

Strategic Politicians, Institutions, and Foreign Policy

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None Dare Call It Reason: Domestic Incentives and the Politics of War and Peace

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[T]he representative betrays his constituents if he sacrifices his judgement to their opinions.

—Edmund Burke

Politics, the saying goes, stops at the water's edge. Faced with external enemies, we have long believed, or perhaps just hoped, that domestic political battles could be put aside. But it is often the case that the demands of the international system are not so clear-cut, and disagreements about the proper course of action in the international sphere exacerbate other domestic divisions. When such disagreements occur, political leaders may well be forced to choose between policies that maximize their personal political fortunes and those that in their view maximize the national interest. The possibility that leaders might make such choices cuts to the foundations of the state and the use of state-centric analysis in the study of international relations. If political actors are making decisions in the face of trade-offs between their personal political prospects and the national interest, then we will need to explore more carefully and systematically the interaction of domestic and international politics in order to build a more effective understanding of politics on the international stage.

Toward this end, I present here a model of decision making by strategic politicians who must make decisions that simultaneously affect their domestic political fortunes and the security of the nation as a whole. I develop a single framework that connects models of domestic and international politics. At the international level, I consider the foreign policy position selected by the governing party and the interaction of that policy with the policy choices of another state. At the domestic level, I consider the effects of different models of decision making by the voters and the position taking of an opposition party.

Political Pandering: The Temptation to Treason

Philosophically, there is considerable debate about how we should respond to the trade-off of the national interest for domestic political interests. The title of this essay and the famous quote from Burke allude to treason or betrayal when the national interest is knowingly sacrificed to the personal interests of political actors. Burke's provocative assertion that representatives should follow their consciences rather than simply transmitting some sense of constituent demands has traditionally characterized one pole in a debate about the sources of the national interest. At the other pole are those who advocate a close connection between the demands of the wider public and the definition of state interests. Democratic values, in this view, are best realized when representatives directly express the wishes of their constituents.¹ Whichever way this debate is resolved, it will be useful to better understand the dynamics that make political leaders more or less likely to compromise their sense of the national interest for political gains.

Following the Burkean line, which provides a nicer alliteration, I will label the incentive to pander to domestic interests "the treason temptation." Understanding the sources and nature of the treason temptation is important to the study of foreign policy and international relations. There has long been considerable dissatisfaction with the treatment of states as unitary rational actors. The search for the so-called microfoundations of the state as an actor in the international arena has yielded much in the way of heat but relatively less light. Despite widespread acknowledgment of the levels of analysis issue, many scholars have simply ignored the problem, working either at the level of states in some variant of the realist tradition or simply pursuing a domestic politics model that focuses on the creation of foreign policy in the internal battles of national political actors. Policy analysts have tended to be even more cavalier about the levels of analysis issue, pursuing an intuitive balance between the demands of the international system and the vagaries of domestic incentives. Historians, meanwhile, have been moving toward an increasingly domestic politics view of international relations (Levy 1988).

There has been a resurgence of interest in the notion that international relations may be better understood by reference to the interaction of domestic and international politics (see Putnam 1988). One example of this development can be seen in the work of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman (1992), who have recently shown the importance of this problem within a rationalist framework. Bueno de Mesquita's early work (1981) left the sources of utility indeterminate—they could be domestic, international, or even personal—while building his models on the assumption that a single leader plays a gatekeeping role that ensures that foreign policy will reflect the transitive preferences required of rational actors. More recently, working with David Lalman, he has ar-

gued that international incentives alone are insufficient for explaining the foreign policy choices of states and the international outcomes to which they lead (Bueno de Mesquita and Lalman 1992).² Nonetheless, their models still put domestic politics within a black box.

The Model

The central problem in moving away from the unitary rational actor mode of analysis remains the formidable challenge of linking the domestic and international incentives faced by state leaders in a coherent single model. My goal in this essay is to develop a model that can illustrate the simultaneous impact of domestic and international influences on the foreign policy choices of domestic actors. The international influence I look at is the effect of the foreign policy choice on the probability of war with another state. The domestic influence is the effect of the foreign policy choice on the probability that the government will be reelected. This model, then, pulls together the core phenomena at the domestic and international levels—elections and war, respectively. I proceed by developing a model of electoral dynamics and then one of conflict dynamics. I then put the two models together to provide a tool for analyzing the interaction of the two realms.

The Domestic Politics Model

I build the domestic component of my model around the electoral process. Elections are a particularly transparent form of leadership selection in politics. This does not mean, however, that the analysis has to be restricted to democratic states. Nearly all leaders have to satisfy some level of domestic constraint and selection process, whether it be by the general populace, elites in a monolithic political party, or a set of powerful colonels in a military dictatorship. While I refer here to the electorate, the appellation "selectorate" could be applied to refer to the selecting body in almost any political setting. The political dynamics of selection I identify in the democratic context should still largely apply.

Foreign Policy and Elections

The domestic component of this model involves two parties—a governing party and an opposition party—competing for an election victory through their choice of a foreign policy. The influence of foreign policy positions on presidential elections is a subject of considerable controversy (see Page and Shapiro 1992; and Aldrich, Sullivan, and Borgida 1989). At a minimum, this model requires foreign policy to have at least a marginal influence on election outcomes. As long as the influence of foreign policy on elections is not zero, then to the

degree that government leaders want to maximize their electoral prospects, they will need to select foreign policy choices with an eye toward the electoral consequences. More realistically, my focus here on the relationship between wars and elections looks at foreign policy issues that have a very high profile and thus suggests circumstances in which foreign policy should prove more salient in the electoral environment.

Voting Behavior

Thinking about elections requires a consideration of the behavior of voters. For the purposes of the model, I focus on a single voter, who can be thought of as the median voter. Modeling the behavior of this voter requires some consideration of the large literature on the motivations and decision processes of voters. At the risk of some simplification, we can reduce this literature to three main streams of thought. These streams focus, respectively, on party identification, the evaluation of outcomes, and the evaluation of policies.

In the tradition that emphasizes party identification, voters are seen as quite limited in their capabilities. Party identification is a useful heuristic that saves voters the trouble of monitoring either the performance or the positions of the parties on individual issues (see Berelson, et al. 1954). In my model party line voting can also be seen as reflecting the behavior of voters who focus on other issues besides foreign affairs. Single issue pro-life voters, for example, are also saved the trouble of monitoring positions and performance on foreign policy issues in making their voting decision.

In the retrospective voting literature, voters focus on outcomes (Fiorina 1981). The advocates of this position have primarily addressed economic issues. Voters who observe that the economy is doing well—either in terms of their personal economic well-being or in terms of the general well-being of the economy—will vote for the government. When things are not going well, it will be time for a change. These voters do not have to know anything about the policies of the government or opposition party. Nor do they need to concern themselves with theories about the relationship between policies and outcomes. They do, however, require more information than in the party identification model, since they have to form some impression about economic conditions.

