

Does Decision Making Matter?

Systemic Assumptions vs. Historical Reality in International Relations Theory

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Nearly fifty years ago Richard Snyder and his colleagues (1954) articulated a foreign policy decision-making perspective that suggested people matter in international affairs. This now classic work proposed such enduring concepts as “definition of the situation” and “organizational context.” Soon recognized as a distinct “level of analysis” in the study of international relations (e.g., Singer, 1961), by the 1970s decision making had become a dominant approach in the study of foreign policymaking with the proliferation of such theoretical models as bureaucratic politics (Allison, 1971; Halperin, 1974) and groupthink (Janis, 1972) as well as a number of so-called cognitive approaches to governmental decision making (Holsti, 1976; Jervis, 1976). This prominence, however, did not last long. In the 1980s systemic theories focusing on international structures regained their former primacy with rigorously formulated neorealist (Waltz, 1979; Gilpin, 1981) and neoliberal arguments (Keohane, 1984). A common feature in this “structural realism” was the dismissal of the significance of decision-making influences and other state-level phenomena on policymaking. Waltz’s critique was damning in two respects: (1) by pointing out that state-level explanations rest on reductionist logic, he portrayed foreign policy analysis as divorced from the context of international politics; and (2) by asserting that the imperatives of systemic structures (e.g., anarchy) were clear, he indicated that all leaders would readily understand them and respond according to their state’s position in the system. In short, not only did decision-making approaches miss much of the substance of international politics, they also dwelled on the largely irrelevant “noise” of internal processes in explaining state behavior. Yet by the 1990s systemic realism was itself being subjected to provocative critiques, the most compelling of which involved

case studies by “soft” realists that pointed out empirical gaps—puzzles and anomalies—in systemic explanations of great power foreign policies dating back to the Crimean War (e.g., Snyder, 1991; Rosecrance and Stein, 1993; Kupchan, 1994).

The premise of this article is that decision-making approaches are well positioned to contribute to the further evolution of international relations theory. This statement should not be considered a rejection of the theoretical developments of the past two decades; nor is it an assertion that decision making constitutes a comprehensive theoretical perspective or level of analysis. Rather, the argument here is that decision-making approaches can fill some of the gaps and account for some of the resulting anomalies in systemic explanations of conflict and war. The argument is made in three parts. First, the evidence concerning the origins of the twentieth century’s three great power conflicts—World War I, World War II, and the Cold War—is summarized with a focus on what cannot be explained by the systemic logic of structural realism. Second, the proposal is asserted and discussed that systemic explanations are incomplete because foreign policy problems are inherently complex (see Steinbruner, 1974)—even in crisis situations where the threat of war appears imminent. To demonstrate this point, the presentation draws upon standard historical analyses of the origins of WWI, WWII, and the Cold War. Such research consistently shows that the conditions inherent in a “unitary, rational actor” model do not hold up very well. Instead, to one degree or another, leaders in the twentieth century’s major crises (1) faced very real uncertainty in responding to international threats, (2) confronted trade-offs across competing goals, including that of retaining power, and (3) operated in decision structures in which political authority was quite dispersed and fragmented. This analysis indicates that understanding decision-making influences is essential to explaining how leaders will respond to international (and domestic) imperatives. Third, the article concludes by exploring the implications of the historical record for the further development of the decision-making perspective by arguing that decision-making structures, or “units,” channel and focus other influences on governments and are themselves variable across international systems and domestic political structures.

EMPIRICAL LIMITS OF SYSTEMIC EXPLANATIONS OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY GREAT POWER CONFLICTS

This section draws upon the critiques of structural-realist theory that have isolated a key limitation in systemic explanations of war—the inability to account for the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars as well as the escalation of the Cold War. Works by Snyder (1991), Rosecrance and Stein (1993), and

Kupchan (1994) as well as Levy (1990–91) have collectively demonstrated that the great powers acted in ways that cannot be readily explained as a direct response to systemic imperatives. Although not rejecting the structural-realist view of states coping with systemic anarchy, this scholarship has isolated “puzzles” in which great powers pursued policies that were inconsistent with the severity of systemic threats and/or their capabilities relative to other powers. States either *underreacted* by failing to balance against, and thereby deter, adversaries; or they *overreacted* to threats by overextending their power and/or provoking self-encirclement by other powers.

The outbreak of World War II seems to be the most divorced from the systemic premises of structural-realist theories. If ever there was a clear threat to international stability, it was Japan in East Asia and Germany in Europe by the mid-1930s. Yet the major status quo powers of the time—Britain, France, and the United States—did very little to counter the rising power of Germany and Japan.¹ These major powers failed to use their originally superior military power to reverse Japan’s initial aggression in Manchuria and left unchallenged Germany’s rearmament, the remilitarization of the Rhineland, and the incorporation of Austria and the Sudetenland. Nor did Britain, France, or the U.S. “balance” in the larger sense, engaging in at most slow and partial rearmament and failing to form alliances with each other and/or the historically crucial (Soviet) Russia. Ultimately, at the height of prewar tensions (the Munich crisis), Hitler was met with forceful appeasement—not deterrence—by an assertive British government, which was meekly followed by an ambivalent France and an absent United States that hitherto responded with stricter neutrality acts.² Also puzzling are the expansionist foreign policies of Germany and Japan. Unless one assumes the darkest image of international systems, the “revisionist” foreign policies of Germany and Japan in the 1930s are far more than a response to the security dilemmas of international anarchy. Whatever the case on this point, it is not apparent why these powers overextended themselves in

¹ This sketch of WWII puzzles closely follows those identified in the Snyder, Rosecrance and Stein, and Kupchan volumes. In particular, Snyder (1991: ch. 4) questions the Japanese attack on Manchuria, while Kupchan (1994: ch. 5) puzzles over the expansion of the war into China and then the Pacific. On war in Europe, Kupchan (1994: chs. 3, 4, and 7) is the most comprehensive, dealing with British, French, and U.S. appeasement before WWII. Rosecrance and Steiner (1993) also address British appeasement, while in the same volume Stein (1993) examines the underextension of American power. On the distinction between revisionist and status quo states see Schweller (1994).

² Even after the start of the Second World War in Europe, the French, British, and American governments persisted in, at best, weak balancing. Only with the fall of France did Britain finally abandon thoughts of an accommodation with Germany (see Lukacs, 1999) and the Roosevelt administration reverse the neutrality acts in major ways through lend-lease aid (see Holsti, 1993).

self-defeating ways. For example, even though it made sense for Japan to conquer resource-rich Manchuria, expanding the war into China in the mid-1930s and then launching a Pacific war against the United States was far beyond that government's economic and military capabilities relative to the other powers.

The occurrence of war does not depend upon actors with the extreme postures of the 1930s. The outbreak of the First World War resulted from a decade-long deterioration of the European balance-of-power system and was centered around comparatively subtle "security dilemmas" among status quo (i.e., non-revolutionary) powers. Beginning with Wilhelmine Germany's abandonment of Bismarckian restraint in favor of a militant diplomacy (itself a self-defeating behavior), by 1912 most of the increasingly vulnerable European governments had shifted to relatively hard-line foreign policies. Thus, by 1914, it is not surprising that the European states would consider war—indeed, it is arguable that the crisis was an exercise in diplomatic brinkmanship in which Austria-Hungary would quickly suppress Serbia, and Germany would threaten war to neutralize Russia and destroy the Triple Entente. Following Levy's (1990–91) analysis, what is so striking is that the attempt failed, and instead provoked a European-wide war that neither aggressor had expected, desired, or ultimately survived.³ The failure of crisis management (or micro-level balancing) in July 1914 presents several puzzles. First, why did it take the Austro-Hungarian government nearly a month to strike at Serbia, a delay that saw European opinion shift from sympathy regarding the assassination to alarm about European stability leading to Russia's involvement in the crisis? Second, why did neither normally cautious France nor the now frustrated Germany restrain their respective allies before the crisis escalated, as they had done in previous crises over the Balkans? Third, once the threat of a wider war became apparent, why were the diplomatic initiatives of the British foreign secretary (Grey) and the German chancellor (Bethmann-Hollweg) so completely ineffective in containing the crisis, in marked contrast to the concert diplomacy of the previous Balkan

³This treatment of the July 1914 crisis as a systemic puzzle draws from Levy (1990–91) as well as Hermann and Hermann (1969). It is consistent with but not directly based on Snyder, Rosecrance and Stein, and Kupchan; none of these scholars examined the outbreak of the war but, instead, explored balancing behavior in the larger time frame. Some of the flaws in British decision making in the July 1914 crisis noted here are downplayed by Kupchan, who argues that the British and French balanced effectively before WWI. In the analysis here, the July 1914 crisis is viewed as the culmination of a "spiral of conflict" (Jervis, 1976) and represents a failure of both brinkmanship and deterrence—either of which points to a puzzling collapse of the balance of power. As such, and like much of the literature on the July crisis, this analysis falls between the image of the crisis as accidental and entirely unintended and the view that it was planned by an expansionist Germany.

crises? Finally, why did the British government fail to express in a timely manner its commitment to intervene on the side of its fellow Entente powers if Germany attacked France? The irreality of Britain's failure to deter German brinkmanship is as striking as the ineptitude of Austria-Hungary's projection of its military force against Serbia.

