policy that has an immediate and obvious domestic impact on Americans is called **intermestic policy**. This type of policy is apt to foster substantial activity by legislators, interest groups, and other foreign policy–making actors and thereby diminish the ability of the executive leaders to fashion policy to their liking. Foreign trade is a classic example of an intermestic issue because it affects both international relations and the domestic economy in terms of jobs, prices, and other factors.

This domestic connection activates business, labor, and consumer groups who, in turn, bring Congress into the fray (Grossman & Helpma, 2002). Therefore national leaders, such as presidents, usually have much greater say over pure foreign policy than they do over intermestic policy. For example, in stark contrast to Bush's easy success in getting the NATO expansion ratified, he had to struggle mightily to persuade Congress to give him greater latitude (called *fast-track authority*) in negotiating trade treaties. Although his party controlled both houses of Congress, the president was only successful after a concerted effort that included personally going to Capitol Hill to lobby legislators and to offer inducements to gain support. Even then, the final vote in the House of Representatives was a razor-thin 215 to 212.

## Making Foreign Policy: Political Culture

Each country's foreign policy tends to reflect its **political culture**. This concept represents a society's widely held, traditional values and its fundamental practices that are slow to change (Paquette, 2003; Jung, 2002). Leaders tend to formulate policies that are compatible with their society's political culture because the leaders share many or all of those values. Also, even if they do not share a particular value, leaders want to avoid the backlash that adopting policies counter to the political culture might cause. To analyze any country's political culture, you would look into such things as how a people feel about themselves and their country, how they view others, what role they think their country should play in the world, and what they see as moral behavior.

How Americans and Chinese feel about themselves and about projecting their values to others provide examples. Both Americans and Chinese are persuaded that their own cultures are superior. In Americans, this is called *American exceptionalism,* an attitude that, for instance, led 81% of Americans to agree in a poll that the spread of their values would have a positive effect on other parts of the world.[31] A similar sense of superiority among the Chinese is called *Sinocentrism.* This tendency of the Chinese to see themselves as the political and cultural center of the world is expressed, among other ways, in their word for their country: "Zhong Guó" means "middle place" and symbolizes the Chinese image of themselves.

Where Americans and Chinese differ is in their beliefs about trying to impose it on others. Americans are sometimes described as having a *missionary impulse,* that is, possessing a zeal to reshape the world in the American image. For example, it is this aspect of American political culture that has led the United States to try not only to defeat hostile regimes in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere, but additionally, to replace them with democratic governments. There is also evidence that the United States makes other decisions, such as foreign aid allocations, based in part on how closely countries adhere to American conceptions of human rights.

Chinese attitudes about projecting values are very different. Despite China's immense pride in its culture, there is no history of trying to impose it on others, even when China dominated much of the world that it knew. The orientation is based in part on Confucianism's tenet of leading by example rather than by forceful conversion. It also has to do with the Sinocentric attitude that the "barbarians" are not well suited to aspire to the heights of Chinese culture and are best left to themselves as much as possible. Among other current ramifications, this *nonmissionary attitude* makes it very hard for the Chinese to understand why Americans and some others try to insist that China adopt what it sees as foreign values and standards of behavior on human rights and other issues. Instead of taking these pressures at face value, the Chinese see them as interference or, worse, as part of a campaign to subvert them.

中 国

One aspect of political culture that affects China's foreign policy is Sinocentrism, the tendency of the Chinese to see themselves and their country as the center of the political and cultural world. This self-image is represented by these Chinese characters. They are Zhong Guó, the Chinese name for their country, which translates as middle (Zhong, on the left) place (Guó, on the right).

**Web Link**

To support research about American political culture at the University of Pittsburgh, fill out the Web questionnaire at **www.pitt.edu/~redsox/polcul.html.**

## Foreign Policy–Making Actors

"Washington is like a Roman arena [in which] gladiators do battle," Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (1982:421) wrote. As his analogy implies, foreign policy making is not a calm, cerebral process. Instead it is a clash of ideas and a test of political power and skills to determine which of many policy proposals will prevail. The combatants of which Kissinger wrote are the **foreign policy–making actors**, including

political executives, bureaucracies, legislatures, political opponents, interest groups, and the people.

### Heads of Government and Other Political Executives

In most countries, the executive branch is the most important part of the policy-making process. This is especially true in national security policy and foreign policy. The most powerful figure in the executive branch is usually the country's **head of government** (most commonly titled president, prime minister, or premier). A step below, but still of note, are the leader's cast of other **political executives**, such as ministers of foreign affairs (secretary of state) and ministers of defense (secretary of defense).

The degree to which the head of government dominates foreign policy is based on numerous factors. We have already touched on some of these, such as the type of government, the type of situation, and the type of policy. Three other important factors are the chief executive's formal powers, informal powers, and leadership capabilities.

**Formal powers** are the specific grants of authority that a country's constitution and its statutory (written) laws give to various offices and institutions. Most chief executives, for example, are the commander in chief of their country's armed forces. This gives them broad, often unilateral authority to use the military. Congress passed resolutions supporting President Bush's planned actions against Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, but he claimed the right to act without legislative support. Instead, the president claimed the authority to go to war "pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations as commander in chief and chief executive."[32] Such an assertion of unilateral authority dismays many Americans as undemocratic, and it is an issue for you to consider in the decision box, "Who Should Decide on War?"

**Informal powers** are a second source of authority for political executives. It is easier for people to identify with and look for leadership toward an individual than toward an institution, and this gives the president of the United States and other chief executives considerable prestige and political influence that cannot be found in the constitution or laws. For instance, more than any other political figure, the chief executive personifies the nation. This is especially true in world affairs and doubly so in crises where a president personifies the nation and embodies "we" in dealings with "them." The nation's focus on the chief executive also means that he or she is expected to lead. As one classic study of the U.S. presidency has put it, "Everybody now expects the man inside the White House to do something about everything" (Neustadt, 1990:7). Presidential prestige also means that they receive considerable more news media attention than any other political actor. One study found, for instance, that television networks devote almost 50% more time to covering the president than Congress (Graber, 2006).

**Leadership capabilities** are the third factor that helps determine how much authority a specific chief executive has. These capabilities include *administrative skills*, how well a president organizes and manages his or her immediate staff and the governments bureaucracy; *legislative skills*, the ability in a democratic system to win the support in the national legislature; *public persuasion* abilities, the ability to set forth a clear vision and to speak well and otherwise project a positive image that will win public support; and *intellectual capacity*, level of intelligence and ability to use it pragmatically to formulate policy. Measuring such qualities is very difficult, but Table 3.1 provides an interesting and undoubtedly controversial presentation and comparison of presidential intelligence and foreign policy success.

**WEB POLL**
Attitudes in Foreign Policy
Decision-Making

**Web Link**

To learn what presidents say privately, listen to and read the transcripts of recorded conversations archived by the Presidential Recordings Program at the University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs at **www.whitehousetapes.org/.**

## DEBATE THE POLICY SCRIPT

### Who Should Decide on War?

Going to war is a country's most important decision. The question is, Who should make it? Article I of the Constitution empowers Congress "to declare war." Article II makes the president "commander in chief" of the military. These clauses reflect the belief of the Constitution's authors that presidents should "be able to repel [but] not commence war," as delegate Roger Sherman put it. The problem is where the line is between repelling an attack and commencing a war. President George W. Bush, for example, portrayed the Iraq War as preemptively repelling the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

Historically, presidents have long used limited force without a congressional declaration of war or other resolution of support. But the frequency of such use and the size of the conflicts grew after World War II. Since Harry S. Truman, presidents have argued that they have almost limitless authority to use military force as they see fit. Signifying that, Truman waged the Korean War on his own authority.