It is important to note, however, that retrospective voting may be less tenable for issues involving international relations than it is for the domestic economy. Retrospective voters interested in economic performance can look either in their own pocketbooks or at some widely agreed upon indicators of the health of the domestic economy. The question of whether war is more or less likely, or a state is more or less secure, is a much more difficult assessment to make. Often, this assessment will be made only through the lens of policy debates. Kennedy's missile gap in the 1960 election was a product of the policy debate,

not an objective reality that voters could directly assess through their personal experiences. Was the Gulf War a bad result?—the Bush administration was asleep at the switch and war happened. Or was it a good result?—Saddam Hussein was stopped with a minimal loss of American lives before he could develop nuclear weapons and realize his vision of revitalizing the greater Babylonian empire. Consider the central international conflict for the United States in the latter half of the Cold War. Was the Soviet Union behaving responsibly and cooperatively throughout the period of détente? Or was it systematically exploiting Western good will? Were the SALT agreements good results or bad results? Right up until the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was still significant debate over whether the changes in Gorbachev's foreign policy were serious or just the clever tactics of an ambitious politician jockeying for domestic power and trying to lull the West into complacency.³

This brings us to the third voting model, which portrays voters as *prospective* in their voting decisions. In this view, voters form expectations about the future impact of the policies of the competing parties. Prospective voting makes the greatest demands on the abilities of voters. Voters have to be aware of the policy differences of the parties and make connections between those differences and their expectations for the future. Nonetheless, as I have suggested, on many international issues this may be the only way for voters to actually evaluate outcomes.

My approach here is to build a model that incorporates all three of these views of individual voting behavior. This approach allows me to examine the impact of these different views within the framework of the model. The intuition behind this approach is that voters are motivated by some combination of all three factors. Voters do have party biases, but they also form preferences over policies and outcomes.

I describe the median voter with five variables.⁴ First, the voter can have a relative attitude toward war and peace. This attitude, A , will be represented by a point on a scale from $A = 1$ for a strong pro-war bias to $A = -1$ for a strong antiwar bias. In this model, this attitude will apply to both policies and outcomes.

The second variable that describes the preferences of the voter represents the party identification component of the vote. The voter has an underlying preference for the government or the opposition. The party bias, P , will also be measured on the $[-1, 1]$ interval, with 1 a strong bias toward the government and -1 representing the strongest bias in favor of the opposition. Again, P can also be thought of as representing the influence of other issues—the domestic economy, abortion, whatever—that the voter may like or dislike about the government and the opposition.

In addition to these two preference variables, there are the three weighting variables that determine the relative role of party, outcomes, and policy

differences in the voter's decision making. v_p represents the relative weight of the party bias. v_R represents the weight of the concern with outcomes (R for results). v_D represents the relative weight the voter puts on the policy differences between the government and the opposition (D for differences).

I should digress for a moment here to say that the difference between policy-based voting and outcome-based voting is particularly important in this model. As I discuss at greater length below, the security dilemma plays a significant role in the international component of my analysis. The security dilemma forces us to recognize that under different international conditions the same policy might lead to quite different outcomes (Jervis 1971). In this regard, it is important to note that the voter in this model is not sophisticated about the security dilemma. Voters prefer belligerent policies when they are basically in favor of war, and they prefer conciliatory policies when they are basically in favor of peace. This bars me from including the important possibility that the median voter likes a belligerent policy in order to avoid war. I do, however, allow policymakers to pursue this more sophisticated course.⁵

The Voting Decision

We can now describe the voting decision. The median voter reelects the government when that voter makes a net positive evaluation of the government compared with the opposition in accordance with the relative weight that voter puts on outcomes, policy differences, and party membership. In formal terms, the median voter reelects the government if and only if:

$$ADv_D + ARv_R + Pv_p \geq 0, \quad (1)$$

where

- A = attitude of the median voter toward war
- D = difference between policy of government and policy of opposition
- R = results of government policy in the international arena
- P = party bias of median voter
- v_D = voter's weight on policy difference
- v_R = voter's weight on result of government policy
- v_p = voter's weight on underlying party bias

and subject to:

$$A, D, R, P \in [-1, 1]$$

$$v_D + v_R + v_p = 1.$$

Equation 1 will yield a result that falls into the range $[-1, 1]$. We can map this outcome into the $[0, 1]$ space and then use it to represent the probability that the government will be elected (e) as in equation 2:

$$e = .5(ADv_D + ARv_R + Pv_p) + .5. \quad (2)$$

The government and the opposition will want to choose policies to optimize their respective probabilities of being elected. The government will want to maximize e , while the opposition will want to minimize it. They will both be constrained in their attempts to do this, however, by the realization that their foreign policy choices also have international effects. To fully specify the behavior of the government and the opposition, we will now need to develop a corresponding model of that arena.

The International Conflict Model

The international arena encompasses the foreign policy choices of two states: state A and state B. The domestic politics in state A will be modeled as in equation 2. Two parties will choose foreign policies that have effects on both their electoral prospects and the international environment. The governing party's foreign policy is actually pursued and leads to results in the real world. The foreign policy of the opposition party is a policy statement that only affects real world results to the degree that other states pay attention to this electoral competition.

State B and the Security Dilemma

I will model state B as a unitary rational actor. State B will choose whether or not there will be a war based on its reactions to the foreign policy dynamics within state A. The decision process for state B is defined by two variables. The first is the degree to which state B can be deterred. Following the logic of the security dilemma, state B will either be deterred or provoked by a belligerent foreign policy line in state A. We can think of nature choosing a type for state B—either deterrable or provokable—and the variable d can represent a belief about the probability that state B is deterrable. A deterrable state B ($d = 1$) will choose peace if state A chooses belligerence, but it will be tempted to exploit state A or start a war if state A chooses a conciliatory policy. A provokable state B ($d = 0$) will choose war if state A chooses belligerence and will choose peace if state A chooses a conciliatory policy.