In many respects the Cold War is not puzzling. It can be argued that the Soviet Union and the United States balanced each other more or less effectively for nearly forty years and that the bipolar structure of the international system explains much of that stability.⁴ However, there are important, if not tragic, questions to be asked. Not only why did the wartime alliance collapse so dramatically as to lead to the point of war in Europe (the Berlin crisis), but why did the United States, in particular, continue to expand its commitments far beyond the strategic areas of Western Europe and the offshore East Asian periphery? In fact, the culmination of the "origins" of the U.S. policy of containment was the Korean War—not the initial intervention to contain the North Korean attack, but rather the attempted "rollback" of communism to the Yalu River which provoked the full-scale military intervention of China. Not only did this effort at rollback create an entirely new war lasting over two more years, but it reinforced ties between China and the Soviet Union against the United States. Ultimately, although not explored here, these events set the stage for a second costly East Asian intervention: the "Americanization" of the Vietnam War in 1965, a sustained buildup until 1968, and then a prolonged exit even after recognizing the impossibility of military victory over North Vietnam. Notably, early realists such as George Kennan and Hans Morgenthau were among the first to question these wars, but the puzzle remains for contemporary realist (or neorealist) theory: why did the U.S. engage in such extended and self-defeating wars beginning in Korea?⁵

Taken together, the above examples make a critical point: systemic explanations of war cannot alone account for the behavior of key great powers in the twentieth century's major conflicts. This statement poses a problem for contemporary realist theory. Not only are the origins of WWI, WWII, and the Cold

⁴ Also, from a domestic politics and decision-making perspective, the U.S. and Soviet political systems were reasonably stable such that their crises (e.g., the Cuban missile crisis) were usually handled by relatively effective small-group decision structures (e.g., the National Security Council and the Politburo).

⁵ Snyder (1991: ch. 7), Stein (1993), and Kupchan (1994: ch. 7) each analyzes U.S. foreign policy after WWII; their analyses as well as that by Christensen (1996) linking the dynamics of the "origins" of the Soviet-U.S. Cold War to the expansion of U.S. commitments to East Asia and, ultimately, war against China are especially compelling, and can be extended to the similarly puzzling American commitment to Vietnam (also see Gelb with Betts, 1979; Berman, 1982).

War major international events, but these situations represent precisely the sort of phenomenon that should be explained best by this theory—that is, how states respond to the threats posed by an international system on the brink of war. Once again, the premise here is that decision-making theory can provide additional insights into these (and other) puzzling episodes. At the same time, though, the reader should keep in mind that what follows is certainly not an argument that decision-making structures somehow created or singularly drove these international conflicts. The historical research examined below makes clear that there were very real pressures from the international system (as well as domestic systems), and that leaders in these powers were more or less rationally attempting to cope with these clearly dangerous situations. What decision-making analysis can usefully explain is why leaders responded in ways that seem distorted in terms of systemic imperatives and their states' military capabilities. In other words, in line with Rosecrance's (1995) "Goldilocks" problem, the puzzle is why do states overreact or underreact to international pressures—or, following Richard Snyder and his associates (1954), how do they cope with the international situation as they define it.

EVIDENCE THAT WAR DECISIONS ARE COMPLEX

This section's survey of historical evidence is intended to show that decision-making situations prior to WWI, WWII, and the Cold War were quite complex and, thus, the responses to international threats by the great power leaders were not entirely obvious. In other words, systemic assumptions about decision making did not hold, which arguably accounts for some of the state responses that pose puzzles to realist theory as discussed above. As explicated by Waltz (1979; see also Bueno de Mesquita, 1981), systemic theories assume that decision makers respond more or less directly to the systemic imperatives posed by an anarchic international order. Particularly in international crises, the premise is that the dangers of war are so clear-cut that decision makers recognize the threat and can quickly agree on strategies to deal with it, focus exclusively on the goal of national security, and have the foreign policy authority necessary to commit the state's resources in responding to the threat. In short, systemic explanations of foreign policy apply under three conditions: information certainty, goal maximization, and the presence of an essentially unitary actor.

When looking at the twentieth century's great conflicts, however, these assumed decision-making conditions simply do not hold up very well. As a result, the responses of decision makers to even the most threatening situations often did not make sense in terms of international system imperatives. An analysis of these conflicts suggests that there are at least three conditions that make foreign policy problems (in our case, the threat of war) fundamentally more "complex" than is generally assumed in systemic theory:

First, there is uncertainty, i.e., imperfect correspondence between information and the environment. Second, two or more values are affected by the decision, and there is a trade-off relationship between the values such that a great return to one can be obtained only at a loss to the other. Third, the power to make the decision is dispersed over a number of individual actors and/or organizational units. (Steinbruner, 1974:16)

The value of this concept of “complex decision” is that it isolates precisely those empirical conditions that are likely to make decision-making responses to systemic imperatives more problematic—or, at the least, not automatic or obvious. Where there is “uncertainty” about threats and how to deal with them, governments’ responses will depend upon how leaders perceive and interpret the threats based on their own belief systems. When leaders confront “trade-offs,” responses to threats involve simultaneous judgments about other policy issues, including how foreign policy actions will influence the government’s hold on power (or vice versa). Moreover, in governments where political authority is dispersed, state actions revolve around the political maneuvers necessary to achieve agreement to support an alliance, defense expenditures, or ultimately the declaration of war. Furthermore, as will be argued at the close of this essay, the extent to which authority is dispersed will significantly affect how a government resolves the choices posed by uncertainty and value trade-offs.

The main point of this essay is simply that the decisions that were made leading to WWI, WWII, and the Cold War were fundamentally complex and involved uncertainty, value trade-offs, and the dispersion of authority. The argument is based on the wealth of historical research that has emerged on each of these conflicts over the past few decades. What follows is a concise survey of rather standard historical evidence indicating that complexity pervaded the situations in the approach to the First and Second World Wars and the origins of the Cold War. The reader should note that the evidence presented here, however, is not compiled from case study research by IR theorists such as Snyder and Kupchan; nor is it based upon studies by political scientists employing or advocating a decision-making perspective. Rather, this evidence is drawn from widely cited secondary analyses by historians on government decision making in the three conflicts. Three types of historical sources are used. The first are general historical studies of the origins of each conflict, particularly those that examine foreign policy decision making in the various belligerents and, as such, show the interactive sequence of state decisions that escalated the conflict. The second set of sources are country-specific historical accounts of each power’s foreign policy decision making leading up to WWI, WWII, or the Cold War. These studies are often impressive, not only in terms of their rich explanation of policy debates, political structures, and specific decisions, but also in their review of historiographical debates concerning each power’s entry into war. The third set of sources are general domestic political histories for each of

the great powers. Although usually not focused on foreign policy and war, these studies survey the larger domestic context at the time, recounting contending political groups, competing policy issues, and larger political structures. In this way these latter sources place specific war decisions in the stream of domestic developments across the longer time frame associated with the buildups to WWI (e.g., 1890s–1914), WWII (1930s), and the Cold War (1945–1950).⁶

The Pervasiveness of Uncertainty Under Threat

A key theme in this historical literature is that governments typically confronted significant uncertainty in responding to what now appear to be obvious threats in the periods leading up to WWI, WWII, and the Cold War. Often problematic was the choice between alternative strategies for coping with the threats and the assessment of the political and military risks involved in the actual use of military force. Although systemic arguments do not preclude debates within the government about threats and capabilities, the point here is that fundamental and often unresolvable uncertainty exists within the political leadership if there are opposing belief systems regarding what to do in foreign affairs.⁷ For our purposes here, the key indicator of uncertainty will be the coexistence of “moderate” and “hard-line” mindsets among policymakers in the government regarding adversaries prior to the outbreak of war.⁸ Moderates favor diplomatic accommodation and multilateral cooperation to avoid war, often because of an aversion to the risks (domestic or international) of going to war or, more extremely, because of pacifist or isolationist logics. Hard-liners,

⁶No claim is made to have consulted primary sources or even lengthy narratives such as those by Albertini (1952–57) or Watt (1989). The concern here is not to report original findings on these conflicts; rather, the goal is to judge IR theoretical assumptions in terms of the received wisdom among historians on the origins of these wars. The works cited are useful in that they synthesize the various, often contentious, strands of research on each country’s role and motives in these conflicts. For a full discussion of the use of standard historical sources (as well as a comprehensive listing of them) in constructing political histories of the great powers since 1815 see Hagan (2000).

⁷In contrast, studies of perception and misperception get at uncertainty by looking at the judgments of decision makers as they responded to conditions as outside observers now know them. See, in particular, Levy’s (1983) comparison of misperceptions before the First and Second World Wars as well as discussions in general works by Jervis (1976) and Lebow (1981).

⁸This distinction is based mainly on Vasquez (1993); see also Snyder and Diesing (1977). Although in another place the author (Hagan, 1994) has elaborated upon this distinction, the basic dichotomy is sufficient for identifying the existence of alternative policy positions. The main caution here is that hard-line and moderate positions vary across political systems as well as within political systems.

in contrast, call for sustained confrontation with adversaries including threatening the use of military force, which they view as the only viable way of deterring an inherently aggressive adversary—at the extreme are hypernationalist arguments favoring military aggression or expansion. Although, like any dichotomy, this hard-line–moderate distinction is simplistic, it still provides an efficient and theoretically meaningful device for making the point that quite often governments do not operate according to one well-defined strategy or clear systemic imperative. More important, the distinction adequately captures much of the rich historical research that suggests that, even at the brink of war, governments have to make choices under conditions of great uncertainty.