Reacting to the unpopular war in Vietnam (which Congress had authorized), legislators enacted the War Powers Resolution (WPR, 1973) to try to rein in the president's self-claimed war power. The WPR specified limited circumstances when the president could use force unilaterally and required congressional consent in all other instances. The WPR has been largely ineffective. One reason is that Congress has never refused a presidential request that it authorize military action. Second, Congress has been unwilling to challenge presidents when they ignored the WPR and used the military unilaterally. Third, all presidents have rejected the WPR as

an unconstitutional restraint on their authority as commander in chief. For example, President George W. Bush welcomed resolutions of congressional support for action against Afghanistan (2001) and against Iraq (2003) as nice but not necessary, claiming that he was taking action solely "pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations as commander in chief and chief executive."[1] When in 2007 the Democrats as the newly elected majority in Congress sought to restrain the president from sending an additional 21,000 troops to Iraq, he rejected the ability of legislators to do so. "I'm the decision maker" about Iraq, he defiantly declared.[2] Fourth, the Supreme Court considers the issue a political one and has refused to hear challenges to the president's use of the military.

Think about amending the Constitution to clear up who should be able to make the decision to go to war. One option is a clause supporting current practice by explicitly giving the war power to the president. The second option is to explicitly bar presidents from using military force without congressional authorization except in cases of a direct, significant, and sustained attack on the United States, its territories, or its armed forces. A third option is specifying that except in the case of a significant and sustained attack, the president and Congress could only send U.S. forces into combat after approval by a majority of Americans voting in a national referendum.

### What Do You Think?

How should the United States decide to wage war?



The debate in early 2007 over whether to send yet more troops to Iraq highlighted the question about who should have power to make such decisions. President Bush said he was the "decider" and increased troop levels even though doing so was opposed by a majority of Congress and a strong majority of the public, including these protesters. Does this seem proper democratic governance to you?

A high IQ is one trait that arguably makes a skilled leader. This table shows the estimated IQs of recent presidents. It also lists the ratings on a 1 to 100 basis that experts have given these presidents for their foreign policy. George W. Bush was not rated because he is still in office. The right column shows how each president ranks in IQ and policy success. How would you rank President George W. Bush's foreign policy compared to his eight immediate predecessors? How would you characterize the connection between IQ and success shown here?

### TABLE 3.1   Presidential Intelligence

| President | Intelligence Quotient (IQ) | Foreign Policy Success (FPS) | IQ/FPS Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Kennedy** | 150.7 | 69.0 | 1/3 |
| **Johnson** | 127.8 | 40.7 | 7/8 |
| **Nixon** | 131.0 | 75.9 | 4/1 |
| **Ford** | 127.1 | 52.7 | 8/7 |
| **Carter** | 145.1 | 55.8 | 3/5 |
| **Reagan** | 130.0 | 68.6 | 6/4 |
| **Bush, G. H. W.** | 130.1 | 70.0 | 5/2 |
| **Clinton** | 148.8 | 54.3 | 2/6 |
| **Bush, G. W.** | 124.6 | — | 9/- |

*Note:* The reported IQ scores are the average of the four estimated scores on the Stanford-Binet scale. A score of 100 is the average IQ; 120 is considered superior, and genius begins at 145.

*Data sources:* For international relations policy, C-SPAN Survey of Presidential Leadership at www.americanpresidents.org/survey/. For IQ, Simonton (2006), Table 1, p. 516.

For all the broad power to shape policy that chief executives have, their power is not unlimited even in authoritarian countries, and it is significantly restrained in democratic ones. Indeed, the spread of democracy and the increasingly intermestic nature of policy in an interdependent world mean that political leaders must often engage in a **two-level game** in which "each national leader plays both the international and domestic games simultaneously" (Trumbore, 1998:546). The strategy of a two-level game is based the reality that to be successful, diplomats have to negotiate at the international level with representatives of other countries and at the domestic level with legislators, bureaucrats, interest groups, and the public in the diplomat's own country. The object is to produce a "win-win" agreement that satisfies both the international counterparts and the powerful domestic actors so that both are willing to support the accord. Reflecting this reality, one former U.S. official has recalled, "During my tenure as Special Trade Representative, I spent as much time negotiating with domestic constituents (both industry and labor) and members of the U.S. Congress as I did negotiating with our foreign trading partners" (Lindsay, 1994:292).

### Bureaucracies

Every state, whatever its strength or type of government, is heavily influenced by its **bureaucracy**. The dividing line between decision makers and bureaucrats is often hazy, but we can say that bureaucrats are career governmental personnel, as distinguished from those who are political appointees or elected officials.

Although political leaders legally command the bureaucracy, they find it difficult to control the vast understructures of their governments. President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President George W. Bush candidly conceded that gap between legal and real authority during a joint press conference. The two presidents were optimistically expounding on a new spirit of U.S.-Russian cooperation when a reporter asked them if they could "say with certainty that your teams will act in the same spirit?" Amid knowing laughter, Bush replied, "It's a very good question you ask, because sometimes the intended [policy] doesn't necessarily get

**www**

**SIMULATION**
Utilizing Levels of Analysis

translated throughout the levels of government [because of] bureaucratic intransigence." President Putin agreed. "Of course, there is always a bureaucratic threat," he conceded.[33]

Bureaucrats sometimes do not agree with their country's foreign policy. Instead they may favor another policy option based on their general sense of their unit's mission. How any given policy will affect the organization is also an important factor in creating bureaucratic perspective. Often what a given bureaucracy will or will not favor makes intuitive sense. The military of any country will almost certainly oppose arms reductions or defense spending cuts because such policies reduce its resources and influence. But the stereotypical view of the military as always gung ho for war is not accurate (Gelpi & Feaver, 2002). Whether the area was Kosovo, Bosnia, Haiti, or elsewhere, the U.S. military has often been a reluctant warrior within the council of government, especially regarding the use of ground forces. A common view, expressed by then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, is that "politicians start wars. Soldiers fight and die in them."[34]

*Filtering information* is one way that bureaucracies influence policy. Decision makers depend on staff for information, and what they are told depends on what subordinates choose, consciously or not, to pass on. This was illustrated after the Iraq War by the uproar over President Bush's assertion in his 2003 State of the Union message that Iraq "recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa." In reality, the statement was based on shaky British sources that the CIA doubted. Yet it wound up in the president's speech when his speechwriters used information from an intelligence report that cited the British report but buried the CIA's objections in a footnote.

This occurred in part because groupthink seemed to intimidate the CIA and prevent it from pushing more strongly a view that it assumed would not please the president. As Senator Pat Roberts (R-KS), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, noted after hearings and reports on how the Iraq War began, "Groupthink caused the [intelligence] community to interpret ambiguous evidence such as the procurement of dual-use technology" to mean Iraq had an active weapons program. It is clear that this groupthink also extended to our allies.[35] Additionally, the dubious assertion about Iraq seeking uranium went unchallenged by the National Security Council (NSC) staff member who reviewed the speech despite an earlier telephone conversation with the CIA director, who said that the agency doubted that Iraq had sought uranium from Africa. The NSC official, who favored action against Iraq, later conceded, "I should have recalled . . . that there was controversy associated with the uranium issue," but many observers doubted that it was a mere oversight.[36]

*Recommendations* are another source of bureaucratic influence on foreign policy. Bureaucracies are the source of considerable expertise, which they use to push the agency's preferred position. One scholar, after analyzing bureaucratic recommendations in several countries, concluded that leaders often faced an "option funnel." This means that advisers narrow the range of options available to leaders by presenting to them only those options that the adviser's bureaucratic organization favors. This recommendation strategy, the analyst continued, "often decided what national leaders would do even before they considered a situation" (Legro, 1996:133).