State B and the Domestic Politics of State A

The second variable that will describe state B is the degree to which it observes the internal political process in state A. In this model, this observation will be

represented by state B's attention to the foreign policy line of the opposition party in state A. The variable t —for *transparency*—will capture this effect, varying from 0 when state B pays no attention at all to state A's domestic opposition to 1 when state B is obsessed with the policy line of state A's domestic opposition and ignores the foreign policy of the government.⁶

The attention that state B pays to the opposition party in state A will likely be a function of two factors. First, and most commonly discussed, is the likelihood that the opposition party will soon become the governing party. State B might pay considerable attention to domestic politics in state A if the opposition party is advocating a dramatically different foreign policy line than the government and if there are indicators that the opposition party is highly likely to take over from the governing party. The importance of this phenomenon is often seen most clearly when states fail to pay adequate attention to domestic opposition forces in other states. Consider the failure of the United States to adequately assess the frailties of the regime of the Shah of Iran and the vitriolic anti-Americanism of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

A second kind of transparency comes into play to the degree that domestic politics are seen as a part of state A's overall foreign policy. This kind of transparency has not garnered much discussion in the international relations literature. It is not difficult, however, to think of cases that raise this issue. A state that is trying to present a highly aggressive foreign policy in order to deter an enemy may find such a policy less effective to the degree that an enemy finds comfort in the opposition's lack of support for such a foreign policy line. In the months leading up to the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein seemed to take considerable, if misplaced, solace in the belief that the Democratic Congress would not support George Bush's more forceful foreign policy line.

From the other direction, a state trying to present a conciliatory front may be stymied to the degree that domestic opposition forces advocate a hard line policy. Current American policy toward Russia is surely predicated on a sense of both of these sources of transparency. American defense policy toward Russia has to be based on attempt to assess the relative weakness of the current Yeltsin government. No matter how friendly Yeltsin may seem, American leaders are unlikely to too quickly draw down American forces in light of the hard line voices that so seriously threaten his power. In a little bit different scenario, George Bush's primary battle against the right wing of the Republican Party in 1988 forced him to take a more belligerent foreign policy line than he would have preferred. He attempted to mitigate the effects of this rhetoric outside of the domestic arena by telling Gorbachev that President Reagan was surrounded by "marginal intellectual thugs" who would try to portray Bush as a closet liberal. He assured Gorbachev that once he was elected he would work to improve U.S.-Soviet relations. In the meantime, he urged Gorbachev to ignore the many things he might have to do and say to get elected. Gorbachev later recalled this

discussion as the most important talk he ever had with George Bush (Beschloss and Talbott 1993, 3-4).

The Probability of War

The foreign policy positions of the government and the opposition in state A will be defined in terms of a probability of pursuing a belligerent policy. Thus, $g = 1$ will reflect certainty that the government is going to pursue a belligerent foreign policy, while $g = 0$ will reflect certainty that the government will pursue a policy of conciliation. b will play the corresponding role for the opposition. Once the government and the opposition choose their foreign policies, the probability of war will depend on whether state B is deterrable or provokable and the amount of attention state B pays respectively to the government and the opposition in state A. This can be expressed as in equation 3:

$$p = (1 - d)[(1 - t)g + tb] + d[(1 - t)(1 - g) + t(1 - b)], \quad (3)$$

where

p = probability of war

d = probability that state B is deterrable or provokable

t = weight that state B gives to opposition's policies in state A (transparency)

g = probability that the government will choose a belligerent foreign policy

b = probability that the opposition will choose a belligerent foreign policy

$p, d, t, g, b \in [0, 1]$

In equation 3 the probability of war is the sum of the probability that a provokable state will be provoked and the probability that a deterrable state will be tempted. More specifically, the probability of provoking a state is the probability that state B is provokable ($1 - d$) multiplied by the probabilities that the government and/or the opposition will be belligerent (g and b , respectively). These latter probabilities are weighted by the attention state B pays to government and opposition policies ($(1 - t)$ and t , respectively). The probability that state B will be tempted to exploit state A is the probability that state B will be deterrable (d) multiplied by the sum of the probabilities that the government and/or the opposition will be conciliatory ($(1 - g)$ and $(1 - b)$, respectively). Again, these probabilities are weighted by the relative attention that state B pays to the government and the opposition ($(1 - t)$ and t , respectively).

Equation 3 can be rearranged to focus attention on the policies of the government and opposition, as in equation 4:

$$p = g(1 - t)(1 - 2d) + bt(1 - 2d) + d. \quad (4)$$

As discussed previously, the intuition behind equation 4 is that belligerence will count for more—either in provoking or deterring state B—when the government is backed up by the opposition. Likewise, to the degree that state B pays attention to the opposition in state A, it will be more likely to react to a conciliatory policy from state A that reflects a foreign policy consensus.

The Combined Model

I now turn to the task of integrating the domestic and international models. Beginning with the electoral model (eq. 2), there are two variables that connect foreign policy and the international environment. First, we need to define D for the difference between the policy of the government and the policy of the opposition. I use the simple expression $(g - b)$ —the difference between the policy of the government and the policy of the opposition—in that role here. There are more complex ways to describe the policy difference that are more satisfying as general functions, but $(g - b)$ offers some computational advantages and is adequate for the analysis that follows here.⁷ As with D , $(g - b)$ will span the $[-1, 1]$ interval. It will take the -1 value when the government is maximally conciliatory ($g = 0$) and the opposition is maximally belligerent ($b = 1$) and will equal 1 when the government is maximally belligerent and the opposition is maximally conciliatory. When the government and the opposition take the same position, it will equal zero. It will be positive when the government is more belligerent than the opposition and negative when the opposition is more belligerent than the government.

The primary point of connection between the international and domestic models is the role of the probability of war as a central indicator of the results of foreign policy choices. This brings us to the second variable needed in the election model (eq. 2), which is the result variable, R . I approximate R from the probability of war by mapping the probability of war from the $[0, 1]$ range to the $[-1, 1]$ range with a simple linear transformation:

$$R = 2p - 1. \quad (5)$$

When the probability of war is greater than .5, R is positive. R is negative when the probability of war is less than .5. When war is a certainty, $R = 1$. When peace is a certainty, $R = -1$.

Substituting the probability of war from equation 4, into equation 5 we get:

$$R = g2(1 - t)(1 - 2d) + b2t(1 - 2d) + 2d - 1. \quad (6)$$

We can now rewrite the election equation (eq. 2) with the substitutions for D and R as in equation 7:

$$e = .5\{A(g - b)v_D + A[g2(1 - t)(1 - 2d) + b2t(1 - 2d) + 2d - 1]v_R + Pv_p\} + .5. \quad (7)$$

Rearranging terms to put the focus on the foreign policy choices of the government and the opposition, g and b , respectively, gives us equation 8:

$$e = g(.5)A[v_D + 2(1 - t)(1 - 2d)v_R] - b(.5)A[v_D - 2t(1 - 2d)v_R] + .5Av_R(2d - 1) + .5Pv_p + .5. \quad (8)$$

I have now defined both the probability of war and the probability of the government being reelected as linear combinations of the policy choices of the government and the opposition. To move to an understanding of the maximizing behavior of these two actors, we need to put these probabilities in the context of expected utilities.