Although the pre-WWI period saw the rise of hard-liners in the governments of most of the great powers, these groups had not entirely supplanted the more moderate arguments that had restrained European affairs since the 1870s. A wide variety of views was especially evident in governments of the Triple Entente, where alternative arguments coexisted right up to the outbreak of WWI. The political leadership of Third Republic France had long been divided over the question of “normal” relations with Germany, with little opinion actually calling for a *revanchist* war to regain the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. Rather, hard-liners called for assertive diplomacy against Germany, mainly through a strong alliance with Russia and ties with Britain, while moderates favored Franco-German *détente* via cooperation on trade and colonial questions. Although dating back to the defeat by Prussia, these divergent positions had, if anything, been sustained by the simultaneous revival of nationalism and socialism in prewar French politics.⁹ As for autocratic Russia, the rising hard-line among the country’s elites in the decade before the war was directed mainly toward Austria-Hungary over Balkans questions. The members of the Tsarist elite were less united about relations with Russia’s other adversary—Germany. Hard-liners favored confronting Austria-Hungary while “deterring” Germany by building strong alliance ties with France and Britain, while moderates feared the cost of a premature war and advocated the “deflection” of German power through *détente* on common issues.¹⁰ In Britain, the ruling Liberal Party, although viewed by the electorate as the “peace party” when compared with the Conser-

⁹For the variety of French viewpoints prior to WWI see Keiger (1983) and Hayne (1993). Several of the general French histories focus on the logic of competing hard-line and moderate beliefs through the nineteenth century, e.g., Zeldin (1973); Agulhon (1990); and Wright (1995). Tombs (1996) is especially useful in showing the strength of moderate, risk-averse arguments growing out of domestic upheaval (e.g., 1790s, 1848, 1871) and military defeat (1815 and 1871).

¹⁰These descriptions are by Leiven (1983), who emphasizes the diversity of elite opinion in Tsarist circles; but see also works by Geyer (1987), Spring (1988), McDonald (1992), and Neilson (1995).

vative Party, actually encompassed a wide range of foreign policy views once in power after 1905. These ranged from “liberal imperialists” favoring strengthened alliances with France and Russia (e.g., the foreign office under Lord Grey) to “radicals” with a Gladstonian aversion to realpolitik and ideological sympathy for human rights (e.g., in Russia). Even in August 1914 at the height of the crisis, Liberal leaders were divided over the necessity and/or morality of Britain’s intervention in the war.¹¹

Admittedly, the range of debate in Austria-Hungary and Germany (the two powers that started the war) was relatively narrow compared to that within the Entente powers.¹² In 1897 in a crucial reorganization of the imperial German government, William II appointed hard-liners to positions in the foreign ministry (Bulow) and Navy (Tirpitz). Along with the Kaiser, these leaders advocated a militant diplomacy to break Franco-Russian encirclement, a further tightening of the alliance with Austria-Hungary, and the pursuit of *Weltpolitik* in the form of colonial expansion and naval buildup.¹³ A similar consolidation of hard-line dominance occurred in Austria-Hungary in 1906, with hard-liners appointed to the Foreign Ministry (Aehrenthal; later Berchtold) and army leadership (Conrad von Hotzendorf). These individuals believed that only a more assertive foreign policy in the Balkans would enable the empire to escape its rising ethnic tensions.¹⁴ Yet all this change and consolidation did not preclude meaningful debate, particularly when it was recognized that the hard-line policies could increase, not decrease, the vulnerability of the two empires. The weakness of Austria-Hungary’s situation posed uncertainties about the merits of war as a means of arresting the empire’s decline, and thus hard-liners were

¹¹ Political divisions among the British leaders are documented in works by Williamson (1969), Steiner (1977), Kennedy (1980, 1981), Brock (1988), Chamberlain (1988), Wilson (1995), Young (1997), and Ferguson (1999).

¹² Note that just the opposite was the case for Italy, the third member of the Triple Alliance, whose choices were severely complicated by alternative adversaries (France or Austria-Hungary) and military defeat (Adowa). On prewar Italian foreign policy views see Thayer (1964), C. Seton-Watson (1967), Bosworth (1983), Chabod (1996), Clark (1996), and Mack Smith (1997).

¹³ Most German histories acknowledge a fundamental shift in the course of the Second Reich with the rise of its pre-WWI hard-liners and that these changes were especially important on the road to WWI. See Berghahn (1973), Kennedy (1980), and Mommsen (1995) as well as general histories such as those by Ramm (1967), Holborn (1969), and Craig (1978). Kagan’s (1995) analysis of WWI’s origins begins with the fall of Bismarck and then addresses these subsequent leadership changes.

¹⁴ Sked (1989), Williamson (1991), Fellner (1995), and in the larger context, Okey (2001) note the importance of this leadership change, while acknowledging the persistence of some dissenting arguments up through WWI.

constrained by less risk prone officials, such as the aging Emperor Franz Josef, the reformist Archduke Ferdinand, and the Hungarian Prime Minister Tisza. Nor was the more powerful Germany immune from policy questions, given its encirclement by the growing power and cohesion of the Triple Alliance. Thus, despite the talk of preventive war among some leaders (e.g., the 1912 “war council”), a sort of “preventive diplomacy” was pursued by the Kaiser to attract his Tsarist counterpart, while his chancellor (Bethmann-Hollweg) held out hope for relaxed tensions with Britain and, failing that, at least the country’s neutrality in the case of war.¹⁵ By July 1914, even though the Archduke Ferdinand’s assassination provided an excellent opportunity to take preventive action against the Serbian threat and Entente encirclement, throughout the crisis advocates of preventive war in both governments had to fend off, first, the diplomatic arguments against war by the Hungarian prime minister and, later, the risk-averse hesitations of the German Kaiser and his chancellor about the escalating crisis.

The range of debate in the major powers prior to World War II is even more dramatic. At one extreme, Nazi Germany and militarist Japan manifested relatively little debate. Both these countries had foreign policies geared to systematic expansion through the use of military force.¹⁶ Hitler’s Germany comes closest to having had a grand plan of expansion with the goals of dismantling the Versailles settlement, gaining diplomatic dominance in the West, and subjugating the Slavic states to the East. Japanese foreign policy under the militarists is arguably not nearly as coherent, but the range of *policy* debate was relatively limited, having to do with the pace and direction of Japan’s expan-

¹⁵Sources detailing prewar debates, and especially the position of Bethmann-Hollweg in Wilhelmine Germany include Stern (1967), Berghahn (1973), Craig (1978), Kennedy (1980), Schmidt (1990), and Herwig (1997). Of course, other research in the Fischer tradition stresses the coherence of the German hard-line; along with Fischer (1967), see Kaiser (1983), Wehler (1985), Pogge von Strandmann (1988), and Röhl (1995).

¹⁶The expansionist core of Nazi foreign policy is widely noted, although up until the latter part of the 1930s there were different views over the pace of that expansion; see works by Holborn (1969), Hildebrand (1970), Craig (1978), Michalka (1983), Müller (1983), Bell (1986), Berghahn (1987), Kaiser (1992), and Kagan (1995). On Japanese policy debates see works by Borton (1970), Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig (1973), Barnhart (1987, 1995), Beasley (1987), Sagan (1988), Iriye (1997), and Jansen (2000). The foreign policies of Stalin’s Soviet Union and Mussolini’s Italy are typically portrayed as far more reactive and hardly conforming to a systematic plan. But to the extent that uncertainty existed, it was in the mind of each leader as neither faced competing policy arguments in the 1930s. On Mussolini see, e.g., Bosworth (1996), Mack Smith (1997), and Knox (2000). On the USSR see McCauley (1993), Westwood (1993), and Hosking (2001).

sion in China and the Pacific. Far more striking than the absence of broad debate in these authoritarian regimes is the narrow range of debate in one key democracy—Great Britain. Throughout the interwar period, British foreign affairs revolved around a consensus in the leadership that, first, recognized some legitimacy in German complaints about the Versailles settlement and, second, avoided any renewed commitment to the defense of France. This consensus was reinforced by the growing German threat after 1935 and, indeed, culminated at Munich in a shift from “passive” to “active” appeasement with Chamberlain’s aggressive diplomacy.¹⁷ Only after Hitler’s unlimited goals became apparent with the dismantling of non-German Czechoslovakia did this policy raise significant doubts. But, remarkably, as Lukacs (1999) has recently documented, this stark policy failure did not create a solid hard-line consensus. Rather, even at the time of France’s collapse in May 1940, the British cabinet remained divided over seeking a comprehensive peace with Hitler via Mussolini (e.g., Halifax) vs. continuing the war (e.g., Churchill).

Like this final British debate, increasing division was represented in the responses of France and the United States to the mounting threats after the mid-1930s. Both of these polities had debates over the most basic issues of how—and, indeed, whether or not—to respond to foreign aggression. Throughout the interwar period French political leaders (usually in multifaction/party cabinets) exhibited a clear “ambivalence” over the choice between competing hard-line and moderate strategies for dealing with the inevitable revival of German power.¹⁸ Indeed, by the mid-1930s (e.g., the Spanish Civil War) right-wing and left-wing blocs were polarized over France’s choice of allies and, ultimately, the question of which was worse—coexisting in an authoritarian Europe under Germany or in a communist order led by the Soviet Union. In the United States, the rising German and Japanese threats also provoked polarizing debates. Although the Roosevelt administration gradually came to recognize the imperative of deterring foreign aggression, isolationist arguments remained a very powerful force throughout American politics and particularly within Congress. Even after the fall of France, no consensus existed among

¹⁷These versions of appeasement are from Adams (1993), a source that offers a concise overview of the limited range of debate over appeasement. See also works by Bell (1986), Hughes (1988), Kagan (1995), and Young (1997). General political histories note the broad consensus within the interwar Conservative Party, e.g., Blake (1970), Beloff (1984), Williams and Ramsden (1990), Lloyd (1993), and Robbins (1994).