*Implementation* is another powerful bureaucratic tool. There are a variety of ways that bureaucrats can influence policy by the way they carry it out. As the investigations into the 9/11 attacks have proceeded, it has become clear that the

**ANALYZE THE ISSUE**
Applying Levels of Analysis in the Wake of September 11 and the War in Iraq: The Bush Doctrine

This editorial drawing from Bulgaria depicts a common image of inept U.S. intelligence agencies supplying poor information about the possibility of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and the possibilities of Iraq cooperation with al Qaeda terrorists prior to the U.S. invasion in 2003.

terrorists were able to carry them off in part because of flaws in the implementation of U.S. antiterrorist policy. Evidence shows that government agencies often failed to share information or otherwise cooperate, that they discounted the terrorist threat, and that they ignored information that pointed to an impending attack. For example, a congressional report indicates that an FBI agent warned in July 2001 that "an inordinate number of individuals of investigative interest" were taking flight training. Yet, the report noted, this alert "generated little or no interest" among FBI officials and was not passed on to the CIA or other relevant agencies. The following month the CIA's Counter-Terrorism Center warned in a report that "for every [al Qaeda operative] that we stop, an estimated 50 . . . slip through . . . undetected. . . . It is clear that [al Qaeda] is building up a worldwide infrastructure which will allow [it] to launch multiple and simultaneous attacks with little or no warning." The agency also predicted, "The attack will be spectacular and designed to inflict mass casualties against U.S. facilities or interests." These and numerous other signals went unheeded, however, leading the congressional committee to conclude that because government agencies "failed to capitalize" on available information, they had "missed opportunities to disrupt the September 11 plot and . . . to generate a heightened state of alert and thus harden the homeland against attack."[37]

## Legislatures

In all countries, the foreign policy role of legislatures play a lesser role in making foreign policy than executive-branch decision makers and bureaucrats. This does not mean that all legislatures are powerless (Howell & Pevehouse, 2005; Scott & Carter, 2002; Leogrande, 2002). They are not, but their exact influence varies greatly among countries. Legislatures in nondemocratic systems generally rubber-stamp the decisions of the political leadership. China's National People's Congress, for example, does not play a significant role in foreign policy making.

Legislatures play a larger foreign policy role in democratic countries, but even in these states legislative authority is constrained by many factors. One of these is that chief executives usually have *extensive legal powers* in the realm of foreign policy. American presidents, for instance, are empowered by the U.S. Constitution to negotiate treaties, to extend diplomatic recognition to other countries, to appoint diplomatic and military personnel, to use U.S. forces as commander in chief, and to take numerous other actions with few or no checks by Congress or the courts. *Tradition* is a second factor that works to the advantage of chief executives in foreign policy making. The leadership has historically run foreign policy in virtually all countries, especially in time of war or other crises.

Third is the *belief that a unified national voice is important to a successful foreign policy.* This is particularly true during a crisis, when Congress, just like the public, tends to rally behind the president. This emotional response helped win support for a congressional resolution in late 2001 giving the president almost unchecked

authority to use military forces against terrorism by votes of 98 to 0 in the Senate and 420 to 1 in the House of Representatives. Just 13 months later, by votes of 77 to 23 in the Senate and 296 to 133 in the House, Congress authorized military action against Iraq. Surely, many members agreed with the war, but at least some voted "aye" despite their misgivings because they agreed, as Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle explained, commenting on his vote, that "it is important for America to speak with one voice."[38]

Fourth, *legislators tend to focus on domestic policy* because, accurately or not, most voters perceive it to be more important than foreign policy and make voting decisions based on this sense of priority. For this reason, legislators are apt to try to influence intermestic policy issues, such as trade, and are apt to be much less concerned with pure foreign policy issues, such as the membership of the NATO alliance.

By this logic, though, legislative activity is especially likely and important when a high-profile issue captures public attention and public opinion opposes the president's policy. Even more commonly, intermestic issues such as trade that directly affect constituents and interest groups spark legislative activity (Marshall & Prins, 2002). For instance, a study of 25 developed countries found that right-of-center parties, which are aligned with business, usually favor free trade, while left-of-center parties, which are supported by labor unions, lean toward protectionism (Milner & Judkins, 2004). Moreover, globalization is increasingly blurring the line between foreign and domestic affairs. As one member of the U.S. Congress put it, "Increasingly all foreign policy issues are becoming domestic issues. . . . [and] Congress is demanding to play a greater role."[39]

### Interest Groups

**Interest groups** are private associations of people who have similar policy views and who pressure the government to adopt those views as policy. Traditionally, interest groups were generally considered to be less active and influential on foreign policy than on domestic policy issues. The increasingly intermestic nature of policy is changing that, and interest groups are becoming a more important part of the foreign policy–making process. We can see this by looking at several types of interest groups.

*Cultural groups* are one type. Many countries have ethnic, racial, religious, or other cultural groups that have emotional or political ties to another country. For instance, as a country made up mostly of immigrants, the United States is populated by many who maintain a level of identification with their African, Cuban, Irish, Mexican, Polish, and other heritages and who are active on behalf of policies that favor their ancestral homes. Religious groups are one type of cultural group that exercises influence in many countries. Conservative Protestant groups, for one, are influential in the administration of President George W. Bush because of his personal religious convictions and the important political support he receives from them. This connection among other domestic factors helps explain some of the president's unilateralist tendencies and reluctance to rely on the UN and other international organizations (Skidmore, 2005). As Bush told a friend after a meeting with the Christian Coalition, "Sovereignty. The issue is huge. The mere mention of [Secretary-General] Kofi Annan in the UN caused the crowd [the audience at the Christian Coalition meeting] to go into a veritable fit. The coalition wants America strong and wants the American flag flying overseas, not the pale blue of the UN."[40]

*Economic groups* are another prominent form of interest activity. As international trade increases, both sales overseas and competition from other countries are vital matters to many companies, their workers, and the communities in which they

live. They lobby their governments for favorable legislation and for support of their interests in other countries. In industrialized countries, for example, many labor unions oppose free trade treaties because increased imports tend to undercut domestic products and the workers who make them. U.S. unions were encouraged when a new Congress opened in 2007 with a majority of Democrats, who tend to support unions. One union cited "the American labor movement's strong opposition to globalization" because "labor unions have lost membership, and workers have had to offer give-backs to employers to retain the jobs that remain, in an era when labor and, indeed, manufacturing can be sourced abroad." With the Democrats in the majority, the unions anticipate that "provisions in future trade agreements will at least build barriers against their members being drowned in the tidal wave of new trade liberalization."[41]

*Issue-oriented groups* make up another category of interest group. Groups of this type are not based on any narrow socioeconomic category such as ethnicity or economics. Instead they draw their membership from people who have a common policy goal. The concerns of issue-oriented groups run the gamut from the very general to the specific and from liberal to conservative. Just one of the multitude of groups, the neoconservative Project for the New American Century, is an organization that during the later Clinton years included in its membership such soon-to-be Bush administration appointees as Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. It was this neoconservative (neocon) group that was the driving force behind the Bush Doctrine of preemptive war and its use in Iraq (Benn, 2004).

*Transnational interest groups* also deserve mention. Growing interdependence has increased the frequency of countries, international organizations, and private interest groups lobbying across borders. In 2005, there were over 1,800 lobbyists registered with the U.S. government as representing 589 foreign interest groups. Some represented national governments and others lobbied for subnational units such as the Province of Quebec in Canada. Yet other lobbyists registered as representatives of groups hoping to become national governments, including Tibet's exiled Dalai Lama, the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq, and the Palestinian Authority. Other foreign registrants, reflecting a panoply of interests, included the Icelandic Tourist Board, Petroleos Mexicanos, the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress of Russia, and Volkswagen of Germany. Japanese interests (53 registrants) were the most heavily represented in Washington, followed by those of Mexico (29), Great Britain (27), and Canada (18).

### The People

Like legislatures, the public plays a highly variable role in foreign policy. Public opinion is a marginal factor in authoritarian governments. In democracies, the role of the people is more complex (Everts & Isernia, 2001). On occasion, public opinion plays a key role. The United States got out of Vietnam in the 1970s in significant part because of the determined opposition of many Americans to continued involvement in that war. Yet even in democracies, the public usually plays only a limited role in determining foreign policy.