The Utility Equations

In this model, I present the government and the opposition as players that receive utility both from being elected and from seeing their preferred results in the international system. Thus, both parties have mixed motives. They seek reelection and specific international outcomes. The politicians in this model are not the single-minded reelection maximizers that are common in many models of domestic politics alone. When the same actions maximize utility in both the international and domestic dimensions, the choice of policy will be relatively easy. The more difficult, and also more interesting, situations will arise when the same actions increase utility in one dimension while decreasing it in the other. The expected utility of the government and the opposition will be based on the utility they receive from war and election multiplied by the probabilities of these events. I will define a variable, W , to be the utility the government gets from war and \bar{W} to be the utility from peace. Similarly, E will be the utility the government gets from being elected, while \bar{E} will represent the utility from not being elected. For the opposition, I will use W^o and E^o for the utility of war and election, respectively.⁸ The expected utility equations will be as presented in equations 9 and 10.

$$EU(\text{government}) = pW + (1 - p)\bar{W} + eE + (1 - e)\bar{E} \quad (9)$$

$$EU(\text{opposition}) = pW^\circ + (1-p)\bar{W}^\circ + (1-e)E^\circ + e\bar{E}^\circ. \quad (10)$$

Substituting p and e from equations 4 and 8 and rearranging terms gives us equations 11 and 12:

$$\begin{aligned} EU(\text{govt}) = & g[(1-t)(1-2d)(W - \bar{W}) + (Av_R(1-t)(1-2d) \\ & + .5Av_D)(E - \bar{E})] + b[t(1-2d)(W - \bar{W}) + (Av_R t(1-2d) \\ & + .5Av_D)(E - \bar{E})] + d(W - \bar{W}) + (.5Av_R(2d-1) + .5Pv_P \\ & + .5)(E - \bar{E}) + \bar{W} + \bar{E} \end{aligned} \quad (11)$$

$$\begin{aligned} EU(\text{opp}) = & g[(1-t)(1-2d)(W^\circ - \bar{W}^\circ) + (Av_R(1-t)(1-2d) \\ & + .5Av_D)(\bar{E}^\circ - E^\circ)] + b[t(1-2d)(W^\circ - \bar{W}^\circ) + (Av_R t(1-2d) \\ & - .5Av_D)(\bar{E}^\circ - E^\circ)] + d(W^\circ - \bar{W}^\circ) + (.5Av_R(2d-1) + .5Pv_P \\ & + .5)(\bar{E}^\circ - E^\circ) + \bar{W}^\circ + E^\circ. \end{aligned} \quad (12)$$

Choosing a Foreign Policy

The utility equation for the government is linear in g . Thus, utility will be maximized when g is either 0 or 1.⁹ For the purpose of this model, the choice of the government and the opposition will always be either complete belligerence or complete conciliation. Whether the government and the opposition choose belligerence or conciliation will be a function of the signs and magnitudes of the five remaining parameters (t, A, d, v_P, v_R), plus the relative utilities of war and of election.

Equation 13 gives the change in the expected utility of the government for a change in belligerence. When the right side of this equation is positive, the government will pursue a belligerent policy. When the right side is negative, it will pursue a conciliatory policy. The critical point at which government policy will change from conciliatory to belligerent occurs when the right side of the equation is zero. This point is shown by equation 15. Equations 14 and 16 are the corresponding relationships for the opposition's choice of policy.

$$\begin{aligned} \delta EU(\text{govt})/\delta g = & (1-t)(1-2d)(W - \bar{W}) + (.5Av_D \\ & + Av_R(1-t)(1-2d))(E - \bar{E}) \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \delta EU(\text{opp})/\delta b = & t(1-2d)(W^\circ - \bar{W}^\circ) \\ & + (.5Av_D - Av_R t(1-2d))(E^\circ - \bar{E}^\circ) \end{aligned} \quad (14)$$

Government:

$$(1-t)(1-2d)/(.5Av_D + Av_R(1-t)(1-2d)) = (E - \bar{E})/(\bar{W} - W) \quad (15)$$

Opposition:

$$t(1-2d)/(.5Av_D - Av_R t(1-2d)) = (E^\circ - \bar{E}^\circ)/(\bar{W}^\circ - W^\circ). \quad (16)$$

The right side of equations 15 and 16 is simply the ratio of the relative utility of being elected over the relative utility of peace. I will call this the *utility ratio*. The left side looks more complicated, but it is also relatively straightforward to interpret. $(1-t)$ is the relative importance of government policy for the behavior of state B. $(1-2d)$ is the probability that state B is deterrable mapped to the $[-1, 1]$ interval, so that it indicates both whether state B is deterrable or provokable (the sign) and the magnitude of that propensity (the absolute value of $(1-2d)$). Thus, the numerator tells us the likelihood that the government's actions will lead to war or peace. The denominator tells us the likelihood that the government's actions will lead to reelection. This has two components. The first component ($.5Av_D$) shows the contribution of the government's policy to the difference between the policies of the government and the opposition weighted by the emphasis the voter puts on policy differences (v_D) and whether the voter has a strong attitude toward war or peace (A). The second component incorporates the likelihood of war expression we saw in the numerator, $(1-t)(1-2d)$, with the weight the voter puts on results (v_R) and the voter's attitude toward war and peace (A). Thus, the left side of the equation is the ratio of the influence of government policy on war over the influence of government policy on reelection. I will call this the *effects ratio*. The effects ratio for the opposition is derived in the same manner, but it is conditioned by t , which is the attention state B pays to the opposition, rather than by $(1-t)$, which reflects the relative attention paid to the government.

I have now derived a relatively straightforward single model that links the domestic and international incentives faced by government and opposition leaders. Both the government and the opposition attempt to balance the ratio of the effects of their policies with the ratio of utilities they get, respectively, from domestic and international outcomes. Some comparative statics will help to illuminate the kinds of behavior this model would predict with variation in the underlying components of the model at both the domestic and international levels.

Comparative Statics

Let us begin with a consideration of the effects of the perceived nature of state B. Suppose that the government values peace about three times as strongly as it values reelection. This will set the right side of the equation—the utility ratio—at $1/3$. Let state B focus 80 percent of its attention on the actions of the government and 20 percent on the policy of the opposition ($t = .2$). Let the median voter be moderately antiwar ($A = -.5$). The median voter will put more emphasis on results than on policies but will also put some weight on a party bias ($v_R = .5, v_D = .3, v_P = .2$). Finally, we allow d , the probability that state B is deterrable, to vary. Figure 1 is a plot of the utility ratio and the effects ratio as a function of d . To the left of the asymptotic point for the effects ratio (where the effect of belligerence on the election is zero), the government will pursue a belligerent foreign policy whenever the effects ratio is above the utility ratio.¹⁰ When the effects ratio is below the utilities ratio, the government will pursue a conciliatory foreign policy in accord with both the demands of the median voter and the international system. When the effects ratio line crosses the utilities ratio, which happens when $d \approx .52$, the government will switch from a conciliatory to a belligerent foreign policy. This suggests a very small zone between $d = .5$ and $d = .52$ when the government realizes that its policy is not optimal for avoiding war but pursues a conciliatory policy because of the perceived electoral benefits. Under these conditions it appears relatively unlikely that a government will be tempted to pursue a policy that compromises its sense of the national interest.