¹⁸Adamthwaite (1995) and Young (1996) are especially useful in portraying the politics underlying French foreign policy during the interwar years. Also see Azema (1984), Bernard and Dubief (1975), Agulhon (1990), McMillan (1992), and Larkin (1997).

U.S. leaders for responding to Churchill's pleas for military and economic aid for Britain's defense against the impending Nazi onslaught. Only Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor resolved American uncertainty regarding the relevance of the German threat in Europe and Japan's conquests in East Asia to U.S. security.¹⁹

Turning to the Cold War, it would be expected that the level of uncertainty in a bipolar world would be fundamentally less when compared to the previously discussed multipolar systems (e.g., Waltz, 1979). To an extent this is true, but there are still some interesting complications. Postrevisionist research on the "origins of the Cold War" stresses the uncertainties in the rise of Soviet-American tensions after WWII. Once again, the Soviet case under Stalin arguably revolved around his personal assessment of threats. Although acknowledging that Stalin had definite postwar goals and demands, key literature shows that Soviet postwar actions were not guided by a grand plan and that, instead, his actions were often ad hoc.²⁰ Far more striking is the American case, particularly if one recognizes that it took half a decade for hard-line containment policies to take shape. Initially, the Truman administration attempted to sort out Soviet moves in Eastern Europe and the Near East using competing mindsets—what Yergin (1977) calls the moderate "Yalta" axioms favoring continued normal diplomacy vs. the more hard-line "Riga" axioms pushing for confrontational diplomacy toward Stalin. Subsequently, after having defined the Soviet government as *the* dominant postwar threat, new uncertainties arose over the nature of that threat: was it essentially political and economic (Kennan) or was it essentially military (Acheson and Nitze)?²¹ The latter view won out (in NSC-68), but still new uncertainties appeared when the "loss of China" revived debates about the geographical range of the communist threat; that is, was it Western Europe or East Asia, or both? Only the shock of the North Korean invasion of South Korea created, as had Pearl Harbor nine years earlier, a firm domestic consensus about U.S. international commitments.²² So certain was this new consensus that the U.S. leaders became trapped by arguments insisting

¹⁹ On interwar policy divisions in the United States see Divine (1965), Dallek (1979, 1983), and Small (1996) as well as general treatments in Paterson, Clifford, and Hagan (1983), LaFeber (1989), and Schulzinger (1998).

²⁰ Mastny (1979) and Taubman (1982) are especially useful in conveying the uncertainty in Stalin's foreign policy, although of course such was not manifest in postwar Kremlin debates.

²¹ Works by Gaddis (1978, 1982), Larson (1985), Leffler (1992), and Yergin (1997) are especially effective in portraying the uncertainty in postwar U.S. foreign policy and the progression of debates that shaped the evolution of these policies. On alternative Cold War postures see also Dallek (1983).

²² See Jervis (1980) and LaFeber (1989) on the impact of the Korean War.

on intervention in the Third World periphery—first, the expansion of the Korean War to the north and ultimately against China, and, second, the Americanization of the Vietnam War in the mid-1960s. For the next twenty years this Cold War consensus meant that there was minimal uncertainty in the American view of world affairs; debate was restricted to hard-line options about alternative instruments of military containment.

Value Trade-offs Under Threat

A second assumption found in systemic theories is that security threats override other policy concerns, both at home and abroad. This view is challenged by the historical research on the origins of WWI, WWII, and the Cold War which typically portrays leaders as dealing with at least three types of trade-offs. One set involved the trade-offs between the continental balance of power and imperial goals in Africa and Asia. These trade-offs affected how the major powers balanced because scarce resources for the defense of the “core” were often allocated to the protection of the “peripheries.”²³ A second type of trade-off centered around balancing domestic vs. foreign policy priorities. In the 1930s a dominant reality was that the economic collapse of the Great Depression had severely undercut the financial resources available for rearmament, at least for those governments that adhered to conservative fiscal policies—most clearly Britain under the Conservative Party and France under Radical Party influence. Even in the more prosperous pre-WWI era, the resources available to European governments (both democratic and authoritarian) were constrained not just by Liberal reformers as in Britain, but also by archaic systems of taxation and military deployment defended by traditional elements such as the Prussian aristocracy.²⁴ The third type of trade-off concerned the larger domestic political context and, in particular, the desire of leaders to retain power and preserve their regimes. Without reverting to arguments about the primacy of internal politics, the evidence suggests that domestic politics conditioned how leaders responded to foreign pressures leading up to WWI, WWII, and the Cold War. In short, despite the immediacy of international threats, decisions to go to war often involved the logic of Putnam’s (1988) “two-level game.” Given the per-

²³ Kupchan (1994) emphasizes this trade-off. Such trade-offs raised further uncertainties because continental adversaries were potential allies in imperial matters and the other way around; e.g., although the British might ally with France and Russia in response to Germany, they were traditionally opposed to these two powers in colonial matters.

²⁴ In Britain this opposition was broken by the Liberals, but in France and Germany entrenched groups resisting social and political reform restricted the revenue available to the military (see, e.g., Lamborn, 1991, and D’Lugo and Rogowski, 1993).

vasiveness of these domestic political influences as well as the extensive research regarding their effects, it is worth focusing on this third type of trade-off in detail.

Mounting domestic political crises were a common problem for European rulers prior to WWI, being almost as disruptive as the deterioration of the European balance of power. This domestic political decay took place in two stages. In the first, conservative leaders in all five powers coped with escalating, domestic political crises in the decade prior to the war.²⁵ Not only was Tsarist Russia shaken by the 1905 revolution and Austria-Hungary's progressive ethnic disintegration, but leaders in all of the powers faced problems in managing tenuous majorities in legislative bodies; that is, Austria-Hungarian parliamentary deadlocks and calls for reform of the Dual Monarchy, the rising power of the Social Democratic Party in Germany in an increasingly polarized Reichstag, Russian nationalist and Panslavic extremists in the new Duma, French Socialist Parties encroaching upon Radical Republican dominance, and the flux posed by the emerging Labour Party in Britain and the civil unrest in Ireland.²⁶ In the second stage, this political decay was intensified as rulers shifted to diversionary political strategies in which foreign policy prestige and nationalism were used to mobilize domestic support and isolate internal oppositions.²⁷ One key turning point was Wilhelmine Germany's 1897 adoption of the policies of *Sammlungspolitik* and *Weltpolitik* to deflect socialist opposition. This strategy was not unique. Similar shifts occurred in Austria-Hungary in 1906, in Russia under the pressure of the new Duma monarchy after 1906, and with France's nationalist

²⁵ Useful overviews of these crises are found in Mayer (1969), Joll (1984: ch. 5), and Kagan (1995), while Kaiser (1990) and Levy (1990–91) place these crises into the larger domestic and international contexts.

²⁶ The rise of domestic oppositions and resulting political tensions are documented in the larger context in the standard nineteenth-century histories of each of the powers. For Austria-Hungary see May (1951), Macartney (1968), and Kann (1974), and assessments by Sked (1989), Williamson (1991), and Mason (1997); for Germany see Ramm (1967), Holborn (1969), and Craig (1978), as well as structural arguments in Wehler (1985) and qualifications in Berghahn (1973), Kaiser (1983), Herwig (1992), Retallack (1992), and Mommsen (1995); for Russia see works by H. Seton-Watson (1967), Rogger (1983), Westwood (1993), and Hosking (2001), as well as the structural analysis by Geyer (1987); for France see works by Bury (1956), Brogan (1957), Cobban (1965), Mayeur and Reberrioux (1984), and McMillan (1992), and analyses by Anderson (1977), Gildea (1996), and Tombs (1996); for Britain see Feuchtwanger (1985), McCord (1991), Robbins (1994), Rubinstein (1998), and Pugh (1999), and especially Williams and Ramsden (1990).

²⁷ On diversionary approaches to foreign policy, see the critical analyses by Levy (1988, 1989), while Hagan (1994) explicates the alternative strategies from which leaders can choose in dealing with domestic opposition.

revival under Poincaré after 1911. Only in the case of Britain (and also Italy) did leaders not shift to diversionary strategies.²⁸

In the July 1914 crisis, domestic pressures were pervasive, but they played out in different ways across the five powers—and hardly reflected the manipulative diversionary strategies originally adopted by most governments. The linkage was greatest in the Austro-Hungarian case because domestic and foreign policy were largely inseparable; that is, limited war against Serbia (even at the risk of a war with Russia) was driven mainly by the rising position of Slavs within this multinational empire. Domestic political pressures were also profound for Germany and Russia, though more in terms of avoiding domestic losses than achieving political gains. Pivotal decisions by William II (approving the “blank check”) and Nicholas II (approving mobilization) were motivated, in part, by the fear that domestic audiences would not tolerate another backing down in a major crisis. These leaders, both of whom had urged restraint in prior crises, were now trapped by the “blowback” (Snyder, 1991) of their own diversionary strategies to the point of risking a dangerous war.²⁹ In the French and British cases, the dynamics of domestic political influences were

²⁸The early adoption of diversionary strategies is covered in further detail in the following sources. On Germany, see works by Fischer (1967), Geiss (1972), Berghahn (1973), Kennedy (1980), Kaiser (1983), Wehler (1985), and Mommsen (1995). For Austria-Hungary, Bled (1987), Sked (1989), and Williamson (1991) argue that part of the post-1906 hard-line was an attempt to use foreign policy prestige to unify the monarchy. In Russia, the post-1906 ministers in the Duma monarchy, more than the Tsar, reverted to the use of diversionary strategies (e.g., Stoylpin); see discussions by Leiven (1983, 1993), Geyer (1987), and McDonald (1992). Among French historians, Poincaré is largely pictured as playing the nationalism card after 1912, although what was most notable here was that the government did not back down in the crisis for fear of provoking unrest; see especially Keiger (1983), McMillan (1992), and Hayne (1993). In the British case, Steiner (1977) is explicit in rejecting the diversionary arguments, but see also Gordon (1974), Kennedy (1980), and Chamberlain (1988). Also note that Italian governments under Giolitti's influence had also turned away from the highly nationalistic foreign policies of earlier governments (see Thayer, 1964; C. Seton-Watson, 1967; Bosworth, 1983; Clark, 1996; and Mack Smith, 1997). Interestingly, the prewar British and Italian governments were both relatively democratic and had fought costly colonial wars in southern Africa and Ethiopia.