*Public Interest in World Affairs*   One reason for the public's limited role is that few citizens ordinarily pay much attention to international issues. During the 2004 and 2006 U.S. national elections, terrorism and Iraq were prominent issues. Worry about terrorism arguably secured President Bush's reelection in 2004, and voter discontent

**Web Link**

A semi-annual report on the Foreign Agents Registration Act is available through the U.S. Department of Justice at **www.usdoj.gov/criminal/fara/.**

with policy in Iraq was a factor in the Republicans losing control of both houses of Congress in 2006. Such elections were unusual, though. Normally, the public's political interest focuses on domestic issues. During the 2000 presidential election, for one, only 5% of voters identified a foreign policy matter as the most important issue to them. Moreover, even in most elections when foreign policy does play an important role, the majority of voters cite a domestic issue as the most important to their vote. In 2006, for example, 65% of people in one poll said "problems in the U.S." would be more important in their vote for Congress than "problems around the world." Only 17% took the opposite view, with another 17% saying both counted equally and 1% unsure.[42]

This is not to say that all of the public pays little heed to foreign policy all of the time. First, there is a segment of the public, the "attentive public," that regularly pays attention to world events. Second, crisis issues, such as the war with Iraq, and intermestic issues, such as trade, are apt to draw significantly greater public attention. Third, studies show that although the public is not versed in the details of policies, its basic instincts are neither disconnected from events nor unstable (Witko, 2003; Isernia, Juhasz, & Rattinger, 2002).

*Channels of Public Opinion Influence on Foreign Policy*     There are a few countries in which the public occasionally gets to decide a foreign policy issue directly through a national referendum. However, all democracies are basically republican forms of government in which policies and laws are made by elected officials and their appointees. Therefore, it is more common for public opinion to have an indirect democratic influence on policy through voting for officials and through the sensitivity of those officials to public attitudes.

Even if they cannot usually decide policy directly, voters do sometimes have a choice of candidates for national leadership positions who have different foreign policy goals and priorities (Fordham, 2002). During 2006, for instance, voters brought new chief executives or new legislative majorities into power in such countries as Canada, Chile, Italy, Mexico, Nicaragua, the Palestinian Territories, and Ukraine, as well as the United States. As in all national elections, many issues were involved, but, among other impacts, the election of a Hamas majority by the Palestinians raised tensions with Israel, the election in Ukraine brought a prime minister to power who favors greater connection with the West and fewer dealings with Russia, and the new center-left government in Italy soon withdrew the last Italian troops from Iraq.

Additionally, research shows that both elected and appointed officials are concerned with public opinion and that it often influences policy (Burstein, 2003; Heith, 2003; Reiter & Tillman, 2002). This is especially true when the public is clearly attentive to an issue (Knecht & Weatherford, 2006). One reason is that most decision makers in a democracy believe that public opinion is a legitimate factor that should be considered when determining which policy is to be adopted. Second, leaders also believe that policy is more apt to be successful if it is backed by public opinion. Third, decision makers are wary of public retribution in the next election if they ignore majority opinion. "I knew full well that if we could rally the American people behind a long and difficult chore, that our job would be easier," President Bush commented about ordering military action against Afghanistan in 2001. "I am a product of the Vietnam era," the president explained. "I remember presidents trying to wage wars that were very unpopular, and the nation split."[43] That image came to haunt Bush after the 2006 elections, and despite vowing to

## TABLE 3.2    Opinions of U.S. Leaders and Public

| Issues on Which Leaders and Public Agree | | | Issues on Which Leaders and Public Disagree | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The United States should: | Leaders Favoring | Public Favoring | The United States should: | Leaders Favoring | Public Favoring |
| Take active role in world | 97% | 67% | Make protecting American jobs a top goal | 41% | 78% |
| Play the role of global police force | 18% | 20% | Stress halting global flow of illegal drugs | 46% | 63% |
| Stress halting spread of nuclear weapons | 87% | 73% | Decrease legal immigration | 10% | 54% |
| Emphasize combating global terrorism | 84% | 71% | Make U.S. military superiority a top priority | 37% | 50% |
| Stress spreading democracy aboard | 29% | 14% | Make improving global environment a top goal | 61% | 47% |
| Make strengthening the UN a top goal | 40% | 38% | Do more to combat world hunger | 67% | 43% |
| Stress protecting U.S. business interests | 22% | 33% | Make helping poor countries a top goal | 64% | 18% |
| Be more willing to accept decisions of UN | 78% | 66% | Reduce U.S. military aid | 40% | 65% |
| Keep military bases in South Korea | 71% | 62% | Reduce U.S. economic aid | 9% | 64% |
| Keep military bases in Germany | 54% | 57% | Keep military bases in Saudi Arabia | 25% | 50% |
| Keep military bases in Japan | 56% | 52% | Keep military bases in Turkey | 63% | 46% |
| Bomb terrorist training camps and faculties | 83% | 83% | Keep military base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba | 47% | 58% |
| Assassinate terrorist leaders | 52% | 68% | Use troops to defend S. Korea from N. Korea | 82% | 43% |
| Not torture suspected terrorists for information | 88% | 66% | Use troops to protect oil supply | 36% | 54% |
| Remain in NATO | 66% | 58% | Topple governments that support terrorism | 38% | 67% |
| Join Kyoto Protocol to cut $CO_2$ emissions | 72% | 71% | Use troops to protect Israel from Arabs | 64% | 43% |
| Give UN power to control global arms trade | 55% | 57% | Use troops to protect Taiwan from China | 51% | 33% |
| Participate in UN peacekeeping | 84% | 78% | | | |
| Wage preemptive war in some circumstances | 71% | 70% | | | |
| Use troops to halt genocide | 86% | 75% | | | |
| Ratify treaty to ban all nuclear weapons tests | 85% | 87% | | | |
| Ratify treaty to ban all land mines | 80% | 80% | | | |
| Use nuclear weapons only if attacked by them | 57% | 57% | | | |

*Notes:* NATO is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, UN is the United Nations, and $CO_2$ is carbon dioxide.
*Data source:* Chicago Council on Global Affairs (2004).

This table compares the opinions of U.S. political, social, and economic leaders and the American public. Usually the two groups agree, but they also often disagree, as the two lists show. Also look for more subtle differences. Whether the groups agree or not, the leaders are usually more internationalist than the public. Where the public is internationalist is on issues that directly and immediately affect Americans, such as protecting jobs from foreign competition.

"stay the course," the president clearly began to more flexibly look for a way to extricate the country from Iraq.

**Web Link**

Numerous foreign policy opinion analyses including surveys evaluating the opinions of U.S. global leaders and the foreign policy views of Americans and citizens from 17 countries can be found on the site of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs at **http://www.thechicagocouncil.org.**

*Dimensions of Foreign Policy Opinion*    Most polls only report overall public opinion on a topic, but it is important to realize that opinion is not split evenly across all segments of the public. One of these opinion splits, the gender gap, is discussed earlier in this chapter. Additionally, there is a **leader-citizen opinion gap** on some issues in the United States and other countries. This term represents the difference in the average opinions of those who are the leaders of government, business, the media, and other areas in a society and the general public. Table 3.2 lists a wide range of issues on which U.S. leaders and the American public agree and disagree.

## SYSTEM-LEVEL ANALYSIS

Countries may be theoretically free to make any foreign policy decision they want, but as a practical matter, achieving a successful foreign policy requires that they make choices that are reasonable within the context of the realities of the international system. For example, Mexico's President Vicente Fox denounced as "disgraceful and shameful" the U.S. plan to build a wall along the two countries' border, and Mexico could exercise its sovereign authority and use force to try to prevent the barrier's construction.[44] However, doing so would be foolhardy because one fact of life in the international system is that the U.S. military power is vastly greater than that of Mexico. Thus, power realities in the international system dictate that Mexico would be wiser to attempt to use more moderate means in its effort to persuade the United States to abandon the notion that good fences make good neighbors.

**System-level analysis** focuses on the external restraints on foreign policy. This is a "top-down" approach to world politics that examines the social-economic-political-geographic characteristics of the system and how they influence the actions of countries and other actors (Moore & Lanoue, 2003). We can roughly divide the restraints on reasonable state behavior into those related to the system's structural characteristic, its power relationships, its economic realities, and its norms.