The incentives faced by the opposition in this case are a little more complex. In the first place, the opposition policy has much less impact on state B ($t = .2$). This increases the range in which the opposition will be tempted to pander to the public, since there is less of a down side in terms of the international effects. Likewise, good outcomes hurt the electoral prospects of the opposition in proportion to the degree that the public pays attention to outcomes. This means that the result and policy components of the electoral effect can cut in opposite directions (this can be seen in the minus sign in the denominator on the left side of eq. 16). If, like the government, the opposition is three times as concerned about peace as it is about getting elected, the opposition will be tempted to espouse a conciliatory foreign policy that increases the risk of war when the probability that state B requires deterrence is between .5 and .57. Unlike the case for the government, we can see in figure 2 that this temptation is highly elastic with respect to the utility ratio. If opposition politicians were to become twice as concerned about getting elected as they are about peace, they would pander to the public by espousing a conciliatory policy even if they were certain that such a policy would lead to war if it were to be enacted.

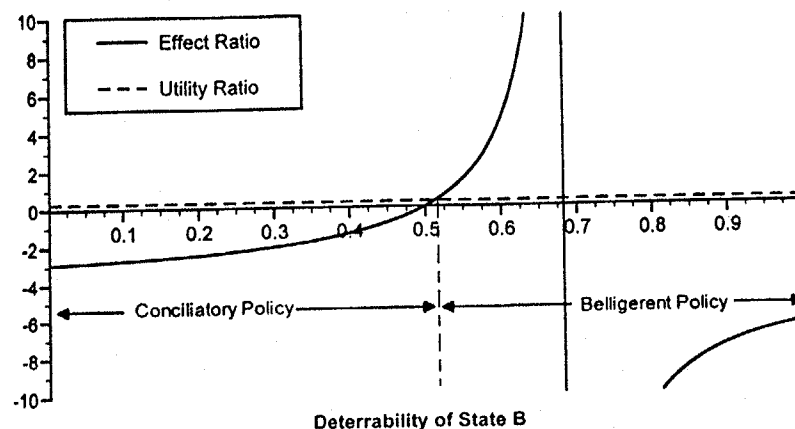


Fig. 1. Government incentives for a belligerent foreign policy

The Utility Ratio

The policy pursued by the government is considerably less sensitive to changes in the utility ratio. Going back to the government's incentives in figure 1 and thinking about the right side of the equation—the relative valuation of peace and reelection—we can see that the range for the treason temptation is quite stable as long as peace is preferred to war and elections are no more important than peace. In this case, holding the other parameters to the same values as in the previous example, the right side of equation 14 will fall within the $[0, 1]$ range, and the temptation to pursue a conciliatory policy when there is a belief that state B is deterrable will be within the range $.5 \leq d \leq .54$. If reelection is more important to the government than peace, it is naturally more likely that policies that are suboptimal from the standpoint of international relations will be pursued. In this case, however, the government would have to have a very significant preference for reelection over peace to make much of a difference. If the government was 10 times more interested in reelection than in peace, it would pursue a conciliatory policy in accord with both its domestic and international interests as long as it was likely that state B was provokable. It would keep pursuing that policy—at odds with its sense of the national interest—if there was between a 50 and 60 percent probability that state B needed to be deterred. In that range, the electoral benefit of pandering to the public's desire for a conciliatory policy would outweigh the risk of war upsetting the results-oriented public. If the probability that belligerence will prevent war is above .6,

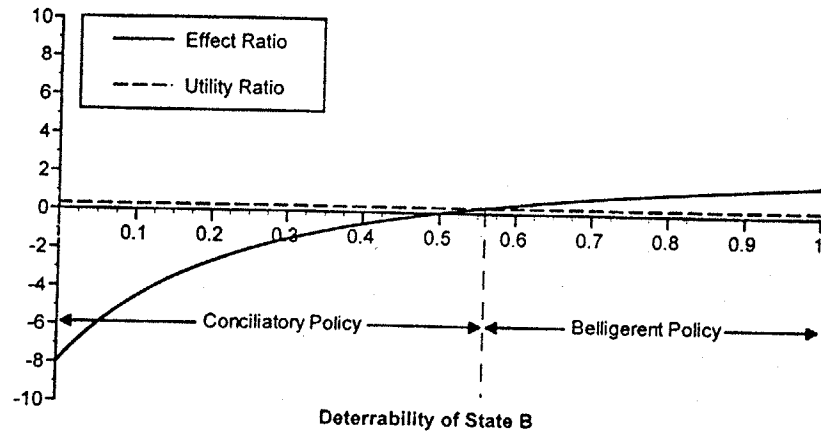


Fig. 2. Opposition incentives for a belligerent foreign policy

the results effect is sufficient to outweigh the policy effect. In this range, the concerns for reelection and peace will both work to make the government more belligerent.¹¹ Indeed, above the asymptotic point at about $d = .7$ there is no value for the utility ratio that will motivate a trade of the national interest for electoral interests.

There are, as we will see, ways to move the asymptotic point and thus to increase the range in which a greater relative concern with election will lead to policies that are perceived to compromise the national interest. But it is also important to emphasize that the utility ratio will be very much affected by the way in which the international results are framed. Foreign policy choices are rarely framed simply in terms of peace or war. If the war option is framed in a way that makes the costs of a given policy seem less, the utility ratio will get larger. One common way for this to happen is through time shifting. This analysis has been static. The choice of politicians, however, is often not a choice of war or no war but rather a risk of war now that may be repairable in the future. Thus, Roosevelt did not envision himself foregoing the possibility of deterring Hitler after the 1940 election just because before the election, while taking credit for the neutrality legislation he had consistently opposed, he assured the voters: "Your boys are not going to be sent into any foreign wars" (Divine 1974, 81-82). To put it in the most stark terms, his real choice was between deterring Hitler with some degree of effectiveness now (before the election) or deterring Hitler later (after the election) with some perhaps marginally diminished effectiveness. Even though the absolute costs of failing to deter Hitler were clearly very high, the marginal cost of delay may have been viewed as relatively low and thus could be traded off against the benefits of domestic electoral politics.

The utility ratio may also be affected to the degree that politicians blur the distinction between electoral and national interest gains. Politicians are often quite adept at what Alexander George (1980, 234) has labeled value extension—that is, the extension of values on one dimension onto another. To the degree that politicians see their own election as critical to the national interest, or concomitantly see grave threats to the national interest in the election of their adversaries, the importance of election will increase relative to the importance of a specific outcome on one particular issue. Politicians who conflate their election with the national interest are more likely to rationalize electorally expedient uses of force abroad.