²⁹Comparative judgments are, of course, difficult to make, but general analyses of the July crisis typically portray these two leaders as clearly motivated by fears of the domestic consequences of backing down (see Joll, 1984; Rich, 1992; Kagan, 1995). On William II's political fears behind the blank check see, in particular, the chapters by Mommsen (1995) as well as Berghahn (1973) and Kennedy (1980)—note also that Bethmann-Hollweg was very pessimistic about the domestic consequences of going to war. The tone is similar in analyses of Russian decision making (Leiven, 1983, 1993; Geyer, 1987; McDonald, 1992; Hosking, 2001); Nicholas II ultimately conceded to mobilization when advisers raised the question of domestic reaction to backing down in the crisis.

more complex. Ironically, the actions of the otherwise politically unstable French Third Republic appear to have been the least driven by domestic politics; for example, Poincaré's necessarily reactive crisis management focused on maintaining the Russian alliance. Actually, the main effect of domestic politics (i.e., another parliamentary scandal, the Caillaux crisis) was to distract public and parliamentary opponents from what was happening until it was quite evident that Germany would attack. Britain's politically constrained Liberal Party (unlike its Conservative predecessor) did not—in fact, could not—engage in diversionary strategies in July 1914. Not only was the cabinet preoccupied with the threat of civil war in Ireland, but any public hint of continental war would have provoked a parliamentary uproar among the party's moderate mainstream and certainly its antiwar Radicals and Labour Party allies.³⁰

Linkages between domestic politics and foreign policy are even more apparent in the case of WWII. Compared to conditions prior to the outbreak of WWI, the presence of opposition varied widely across the different powers. In the 1930s the leaders of some powers actually faced very little organized opposition and had little reason to expect domestic criticism of their conduct of foreign policy. Of course, in all of the totalitarian/authoritarian regimes (most notably Germany and the Soviet Union) opposition groups and autonomous political institutions such as legislatures that were important arenas prior to WWI had been largely neutralized and most publics were, if anything, enthusiastic about nationalistic foreign policies.³¹ Political constraints in democratic Britain were not dramatically different, as the long-dominant Conservative Party continued to rely on a large parliamentary majority. Except for isolated critics such as Churchill, the Baldwin and Chamberlain cabinets encountered minimal opposition from a unified and disciplined party that shared a broad consensus in favor of appeasement.³² Only in the American and French cases were there

³⁰ Along with Joll (1984) and Kagan (1995), domestic political considerations in Poincaré's handling of the July crisis are discussed in Keiger (1983) and (1995), and assessed in Magraw (1983), Cobb (1988), and Adamthwaite (1995). On the politics within British decision making see Gordon (1974), Steiner (1977), Kennedy (1980), and Ferguson (1999).

³¹ The progressive, and thorough, suppression of wider opposition is covered in standard histories of Germany (e.g., Holborn, 1969; Craig, 1978; Hildebrand, 1984; Carr, 1991; also Kaiser, 1992) and the Soviet Union (e.g., McCauley, 1993; Westwood, 1993; Hosking, 2001). The suppression of parliamentary democracy and traditional institutions was not as complete but still present in Italy (e.g., Duggan, 1994; Clark, 1996; Mack Smith, 1997; and Knox, 2000) and especially in Japan (e.g., Fairbank, Reischaur, and Craig, 1973; Duus, 1976; Berger, 1988; Pyle, 1996).

³² On the political dominance of the cohesive Conservative Party in interwar British politics see works by Beloff (1984), Williams and Ramsden (1990), Lloyd (1993), and

significant domestic constraints, and they were quite strong. American isolationist sentiment remained entrenched in the Congress, and Roosevelt was entering the 1940 election cycle at precisely the peak of the European crisis. Foreign policy was a potentially explosive issue; for example, open assistance to a desperate Britain could raise public fears that military aid would eventually draw the U.S. into another European war.³³ The political situation in France was also desperate. The depression and international politics progressively polarized French party politics, stimulating the rise of the socialist/communist Left and the increasingly authoritarian Right—at the expense of the factionalized Radical center. Unlike the underlying continuity of the Third Republic ministries before WWI, distinctively rightist and leftist blocs now alternated in power, neither of which was capable of governing for a sustained period with a cohesive parliamentary base.³⁴

The WWII case also illustrates the alternative ways leaders can respond to domestic opposition. Diversionary strategies, generally prevalent prior to WWI, were not the dominant political dynamic in the 1930s. The governments facing the most severe oppositions—France and the United States—clearly did not attempt to use foreign policy as a means of dealing with domestic problems. If anything, they consciously did the reverse, avoiding the controversies expected from any course of action that involved deterring aggressive states or entering into controversial alliances (e.g., one with the Soviet Union).³⁵ At the other extreme, the need for foreign policy success and nationalism were far more apparent in the authoritarian/totalitarian states. But even here there is complexity. As a way of dealing with opposition, it is a stretch to say that diversionary strategies influenced the shape of Nazi and Communist foreign policy. The leaders of both these regimes had so thoroughly eliminated any opposition that they faced minimal constraints in carrying out expansionist plans (in Hitler's case) and coping with difficult alignment choices (in Stalin's case). The cases of Japan and Italy, however, are more fluid, and it is here that diversionary

Robbins (1994). Young (1997) and Hughes (1988) note the party's broad consensus on foreign policy, a point emphasized in Bell (1986) and Kagan (1995).

³³Holsti's (1993) "destroyers for bases" case documents this potential explosiveness; on domestic opposition to the Roosevelt administration see not only LaFeber (1989), Guinsburg (1994), and Small (1996), but also Brogan (1985) and Jones (1995).

³⁴On the instability of interwar French politics see Bernard and Dubief (1975), McMillan (1992), and Larkin (1997). Adamthwaite (1995) and Young (1996) view domestic politics as yet another area of painful choices for French leaders.

³⁵Controversy avoidance was inherent in French ministerial politics (see sources in footnote 34). In the American case, much more depended on FDR's cautious and accommodating political approach; e.g., see works by Divine (1965), Dallek (1979), and Farnham (1997) as well as Haines (1981) and LaFeber (1989).

strategies arguably apply. In neither case had traditional institutions (e.g., the monarchy) been entirely eradicated; radical nationalism remained a potent force. Mussolini's shift to a more aggressive foreign policy in the mid-1930s was motivated in part by the need for a dramatic policy success to enhance the prestige of the regime as domestic problems persisted.³⁶ Although less clear-cut, diversionary strategies in Japan's foreign policy reflect the attempt by contending factions to appeal to the nationalism of larger audiences as a way of discrediting their factional opponents.³⁷

Domestic politics also conditioned the rise of Cold War tensions. Although rejecting the deterministic view that domestic structures alone propelled the U.S. and USSR confrontation, the postrevisionist literature suggests that the need for both Truman and Stalin to posture to domestic audiences contributed to the rise of hard-line policies. Even for the otherwise dominant Stalin, playing the ideological card of capitalist encirclement was a key means of reasserting dominance over the postwar Communist Party; for example, as evidenced by his hard-line reelection speech at the first postwar party congress in January 1946.³⁸ The prestige of a strong foreign policy would remain a fixture of Soviet foreign policy throughout the Cold War. The early political situation for the U.S. in the Truman administration was obviously different; yet, by democratic standards, this administration faced considerable opposition on its road to the Cold War.³⁹ Not only was the Republican Party bent on regaining its predepression/prewar dominance, the Democratic Party was by no means unified over Truman as a successor to FDR. Almost immediately after WWII (in the wake of the Yalta controversies), tough responses to puzzling Soviet actions enabled the vulnerable Truman to avoid accusations of appeasement, consolidate his control over the administration, and later mobilize public support for new Cold War commitments over the next few years. The Truman administration's ability to control anticommunist rhetoric, however, progressively declined, ultimately leading to extreme conservative backlash—or blowback—after the

³⁶Duggan (1994), Bosworth (1996), Clark (1996), Mack Smith (1997), and Knox (2000), as well as Bell (1986) emphasize Mussolini's need for a foreign policy success to enhance the image of his regime.

³⁷As explicated by Snyder (1991), public nationalism was crucial to the factional infighting within the Japanese government (see Ogata, 1964; Berger, 1988; Barnhart, 1995; Pyle, 1996).