## Structural Characteristics

All systems, whether it is the international system, your country's system, or the immediate, local system in your college international relations class, have identifiable structural characteristics. Two of particular relevance to our analysis here are how authority is organized in the international system and the scope and level of interaction among the actors in the system.

### The Organization of Authority

The structure of authority for making and enforcing rules, for allocating assets, and for conducting other authoritative tasks in a system can range from hierarchical (vertical) to anarchical (horizontal). Most systems, like your class and your country, tend toward the hierarchical end of the spectrum. They have a **vertical authority structure** in which subordinate units are substantially regulated by higher levels of authority. Other systems are situated toward the **horizontal authority structure** end of the continuum. There are few, if any, higher authorities in such systems, and power is fragmented. The international system is a mostly horizontal authority structure. It is based on the sovereignty of states. *Sovereignty* means that countries are not legally answerable to any higher authority for their international or domestic conduct. As such, the international system is a **state-centric system** that is largely anarchic; it has no overarching authority to make rules, settle disputes, and provide protection.

The anarchical nature of the international system has numerous impacts on national policy. Consider defense spending, for instance. We debate whether it is too high, too low, or about right; but almost nobody suggests that we spend zero and eliminate our country's military entirely. To see why the anarchical international system pressures countries to have an army, ask yourself why all countries are armed and why few, if any, students bring guns to class. One reason is that states in the international system (unlike students in your college) depend on themselves for protection. If a state is threatened, there is no international 911 to call for help. Given this anarchical self-help system, it is predictable that states will be armed.

**MAP**
The Geopolitical World
at the Beginning
of the 21st Century

**WEB POLL**
System-Level Analysis

**FIGURE 3.6 Attitudes about Global Governance**

Percent of Americans who favor greater U.S. compliance with the:

| United Nations | World Trade Organization | International Monetary Fund/ World Bank | International Court of Justice | International Criminal Court |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66% | 69% | 68% | 57% | 65% |

Most Americans say they support increased U.S. compliance with a wide range of international organizations even if their decisions differ from U.S. policy preferences. However, questions about specific issues that go against current U.S. policy often bring a less internationalist response by Americans. For example, 65% of them want the United States to join the International Criminal Court, but only 37% are willing to have the ICC try American soldiers accused of war crimes if the U.S. government refuses to do so.

*Data sources:* Chicago Council on Global Affairs, *Global Views 2004: American Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (Chicago: Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 2005) and Pew Global Attitudes Project Poll, January, 2003; data provided by The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, University of Connecticut.

While the authority structure in the international system remains decidedly horizontal, change is under way. Many analysts believe that sovereignty is declining and that even the most powerful states are subject to a growing number of authoritative rules made by international organizations and by international law. Countries still resist and often even reject IGO governance, but increasingly they also comply with it. In 2006, for example, the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled in favor of a U.S. allegation that the European Union (EU) was violating trade rules by using health regulations to bar the importation of genetically modified foods. That gladdened Washington, but it was disappointed in another ruling that year which upheld an EU complaint that U.S. tax breaks given to Boeing and other aircraft manufacturers were acting as a subsidy that gave Boeing an unfair advantage over Europe's Airbus under WTO rules. In both cases, as often occurs, the losing side grumbled mightily and hinted it might not comply, but history shows that countries do eventually change their practices when the WTO finds against them. Americans, like people in most countries, are sensitive about their sovereignty, yet they also are becoming more willing to accept the idea that their country should abide by IGO decisions, as Figure 3.6 indicates.

## Scope, Level, and Intensity of Interactions

Another structural characteristic of any political system is the scope (range), frequency, and intensity (level) of interactions among the actors. In your class, for example, the scope of interactions between you and both your professor and most of your classmates (1) is probably limited to what happens in the course; (2) is not very intense; and (3) is confined to two or three hours of class time each week over a single semester.

At the international system level, the scope, frequency, and level of interaction among the actors is not only often much higher than in your class but has grown extensively during the last half century. Economic interdependence provides the most obvious example. Countries trade more products more often than they did not long ago, and each of them, even the powerful United States, is heavily dependent on others for sources of products that it needs and as markets for products that it sells. Without foreign oil, to pick one obvious illustration, U.S. transportation and industry would literally come to a halt. Without extensive exports, the U.S. economy would stagger because exported goods and services account for about 15% of the U.S. GNP.

Data about expanding trade does not, however, fully capture the degree to which the widening scope and intensifying level of global financial interactions are increasing transnational contacts at every level. For individuals, modern telecommunications and travel have made personal international interactions, once relatively rare, now commonplace. For example, between 1990 and 2005 the number of Americans traveling overseas increased 42% from 44.6 million to 63.5 million. During the same

period, the number of foreign visitors to the United States jumped 25% from 39.4 million to 49.2 million. Communications are also expanding the scope, level, and intensity of communications. Satellite-transmitted television revolutionized communications. Most recently, al Jazeera, the Arab-based news network, has added an around-the-clock English-language broadcast. Trillions of phone calls, letters, and e-mail messages add to the globalization of human interactions, and the Internet ignores borders as it connects people and organizations around the world as if they were in the next room.

## Power Relationships

Countries are restrained by the realities of power in the international system, much like individuals are limited by the distribution of power in more local systems. For instance, it is very probable that the distribution of power in your class is narrow. There is apt to be one major power, the professor, who decides on the class work, schedules exams, controls the discussion, and issues rewards or sanctions (grades). Sometimes students grumble about one or another aspect of a class, and they might even be right. But the power disparity between students and their professor makes open defiance exceptionally rare. Similarly, the conduct of the international system is heavily influenced by power considerations such as the number of powerful actors and the context of power.

### The Number of Powerful Actors

Historically, international systems have been defined in part by how many powerful actors each has (Wilkinson, 2004). Such an actor, called a **power pole**, can be (1) a single country or empire, (2) an alliance, or could be (3) a global IGO, such as the UN, or (4) a regional IGO, such as the EU.

These poles are particularly important to the realist approach and its concern with the balance of power. Sometimes the term is used to describe the existing distribution of power, as in, "the current balance of power greatly favors the United States." More classically, though, the theory of **balance-of-power politics** put forth by realists holds that: (1) all states are power seeking; (2) ultimately, a state or bloc will attempt to become hegemonic, that is, dominate the system; and (3) other states will attempt to block that dominance by increasing their own power and/or cooperating with other states in an antihegemonic effort.

Some scholars further believe that the number of power poles in existence at any one time helps determine how countries are likely to act. According to this view, it is possible to identify patterns or rules of the game for systems. Figure 3.7 displays four power configurations (unipolar, bipolar, tripolar, and multipolar) and ways in which the patterns of interaction arguably differ across them. Bear in mind that these rules indicate what actors are apt to try to do. The rules are neither ironclad nor do actors always succeed in implementing them.

As a sample of how these rules work, note that in a **unipolar system**, which exists in many ways today with the United States as the single pole, the **hegemonic power** tries to maintain control. From a system-level perspective, this impulse to power is not so much caused by the preexisting desires of the dominant power as by the pressure in the system to maintain stability and order. The argument is that "a unipolar system will be peaceful," but only so long as the hegemonic power acts like one (Wohlforth, 1999:23). This leads some scholars to worry that if the United States refuses to play the leading role in the world drama, then the system becomes unstable, leading to greater violence and other negative consequences (Lal, 2004).

**SIMULATION**
Rules of the Game

**Web Link**

An online balance-of-power game can be played at **www.balance-of-power.ch/ main.html.**

## FIGURE 3.7 The Dynamics of International Systems

**Unipolar System**

Traditional Hegemonic Dominance     World Federal System

**One pole**
Rules of the game are: (1) The central power establishes and enforces rules and dominates military and economic instruments. (2) The central power settles disputes between subordinate units. (3) The central power resists attempts by subordinate units to achieve independence or greater autonomy and may gradually attempt to lessen or eliminate the autonomy of subordinate units.