Transparency

The transparency variable (t) indicates the degree to which state B pays attention to the policy statements of the opposition in state A. When $t = 0$ the opposition's policy statements are irrelevant to the actions of state B. In this case, the opposition will have no incentive to espouse responsible policies and will always pursue the policies that please the public. The larger t is the smaller will be the effect of government policies on the actions of state B and thus the larger will be the range in which the government will be willing to trade international risks for domestic electoral gains. If t were to rise above .5—indicating that state B pays more attention to the opposition's policy statements than to the government's policy actions—figures 1 and 2 would switch and the government would have consistently more liberty to pursue domestically popular policies with less concern about their international repercussions.

Retrospective and Prospective Voting

Increasing voter attention to results has opposite effects on the government and the opposition. The more results matter, the more the government has to pursue policies that it believes will ensure the optimal international outcomes, even at the expense of policy positions that alienate domestic constituencies. The opposition, on the other hand, will find its policies under less public scrutiny. There will be an increased temptation to seek electoral profits from working to sabotage the results achieved by the government's policies. Results-oriented voters will thus be able to place more trust in the sincerity of the governing party, but they will have to be more suspicious of the opposition.

Increasing voter attention to policies and decreasing their attention to results will flatten the relevant part of the curve and thus will increase the potential area of a treason temptation for both the government and the opposition. If we reverse the values we used in the earlier example, so that voter concern with policies is now .5 while concern with results is .3, the range for a government

that is three times as concerned about peace as about reelection would only increase from about $.50 < d < .52$ to $.50 < d < .53$. The real change would come in the potential range. Where, in the case illustrated in figure 1, a government that is 10 times more concerned with reelection than peace would be tempted in the range $.50 < d < .57$, when we increase the voter's focus on policies the range becomes $.50 < d < .81$. The opposition case is even more dramatic. An opposition that values peace and reelection about *equally* would be induced to pander to public demands for any d in the range $.50 < d < .88$.

The importance of policy relative to results is particularly likely to be high when results are ambiguous or unknown. For the reasons given previously, this may be the case in international relations more often than we might want to admit. Except in truly dramatic times, voters will need to have a sense of the relationship between policies and outcomes in order to evaluate the difficult counterfactual question of whether things are going well or poorly.

An important implication of this model, then, is that for voters a little bit of intelligence is a most dangerous thing. A public that focuses solely on its party bias or on outcomes—that essentially ignores foreign policy—would create no treason temptation. Likewise, a public that recognizes the security dilemma and was as attuned to the intricacies of foreign policy as elites would leave no space between the demands of the international environment and the demands of the domestic environment. It is only when the public has strong policy preferences at odds with the preferences of the government and opposition parties that these actors will find it advantageous to sacrifice the national interest for their personal political needs.

The Attitude toward War

Finally, changing the public's attitude toward war changes the steepness of the curves in figures 1 and 2. Decreasing the public's antiwar attitude makes war a less critical electoral issue. This increases the steepness of the curves and thus decreases the range of the treason temptation for both the government and the opposition. Increasing the public's antiwar attitude makes war a more critical issue. This flattens the curves and makes the policy choice more sensitive to changes in the utility ratio. The irony, then, is that the more intensely the public feels about peace the more likely it is to get a government that will sacrifice peace for the electoral benefit of pursuing the popular policy.

Since in this model the danger and costs of war and exploitation are symmetric, making the public pro-war simply flips the figures around. A policy of belligerence will be in accord with both the national interest and the electoral interests of the parties as long as the probability that state B is deterrable is above $.5$. When it is clear that state B is provokable, both the government and the opposition are likely to pursue a conciliatory policy, despite public protes-

tations. The government and especially the opposition will be most tempted to pander to the pro-war public with a belligerent foreign policy at the expense of the national interest when the probability that state B is deterrable (d) is just below $.5$.

The Probability of Election and the Probability of War

Thus far, I have focused on the temptation to pursue policies that are at odds with this formulation of the national interest. I turn back, now, to consider the relationship between these foreign policy choices and the probabilities of war and election. Figure 3 plots the probabilities of war and the government being elected under the parameters of the case presented earlier ($t = .2$, $A = -.5$, $v_R = .5$, $v_D = .3$). These parameters are sufficient for calculating the probability of war. For calculating the probability of the government being elected, I have added the assumption that there is no party bias ($P = 0$). The inclusion of a party bias would simply shift the curve up or down by the amount of the party bias multiplied by the weight on party bias (v_p).¹²

The Probability of War

There are several features to note in these plots. The most obvious characteristic is that the probability of war is inversely related to the extremeness of either the deterrability or the provokability of state B. The clearer the imperatives of the international system, the more likely state A is to choose the appropriate policy and the less likely war is. In this model, it is when there is the greatest ambiguity about the appropriate policy to pursue that the danger of war is the highest.¹³

It is also important to see the way that the probability of war interacts with the foreign policy choices of the government and the opposition. If the government and the opposition always pursue the optimal international result, the probability of war would be two straight lines in a single peak at $d = .5$ and $pr(\text{war}) = .5$. Compared with this baseline form, we see that in the small range between $d = .5$ and $d = .52$ the choice of the government to pursue a conciliatory policy, despite its sense that state B is marginally more likely to require deterrence, pushes the probability of war above the 50 percent mark. The probability of war then remains above its baseline as long as the opposition continues to argue for a conciliatory policy despite its awareness of the shortfalls of such a policy in the international realm. Thus, the temptation of the government and the opposition to focus on domestic political battles at the expense of the national interest is greatest precisely when the international system is the most dangerous. The international system, in turn, is made even more dangerous by this lack of attention.

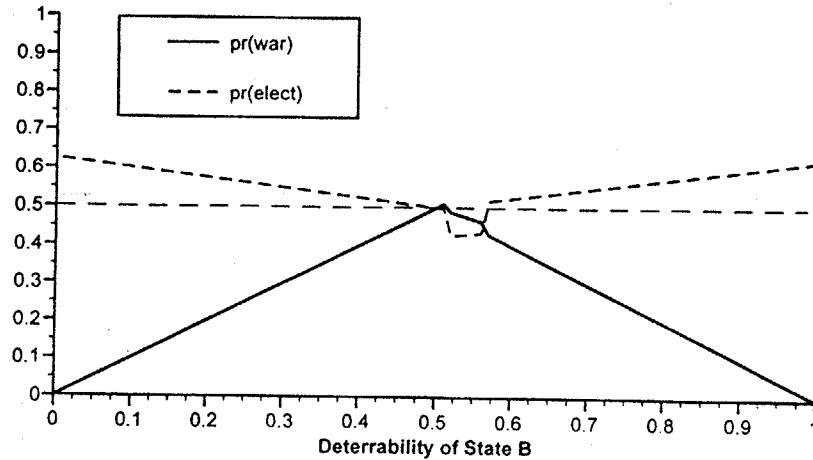


Fig. 3. The probabilities of war and election. ($t = .2$, $A = -.5$, $V_R = .5$, $V_D = .3$; the horizontal line at .5 is for reference.)