³⁸The need for Stalin to consolidate authority is evident not only in Cold War histories such as Mastny (1979) and Taubman (1982), but also in general histories such as those by McCauley (1993), Westwood (1993), and Hosking (2001).

³⁹The larger domestic political scene is a prominent theme among Cold War historians, in particular, Gaddis (1972), Paterson (1979, 1988), Divine (1985), and LaFeber (1989); see also the analysis by Trout (1975).

“loss of China,” severely weakening its credibility. As a result, the administration was hardly in a position to stand up to MacArthur’s demands that communism be rolled back throughout Korea. These political lessons became an enduring fixture of the Cold War consensus. Indeed, the idea that foreign policy weakness could destroy an administration’s credibility was a domestic certainty for U.S. presidents; for example, Kennedy’s fear of impeachment in the Cuban missile crisis and Johnson’s fears of political impotence if Vietnam collapsed.

The Diffusion of Political Authority Across Multiple Actors

The final dimension in the concept of “complex decision” questions the premise that states act as unitary actors; that is, there is a contraction of authority and a single decision-making body evaluates distinct policy options and interests, sorts them out, and arrives at a final option. Historical research suggests that the key decisions surrounding WWI, WWII, and the early parts of the Cold War departed from this idealized pattern of decision making. At one extreme was the fragmentation of authority across competing factions, parties, or institutions, such that no single actor had the authority to commit the state to war, each wielding a veto over the others. Equally important, though, is the opposite extreme: the concentration of power into the hands of a single leader who either makes decisions alone or, if working with a single group, suppresses dissent so that viable alternatives are not seriously considered. The point here is that even the most severe international crises involve a wide variety of decision structures, including ones that operate in reasonable ways. Although effective single-group decision making undoubtedly occurs, the popular image of Kennedy’s ExCom in the Cuban missile crisis is hardly typical of the crises considered here.

That there can be a variety of potential decision structures is quite apparent in the period prior to WWI and in the July 1914 crisis. Turning first to the powers that launched the war, neither Franz Josef nor William II dominated foreign policymaking, despite their personal constitutional authority over foreign policy and military affairs. In Austria-Hungary the ultimate decision-making body was the Crown Council, consisting of the emperor, the empire’s common ministers (army, foreign affairs, and finance), and the Austrian and Hungarian prime ministers responsible to the separate parliaments in their respective halves of the empire. This decision-making body, an institution dating back to the 1867 creation of the Dual Monarchy, formalized the emperor’s consultation with the key ministers and established the influence of the Hungarian leadership on the decisions of the Habsburg ruling elite. This process was critical during the July 1914 crisis; by then, the Hungarian prime minister (Tisza) was the only remaining advocate of diplomatic restraint and, because of his

de facto veto power within the Crown Council, could block military action against Serbia.⁴⁰ In contrast to Austria-Hungary, the federal constitution of imperial Germany did not provide for a cabinet body to coordinate imperial decision making. Whereas Bismarck was personally able to coordinate decision making, William II never established clear-cut lines of authority over an increasingly complex German government. Foreign policymaking was largely distorted by this erratic decision-making pattern which became evident in the July 1914 crisis. William II personally extended the “blank check” to Austria-Hungary, and only afterwards sought the required approval of Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg and met with senior foreign and military advisers. This lack of coordination appeared again at the height of the crisis. After the Russian mobilization Bethmann-Hollweg and William II separately sought restraint over the military option (now advocated by the army and finally pursued by Austria-Hungary), but the German government gave mixed diplomatic messages, leading even their one ally to ask “who is in charge in Berlin?”⁴¹

Despite the common threat from Germany, decision-making structures in Britain, Russia, and France were quite different, ranging from highly cohesive to very fragmented. Surprisingly, French decision making had become the most cohesive when actually faced with the prospect of war. Despite the Third Republic’s long record of weak cabinets (occasionally collapsing under foreign threat), alarm over the German threat since the second Moroccan crisis (1911) permitted the emergence of strong presidential authority over foreign policy. Thus, in the July 1914 crisis, President Poincaré was able to insulate French diplomacy (supporting Russia) and restrain military preparations, not only from moderate and antiwar opposition in the new socialist-led cabinet, but also from repercussions from the cabinet’s alarm over the Caillaux scandal in parlia-

⁴⁰ Austro-Hungarian decision making in the July crisis is discussed by Stone (1966), Jannen (1983), Williamson (1983, 1991), Sked (1989), Fellner (1995), and Herwig (1997) as well as emphasized by Joll (1984), Williamson (1988), and Kagan (1995). This decision making reflected the well-established, though fragmented, constitutional authority of the Dual Monarchy created in 1867. See overviews in works by May (1951), Macartney (1968), Jelavich (1987), Sked (1989), and Berenger (1997).

⁴¹ German decision making in the July crisis, particularly its uncoordinated character, is documented in works by Berghahn (1973), Kaiser (1983), Schmidt (1990), Mommensen (1995), and Herwig (1997) and is emphasized in the general accounts in Joll (1984), Rich (1992), and Kagan (1995). For studies that downplay differences among German leaders and see imperial decision making in this crisis as much more cohesive check Fischer (1967, 1990) and Röhl (1995). The institutional fragmentation of imperial Germany (especially without Bismarck’s strong leadership) is discussed in works by Ramm (1967), Holborn (1969), Berghahn (1973, 1994), Craig (1978), Kennedy (1980), and Wehler (1985).

ment.⁴² Russian decision making was also reasonably coherent and, more than any of the powers, took place within a single group. As stipulated by the “unified government” reforms of the 1905 constitution, Czar Nicholas II did not act on his own (as before the Russo-Japanese War) but, instead, regularly met with his Council of Ministers. The discussions in these meetings appear to have been reasonably wide ranging; but with the prior removal of the main advocate for avoiding war (Kokovtsov), the July crisis finally produced a consensus not to back down again in the Balkans.⁴³ More problematic was British cabinet decision making under the divided Liberal Party. Representation of the full range of the party’s factions was a political prerequisite for any Liberal cabinet. So long as British diplomacy was limited to verbal commitments and war plans, Lord Grey’s foreign office could conduct Entente diplomacy without major constraints. However, the question of war required the full approval of the cabinet, and in the July crisis neither Grey nor the prime minister (Asquith) had the authority to commit Britain to the Entente powers. Taking such action on their own at the height of the crisis would have provoked the defection of the party’s “radical” faction and ended nearly ten years of Liberal rule. Only the German invasion of neutral Belgium, in violation of international law and human rights, enabled enough Radical leaders to legitimize their support of a continental intervention.⁴⁴

⁴² Poincaré’s dominance in the July 1914 crisis is developed (and defended) best by Keiger (1983, 1995), but it is a consistent theme elsewhere (Hayne, 1993; Adamthwaite, 1995) and is a key fixture in the general studies by Joll (1984) and Kagan (1995). While most histories of Third Republic France recognize the prewar shift in foreign affairs authority to the presidency, they also stress the underlying continuity in the country’s prewar cabinets—particularly, the stabilizing effect of the Radical Party’s pivotal position in successive cabinets. Along with Keiger (1983), see ministerial analyses in works by Anderson (1977), Magraw (1983), Mayeur and Reberieux (1984), McMillan (1992), and Gildea (1996).

⁴³ Russian decision making in the July crisis is covered in studies by Leiven (1983, 1993), Joll (1984), Spring (1988), Geyer (1987), McDonald (1992), Rich (1992), Kagan (1995), and Neilson (1995). These studies all make note that the July 1914 decision reflected changes in the makeup of the Council of Ministers; McDonald (1992) analyzes the institutional evolution of the “united government” that established this body. For the larger institutional evolution of the Duma monarchy see H. Seton-Watson (1967), Rogger (1983), Westwood (1993), and Hosking (2001).

⁴⁴ These constraints are well documented, not only in Joll (1984) and Kagan (1995), but also in studies of British decision making in the July crisis, e.g., Steiner (1977), Brock (1988), Wilson (1995), and Ferguson (1999). That these factional splits were not an aberration is evidenced in examinations of the evolution of the Liberal Party in Victorian Britain; see, e.g., Feuchtwanger (1985), Williams and Ramsden (1990), Parry (1993), Robbins (1994), and Rubinstein (1998).

Turning to the Second World War, the variety of decision structures is, like so much else about that war's origins, far more clear-cut when compared to 1914. However, by the mid-1930s, when the German and Japanese threats were apparent, decision making in none of the powers appears to fit the single-group model. There was, of course, the extreme concentration of authority in Fascist Italy, the Communist Soviet Union, and Nazi Germany. Not only did each regime have totalitarian arrangements in which governing authority was lodged entirely in a single institution, but Mussolini and certainly Hitler and Stalin had ruthlessly consolidated their own personal authority over foreign policy issues.⁴⁵ In all three cases decisions related to war reflected the unfettered power of a single individual. Far more striking is the one additional case: the highly cohesive decision making in the British cabinet under Prime Minister Chamberlain. Although structurally very different from the previous three regimes, British foreign policy authority was highly concentrated for a stable democracy. In part, this concentration was due to the dominance of interwar cabinets by a Conservative Party that, in contrast to the pre-WWI Liberal Party, was not factionalized and had a solid consensus on foreign policy issues (i.e., appeasement). All this was further intensified when Chamberlain became prime minister. More so than his predecessor (Stanley) and in response to mounting German demands, Chamberlain sought a comprehensive settlement through the "active" appeasement of Germany by aggressively conceding to their demands without war. However, in the process of doing so, he oversaw the resignation of those on the cabinet who were skeptics of these active concessions (e.g., Foreign Minister Eden) and by the time of the Munich crisis operated with minimal cabinet constraints.⁴⁶ Only when appeasement had failed (with Hitler's violation of the Munich accords) was Chamberlain's authority weakened, which (along with military failure in Norway) eventually led to his replacement by the more hard-line Churchill—a process of political adjustment that obviously did not occur in the totalitarian regimes.

