Analyzing National Security Policy

Strategic Policy-Making
Concepts

- Policy Arenas
- Policy Cycles Model
  - Agenda setting
  - Problem framing
  - Implementation
- Realist Model
  - Rational actor model
Policy Arenas

- **High Policy**
  - Fundamental Decisions about Interests, Threats, & Responses
    - Should we develop a national missile defense system and how much should we spend?

- **Middle Policy**
  - Turning decisions into actions
    - What would be the most effective NMD configuration and how should the program be managed?

- **Low Policy**
  - Which competing interceptor design is best?
    - Technical details of actions
Policy Cycles Model

- **Heuristic**
  - Focus analytic attention

- **Nested cycles**
  - Policy moves down through arenas of action
    - Implementation

Diagram:
- Agenda Setting
- Option Formulation
- Evaluation & Assessment
- Decision
- Implementation
Agenda Setting

- **What should the government “worry about?”**
  - Controls subsequent stages in the policy cycle

- **Problem Framing**
  - How should the government characterize the national security issue?
    - What is the causal story that drives the need for policy?

- **Terrorism Example**
  - Is terrorism a surrogate for state-based aggression?
    - E.g., Iraq, Iran, Libya
  - Is it caused by poverty and desperation?
  - Is it caused by legitimate political-economic complaints against U.S. policies?
  - Is it caused by charismatic religious zealots?
Realist Model
Realist Model

- "State" as the focal and unitary actor
  - Actions can be understood without reference to domestic politics, leadership, etc.
  - States have interests that transcend domestic politics and leadership change
    - Broad orientation of foreign and defense policies are invariant
    - Interests are fixed by geo-political-economic situation & state "character"
- Decisions are based on strategic analysis of interests, threats, resources, etc.
  - Cost-Benefit Analysis
  - Maximizing preferences
- Requires the least amount of information to "predict" behavior
Implications for How We Analyze National Security Decisions

Agenda Setting

- Interests
- Threats

Option Formulation & Decision

- National Security Policy

Implementation

- Diplomatic Strategy
- Military Strategy
  - Tactics
  - Forces
  - Deployments
  - Weapons
Questions

- How do national security issues get on the government’s agenda in the realist model?
- Where do policy options come from?
- How are decisions made?
- What do we assume about implementation?
Clinton National Security Policy
Clinton: National Security Objectives

- **Primary Objectives of National Security Policy**
  - Enhance U.S. Security
  - Promote Domestic Prosperity
  - Promote Free-Market Democracy overseas
Clinton: National Security Interests

- 3 Tiers of Interests
  - **Vital Interests**: of broad overriding importance to the survival, security, and vitality of our national entity; defense of US territory, citizens, allies, and economic well-being
  - **Important Interests**: affect importantly our well-being and the character of the world we live in
  - **Humanitarian interests**

- These dictate when we will use force.
Clinton: National Security Threats

- Nuclear Proliferation
- Regional Instability
- Reversal Of Reform In Russia
- Unfair Trade Practices
- Other
  - Terrorism
  - Drug trafficking
  - Refuge flows
  - International environmental issues
Clinton: Strategy

- **Strong Defense Capability**
  - Deter/defeat aggression in major regional conflict
- **Maintain credible overseas presence**
  - Rapid response
  - Prevent power vacuums
Clinton: Strategy

- **Countering WMD**
  - Arms Control is the core strategy
- **Contribute to Multilateral peace operations**
- **Support Counterterrorism efforts & Other NS Objectives [of equal weight]**
  - In special circumstance may need to attack terrorist bases overseas with special ops
  - Pressure state sponsors of terrorism
  - Exploit legal mechanisms to punish terrorists
  - Help other govts. Improve their counter-terrorism capabilities
Clinton: Strategy

- Goals cannot be secured by acting unilaterally
  - Collective decision-making
  - International collaboration & leadership
- Arms Control is essential for dealing with WMD
Clinton: Promoting Prosperity & Democracy

- **Promote Domestic Prosperity**
  - American competitiveness
  - Access to foreign markets
  - International Macroeconomic coordination
  - Energy Security
  - Emphasis on efficiency, conservation & alternative technologies

- **Promoting Free Market Democracy**
  - Focus on regions where we have strongest security concerns
    - Russia
  - Democratic Peace theory: major powers that are free-market democracies will not wage war
Questions Confronting the Realist Model

- Are the Interests enumerated by Clinton (1997) significantly different from those enumerated by Bush, or any U.S. President?
  - How & Why?

- Are the strategies and approaches for protecting those national interests articulated by Clinton different from those of Bush, or some other president?
  - How & Why?
Inferences

- Realist Model may be most appropriate for analyzing actions when vital interests are at stake -- in crises.
- Realist Model may have little explanatory power for non-crisis national security policymaking.