**Bipolar System**

**Two poles**
Acute hostility between the two poles is the central feature of a bipolar system. Thus primary rules are: (1) Try to eliminate the other bloc by undermining it if possible and by fighting it if necessary and if the risks are acceptable. (2) Increase power relative to the other bloc by such techniques as attempting to bring new members onto your bloc and by attempting to prevent others from joining the rival bloc.
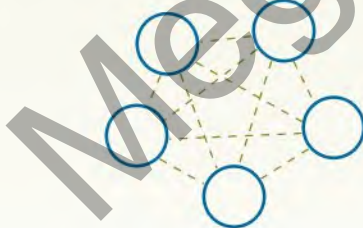
**Tripolar System**

Prevention of good relations between other two players
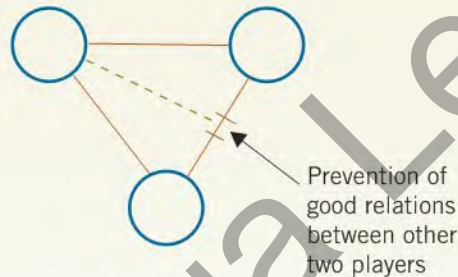
**Three poles**
The rules of play in a triangular relationship are: (1) Optimally, try to have good relations with both other players or, minimally, try to avoid having hostile relations with both other players. (2) Try to prevent close cooperation between the other two players.

**Multipolar System**

**Four or more poles**
Rules of the game are: (1) Oppose any actor or alliance that threatens to become hegemonic. This is also the central principle of balance-of-power politics. (2) Optimally increase power and minimally preserve your power. Do so by negotiating if possible, by fighting if necessary. (3) Even if fighting, do not destabilize the system by destroying another major actor.

● Small Power          - - - - - - -  Short-Term or Potential Link

○ Large Power          —————  Dominant and Lasting Link

The relationships that exist among the actors in a particular type of international system structure vary because of the number of powerful actors, the relative power of each, and the permitted interactions within the system. This figure displays potential international system structures and the basic rules that govern relationships within each system. After looking at these models, which one, if any, do you think best describes the contemporary international system?

Advocates of this view warn, "Critics of U.S. global dominance should pause and consider the alternative. If the United States retreats from its hegemonic role, who would supplant it? . . . Unfortunately, the alternative to a single superpower is not a multilateral utopia." What will occur, the argument continues, is a "power vacuum . . . an era of 'apolarity'," leading to "an anarchic new Dark Age: an era of waning empires and religious fanaticism; of endemic plunder and pillage in the world's forgotten regions; of economic stagnation and civilization's retreat into a few fortified enclaves" (Ferguson, 2004:32). This view is akin to Barber's (1996) image of tribalism, as discussed in chapter 2.
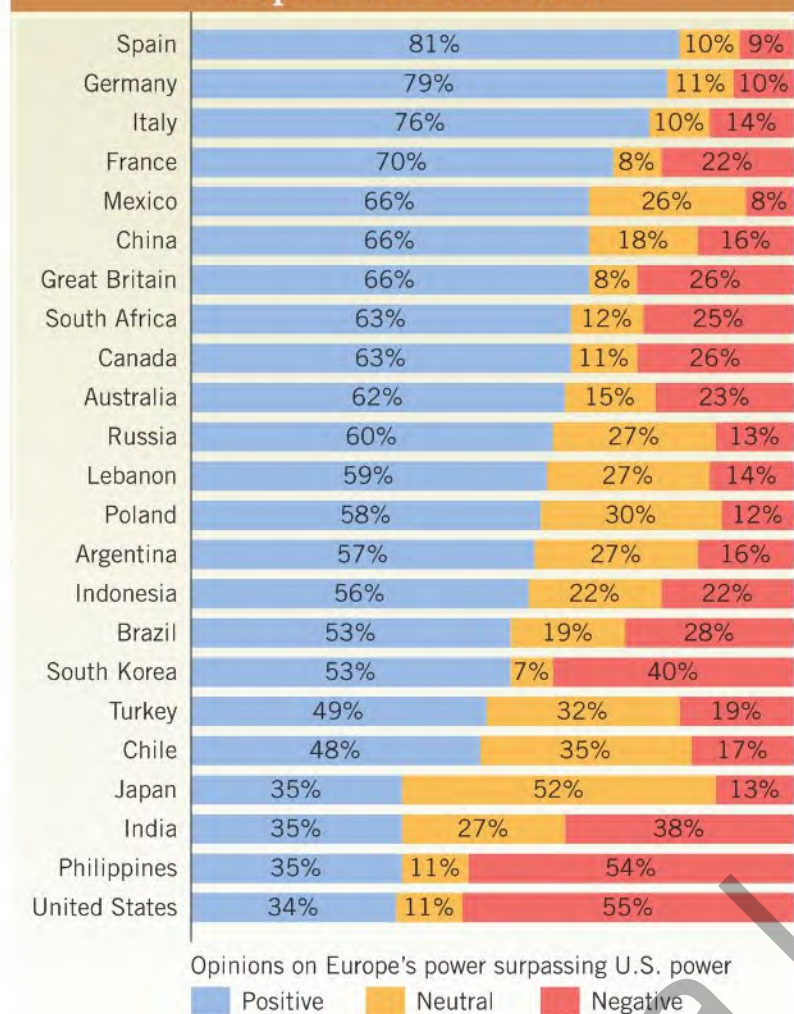
Needless to say, there is considerable debate over such views. Some scholars contend that a reduced U.S. presence in the world would not destabilize the system. Yet other analysts debate the motives behind and the implications of the United States conducting itself as the hegemonic power. Some condemn it as a destructive imperialistic impulse (Gitlin, 2003; Lobell, 2004). Speaking to an international conference in 2007, Russia's President Putin argued that the U.S. aggressive policy had made the world more dangerous than during the cold war. During that period of bipolar confrontation, Putin argued, there "was a fragile peace, a scary peace, but it was fairly reliable, as it turns out. Today it is less reliable."[45] Others argue that U.S. power is not only necessary for stability, but will also have other positive impacts such as spreading democracy (Kaplan 2004; Krauthammer, 2004). Amid all these sharply divergent views about the U.S. global role, though, there can be little doubt that changing the power equation changes the way a system operates.

The theory about the rules of the game in a unipolar system also suggests that lesser powers try to escape dominance. Arguably, that explains why many Europeans favor transforming the existing 60,000-soldier Eurocorps (with troops from Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Spain) into a de facto EU army to rival or even to replace NATO, which the United States dominates. As former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher put it, "The real drive towards a separate European defense" is based on the unstated goal of "creating a single European superstate to rival America on the world stage."[46] The urge to escape the U.S. orbit also may help explain why France, Germany, Russia, and China were all opposed to U.S. action against Iraq in 2003. Certainly those countries objected to the war as such, but it was also a chance to resist the lead of the hegemonic power. In this context, it was not surprising that several European countries met soon after the Iraq War to discuss how to increase their military cooperation. "In order to have a balance, we have to have a strong Europe, as well as a strong U.S.," is how French President Jacques Chirac explained the purpose of the conference.[47] Moreover, surveys indicate that not only do Europeans agree that a stronger Europe to counterbalance U.S. power is desirable, so does a majority or plurality of people in most other countries surveyed on the question. The details are presented in Figure 3.8 on page 96. None of this means that any of these countries are implacably antagonistic toward the United States, only that Washington needs to exercise power carefully to avoid driving its former allies together with its former enemies in an anti-hegemony, not an anti-American, alliance (Carter, 2003).