France, the United States, and Japan all represent the fragmented extreme of pre-WWII decision making. In each, political authority was dispersed across politically autonomous factions, parties, and/or institutions. The French executive

⁴⁵On Hitler's personal dominance of foreign policy, including his willingness to override the cautious advice of the military and diplomats, see Craig (1978), Bell (1986), Kaiser (1992), and Kagan (1995). Stalin's dominance over pre-WWII foreign policymaking is implied in political histories (e.g., McCauley, 1993) and noted in Bell (1986) and Kennedy-Pipe (1998). Despite the absence of totalitarian control, Mussolini did have control over foreign policy decisions, as argued in Clark (1996) and Mack Smith (1997) as well as Bell (1986).

⁴⁶Chamberlain's dominance over the cabinet is noted in Adams (1993), Kagan (1995), Young (1997), and, more generally, Lloyd (1993).

responded to the rising Fascist threat with internal decay—not the greater coherence found before WWI. In contrast to the pre-WWI period, the cabinets of the interwar Third Republic retained close control over foreign policy. At no point did parliamentarians allow the emergence of strong presidential authority. These cabinets were, however, hardly in a position to fill the void. The centrist Radical Party lost its pivotal position in cabinets that now required greater power-sharing in coalitions with either the Left or the Right; furthermore, the opposing wings of the already loosely structured Radical Party were not in agreement over foreign policy. The result was that any cabinet, either center-left or center-right, faced collapse if it acted with conviction on foreign policy, and there was no institutional alternative to the cabinet.⁴⁷ The United States was also hampered by what were, in effect, coalition constraints. Although not approaching executive instability (or extra-parliamentary extremism), any meaningful commitments by an increasingly alarmed Roosevelt administration clearly required formal congressional approval. This constraint resulted from the earlier neutrality acts by which the largely isolationist Congress responded to international threats with increasing clamps on executive authority. Even after the fall of France (and actually beyond), Roosevelt had to cope with Congress's precise legal and political restrictions on aid to Great Britain. Only with Japan's late-1941 attack on Pearl Harbor was Congress fully willing to support FDR's control of foreign affairs.⁴⁸ Even Japan's actions—including its attack on the United States—were the manifestation of extremely fragmented decision making. Unlike its Italian and German allies, Japanese decision making under the militarist regime during the 1930s never achieved much coherence. Even after the demise of civilian influence via the Diet, policymaking authority remained ambiguously dispersed across highly competitive political factions tied to the army, navy, and imperial court. Although this fragmented decision making did not create the deadlock found in the U.S. and French cases, it surely helped distort Japan's judgments with respect to waging war throughout China and also across the Pacific against the U.S.⁴⁹

The imperative of rising post-WWII tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, like the previous decision-making conditions, would seem to have led

⁴⁷ The constraints posed by the divisions in the French cabinet are covered in works by Bernard and Dubief (1975), Azema (1984), McMillan (1992), Adamthwaite (1995), Young (1996), and Larkin (1997), as well as in Bell (1986) and Kagan (1995).

⁴⁸ On the assertion of congressional authority reflected in the neutrality legislation see Dallek (1979), LaFeber (1989), Guinsburg (1994), Small (1996), and Vieth (1996).

⁴⁹ On factional conflict in Japan's militarist regime see Ogata (1964), Fairbank, Reischauer, and Craig (1973), Hosoya (1974), Duus (1976), Fukui (1977), Berger (1988), Barnhart (1995), Pyle (1996), and Jansen (2000).

to more orderly decision structures in the Soviet Union and the United States. That was arguably often the case, even in the early period during the origins of the Cold War. There are few doubts that Stalin continued to make Soviet foreign policy decisions (as noted above), although the succeeding Khrushchev regime was never able to establish coherent foreign policymaking. Nor was American foreign policy decision making necessarily disorderly. President Truman had, in fact, returned White House decision making to the small-group norm; he consulted with his advisers in key crises over Poland, Berlin, and ultimately Korea. There is, though, one glaring exception. At key junctures, Truman administration decisions required congressional ratification and/or funding approval for new diplomatic and military commitments. Instead of conceding to isolationist opposition in the now Republican Congress, the Truman administration sought to mobilize its support by exaggerating the severity of the communist threat in both military and ideological terms.⁵⁰ The Truman doctrine speech in March 1947 was the primary manifestation of this manipulative strategy, one that within a few years would create difficulties in working with the Congress. Namely, the “blowback” of this rhetoric ultimately led to a “logroll” among the contending internationalist groups favoring European commitments and those emphasizing East Asia. This larger political framework not only enabled MacArthur’s expansion of the Korean War, but it ultimately necessitated the Americanization of the war in Vietnam by a Johnson administration fearful of losing congressional support for domestic programs and reforms. The hard-line Cold War consensus rested upon domestic political imperatives created after WWII.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE HISTORICAL RECORD

The primary point of this article has been that decision-making conditions leading to the twentieth century’s three great conflicts—WWI, WWII, and the Cold War—were fundamentally more complex than generally assumed by systemic explanations of war. This concluding section will use the historical evidence to suggest the importance of a decision units perspective on foreign policymaking which will be developed in the remainder of this special issue. The discussion here will be in two parts: (1) an examination of the assertion that the decision unit is a critical channel through which uncertainty and value trade-offs are defined—and that knowledge about the structure of the decision unit helps to explain the key puzzles about the origins of WWI, WWII, and the Cold War

⁵⁰ Along with Snyder (1991) and Christensen (1996) see analyses by Lowi (1967), Trout (1975), and Small (1996) and accounts of the origins of the Cold War by, for example, Gaddis (1972) and Paterson (1988).

described earlier in this essay; and (2) an exploration of the wide variety of types of decision structures and the fact that they vary independently of international systemic conditions or domestic regime structures—decision units are a theoretically fluid phenomenon that cannot be inferred directly from either systemic or domestic structures.

Pivotal Role of Decision Units

One insight from the examination of the origins of WWI, WWII, and the Cold War is that decision units helped to define the degree of uncertainty and the value trade-offs in the situation. Even though wide-ranging debates occurred in most of the political systems, the structure of the decision unit governed the extent to which such debates were considered in the final decision to commit to war. For example, a predominant leader could exclude other positions, while a highly fragmented body enabled alternative positions and interests to coexist in a contradictory way or, worse, immobilize the government. Moreover, the structure of the decision unit affected how leaders responded to domestic political pressures. Decision structures could, on the one hand, position a national leader so that he/she could manipulate foreign policy politically and, on the other hand, magnify political conflicts within a political system thereby raising larger questions about the government's survival. Knowledge about the nature of the decision unit can help us account for the distortions in the balance of power in July 1914, at Munich, and in early Cold War crises—and, as such, can assist us in finding answers to the puzzles identified earlier in this article.

Learning about decision structures is key to understanding how the July 1914 crisis led to a war that none of the participants originally desired. With respect to the aggressive diplomacy of Austria-Hungary and Germany, perceived constraints on the decision unit of each negated their strategy of quickly suppressing Serbia and then forcing the Russians (and their French ally) to back down diplomatically under the threat of war. The structure of Austria-Hungary's Crown Council enabled the otherwise isolated opposition of the Hungarian prime minister to block the prowar consensus that now included even the emperor. During this lag, the Russians and the French became alarmed, and for the first time did not back down to the German threat of war. Decision structures were crucial in this new willingness to risk war with Germany. The Russian decision to mobilize is not entirely puzzling: its Tsar met with his Council of Ministers and considered options, which notably emphasized domestic consequences as much as international ones. Much more striking is the role of decision structures in the French case. Despite a cabinet dominated by moderates, if not antiwar socialists, the relatively hard-line French president (Poincaré) was able to control policy entirely, providing the Russian government with

initial assurances and ultimately mobilizing the cabinet's full support for resisting Germany. In short, opposition to war was excluded from the decision process.

Decision units in the July 1914 crisis also undercut any deterrence against aggression. Most glaring is the failure of the Triple Entente to deter the German threat. This failure is mainly the collective fault of the British government (not just the foreign secretary, Lord Grey). Whereas Germany was prepared to fight Russia and France, they did not seek war with the British and assumed their neutrality. But because the British foreign policy leadership could not make a decision to go to war without consulting the entire cabinet—a cabinet dominated by opinion either unaware of, or outright opposed to, continental commitment—throughout the month of July they were unable to state openly to the Germans that they would side with the French and Russians in a war. Moreover, decision structures hindered attempts at mediation during this crisis by undercutting the impact of moderate arguments against hard-liners. In part, this effect resulted from the insertion of military leaders into the process, but it also stemmed from the weakness of equally alarmed civilian leaders. In the German case, the lack of a single decision-making body meant that hard-liners could undercut initiatives for restraint (e.g., those by Bethmann-Hollweg) by confronting the Kaiser separately and by re-framing any signals for restraining Austria-Hungary. Of course, any incentive for agreeing to the British foreign minister's proposal for an international conference was undercut by indications that Britain would remain neutral.