To look at this from another angle: when the policy implications of international dangers are clear, the opposing domestic political forces will have clear incentives to join together. Responsible political parties will have both national interest and electoral incentives to pursue the policies demanded by the international system, even when there is strong public pressure to follow another course. When the policy implications of international dangers are not clear, however, the two political parties will not respond with a united front. Ambiguities in the relationship between policies and outcomes will not only create more potential for policy differences because of this uncertainty, but they will also create a space in which there may be an electoral temptation to pursue a policy contrary to the national interest.

One can think here of the period leading up to World War II when the West (and Stalin as well, for that matter) vacillated between a policy of appeasement and a policy of belligerence toward Hitler. The inability to see clearly what the appropriate policy is leaves a political space for domestic political actors to pursue the electorally optimal policy. Stalin, admittedly, probably didn't have much of a problem with this, but in Britain, France, Canada, and the United States there were obvious dilemmas in trying to choose a foreign policy line that could optimize both the domestic and international outcomes. Isolationism flourished in the West, producing domestic demands for a conciliatory policy, while most government leaders recognized the need to restrain Hitler's ambitions. In Canada, MacKenzie King was able to pursue a belligerent policy in support of Britain only by limiting Canadian capabilities by promising not to

send conscripts overseas.¹⁴ The infamous prewar policy of the British Conservative Party was simultaneously "all sanctions short of war" and "peace at almost any price."¹⁵ In the American presidential campaign of 1940, both Willkie and Roosevelt favored more involvement in the European war but felt electorally constrained to take a more neutral line. Willkie was pushed in that direction by his Republican backers. Roosevelt was pushed by the fear that Willkie would more vigorously take up the isolationist cause (Divine 1974).

The Probability of Election

The plot of the probability of the government's being reelected is also revealing. Because of the sensitivity of the electorate to international outcomes, the opposition party benefits from the increased probability of war, giving the electoral curve the inverse shape of the probability of war curve. As with the war curve, however, the opportunity to pander to public demands for a conciliatory policy when the international system marginally demands a deterrence policy distorts this baseline shape. In this case, the opposition can make a significant dent in the government's reelection prospects by pursuing a popular policy of conciliation when the government feels constrained by the demands of the international environment to pursue deterrence. Without the opportunity to pander to the public, the opposition would never be able to beat the government under the conditions described here.¹⁶ It is only with the luxury of being out of power, and being relatively ignored by state B, that the opposition has any hope of gaining power. In the current example, the range from $d = .5$ to $d = .57$ puts the government in a difficult position: despite sharing the same relative preferences for peace and election and the same sense of the international system as the opposition, the responsibilities of power mean that the government will pursue a policy that, while maximizing its utility, also may cost it the election.

Limitations and Extensions

It is important to set out explicitly some of the limitations of this model both for the purpose of putting the results into perspective and because they are suggestive for ways in which the model might be improved in future iterations.

In the first place, some of the important results I have presented here are driven by the fact that I present the public as unsophisticated relative to elites. In particular, I have modeled the public as ignorant of the probability that state B is deterrable and unversed in the intricacies of the security dilemma. While there will be some controversy as to how far this assumption deviates from reality, it would clearly be preferable to be able to assess the role of different levels of public capabilities beyond the role of simple attentiveness to policies.

At the other end of the spectrum, this model may give voters too much

credit by making their views independent of elite views. It is clear that there is a strong relationship between elite and mass opinion (see Zaller 1992). Since this model is not dynamic, I cannot use it to directly assess the role of rally effects or the creation of public attitudes by government and opposition leaders. Still, if Kennan (1951, 62) is right that demagogues will always be a problem because "the truth is sometimes a poor competitor in the market place of ideas," we could continue to think of the treason temptation being built on the relative manipulability of the public. In this case, the model would show when political leaders face a temptation to create public enthusiasms for policies that are at odds with the national interest.

The lack of a dynamic element also limits my ability to use this model to assess the interaction of government, opposition, and foreign actors. One obvious direction for future work would be to allow the choices of these actors to affect each other. In particular, it might make sense to force the government to choose a policy first and then give the opposition the opportunity to pick an optimal response. State B, in turn, might also be allowed to select a foreign policy in accordance with its expectations about domestic politics in state A. This would raise the important possibility of strategic behavior by all of the actors.

Finally, a more sophisticated model would allow more control over information conditions. In this model, the government and the opposition have the same perspective on the nature of state B. It is often the case, of course, that domestic actors cannot agree on the nature of state B. A more sophisticated model than the one I present here might assess the degree to which the government and the opposition deviate from their own individual perspectives on the national interest. This would be particularly useful in combination with the inclusion of interaction effects, since it would allow these actors to base their policy compromises more directly on political competition with their domestic adversaries.

Conclusions

The world is a complex place. There will always be occasions for conflict between popular and elite conceptions of the national interest. Unless our view of popular passion is so lofty that we always see in the public voice some best approximation of the national interest, we will have to be concerned about the temptation for elites to knowingly sacrifice their conception of the common good for their own political gains. In the model I have presented here, this temptation arises not from venality or short-sightedness but from rational utility maximization, from reason.

To the degree that this model accurately reflects the interaction of domestic and international incentives, there is both bad news and good news for those

concerned with democracy and national security policy. The bad news is that there is a set of circumstances under which governments will sacrifice the national interest to their electoral needs. The intuition that there will be political actors who are willing to risk international crises and even wars to bolster their domestic standing is reproduced in this model. The good news is that there is only a small range of parameter values where that will happen. For the vast majority of possible parameter values, the government's international and national incentives are in accord.

Moreover, there is a plausibly large range in which the government will accept electoral defeat rather than pursue irresponsible policies. The fact that an irresponsible opposition is elected may be unfortunate, but this model should also be reassuring in that direction. The irresponsibility of the opposition arises precisely because it is not in power. Once in power it will face an incentive structure that emphasizes the international effects of its actions, and, in turn, it will behave as responsibly as did the previous government.

This model also suggests a number of interesting dynamics in the relationship between voters and the international system. Most significantly, increasing voters' concerns about foreign policy without increasing their ability to observe and understand the connection between policies and outcomes will increase the pressure on strategic politicians to act irresponsibly.

