

Domestic Structure of Decision- Making Processes Part 2

- The structure of a decision-making process can affect foreign policy outcomes, especially when no single alternative appeals to a majority of participants.
- Experienced participants in foreign policy formulation are familiar with the techniques for manipulating decision-making processes to favor outcomes they prefer.
- A common technique is to control a group's formal decision rules.
- These rules include the items of business the group discusses and the order in which proposals are considered.
- Probably most important is the ability to control the agenda and thereby structure the terms of debate.

- State leaders often rely on an inner circle of advisors in making foreign policy decisions.
- The composition and operation of the inner circle vary across governments. Some leaders depend heavily on informal consultations in addition to formal meetings.
- Some leaders create a “kitchen cabinet”—a trusted group of friends who discuss policy issues with the leader even though they have no formal positions in government.

- The actions of a state in the international arena result from individual human choices aggregated through the state's internal structures.
- Within the states there are various domestic structures that participate in and contribute to the formulation of foreign policies of states.
- These include:
 - ***A) Bureaucracies***
 - Bureaucracies, that is, various agencies and institutions of government, play a key role in the foreign policy decision processes.
 - Bureaucratic agencies contribute to the formulation of states' foreign policies as well as influence their actions in the international arena.
 - Different states maintain different foreign policy bureaucracies but share some common elements.

- ***i) Diplomats***

- Virtually all states maintain a diplomatic corps, or foreign service, of diplomats working in *embassies* in foreign capitals (and in *consulates* located in noncapital foreign cities), as well as diplomats who remain at home to help coordinate foreign policy.
- States appoint ambassadors as their official representatives to other states and to international organizations.
- Diplomatic activities are organized through a foreign ministry or the equivalent.
- In many democracies, diplomats consisted of *political appointees* (who come and go with changes in government leaders) and *career diplomats* who come up through the ranks of the foreign service and tend to outlast changes in administration.

- Diplomats provide much of the information that goes into making foreign policies, but their main role is to carry out rather than create policies.
- Nonetheless, foreign ministry bureaucrats often make foreign relations so routine that top leaders and political appointees can come and go without greatly altering the country's relations.
- ***i) Interagency Tensions***
- Interagency tension also affects the formulation of foreign policy.
- Certain agencies traditionally clash, and an endless tug-of-war shapes the foreign policies that emerge.
- In the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the defense ministry was usually more hawkish (favoring military strength) and the foreign ministry or State Department more dovish (favoring diplomacy), with the president or premier holding the balance.

- ***B) Interest Groups***

- Interest groups are coalitions of people who share a common interest in the outcome of some political issue and who organize themselves to try to influence the outcome.
- Foreign policy makers do not operate in a political vacuum but in the context of the political debates in their society.
- In all states, societal pressures influence foreign policy, although these are aggregated and made effective through different channels in different societies.
- In pluralistic democracies, interested parties influence foreign policy through interest groups and political parties.
- Thus foreign policies adopted by states generally reflect some kind of process of domestic coalition formation.

- The major tool often deployed by interest groups is lobbying.
- Lobbying is the process of talking with legislators or officials to influence their decisions on some set of issues.
- Three important elements that go into successful lobbying are:
 - the ability to gain a hearing with busy officials;
 - the ability to present cogent arguments for one's case; and,
 - the ability to trade favors in return for positive action on an issue. These favors—legal and illegal—range from campaign contributions to dinners at nice restaurants, trips to golf resorts, and paying bribes.

- ***C) The Military-Industrial Complex***

- A military-industrial complex refers to a huge interlocking network of governmental agencies, industrial corporations, and research institutes, working together to supply a nation's military forces.
- The military-industrial complex was a response to the growing importance of technology (nuclear weapons, electronics, and others) and of logistics in Cold War military planning.
- Because of the domestic political clout of these actors, the complex was a powerful influence on foreign policy in both the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

- ***D) Public Opinion***

- Many domestic actors seek to influence **public opinion**—the range of views on foreign policy issues held by the citizens of a state.
- Public opinion has greater influence on foreign policy in democracies than in authoritarian governments.
- But even dictators must pay attention to what citizens think.
- No government can rule by force alone: it needs legitimacy to survive.
- It must persuade people to accept (if not to like) its policies, because in the end, policies are carried out by ordinary people—soldiers, workers, and bureaucrats.

- ***E) Legislatures***

- One conduit through which interest groups and public opinion may wield influence is legislatures.
- Some democracies, such as the United States, have presidential systems, in which legislative bodies are elected apart from the president.
- In these systems, legislatures play a direct role in making foreign policy by passing budgets, regulating bureaucratic rules, creating trade law, even controlling immigration policy.
- Although executives may attend summits and talks, any agreement they sign must be approved by their domestic legislature.