## The Context of Power

The United States is troubled by its massive trade deficit ($221 billion in 2006) with China, and there is pressure on the Bush administration to react strongly. U.S. manufacturers and unions assert that they are losing business and jobs to the flood of imports. Thus far, however, Washington has not pressed Beijing hard on the issue. One reason is that raising tariffs on Chinese goods and other decisive actions, which the United States has the power to do, would dramatically decrease China's willingness

### FIGURE 3.8 Opinions on European and U.S. Power

| Country | Positive | Neutral | Negative |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spain | 81% | 10% | 9% |
| Germany | 79% | 11% | 10% |
| Italy | 76% | 10% | 14% |
| France | 70% | 8% | 22% |
| Mexico | 66% | 26% | 8% |
| China | 66% | 18% | 16% |
| Great Britain | 66% | 8% | 26% |
| South Africa | 63% | 12% | 25% |
| Canada | 63% | 11% | 26% |
| Australia | 62% | 15% | 23% |
| Russia | 60% | 27% | 13% |
| Lebanon | 59% | 27% | 14% |
| Poland | 58% | 30% | 12% |
| Argentina | 57% | 27% | 16% |
| Indonesia | 56% | 22% | 22% |
| Brazil | 53% | 19% | 28% |
| South Korea | 53% | 7% | 40% |
| Turkey | 49% | 32% | 19% |
| Chile | 48% | 35% | 17% |
| Japan | 35% | 52% | 13% |
| India | 35% | 27% | 38% |
| Philippines | 35% | 11% | 54% |
| United States | 34% | 11% | 55% |

Opinions on Europe's power surpassing U.S. power

☐ Positive   ☐ Neutral   ☐ Negative

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," Shakespeare tells us in *Henry I, Part II*. This insight helps explain global attitudes toward the reigning hegemonic power, the United States. When people in 23 countries were asked whether it would be mainly a positive or negative development if "Europe becomes more influential than the United States in world affairs," a majority in 17 countries and a plurality in 2 others replied mainly positive. Only majorities of Americans and Filipinos thought the change would be negative, while people in India were closely divided and most Japanese were neutral.

*Note:* Unsure and all other answers other than positive or negative were coded as neutral here.
*Data source:* Program on International Policy Attitudes, 23 Nation Poll: "Who Will Lead the World?" April 2005.

to cooperate with the United States in other key areas. An example of these is North Korea's nuclear weapons program, a situation that could lead to the spread of nuclear weapons beyond North Korea to South Korea and Japan and even to war on the Korean Peninsula. China is one of the few countries with any influence in Pyongyang, and Beijing might respond to U.S. pressure to reduce the trade deficit by refusing to cooperate with Washington's efforts to persuade North Korea to end its nuclear program.

## Economic Realities

System-level analysts contend that the economic realities of the international system help shape the choices that countries make. Again, this is the same in systems from the global to your local level. For example, a safe prediction is that after finishing your education you will get a job and spend most of the rest of your life working instead of pursuing whatever leisure activities you enjoy the most. You will almost certainly do that because the economic realities of your local system require money to get many of the things you want, and most of us need a job to get money. Similarly, the international system has economic facts of life that help shape behavior.

Interdependence is one of the economic facts of life that influences states' behavior. For example, many studies conclude that increasing economic interdependence promotes peace as countries become more familiar with one another and need each other for their mutual prosperity (Schneider, Barbieri, & Gleditsch, 2003). The ramifications of this on policy are evident by again turning to U.S.-China relations. It is tempting to advocate imposing tariff hikes and other sanctions on Beijing, and certainly that would stagger China's economy. But it would also damage Americans economically. Equivalent U.S.-made products would be much more expensive, thereby increasing the cost of living for the American consumer. Toys, electronic products, and many other things that Americans import from China might be in short supply or not available, at least until substitute sources could come on line. Many U.S. businesses and their stock- and bondholders might also suffer because they have invested heavily in setting up manufacturing plants in China that produce goods for the U.S. market. In short, the United States could decide to impose sanctions on China, but doing so would at least partly be the equivalent of Americans shooting themselves in their own economic foot.

Natural resource production and consumption patterns also influence the operation of the system. From this perspective, the U.S. military reaction to Iraq's attack on Kuwait in 1990 and its threat to the rest of the oil-rich Persian Gulf region was
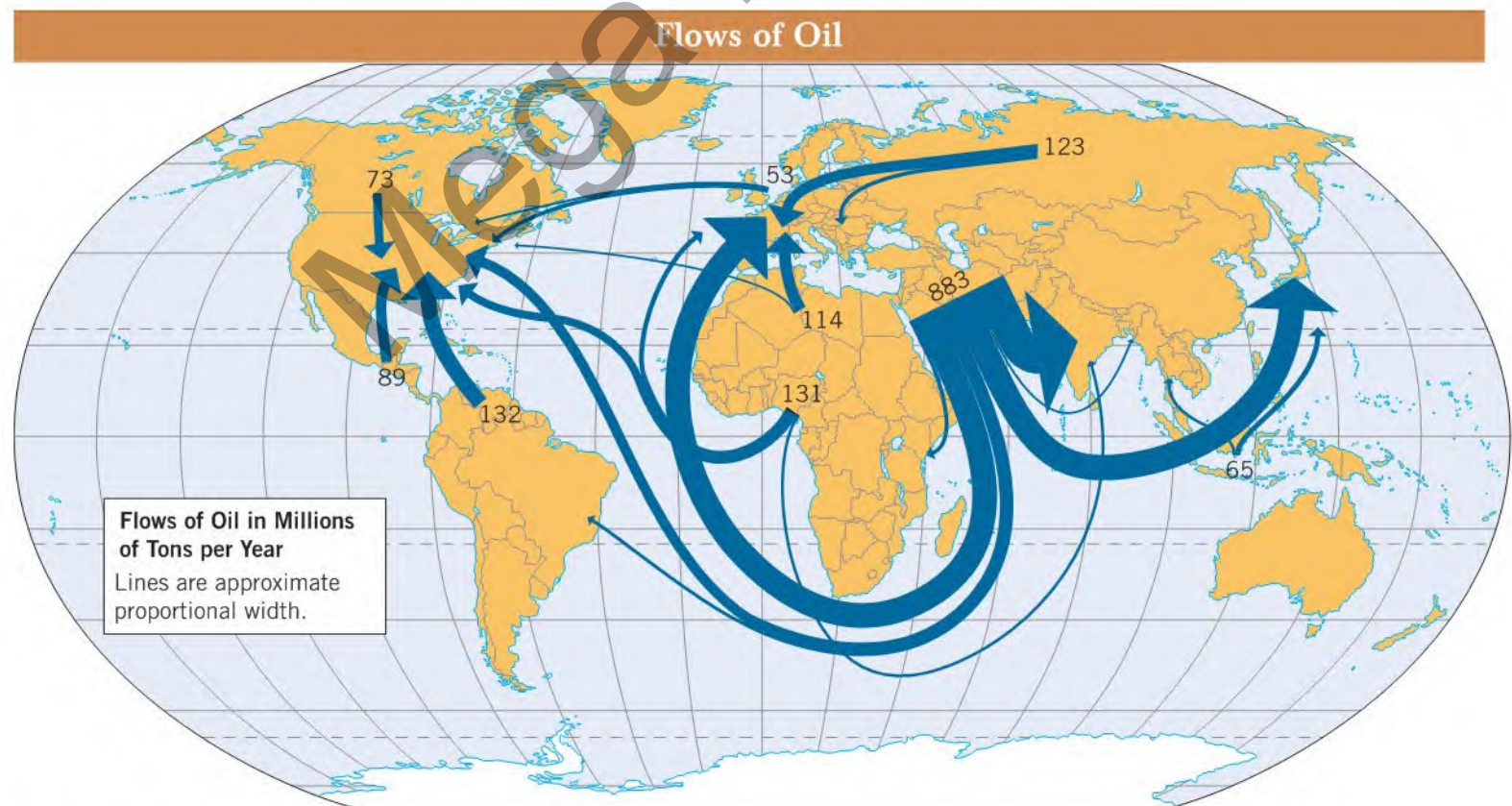
virtually foreordained by the importance of petroleum to the prosperity of the United States and its economic partners. As U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker III explained to reporters, "The economic lifeline of the industrial world runs from the Gulf, and we cannot permit a dictator . . . to sit astride that economic lifeline."[48]