The challenge now, of course, is to discuss parameter values empirically. Is it the case that crises are characterized by high uncertainty about the deterrability of states and that political leaders are considerably more concerned about their electoral prospects than about almost anything else? If so, we will see the national interest compromised more frequently for domestic concerns. If, on the other hand, crises are distributed fairly evenly on the deterrability/provokability continuum, and government leaders are, at worst, only two or three times more concerned with election than with war and peace, then, with moderate assumptions about the other parameters, it will be relatively unusual for government policy to reflect domestic rather than international concerns.

Whether pandering to public demands is a form of treason or a realization of the aspirations of representative democracy is a question that will continue to attract the attention of political philosophers. Since this dynamic affects the foundation of our conception of states as actors in the international system, it must also be of concern for students of international relations. The classical realists incorporated this concern into their analysis of international relations. My argument here has been that we need to understand the dynamics and prevalence of these trade-offs before we move too quickly with the structural realists to dismiss these concerns. My hope is that the model I have constructed will begin to provide a foundation for specifying more carefully the conditions under which the trade-off of domestic and international concerns will be more or less likely.

NOTES

1. On this debate, see Pitkin 1967. A more formal approach to this issue is provided by Riker 1982.
2. Bueno de Mesquita, Siverson, and Woller (1992) have also argued that in terms of war there is a strong connection between international incentives and domestic electoral incentives in that, historically, losing wars has proven a very bad electoral strategy.
3. Charles Fairbanks Jr. writes in *Commentary* in August 1989: "The Politburo, with tactical brilliance, has realized that the pause enforced by its internal crisis can be exploited in a peace offensive to weaken the West and lighten the pressures exerted by the international trend toward democracy. Lulled, we could well dismantle our military forces, and allow NATO to fall apart, thereby renouncing our ability to influence a complex and dangerous transition."
4. While these five variables are necessary for developing the model, most of the analysis will function with effectively just two variables: the attitude toward war and the relative weight of policies and outcomes.
5. Technically, this approach should not change the analysis as long as there is a gap between the voter's sense of the connection between policy and outcomes and the view of the government and opposition elites about this connection. Furthermore, while I use the war/peace issue to represent one kind of outcome, we could substitute less extreme categories such as conflict/cooperation.
6. In future models, this might be tied to the parties' anticipated electoral prospects. For now it is an independent variable.
7. The use of $(g - b)$ to represent policy difference is an important simplification. A more satisfactory function would be $|A - b| - |A - g|$ or the frequently used $(A - b)^2 - (A - g)^2$ with $A \in [0, 1]$. This has the disadvantage, however, of either making the math less tractable or requiring the subsequent analysis to be broken up into cases, depending on the relative values of A , b , and g . Because, as I will show, this model forces g and b to the values of 1 or 0, the use of $(g - b)$ and $A \in [-1, 1]$ maintains the appropriate coefficients for g and b for all of the cases. None of the following conclusions would change with the use of $|A - b| - |A - g|$ and $A \in [0, 1]$.
8. In this two-party model, the probability of the opposition being elected is the complement of the probability of the government being elected: $(1 - e)$.
9. This knife-edged situation is not surprising given the basic simplicity of this model. Increasing the interactive character of the terms is a direction of future development that would provide a more nuanced sense of the optimal degree of belligerence or conciliation.
10. Mathematically, whether the effects ratio being above or below the utility ratio produces a belligerent policy depends on the signs of the utility ratio and the domestic effects part of the effects ratio (through their effect on the direction of the inequality). Above the asymptotic point, at around .7 (where the denominator of the effects ratio approaches zero), the inequality shifts and belligerent policies will be pursued as long as the effects ratio is below the utility ratio.
11. Again, above .7 the inequality is reversed. Belligerence will be pursued when the effects line is below the utility line. The asymptotic effect occurs because as the election effect goes to zero, it will be irrelevant and the domestic costs of a belligerent foreign

policy will be completely ignored. As long as peace is preferred to war and election is preferred to not being elected the utility ratio will always be positive, so there is no treason temptation in the range where d is above .7.

12. The curve could also be shifted up or down by the use of a more sophisticated function for the distance between the voter's preferred policy and the policies of the government and the opposition. The dynamics of the model relative to d would remain the same. See note 7.

13. The stark shape of the probability of war curve in this case is a function of the knife-edged nature of the incentives to be belligerent or conciliatory. One could imagine a more sophisticated model that would allow state A to pursue a moderated policy that would be in accord with the more moderate probabilities that state B is either provokable or deterrable.

14. This restriction significantly hampered the Canadian war effort. It was overturned in 1942 after a national referendum freed King from his commitment. Even after that referendum passed by a substantial margin, King waited until 1944 to lift the restriction on overseas service for conscripts. He anticipated at the time that his course of action might well destroy the political viability of the Liberal Party (Stacey 1970).

15. This policy left the opposition Labour Party in a quandary. In the 1935 election, its opposition to Conservative Party foreign policy led it to advocate a more belligerent policy line, which was widely interpreted by the electorate as a policy of "sanctions, even if it means war" (Taylor 1961, 93).

16. This is under the assumption of no party bias. Party bias will shift the entire curve up or down.

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The Domestic and International Sources of Foreign Policy: Alliance Formation in the Middle East, 1948–78

Michael J. Gilligan and W. Ben Hunt

The dominant paradigm within the study of international security continues to be realism. Of the several varieties of realism, "structural neorealism," as described by Kenneth Waltz (1979), is the most developed and continues to be applied extensively (e.g., Grieco 1988; Mearsheimer 1990, 1994). Waltz argues that the international behavior of states is driven by the dictates of self-preservation within an anarchic system. A balance of power in which states group themselves in roughly equal constellations is the only logical outcome for such a system, else states risk dismemberment at the hands of some more powerful state or group of states. The mechanism is much like that of a perfectly competitive market in which firms must maximize profits or be driven out of business. Like Adam Smith's invisible hand, the balance of power forces states into certain behaviors. In this vision of international relations, the systemic constraints on state behavior bind so tightly that states have only two options: balance or be conquered.

This is a parsimonious and elegant theory, but we have two objections to its characterization of international politics. First, states don't make policies, people do, and these people may have objectives other than the welfare of the state as a whole. Second, while the neorealist characterization suggests that the threat of war is the primary constraint on international behavior, we believe that the prospect of war is rarely much of a threat at all and therefore rarely motivates policymakers' actions.

Our first objection really concerns the neorealist model's objective function of the state—the function of goods that the state maximizes or ills that it minimizes. For neorealists, this function contains one preeminent variable—survival of the state from foreign attack. We argue that this objective function should instead model the political survival of the politicians that make security policy. Such a revised objective function incorporates and extends the world suggested by neorealists, as politicians must worry about foreign military