The role of decision structures is simpler in examining the road to the Second World War. In Germany, Britain, Italy, and Russia, strong leaders did not have to debate opposing positions (or could override them), nor were they forced to deal with the trade-offs across other issues. This control meant they were minimally constrained, and, as a result, could engage in risky, diplomatic initiatives. Thus, in the Munich crisis, Hitler could go to the brink of war and Chamberlain could grant the most extreme concessions without having to concede to skeptics. And, all the while, Mussolini and Stalin had the ability to engage in flexible diplomacy; for example, Stalin ultimately did not have constraints on dramatic alliance shifts. Nor did any of these leaders have to worry about domestic opposition to their moves; in fact, with the exception of Mussolini, their dominance largely negated the need to engage in diversionary approaches or to listen to advisers concerned with the possible domestic costs of any actions.

The situation in the more fragmented regimes—France, the United States, and Japan—was one that greatly amplified uncertainties and intensified domestic political constraints. For the U.S. and France, these constraints led to a failure of deterrence. The ambivalence in French responses to the rising German problem was embedded in fragile coalition governments, regardless of whether on the Left or the Right. In neither the center-left nor center-right coalition was there sufficient cabinet consensus to support an effective deterrent

against Germany; for example, assertion of French military power or clear alignment choices with, say, Soviet Russia would have brought down the government. Nor could the United States then or after act as a deterrent. Despite the fact that FDR recognized the threat, the isolationist mindset had been written into the neutrality acts and other legislation—all with the effect that Congress could block any strong deterrent by the presidency. Furthermore, Congress represented a decision forum in which presidential assertion of U.S. power could be visibly challenged, thereby raising the electorate's fears that the U.S. was heading toward war. Similar to the French case, this possibility imposed severe constraints and led FDR's administration to engage in controversy avoidance. The Japanese case is, of course, just the opposite. Arguably more than any power its foreign policy was amplified by political dynamics within its decision structure. On the one hand, factional infighting magnified narrow policy differences and precluded any compromise or policy integration; on the other hand, factions openly played the nationalism card in order to mobilize public support for their interests.

The origins of the Cold War are also dominated by the contrast in decision structures between adversaries. Under Stalin, Soviet decision making remained highly concentrated. Although now able to operate with greater certainty than before the war, Stalin retained maximum flexibility in adjusting to the reassertion of U.S. power in world affairs. The only arguable difference was that he needed to consolidate authority at home, and thus played the nationalism—or ideology—card in defining anti-American hostility. The rise of American Cold War policies is far more complex and again rooted in domestic structures as the United States responded to a rising communist threat. As with FDR before WWII, the Truman administration had to gain a still isolationist/moderate Congress's formal approval for programs to implement containment via economic reconstruction and then deploy military forces. However, this time the result was not deadlock. Rather, the Truman administration systematically exaggerated the Soviet threat to mobilize support in Congress for authorizing containment commitments. This strategy ultimately resolved debate in the American public and became a fixture in U.S. Cold War policy—in fact, Congress accepted the most extreme view of the communist threat and ultimately trapped the Truman and successive administrations into an expanded array of East Asian commitments and two costly, self-defeating wars. Not until the painful lessons of Vietnam did the American political atmosphere again permit a reassertion of congressional authority and a wide-ranging debate over the premises of the Cold War and pragmatic engagement with the USSR.

Variability in Decision-Making Structures

Another premise of this article and, in turn, this special issue is that decision structures are a highly variable phenomenon—all in ways compatible with Sny-

der and his associates' (1954) situationally grounded conception of decision making. The wide variation in types of decision structures described above is especially striking if one considers that we have been focusing on a rather narrow (albeit dramatic) aspect of international politics—the act of going to war. Even though the great powers were all responding to the same July 1914 crisis, the governments did not make decisions in the same way—one had a strong leader (France), others involved formal groups with some sharply divided (Austria-Hungary and Britain) and some not (Russia), and another (Germany) had decision-making authority that was especially fluid. The variation is even more clear-cut in the decisions made on the road to WWII: decision making typically involved either extremely cohesive states (Germany, Italy, the USSR, and even Britain) or highly fragmented states (France, the United States, and Japan). While small groups (e.g., the U.S.'s National Security Council and the Soviet Politburo) emerged as key Cold War decision-making bodies, it is still striking that the “origins” of that conflict involved a far wider array of decision structures. In short, contrary to theoretical expectations, the crises leading to WWI, WWII, and the Cold War, although handled by senior leaders, cannot be characterized as the result of a highly coherent decision process with a limited range of debate.

The range of variation in decision structures is also striking across time within each nation. The July 1914 crisis was one in a series of international crises, but this time the European powers did not back away from war—in part, because of changes in the makeup of their respective decision units. On the one hand, certain key leaders (William II, Franz Josef, and Nicholas II) now accepted war, while, on the other hand, key opponents to war in the previous crises were gone from the Russian and Austro-Hungarian decision-making bodies. In France, there had been an increasing concentration of authority in the presidency in the years leading up to 1914 so that decision making was dominated by a single leader capable of overcoming cabinet divisions. In Britain, a declaration of war required the formal approval of the full political leadership. That meant those in charge of foreign affairs had to deal with key opponents, announcing commitments unknown to the wider Liberal Party leadership and opposed by that party's Radical wing. World War II and the Cold War also present an interesting variation in decision structures, although they appear to be tied to regime types. Among the surviving democracies in 1940, policy failures led not only to policy adjustments but ultimately to a rearrangement of political authority. After the fall of France, the hard-line Churchill finally replaced Chamberlain as Britain's prime minister and the Roosevelt administration gradually gained greater authority to lend material support to the British. A decade later such a change occurred again in the United States: the rising Soviet threat contributed to a renewed dominance of the executive in making Cold War policy. These dynamics were just the opposite in the

totalitarian regimes. Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Japan's militarists ultimately overextended themselves, in part because their leadership was politically entrenched and unwilling to adjust strategically. The record of the Soviet Union is more mixed from Stalin to the reformist Khrushchev and the consensus-oriented Brezhnev, but the failure to adjust was all too apparent by the late 1980s.

This last point does not, however, suggest that decision structures and their dynamics (including how such units respond to domestic pressures) are a direct function of internal regime structure—such as democracy and democratization. In fact, decision structures can vary even within the same type of regime structure. Thus, predominant leaders are found not only in totalitarian regimes (e.g., Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, Fascist Italy), but also in democratic states such as France in 1914, Britain in the late 1930s, and the United States at the height of the Cold War. And fragmentation of authority occurs not just in established democratic systems, such as Britain in 1914, France in the late 1930s, and the U.S. in the late 1930s and mid-1940s, but also in authoritarian regimes such as Japan in the 1930s and in anocratic (or democratizing) regimes like Germany and Austria-Hungary in July 1914.

These observations lead to another point: the political dynamics of these decision structures are not the same. For example, consider Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia during the crisis leading up to WWI. Among just these three anocracies, there is little in common in decision making. Austro-Hungarian foreign policy is constrained by internal divisions, while that of imperial Germany is far more uncoordinated with few constraints and Russian foreign policy is being made by a single group. What these anocratic regimes had in common was how their leaders perceived vulnerability to domestic opposition: a domestic ethnic crisis propelled Austria-Hungary into war, and both William II and Nicholas II feared the domestic prospects of backing down in another crisis. Although relatively democratic, pre-WWI France and Britain also faced domestic crises, but they were either careful not to—or politically unable to—manipulate the crisis for domestic gain. And, like Britain in 1914, the leaders of neither the U.S. nor France in the 1930s were in a position to inflame international affairs to resolve domestic pressures—to project threats would have intensified domestic divisions, rather than quelled them. The dynamics were the opposite for militarist Japan and Mussolini's Italy. Regimes with a high concentration of authority were in a better position to manipulate foreign policy for domestic purposes, although again the pattern is not consistent—for example, only Mussolini seemed to be driven mainly by diversionary strategies. In the Cold War, diversionary strategies became more the norm—but for both the authoritarian Soviet Union and the democratic United States.

IN CONCLUSION

The basic point of this essay has been that decision making is an important (albeit fluid) phenomenon in international relations, even in the most severe of international conditions: that of the origins of war. As historical research has documented, how decision makers were configured had a significant impact on the outbreak of the twentieth century's great conflicts: WWI, WWII, and the Cold War. In each case, the decision units responsible for committing the resources of the government acted in ways that contributed to the conflict spiral, deterrence failure, or both. We are not arguing here that decision structures were the primary cause of these conflicts. Not only was the road to war a long one domestically and internationally, but the leadership in these countries was reacting to very real systemic pressures. Given, however, the complexity of these pressures (the degree of uncertainty they generated, the value trade-offs they provoked, and the dispersion of decision authority they encountered), it is not obvious how the leadership would (or should) respond. Furthermore, it should be evident from the previous discussion that the leadership's responses are not necessarily associated with domestic political structures. Not only are leaders rarely motivated solely by domestic concerns, but regime structures do no better than international imperatives in explaining decision structures and processes. Instead, decision units appear to operate in a way that is often independent of the otherwise compelling constraints of both international and domestic politics. As Richard Snyder's original formulation suggested and decades of subsequent historical research seems to demonstrate, decision-making dynamics cannot be inferred directly from international and domestic structures. Without denying the importance of both domestic and international situations, all that follows in this special issue is premised on the idea that decision units do matter, although in complex ways that vary across time and political systems.

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