By contrast, U.S. officials repeatedly denied that petroleum was connected to the war in 2003. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, for one, asserted that the U.S. campaign against Iraq "has . . . literally nothing to do with oil."[49] Nevertheless, numerous analysts believe that it was an underlying factor. Some contend that Washington sought to ensure continued supplies at a stable price by adding control of Iraq to its already strong influence over Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and other oil-rich states in the region. The administration "believes you have to control resources in order to have access to them," argues Chas Freeman, a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia.[50] Other analysts believe that the motive behind U.S. policy was a power play. As one scholar put it, "Controlling Iraq is about oil as power, rather than oil as fuel. Control over the Persian Gulf translates into control over Europe, Japan, and China. It's having our hand on the spigot."[51]

There has also been speculation that the opposition of France, Russia, and some other countries to the U.S.-led invasion and their support for easing sanctions on Iraqi oil exports were in part oil related. The contention is that these countries were concerned with the contracts their oil companies had with Iraq to develop its oil production once sanctions were lifted, and they feared that those agreements would be abrogated and given to U.S. firms in the wake of a U.S. occupation of the country. As one U.S. oil expert put it before the war, "Most of these governments . . . have [a financial] interest in the current Iraqi government surviving. It's not trivial. . . . Once it's developed, the oil will be 2.5 million barrels [worth about $70 million] per day."[52]

**Did You Know That:**
Iraq contains about 11% of the world's proven oil reserves.

**MAP**
Flows of Oil

## Flows of Oil



**Flows of Oil in Millions of Tons per Year**
Lines are approximate proportional width.

World politics is strongly influenced by the reality in the international system that much of the world's petroleum is produced in the Middle East and consumed in North America, Europe, and Japan.

## Norms

Like all the other factors we have been discussing, norms influence the actors in systems from the global level to the local level. Norms are one of the reasons that even on a very warm day you will almost certainly come to class wearing clothes rather than *au naturel*. In fact, norms make it reasonably predictable that most students will come to class not only dressed, but dressed similarly. Jeans, sweatshirts, sneakers or work boots, and baseball caps (often worn backwards) seem the most common "uniform."

Similarly, norms play a part in determining actions within the international system. It is hard for some to accept that norms exist in a world in which absolutely horrendous things sometimes happen. Moreover, it would be far too strong to say there is anything near a universally accepted standard of behavior. Yet it is the case that values do exist, are becoming a more important part of international conduct, and are becoming more uniformly global. During the war with Iraq in 2003, for example, one available U.S. option was "nuking" Iraq's main cities and military sites and killing most Iraqis. It surely would have ended the regime of Saddam Hussein, it would have been quick, and it would have cost many fewer American lives and dollars than the conventional attack and subsequent occupation. Yet the U.S. decision was to send troops to Iraq at great expense and at great risk, especially given the perceived threat of a chemical or biological attack on them. Why?

Norms were one reason for not using nuclear weapons. The global population would have been horrified, and Americans themselves might have risen up and removed President Bush from office. Indeed, the norm against using nuclear weapons, especially against a non-nuclear power, is so strong that only massive Iraqi use of chemical or biological weapons might have prompted such a response. Moreover, even during their conventional invasion, it is noteworthy that U.S. and U.K. military forces generally conducted operations in a way to keep civilian casualties much lower than they might otherwise have been. That reflected the growing norms in the world, including those of Americans, 75% of whom, according to one poll, believed there should be a "very high" or "high" priority on minimizing civilian casualties.[53]

It is easy to lose track of the main message in this long section on system-level analysis. So to recap our focus, system-level analysis looks for the way that the structure, power distribution, economic realities, and norms of the international system influence foreign policy. Indeed, we have seen that foreign policy making is much more complex than merely "what the president decides." Instead, foreign policy and by extension world politics are heavily influenced by numerous factors related to the traits of humans as individuals and as a species, to the complicated structure of government with its many important subnational actors, and to the context of the international system in which all countries operate.

## CHAPTER SUMMARY

### INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL ANALYSIS

1. Individual-level analysis is based on the view that it is people who make policy. It analyzes the policy-making process by examining how people (as a species, in groups, and individually) make decisions.

2. Individual-level analysis can be approached from three different perspectives. One is to examine fundamental human nature. The second is to study how people act in organizations. The third is to examine the motivations and actions of specific persons.

3. The human nature approach examines basic human characteristics, including the cognitive, psychological, emotional, and biological factors that influence decision making.

4. The organizational behavior approach studies such factors as role (how people act in their professional position) and group decision-making behavior, including groupthink.

5. The idiosyncratic behavior approach explores the factors that determine the perceptions, decisions, and actions of specific leaders. A leader's personality, physical and mental health, ego and ambitions, understanding of history, personal experiences, and perceptions are all factors.

6. The application of perceptions to policy can be explained by exploring operational reality and operational codes.

## STATE-LEVEL ANALYSIS

7. State-level analysis assumes that since states are the most important international actors, world politics can be best understood by focusing on how foreign policy is influenced by the political structure of states, the policy-making actors within them, and the interactions among the policy actors.

8. Foreign policy is not formulated by a single decision-making process. Instead, the exact nature of that process changes according to a number of variables, including the type of political system, the type of situation, the type of issue, and the internal factors involved.

9. States are complex organizations, and their internal, or domestic, dynamics influence their international actions.

10. One set of internal factors centers on political culture: the fundamental, long-held beliefs of a nation.

11. Another set of internal factors centers on the policy-making impact of various foreign policy–making actors. These include political leaders, bureaucratic organizations, legislatures, political parties and opposition, interest groups, and the public. Each of these influences foreign policy, but their influence varies according to the type of government, the situation, and the policy at issue.

12. Usually, heads of government are the most powerful foreign policy–making actors. Bureaucratic organizations are normally the second most powerful actors.

## SYSTEM-LEVEL ANALYSIS

13. To be successful, countries usually must make policy choices within the context of the realities of the international system. Therefore, system-level analysis examines how the realities of the international system influence foreign policy.

14. Many factors determine the nature of any given system. Systemic factors include its structural characteristics, power relationships, economic realities, and norms of behavior.

15. One structural characteristic is how authority is organized. The international system is horizontal, based on state sovereignty, and therefore it is anarchical. There are, however, relatively new centralizing forces that are changing the system toward a more vertical structure.

16. Another structural characteristic is a system's frequency, scope, and level of interaction. The current system is becoming increasingly interdependent, with a rising number of interactions across an expanding range of issues. Economic interdependence is especially significant.

17. When analyzing power relationships, an important factor is the number of poles in a system and how the pattern of international relations varies depending on how many power centers, or poles, a system has.

18. The current system most closely resembles either a unipolar system or limited unipolar system dominated by the United States.

19. The context of power is another system characteristic. One contextual factor is the applicability of power in a given situation.

20. Another aspect of the context is the intricate interrelationships among almost 200 countries and the need of even powerful countries for diplomatic reciprocity, the cooperation of others on a range of issues. It is therefore wise, before using power, to calculate the long-term impact of the attitudes of other countries.

21. Norms are the values that help determine patterns of behavior and create some degree of predictability in the system. The norms of the system are changing. Many newer countries, for instance, are challenging some of the current norms of the system, most of which are rooted in Western culture.

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## KEY TERMS

authoritarian governments
balance-of-power politics
biopolitics
bureaucracy
cognitive decision making
crisis situation
decision-making process
democratic governments
ethology
foreign policy process

foreign policy–making actors
formal powers
frustration-aggression theory
gender opinion gap
groupthink
head of government
hegemonic power
heuristic devices
horizontal authority structure

idiosyncratic analysis
individual-level analysis
informal powers
interest groups
intermestic policy
issue area
leader-citizen opinion gap
leadership capabilities
levels of analysis
mirror-image perception
operational code
operational reality

poliheuristic theory
political culture
political executives
power pole
roles
state-centric system
state-level analysis
system-level analysis
two-level game
unipolar system
vertical authority structure